



# **FULLY ALIVE**

*A Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine  
Publication*

## **God's Plan Included Us!**

*(Hebrews 11:40)*

Fifty years ago, on June 30, 1973, Blessed Vasyl Vsevolod Velychkovsky, C.Ss.R. fell asleep in the Lord at Misericordia Hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.



Blessed Vasyl was released by the Soviets from his last imprisonment in Komunarsk, Eastern Ukraine a mere 17 months earlier. During his three-year incarceration in a psychiatric hospital, Blessed Vasyl was tortured with electricity and drugs in order to destroy his health. His nerves were shattered, his heart was weakened and his mind confused.

As he was being released on January 27, 1972, slow-working drugs were administered to him, ensuring that he would die soon, but not in the Soviet's hands. He was brought to Kyiv, but was not allowed to return to Lviv, the centre of his work in the underground church. In the few days that he was in Kyiv, he met with Sister Justina, a Basilian Sister and fellow worker in his ministry. She could barely recognize him because of his gaunt appearance. During their conversation, Blessed Vasyl said "I'll be back in about a year, and then we'll finish the book on Our Mother of Perpetual Help." Blessed Vasyl had full intentions of returning to Ukraine.

Blessed Vasyl was exiled from Ukraine and given a plane ticket to Yugoslavia to visit his sister Vera in Zagreb, Croatia. During his flight, he looked at his passport that was given to him and realized that there was no return visa. He was truly exiled. Upon arriving in Zagreb, Vera's husband, a doctor, began to help Blessed Vasyl regain his health. In a few short weeks, he travelled to

Rome to give a report to Pope Paul VI on the state of the Church in Ukraine.

The wounds that were inflicted upon him during his recent imprisonment and the years of persecution under the Soviets, continued to affect him. His martyr's journey was not yet over. Often he was overwhelmed with the suspicion of being persecuted by others. In his audience with the Pope, he was accompanied by an unknown priest. Because Blessed Vasyl could not trust this unknown person, he was unable to share with Pope Paul VI what was on his heart. This broke his heart. He cried when he shared this experience with Sister Vasyliya, SSMI, his penitent.

In a few months, Metropolitan Maxim Hermaniuk brought Blessed Vasyl to Winnipeg, Canada. Again, this was supposed to be temporary, with the hope of someday obtaining permission to re-enter the Soviet Union and continue his work leading the underground Ukrainian Catholic Church.

**God had a different plan.**



His life of persecution left its mark on Blessed Vasyl. While having supper with the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate in Toronto, he noticed some old intercom wires in the ceiling. He placed his finger to his lips and pointed to the wires, and warned the Sisters to be careful what they say because someone is listening.



*Sr. Carmella Lukey & Sr. Cecilia Fystor*

A similar experience was related in Winnipeg when he was riding in a car, and the vehicle in front of them had a license plate, "COMM." He was sure that Communists were following him. In fact, just recently, from documents we obtained from the KGB archives in Ukraine, there indeed were spies in Winnipeg following his every move and public conversation.

His teacher, Dorothy Bilash, told us that while she was tutoring Blessed Vasyl in English, he would have episodes that seemed like he was seeing things or undergoing trauma. These episodes would pass in a few minutes and then they continued their classes.

While traveling to Edmonton by plane with Bishop Michael Wiwchar, Blessed Vasyl kept asking him if it was safe to eat the food and drinks that were being served for fear of being poisoned. His suffering continued even in

the "free" world.

Blessed Vasyl continued to suffer internally, but his faith remained confident and strong. Sister Monica SSMI shared with us that Blessed Vasyl's demeanor was quiet, with downcast eyes, lost in thoughts and soft speech. But when he got up to preach, his face would begin to glow and become alive. His voice would become strong as he preached about the Passion of Christ and the Blessed Mother.

Blessed Vasyl longed to return to Ukraine, but this dream never materialized. God had a different plan, a plan that included us. God's plan was that this modern-day martyr would breathe his last breath on Canadian soil and that his holy relics would be among us. North America has a great need in our times for the witness of a martyr like Blessed Vasyl. He lived an uncompromised life. He lived for God. To fulfill God's will was his greatest value for which he would sacrifice all. He suffered much in Ukraine, in prisons, in the underground Church and even here in North America.

