



FULLY ALIVE

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION

CHRIST IS RISEN!

The Cross and the Resurrection are the source of hope for the whole world. The good news of the resurrection, first announced by an angel to the myrrh-bearing women and then experienced by the apostles gathered behind



The Icon of Resurrection or "The Descent into Hades"

locked doors, became the event that changed their lives. Despite all the adverse circumstances in their lives (most of them were eventually martyred), the knowledge and belief in the Risen Lord gave them great joy and unbreakable hope. This Good News has spread throughout the whole world, unfortunately not all receive or accept this Good News.

The longing for resurrection is deep in the human soul. We see this theme in movies. Often there is some tragedy, some broken relationships, a seemingly dead end where all is lost. Then through some great act of self sacrifice or repentance or change of heart, all that was broken begins to heal and find new life. This is the experience of resurrection. Wherever we find new life, be it in nature or in relationships, there we discover the power of the resurrection. It fills us with joy and hope. The Cross and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus goes even deeper. Through the Cross and Resurrection, the very nature of evil is destroyed, having no ultimate hold on humanity, and the path to new life is firmly established. New Life rises from the pain of death.

Blessed Vasyl's time in the Soviet penal camps was very difficult and harsh. He spent almost ten years in various camps after his death sentence by firing

squad was changed to imprisonment and hard labour in laager camps. While he was in Vorkuta near the mines #9 & #10, some fellow prisoners, Myroslaw Romash and Boris Mirus, who shared the same barracks with Blessed Vasyl, gave us a beautiful witness of his life there. (See: issue newsletter 58 - March 2018 for more details). Blessed Vasyl even during such harsh circumstances continued his priestly ministry. He confessed the prisoners and celebrated the Divine Liturgy secretly. He would celebrate the Divine Liturgy twice a day if circumstances allowed it. This gave the opportunity for more trusted fellow prisoners to attend. He also celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the deep coal mine shafts. Boris Mirus related his profound experience of the Divine Liturgy which was celebrated almost



Myroslaw Romash & Boris Mirus, fellow-prisoners with Blessed Vasyl

silently in virtual darkness with miner's dirty clothing as vestments. He said those moments were unforgettable. Here, we see both the Cross and the Resurrection alive and giving new life to those prisoners



Tower and fencing around the prison barracks in Vorkuta

who were so often besieged by despair and doubt.

Myroslaw shared the experience of important feast days like Easter. They would openly have the Divine Liturgy in the barracks. They would invite other priests and set a "festive" table in the middle of the bar-

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racks. Blessed Vasyl would celebrate the Divine Liturgy with all the prisoners from that barrack, preach a moving sermon and they would all partake of the Divine Gifts. The guards would often look the other way. This too was a visible sign of the power of the Resurrection, the power to bring new life within circumstances filled with suffering and death. Blessed Vasyl witnessed to this power in his own attitude and approach to life and by his words and dealings with his fellow prisoners.



Barracks similar to those in Vorkuta

As we continue to struggle with the dangers and destruction of the global pandemic COVID-19, and now

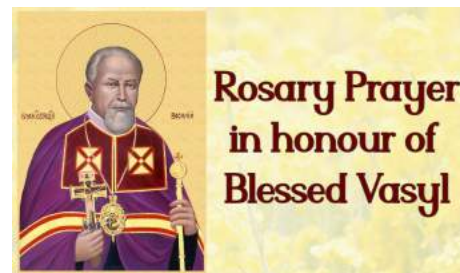
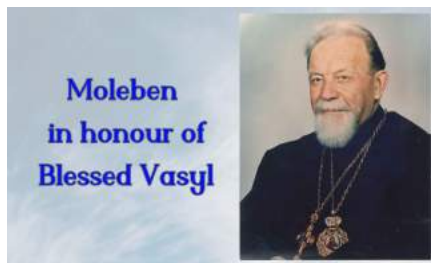
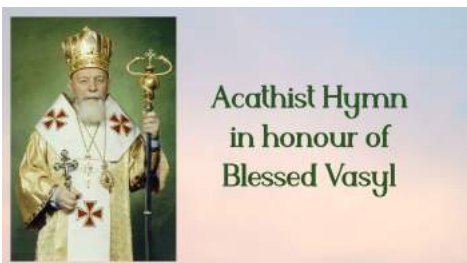
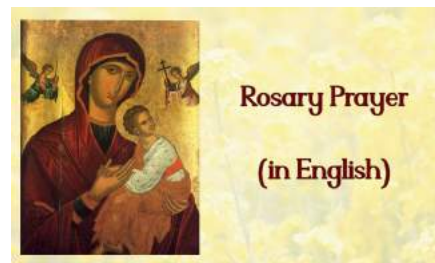
with all its variants, we too can take solace as Blessed Vasyl did in the power of the Resurrection. Last year we did not know what lay before us. How long would this pandemic last? A few weeks? A few months? Years? We still don't know. The presence of vaccines is giving us hope. COVID-19 has taught us to be aware of our circumstances and to be aware and concerned for each other. As a world, we still have a long way to go before this "enemy" is defeated. The Resurrection of our Lord does give us assurance of our final victory and offers opportunities of new life in our present circumstances. May Blessed Vasyl, who never lost hope in the Resurrection, give us the grace and the faith to be always filled with joy and hope in the face of whatever we encounter.

