



FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

THE GIFT OF MARTYRDOM

THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE

Recently I was asked why Blessed Vasyi's holy relics were here in Winnipeg and not in Ukraine. On the one hand, it would make sense since he is from Ukraine that his holy relics should be returned there. However, perhaps God had a deeper plan, as the author of the Letter to the Hebrews says; "a plan which included us." (11:40)

Blessed Vasyi spent only his last year of life in Canada. When he was released from his second imprisonment in Eastern Ukraine by the Soviets on January 27, 1972, he was already a marked man. During his



Dr. Vasyi Nikolic, Blessed Vasyi's nephew. Blessed Vasyi visited them in 1967 and again in February 1972. Dr. Nikolic shared about the poor state of Blessed Vasyi's health after he was exiled from Ukraine.

last imprisonment, he was administered deadly slow-working drugs that would lead to his imminent death. He was then exiled from his native land quite sick and weak. Upon arrival at his sister Vera's in Yugoslavia, his nephew Dr. Vasyi Nikolic began nursing him back to relative health. Shortly after, he travelled to Rome to meet with Pope

Paul VI to relay information about the underground church in Ukraine. Since he had relatives in Winnipeg and Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk, a fellow Redemptorist, knew him well, he was invited to come and live in Canada. In Winnipeg his cousin Maria's

husband Dr. Zenon Matwchuk took personal care of him. Doctors attested to Blessed Vasyi's poor condition and health. Just a little more than a year after his arrival in Canada, he fell asleep in the Lord on June 30, 1973. It was determined that his death was the result of the poisonous drugs received during his last imprisonment in Kommunarsk. In 2001, he was proclaimed a martyr for the faith by Pope John Paul II. After his beatification his holy fully intact (incorrupt) body was transferred to St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, a Redemptorist parish.

Did God have a deeper plan in bringing this martyr to Winnipeg, to Canada, to North America? I believe He did. We are living in a part of the world where the Christian faith, once strong and being a guiding principle in life, has now eroded to mere lip service. Our Christian values are constantly being watered down and compromised. The value and respect of human life has decreased where we can legalize and allow abortions and practice euthanasia. The sanctity of Christian marriage has been distorted where society no longer views it as a holy union between a man and a woman. Christian symbols are being forbidden to be worn in public. Truth has become relative and is twisted to serve selfish needs. Blatant lying and distortion of facts have become the protocol of political leaders. The primacy of God, our faith in Him, the following of His commandments are all under attack. I believe that God has given us the witness of a martyr to inspire us and to give us the courage to stand firm in our faith and beliefs.

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Blessed Vasyl's martyrdom was not just a single act in his life. It was a life-long journey of faithfulness to our Lord, to the Eucharist, to the Mother of God. He had many opportunities to compromise his faith, rationalize decisions to adhere to the command of the Soviet government, but he didn't. Despite severe consequences, he remains faithful to God, not only secretly but even openly. He never stopped celebrating the Divine Liturgy, hearing confessions, giving religious conferences, organizing monastic life, promoting religious literature and materials, even though all these things were strictly forbidden and punishable with imprisonment and even death. Blessed Vasyl proclaimed the Truth even when it was "not in season." As the letter to the Hebrews says: "he wished to be ill-treated along with God's people rather than enjoy the fleeting rewards of sin." (11:25)

Blessed Vasyl remained faithful to the end and now

has been given the role and ministry of being a great intercessor for us all. His Shrine has become a fountain of blessings and graces. He brings our prayers to the throne of the King and obtains blessings and graces



for all those who ask through him. May the witness of Blessed Vasyl help us to embrace "martyrdom" for the Christian faith in all the many forms it takes. May we too remain faithful in this world of confused values and beliefs.

by Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.

A NEW FEAST DAY

Last summer, the Synod of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church under the leadership of Patriarch Sviatoslav, announced a new feast day. They have asked the church that on the **first Sunday of July**, we honour the Mother of God under the title of "Our Mother of Perpetual Help." In the Roman Catholic (western) Church, this feast day is honoured on June 27.

The icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help was given to the Redemptorists in 1866 so that they would make her known throughout the world. It is a very ancient icon with a rich history. Since the Redemptorists had this mission, this icon, in fact, is now known throughout the world, including Ukraine. Blessed Vasyl was a great devotee of this icon. He preached missions promoting her and formed arch-confraternities of Our Mother of Perpetual Help. These arch-confraternities helped people to live a devote life and grow in holiness. Blessed Vasyl was ordained in Zboisk before this icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help. This same icon, after it was wounded by a bullet, later hung in Blessed Vasyl's apartment after returning from his first imprisonment. He wrote a book in honour of this icon for which he was arrested and imprisoned a second time in 1969. Blessed Vasyl would be very pleased that our Mother of Perpetual Help is now being honoured by the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church with this new feast day.



The history of the icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help can be found in our gift shop—a booklet called "The Mother of Millions." Also available is a book written by Blessed Vasyl titled "The History of the Miraculous Icon of the Mother of Perpetual Help."

VISITORS TO THE MUSEUM/SHRINE IN WINNIPEG



Youth ministry group from the Archdiocese of Regina, SK



Parishioners from St. Bernadette's in Winnipeg with guests from Edmonton, AB



Visitors from India and Winnipeg



Visitors from Edmonton, Ab, North Bay, ON, Charlottetown, PEI, & Marystowne, NFL



Interview with Brenda Suderman & photographer from the Winnipeg Free Press



Confirmation Class with Fr. Gerry Sembrano from St. Emile Parish, Wpg

VISITORS TO MUSEUM/APARTMENT IN UKRAINE AND PRESENTATIONS IN UKRAINE



Protection of the Mother of God Parish in Kolomeya,



St. Sophia Catechetical School, Lviv



Protection of the Mother of God Church in Zalishchyky



Presentation of Christ in the Temple Parish in Kolomeya



Pilgrims in the Blessed Vasyl apartment/museum in Lviv



Bishop Velychkovsky Way of the Cross in Kolomeya



Private School Tryvita in Lviv



Basilian Church in Brukhovychi near Lviv

THE POWER OF LOVE

Last year in the June Newsletter, we described a new ministry. We at the Shrine are involved with orphaned and abandoned girls. These girls are under the care of Sr. Julia. She is now under the patronage of the Archeparchy of Lviv, under the leadership of Archbishop and Metropolitan Ihor Vozniak, C.Ss.R.

Last summer, Sr. Julia obtained new housing for the girls and herself. This dwelling, a condo with eight furnished bedrooms, was donated to her ministry through a charitable group called "Diaconia." The bedding, towels, dishes, kitchen supplies and laundry items, etc. were all supplied through your generosity. Presently there are seven girls that are living with her. All have come from horrific backgrounds. Social Services approach Sister with girls who truly have no one or whom everyone else has rejected. Of the girls that were with Sister last year, Olya graduated from high school and is now studying at an institute for fire-fighting/paramedics. Several years ago, Olya and her sister Lydia were found living in a abandoned warehouse. Lydia is now preparing to enter law school. Diana, who was orphaned, has been with Sr. Julia for several years now. She too is preparing to enter law school. Victoria, coming from a background of drug and alcohol abuse, is now preparing to enter medical school. To help the girls improve their grades and to assist them in their higher education, tutors were hired through your support. These girls will now be able to achieve their dreams.

Sister received a 9 year old autistic girl, who was written off - she could not communicate, was withdrawn, and was considered unteachable. She was told that Nastya was suffering from many medical issues. However, after Sister took Nastya for a thorough medical exam, it was discovered that some of the medical conditions were very treatable. After much love, care and patience, this young girl began to communicate. With the help of a tutor, it was discovered that Nastya was able to learn by using a computer and that she could read English. If Sister would not have taken her in, society would have written her off and placed her in institutions for the rest of her life. Sister is delighted on how she is blossoming. Once again thanks to your donations, Sister is able to hire tutors, psychologists and give her the required medical treatment.

