



FULLY ALIVE

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

POWER OF THE WORD

Zealous Missionary

In his letter to the Ephesians, St. Paul writes about the spiritual battle that we all must engage in. "Our battle is not against human forces but against .. the rulers of this world of darkness, the evil spirits." (Eph. 6: 12) Blessed Vasyl was well aware of this spiritual battle in his life, especially during the time of the Soviet occupation and persecution. He knew that the real issue was not merely political, or the human desire for power and control. The real issue was a spiritual one and it needed a spiritual response. St. Paul writes about putting on the armour of God: truth, justice, faith, salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, that is the Word of God. Blessed Vasyl had all these qualities but the one piece of the armour which particularly applies to him was "zeal to propagate the Gospel of peace." (Eph. 6: 15)

As a young Redemptorist, Blessed Vasyl was always eager to proclaim the Gospel, in particular during parish missions. A parish mission could last as long as ten days. He had many such missions in one year. From the interviews with eye-witnesses, the missions were crowded with people and they were moved to tears by his preaching. Some seventy years later people still



Celebrating Liturgy in the grotto at the Redemptorist monastery in Ivano-Frankivsk during the feast of our Mother of Perpetual Help

vividly remembered his mission sermons. They were brought to tears when Blessed Vasyl preached on the Passion of Christ or on the Mother of God. Blessed Vasyl says in his autobiography that during the time of parish missions (1927 to 1945) he preached to over a million and a half faithful.

When the Soviet persecution of the Church began, first in 1939-41 and then again in 1945, Blessed Vasyl was forbidden to preach publicly. His heart though was still filled with zeal to proclaim the Good News. While in prison when he was sentenced to death by firing squad, he evangelized those who were with him on death row. According to Sister Innocentia, Blessed Vasyl gave those fellow-prisoners a ten day mission. He spoke of this experience of evangelizing on death row as one of his most profound experiences. He saw men steeped and overburdened by sin become free by the grace of God.



Sister Innocentia OSBM was Blessed Vasyl's 'secretary' and assisted him in the administration of the underground church.

While in prison in Vorkuta under the watchful eyes of the guards, he would celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Feast Days in the barracks. According to fellow prisoner Myroslaw Romash, Blessed Vasyl preached short but moving homilies which inspired the prisoners. He also consoled and counseled fellow prisoners who came clandestinely for confession



Blessed Vasyl prayed before this cross with the suffering and bloody body of our Lord. It often brought him to tears.

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or advice. Boris Mirus, a fellow prisoner, described the consolation he received every time he spoke with Blessed Vasyl. "It became easier on the soul every time I spoke with him. It helped me



Sister Justina OSBM worked with Blessed Vasyl. She hid religious items such as vestments, antimensions, holy cards and books from the KGB. She spent 6 months in jail but did not betray Blessed Vasyl.

overcome the gloom of prison life and gave me courage to survive."

When Blessed Vasyl returned from prison in 1955, he immediately began to gather

people in homes. Sr. Justina said that the first of such gatherings happened in her apartment in August of 1955. Several young women were present. After the retreat, she and a few other women made their promises (vows) and entered secretly into monastic life. All convents at that time were confiscated and the nuns scattered into homes or were sent to prison. Blessed Vasyl began to organize "monasteries" in homes. Sr. Elizabeth said that he would come on Friday evenings several times a month to give them a spiritual talk. During the years from 1955 to 1969, he organized 10 such homes in Lviv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk. One hundred and two sisters



A house in Ternopil bought by Blessed Vasyl to serve as a monastery for three Basilian sisters. Sitting besides Blessed Vasyl is his mother.

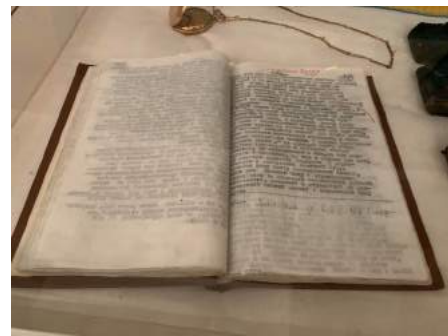
joined the Basilian Order alone, through the preaching and encouragement of Blessed Vasyl. How many more sisters owe their vocations to his preaching! His zeal to propagate the Gospel was not quelled by

the persecution and imprisonment.