Submitted by Fr. John Sianchuk, C.S.S.R.

THE YEAR OF COVID

March 2021 marks one year since the world changed because of the COVID pandemic. Because of COVID health regulations the Museum and Shrine closed its doors to the public and our staff found new ways to do Shrine ministry work. To make the Shrine a safe place, sanitization protocols were put in place. Weekly Devotional services were moved to an online platform – Blessed Vasyl's YouTube channel. Live-streamed Moleben and Acahist services allowed us to reach people from all over the world to join us in prayer. The need to feel God's presence and protection through prayers, gave us the opportunity to record the rosary in both English and Ukrainian. This allowed people to say the rosary before the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl. A beautiful rosary prayer in honour of Blessed Vasyl, created by our ministry in Ukraine and translated into English by Fr. John, can also be found on the YouTube channel. Because of the pandemic, we found ways to connect virtually with the people who need prayer and Blessed Vasyl's intercession. Through our website, you can write prayer petitions which are lifted in prayer every Wednesday evening and/or you can light a five-day candle in the Shrine.

To take advantage of all these new opportunities, we encourage you to go to our website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com, on our Bishop Velychkovsky YouTube Channel, you will find many prayer services. The latest ones are on the screen before you, but all of our services are found under **Videos**. We encourage you to check our feastday program (June 27) where you find two beautiful video testimonies.



GRACES AND BLESSINGS

I am writing to share with you a few blessings received from God, that I believe Blessed Vasyl was instrumental in requesting through intercessory prayer.

I have been visiting the shrine and asking Blessed Vasyl to intercede on behalf of a few friends of mine who were very ill and near death. I also asked Blessed Vasyl to pray for the conversion of my daughter, and to help her stop smoking drugs. I attend mass three times a week and light prayer candles each mass. I pray and read scripture and/or faith related books daily.

Today my daughter came to me to let me know she put away all her drug paraphernalia and drugs and has "stopped for awhile." I cannot tell you how grateful I am to God and to Blessed Vasyl for his intercession. I will continue to pray to God for my daughter's strength and perseverance to refrain from drugs through Blessed Vasyl's intercession.

My friend Nadine, has a 29 year old son who became very ill, suddenly. Mason was experiencing multiple organ failures. His grandmother, whom is also my confirmation sponsor, asked me to pray for him. I asked for Blessed Vasyl's intercession, along with that of Mary, Joseph and all the angels and saints. Initially, the doctors believed Mason's illness was because of a heart problem, possibly a condition from birth. I learned this past Friday at morning mass that Mason is now being considered well enough for discharge, and the doctors now believe it was an infection. I know that Blessed Vasyl's intercessory prayers helped invoke the mercy, love and healing spirit of God and that is why Mason is alive today.

Ever since I learned about the Shrine for Blessed Vasyl, (two months ago), I have visited several times and each time prayed the rosary in the church and then prayed in the shrine. Last week I brought my husband to pray at the shrine. I intend to bring others. I previously requested prayers for your Wednesday evening prayer service for my daughter, Sherry and Mason. Thank you for bringing those prayers forward.

I feel very blessed to be able to come to the shrine and pray.

Wendy

MINISTRY IN UKRAINE



The new parish in Kovel dedicated to Blessed Vasyl receives his 1st Class relics.



St. Michael's Parish in Sudova Vyshnya venerate the holy relics of Blessed Vasyl.



Parishioners from St. Nicholas Church in Zolochiv during a presentation.



Nativity of the Mother of God Parish in Banya-Lisovyts presentation



Tanya taping a video on Blessed Vasyl's life before the construction of the new church in Kovel dedicated to Blessed Vasyl.

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 National Martyr's Shrine. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.

Contributions listed below are from November 21, 2020 until March 20, 2021

+1000

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In Honour of Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.
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Please consider Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine when planning your estate. This will help to secure the future of this ministry. Thank you.

MINISTRY IN WINNIPEG



Wednesday evening Devotional Services, lifting the pray petitions before the Lord.

Welcoming Pilgrims and following Pandemic protocols



Wishing all our supporters and their families a Blessed and Joyous Easter! Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

COVID SHRINE SCHEDULE


Monday: Closed
Tuesday to Friday: 10 am to 5 pm
Saturday: 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

The Shrine is open to the faithful during the above hours. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate groups at this time.

EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING 7:00 pm
Virtual Liturgical Service to Blessed Vasyl (Acatnist or Moleben) on our Bishop Velychkovsky YouTube Channel
www.bvmartyrshrine.com

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 graces received.

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