Sister has also received girls with challenging characters. With the help of God and Sister Julia's love, they are slowing dealing with their anger issues and their social skills. Her home is making a great difference in the lives of these girls. The needs are great and can only be accomplished through your prayers and generous support. Donations can be made to this project payable to "Ukrainian Catholic Mission" and sent to the Shrine address. Please write in the memo "orphan fund". Your support of this project is greatly appreciated. Please pray for Sr. Julia so that her strength and health continues as she prepares these young ladies to become well educated and skilled in their chosen careers.



Sister Julia's girls with Sophia Obirek from Winnipeg

THANK YOU!!!

Your generous donations make it possible for us to conduct our ministry at the Shrine and to promote the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl throughout the world. Thank you to all the contributors to the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.

Contributions listed below are from March 1st 2018 until May 15th, 2018.

5000+

In memory of Amelia Ratushniak
Fr. Len Ratushniak

1000+

Estate of William Zambrick

100+

Sofia Hull
Chris Kyrzyk
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Anne Shymko

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Joseph Zeleny
Joseph & Susan Zeleny

THE BLESSED VELYCHKOVSKY NATIONAL MARTYR'S SHRINE

Invites you to celebrate our Feastday

Thursday June 27, 2019

Day Program

9:00 Divine Liturgy
10:00 Rosary
10:30 Moleben to
Blessed Vasyl
with anointing

Lunch available

1:15 Video Presentation
2:00 Acafist Hymn
in honor of Blessed
Bishop and Martyr
Vasyl Velychkovsky, C.Ss.R.
with anointing

Evening Program

7:00 Divine Liturgy
Living Rosary
Veneration of Relics
Anointing for Healing



Guest Homilist:

*Archbishop
Emeritus
Stefan Soroka*

IN THANKSGIVING

Dear Mary Jane and all our friends who have prayed for us when we needed help. I want to tell you it was a year in July, 2018. At the beginning of July 2017, we asked you to pray for our son Gary to help him to overcome addiction to alcohol. By the end of July 2017, he was fed up with his drinking, so he decided to do something about it. He went to London, ON to the detox centre.

Gary was done a year ago in July. He moved to a beautiful place in Halifax, NS still with Teen Challenge. He is now working to help the other people who are going through what he did last year.

Gary knows his Bible very well as they study the Bible every day and go to different Churches every week. Gary is a very good speaker. Gary is very happy and healthy and we believe that the prayers at the Shrine helped our son to be where he is today. He is cured and we hope that he stays that way and never goes back to alcohol again. We trust in God to continue taking care of him where ever he goes. So please continue praying for Gary and all our family as well and all those that need help who are suffering from the addiction.

We wish to thank all those that prayed for us and Gary. We will pray for the Shrine and all the Saints and Bishop Velychkovsky to continue helping in our needs. Thank you.

Bill & Sophie Senkowski

ST JOSEPH'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
BISHOP VELYCHKOVSKY MARTYR'S SHRINE
250 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, MB
for more information call: 204-338-7321

Visit our
Online Gift Shop
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www.bvmartyrshrine.com

SHRINE SCHEDULE

Monday: Shrine is closed
Tuesday to Friday: 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
Sunday: Open until 1:00 pm

Shrine is open to the faithful during the times of Liturgical Services. The Museum is open on weekends after each Divine Liturgy.

Group tours are available.

For pilgrimage group tours call for reservations
204-338-7321 or e-mail: info@bvmartyrshrine.com
Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com

EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING - 7:00 pm
Liturgical Service to Blessed Vasyl
(Acafist or Moleben) followed by an anointing with Holy
Oil blessed by his relics.

Prayer to Blessed Martyr Bishop Vasyl

O Lord God, You are praised by the whole world for the marvelous works in your saints. I thank you for the grace you gave to **Blessed Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky** to be a faithful witness to You unto the point of death. Through his intercession I ask for the following favour _____ for your Name is glorified forever. Amen.

Please inform the shrine of any favors received to:
Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine
250 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6
Canada
or E-mail: info@bvmartyrshrine.com