



# FULLY ALIVE

## Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

### A TIME FOR PEACE

## WAR IN UKRAINE

In a moment all changed. Life changed. Over the past several weeks, we all have been witnessing the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces. We have seen the senseless killing of so many innocent people, in apartment complexes, in hospitals, maternity wards, schools, orphanages and on the battle fields. We have witnessed millions of people who have left behind their homes, families, husbands and sons and have become displaced either to other parts of Ukraine or across the borders into neighbouring countries.



We see this great humanitarian disaster. Having travelled to Ukraine for many years, especially in the last twenty years researching and promoting on Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky, we have made many friends and acquaintances. Our hearts break when we see this devastation. War is terrible and evil.

We also have seen the heroic response of the Ukrainian army, totally outnumbered and outgunned, and yet they are offering a valiant resistance. Their love for country, for their families, for their fellow Ukrainians have caused all to join in the war effort. It has united the people against a common enemy. Beyond all odds we are seeing an extraordinary humanitarian response. People helping people because they need help. Countries opening their borders to the refugees, assisting them with all their basic needs. The outpouring of the world to help in whatever way possible. This expression of unity among people is a sign of the action of the Holy Spirit.

Blessed Vasyl was no stranger to war. He was twelve years old when World War I affected to his village. "In 1914 - World War I. In the years 1915-16, came the battle line on the Dniester River. Shuparka and all the villages were full of soldiers. Our house was



used by the Russian army staff. We were under the barrage of Austrian artillery. For safety, we moved into the cellar." (autobiography) As a young teenager, his life was disrupted. For safety reasons, his parents took him to Probizhnia to his grandfathers parish. Because of his size as a young lad, and because all the men had gone to war, he did the work of a grown man bringing in the harvest for the village. Again he was moved to Horodenko to continue his studies. But by the age of fifteen, a Ukrainian insurgency army, the "Sichovy Striltsi", was being formed, which he joined. However, by God's grace he was never sent to the front line, but was always given "supporting roles". In 1919, he was captured. "All of a sudden, I hear the words of a Polish sergeant: 'You pigs wanted Lviv? Now dig your pits!' But the grave-pit was not yet ready, when perchance a passing Polish officer altered the sentence of the sergeant, and shipped me by the first train to the place for the captured in Zolochiv." (autobiography) He later escaped and entered the seminary.

During World War II, he lived through it as a priest-missionary. The first part of the war he spent in the city of Stanislaviv (Ivano-Frankisk) under Soviet occupation. He was detained and interrogated by the Soviets because of a religious procession he organized. He experienced tortures and accusations by the NKVD. In 1941 in Kamianetz Podilskiy where



Ternopil 1944

he was reorganizing the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (which had been forbidden since 1795), and was under Nazi occupation, he narrowly escaped execution. In the latter years of the war, he remained in Ternopil amidst the shelling of the



Blessed Vasyl as a Sichovy Striltsi

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city by the Soviets. He saw the city being devastated by the shelling. In fact his own bedroom was hit when he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in a neighboring orphanage. News reached Lviv that he was killed by that shelling and requiem services were celebrated for him. But of course he remained alive. As the war was ending, in April all the hierarchy of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church were arrested together with many priests. Blessed Vasyl was arrested on August 7, 1945 and imprisoned because he refused to reject the Catholic Church and the Christian faith. He spent the next ten years in interrogations, tortures, prisons and inhumane labour camps.



Blessed Vasyl before his arrest in 1945

We now turn to Blessed Vasyl, who experienced the dangers and horrors of war, to intercede for his homeland, for Ukraine. He himself was a patriot and understands the patriotic spirit of Ukrainians for freedom and democracy and for their own homeland. He shares in the suffering of all the victims of this brutal and unjust war. We ask Blessed Vasyl to comfort all those who are tragically affected by this war. As the

war was beginning, we were asked by the military chaplains to send them relics of Blessed Vasyl so that these relics would bring courage and comfort to all those on the front lines. We were able to do so. Blessed Vasyl is spiritually present with those who are fighting for the existence freedom of Ukraine.

We have composed a short prayer service on our **YouTube video channel- a Chaplet** - asking Blessed Vasyl to pray for the people of Ukraine. It can be found on our website, Facebook and YouTube channel. Please join us in this prayer:

**"O Blessed Vasyl, you lived through the danger of war, protect your people from all enemies.**

**Blessed Bishop and Martyr Vasyl, pray to God for us."**



## REDEMPTORISTS IN UKRAINE

The Redemptorists have decided to stay with the people and to serve them in whatever way possible. We have two homes in Berdyansk and Chernihiv and two Bishops in the War Zone. Berdyansk is now occupied by the Russian forces, while Chernihiv has taken heavy shelling. The night before the heavy shelling began we received this text from Chernihiv from Fr. Roman. All the Redemptorists are still alive and uninjured.