For Blessed Vasyl the best way to confront the evil around him was to increase his commitment to Christ by spreading the Gospel by whatever means was available. As a secret bishop, he organized clandestine seminaries, and himself taught the young men. He went to private homes at night to celebrate the Divine Liturgy and bring the Gospel and the Holy Mysteries to the faithful. He confessed people in parks. He ordained priests so that the Gospel could continue to be spread. When fellow priests returned from imprisonment, he encouraged them to act boldly

in the underground Church. He welcomed apostate priests back into the Catholic Church. For some, who were pastors of Orthodox churches, he asked them to secretly acknowledge their allegiance to the Catholic Church, but to stay where they were so that the people would continue to hear the Word of God and receive the Sacraments. For others, Blessed Vasyl asked them to become active in the underground Church. For all these actions, Blessed Vasyl became known as the "Father of the Underground Church."

Blessed Vasyl also propagated the Gospel through writings and publications. He commissioned the printing of holy cards and prayer books. This was no easy task. The action was illegal and besides this there were no printing presses. He had a friend, Vasyl Manko, who was a photographer and who a darkroom, to print pictures of holy cards and prayer books. These pictures were



The hand made book was written by Blessed Vasyl and typed by others with the use of carbon paper. This book was discovered in the Museum of Atheism as an example of anti-Soviet propaganda.

hand bound into booklets which were distributed among the faithful. Blessed Vasyl wrote a book "The History of the Miraculous Icon of our Mother of Perpetual Help." He wrote it by hand and had others type the text using carbon paper. In this way they could make five to eight copies at a time. These copies too were hand bound into books. When copies of this book were found by the KGB during house searches in 1969, they arrested Blessed Vasyl.

Blessed Vasyl tirelessly remained active during the time of great persecution. He could have been arrested at any time for his actions if he was caught. For him the Word of God and its proclamation was more important than life and liberty itself. May we through his intercession find the same zeal to propagate the Gospel of peace in whatever circumstances in life we find ourselves.

Ministry in Ukraine



Oleh and Tanya Chekharivsky continue their ministry of promoting Blessed Vasyl throughout Ukraine.

The Dormition of the Mother of God Parish, Pustomyty, Lviv oblast



Village church in Ulashkivtsi, Ternopil oblast



Cosmian & Damian Parish, Pustomyty, Lviv oblast

Blessed Velychkovsky pilgrims from the village of Tarasivka visit Ternopil, Buchach, Chortkiv and Zarvanitsia



Students from the Nicholas Charnetsky Catechetical School in Lviv visiting the Blessed Velychkovsky museum/apartment



Parish of the Annunciation, Kolomyia, Ivano-Frankivsk oblast

Parish of the Nativity of the Mother of God, village of Ulashkivtsi, Ternopil oblast



Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Parish in Kovel, Volynia

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 September 15 until December 2nd, 2021

+1000

Estate of Fr. Edward Evanko
Elizabeth Haughton
In memory of Vicki Tycholis
Edward Tycholis
In memory of Vicki Tycholis
Janice & Mark Tycholis-Lloyd

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In memory of Archbishop Michael
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Harry & Doreen Boychuk
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Victims of abortion
 Jonathan & Annette Gustave
John Warrenchuk
 Kathleen Warrenchuk
Mary Winchar
 Rick & Cynthia Bryant
 Gary & Jan Lukie
 Olga Szutiak
Olga Wynnyk
 Marilyn Krawchuk
Melvin Zankowski
 Anna Banera
George Zawortny
 Kay Zawortny
**Zegalski, Lysyshyn, Senyk &
 Zimmerman deceased
 family members**
 Rose Zegalski

In Honor of...

Bishop Bryan Bayda, C.Ss.R.
 Chris Pidwerbeski
Bob Cesmystruk
 Robert & Iris Cesmystruk

Megan Deck
 Cecil & Leona Krywulak
Ed Faseruk
 Olga Szutiak
Josie Ferniuk
 Olga Szutiak
Scott Jenken
 W. Scott Jenken
Mary Jane Kalenchuk
 Rick & Cynthia Bryant
 Basil & Judy Galarnyk
 Paul Shumay
Dennis Kurzyk
 Chris Kyrzyk
Fr. Bohdan Lukie, C.Ss.R.
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Peter & Marlene Skrinski
 Robert & Shirley Erstelle
Fr. Frank Szadiak
 Bob & Darlene Famulak
 Mary Hamm
 Olga Szutiak
Bishop Michael Wiwchar, C.Ss.R.
 Bob & Darlene Famulak

For the Health Of...