*"At this time, we have had two quiet nights, which is unbelievable. But as you know, with silence comes anxiety, for when there is silence, one thinks perhaps there is peace, but no the enemy is preparing new devilish attacks. In our monastery on Lyubetsky street, life goes on, people are very tired. Fr. Roman looks after everything as much as possible. We talk with the children and the adults. There are confessions. Prayer unites us all. With us are Sisters, Bro. Vasyl, Fr. Oleh. Fr. Yaroslav and Fr. Myhailo. We remain in our outpost in the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary under her cupola of love. We do not have any bomb shelter, so when the sirens sound we go into the corridors under the icons. We actively engage in the war effort. Our church is open from 9 in the morning until the curfew. Today we prayed near the hospital where there are children suffering from cancer. Because of the danger and the quarantine, we only prayed near the staff and the people were moved. We also brought them food. We visited people who lived in parts of the city that had been shelled. In fact, now we hear shelling but we are still alive. Everyday we celebrate the Divine Liturgy in the afternoon followed by Vespers. During Vespers today, those in charge of the defense came to ask for sand found on our monastery grounds. It was unbelievable. Over 40 people came to our church. These were people of various ages, children, youth, and adults. Fr. Oleh brought them water for they were thirsty. Fr. Yaroslav helped with the sand bags. I looked after the church for people were coming in to pray and light candles. Today Chernihiv is surrounded. This is how we live, how we pray, how we defend ourselves. Pray for us. We are not afraid, but we pain for all the people who are suffering. At this time we can still communicate but we do not know for how long. We are not sorry that we are here. And as much as we can and whatever God permits, we will serve our people.*



Our Redemptorist community in Chernihiv

**Donations** for Redemptorist ministry in Ukraine during this time of war can be made to **"Ukrainian Catholic Mission"** 250 Jefferson Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6. In the memo please say **War Relief**.

# ORPHAN WAR MINISTRY

For the past 15 years, we have been supporting Sr. Julia in her ministry with orphans in Ukraine. This ministry for the past eight years has focused on working and living with orphan girls at risk especially of human trafficking. Because of her ability and success in working with these wounded girls, the city of Lviv has asked her to pilot a new project. Sister Julia is in charge of operating and training her employees to look after children from social services and the rehabilitation of their families. Some of these children were also true orphans. For the past year, she has been running both projects. In fact many of the girls that were living with her were working or volunteering at this new centre where there were about 40 children. As we have mentioned in past articles, many of the girls living with Sr. Julia have entered higher studies thanks to the tutoring Sister was able to provide for them and to the generosity of donors.

All has changed because of the War. First of all, Sr. Julia sent her girls and the children from the new social services centre to Poland for safety. She decided to stay in Lviv to help future orphans and to make room for refugees. Three of her girls who were



of age decided to stay in Lviv and help in the war effort. One of the girls, Olena, is a paramedic, so her help will be needed in the medical field.

The other two, Lilia and Diana, are helping Sister Julia with the new orphans that she is receiving from the war zone. The orphans began arriving within a few days.



She not only provides shelter, food, medicines, love and care for the orphans, but she has been collecting supplies for other orphanages and organizing their distribution. When possible she sends these orphans to safety in Poland and welcomes new ones. Since the war began she has personally led convoys to Central and Eastern Ukraine to transport food, clothing and especially medical supplies to orphanages in those territories. When possible she has brought orphans back to Lviv. When someone says to her "I will pray for you", her response is "prayer is necessary and good, but you must act. You must do something." As she says, her life is non-stop. She herself

journeys to the war areas because as she said "How can I ask others to go into danger when I myself am not willing to go." She led the convoys as a Sister hoping to find mercy at the various check points. So far she has been safe. She had convoys travelling to Mykolaiv, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, Uman, & Kropyvnytskyi. She has asked us for financial help for fuel for the convoys and for medical supplies, food, clothing, baby formula and pampers for the orphans. Thankfully because of your donations, we were able to do this for her.

The orphan ministry in Ukraine will only increase a

hundredfold as a result of this unjustified war. Many new children are losing their parents.



Many of the existing orphanages are presently in the war zone. They need to be evacuated and transported to safety. This need will only grow. We are raising funds for Sr. Julia and her orphan ministry. We are selling lapel ribbons (blue & yellow) and other items to help raise funds. We accept donations for this important cause. The donations can be made to "**Ukrainian Catholic Mission**" 250 Jefferson Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6. In the memo please say **Orphan War Relief**.



One can also donate through e-transfer to [ucmwpg@gmail.com](mailto:ucmwpg@gmail.com). Again in the "**message**" mention **Orphan War Relief** and give your name and address to receive a income tax receipt. Thank you for your generosity. Please pray for the orphans and for those who are caring for them.

Please pray for Sr. Julia as she continues her ministry work in trying to shelter and provide safety for these orphans in war-torn Ukraine.

# 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 December 3, 2021 until March 18, 2022*

## 1000+

Donna Korban  
Don & Karen Solman

## 500+

In memory of Fr. Josaphat Korchinski  
Joan Korchinski  
Adrian & Vera Olenick  
In memory of Steve Sianchuk  
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In memory of Nadia & Olexa Melnyk  
George & Anna Maria Stefaniuk

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## SHRINE MINISTRY IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR

Because of the War, our Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Ministry in Ukraine has changed. The Museum/Shrine is closed to the public. As much as possible Oleh and Tanya do some presentations in Western Ukraine. Daily Oleh prays online the Moleben to Blessed Vasyl for peace in Ukraine. But for the most part, they are involved with the war effort. Oleh, who is the administrator of a Medical Clinic is ministering to those wounded by the war. His wife and children help the war effort by making camouflage netting for the soldiers and tanks. Pray for their safety.



The Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine is helping to raise funds for **Sr. Julia's ministry** in war-torn Ukraine. These items are available in the Shrine -Museum (in person only).



Every **Wednesday** at 1:30 pm, we pray the **Holy Rosary for Peace in Ukraine**. Please join us at St. Joseph's Church.



Also the **Blessed Vasyl Chaplet** can be found on our YouTube Channel and Facebook page.

### SHRINE SCHEDULE

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

Shrine is open during the times of Liturgical Services. The Museum is opened 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](mailto:info@bvmartyrshrine.com)

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

Services can also found On-Line on our website.

### 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.

***Wishing all our supporters and their families a Blessed Easter!***

**ХРИСТОС ВОСКРЕС! ВОІСТИНУ ВОСКРЕС! CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!**

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