**Zegalski, Lysyshyn, Senyk &
 Zimmerman families**
 Rose Zegalski
David McIntyre
 Klym Kurdydyk
Florence Blanchard
 Rick & Jeannette Kendall
 Natasha Macsymach
 Olga Szutiak
Carbotte family
 Paul & Adeline Carbotte
Mike & Ruth Erstelle
 Robert & Shirley Erstelle
Orest & Margaret Fedorchuk
 Rick & Jeannette Kendall
Derek & David Feeney
 Frank & Agnes Feeney
Anthen & Emily Gazdewich
 Anthen & Emily Gazdewich
Curtis & Christine Gazdewich
 Anthen & Emily Gazdewich
Gingera & Kokolski families
 Mary Kokolski
Houghton Family
 Tom & Cheryl Houghton
Cheryl Houghton
 Tom & Cheryl Houghton
Zorian & Leona Hudyma
 Rick & Jeannette Kendall
 Olga Szutiak
Spencer Katerynuk
 Bill & Olga Katerynuk

Joe Krowiak
 Helen Jakimeczko
Michael Lastiwka
 Merv & Rosann Lastiwka
Rudy & Josie Macsymach & Family
 Matthew & Florence & Michelle
 Blanchard
Jill & Ernie Matwychuk
 Bert & Val Galay
Mary Theresa Papinko
 Greg & Mary Papinko
Redemptorist Fathers
 Rick & Cynthia Bryant
Crescentia Rozdeba
 Anthen & Emily Gazdewich
Riley Rozdeba
 Anthen & Emily Gazdewich
Manuela Rubio
 Manuela Rubio
Jason Sliva
 Robert & Lydia Sliva
Thorkelson family
 Ken & Evelyn Thorkelson
Larry & Doreen Trach
 Rick & Jeannette Kendall
 Olga Szutiak
Ina Yakabowski
 Metro Lukie

Please consider Bishop
 Velychkovsky Martyr's
 Shrine when planning
 your estate. This will
 help to secure the future
 of this ministry.
 Thank you.

A TEACHING GIFT FOR THE CHURCH - A CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

Kseniya Kravtchouk, who was a staff member of the Blessed Vasyl Shrine for many years, wanted to create a teaching kit about the life of Blessed Vasyl. Her goal was to produce material that would be used in Catholic schools, Catechism classes and even for adult education workshops. With a background in education, Kseniya worked on the project for two years. This teaching kit is now available for sale.



Mr. Rob Praznik, Superintendent of Catholic Schools in Manitoba visited the Shrine and received the Teacher's Kit.

It includes:

- a colourful booklet on "Life Story of Blessed Vasyl..."
- a "Workbook for Students" corresponding to his life
- a timeline of Blessed Vasyl's life
- 28 cards used for an activity - the scavenger hunt
- UBS memory stick which includes a 9-minute video on Blessed Vasyl's life, and digital copies of all the material.

This Kit is a wonderful asset to become familiar with the life of Blessed Martyr, God's gift to the Catholic Church. This Kit is now being distributed to all Catechist Coordinators, Catholic Schools and various Catholic parishes in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.



Judith Vasques, (furthest right) Director of Catechism for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

As a **Christmas Special**, the Shrine is offering the complete Kit for \$45.00 (including shipping) until January 15, 2022.

Individual items may also be bought from the museum gift shop or online. Contact the Shrine Office at 204-338-7321 for more details.

Join us every Wednesday Evening for our Devotional Services at 7:00 pm Winnipeg Time. The Service is also live-streamed through our YouTube Channel found on our website and our Facebook page.

COVID SHRINE SCHEDULE

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

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

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

**It is important to notify the Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Shrine if you have received a grace or a blessing through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl. Whether it be through prayer, a third class relic or through the anointing with holy oil, even if the grace seems minimal, please inform the Shrine office,
email: info@bvmartyrshrine.com
Tel: 204-338-7321**

***Wishing all of our supporters and their families
a blessed Christmas and a peaceful and healthy New Year***

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine
250 Jefferson Avenue Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada R2V 0M6
Tel/Fax: 204-338-7321 Email: info@bvmartyrshrine.com Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com