Blessed Vasyl is a gift from God for us all. He is able to understand our suffering and therefore is ready to intercede for us and to help us. As we commemorate the 50th anniversary of his death, we are grateful to God that He has sent us such a great witness to the truth of the Gospel. A witness to the power of God which can take human suffering and infuse it with the Holy Spirit and transform it into His glory.

## BLESSED VASYL MINISTRY IN UKRAINE—TODAY

**A barrack temporarily becomes a church  
Ternivka Eastern Ukraine**



**Presentation in  
Pershotravensk Eastern Ukraine**



**Blessed Vasyl Presentation in the  
Pavlohrad Orphanage**



**Fr. Rafael Turkoniak, a Studite  
Monk recently visited the Blessed  
Vasyl Museum/Apartment in Lviv.  
Fr. Rafael was ordained a priest  
by Bishop Vasyl in Rome in 1972.**



**Children in Lviv visit  
Blessed Vasyl Museum/Apartment**



## SR. NATALIA'S MINISTRY

As the war in Ukraine continues, there is a steady stream of orphans coming from the war zone through the orphanage run by Sister Natalia (Julia) in Lviv. Besides the orphanage, where she has 40 employees under her direction, Sister also has a Home for Girls at risk. The ten girls live together with Sister Natalia. She provides them with a safe home and especially offers them an education and life skills training. Several girls have already graduated from university and are now on their own, while others have come to take their place.

Several months ago, a young girl, Nastya (14 years old), was sent to Sister Natalia's orphanage. She was a true orphan, having no parents or relatives. It was discovered that she was pregnant and did not know who the father was. Sister decided to take Nastya into her home and care for her throughout the pregnancy. Of course, there was no question about abortion. On May 4th, Nastya gave birth to a baby boy, Timofei, who was baptized on May 14th.

At first, Sister Natalia was going to place this young mother in a home for unwed mothers supported by the government. However, it soon became evident



that this was not a good decision because of the relationship already developed between Sister, the other girls and Nastya. After consulting with us (Mary Jane and Fr. John), we assured her we would help financially to raise this little boy and support the young mother. This decision would allow Nastya to be in a loving environment where she would be cared for. Some outside resources will be provided to teach this young mother how to care for her child. Many necessary items are needed to be purchased, such as clothing, diapers, a crib, a stroller, medical expenses, etc. We ask for your prayers and financial help in this project. Thank you for your support. God bless you.



This unjust war has inflicted many casualties. The needs are ever growing, both for the soldiers, for the affected by the war, the homeless and the orphans. Sister Natalia has shared that they are overwhelmed with the number of orphans caused by this war. There is a great need for help throughout this time of conflict and pain. Please continue to pray for Ukraine.

**Donations in support of the Orphan Relief Fund can be made to  
Ukrainian Catholic Mission 250 Jefferson Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6**

## A Soldiers Story – Shared by Oleh Chekharivskyj

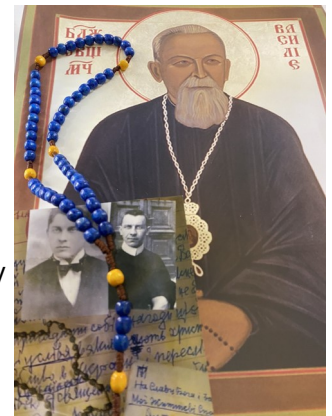
When we visited the Dnipropetrovsk region to bring the Relics and share the story of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky with the people, we were enriched by their testimonies of faith. One experience that was shared took place in the eastern region of Ukraine, where the war, with the most bloodshed, is being fought for our identity and freedom. During one of the battles, a soldier had his leg seriously wounded. Because of shock and heavy bleeding, he could not apply a tourniquet on his own. A fellow soldier came to his rescue, helping to apply the tourniquet. In addition to caring conventional weapons, this soldier had a spiritual weapon in his hands - **a rosary**.

Unfortunately, the fellow soldier that helped was killed. The wounded soldier although he lost his leg, survived and received a second chance at life. He learned that the comrade that saved him had a rosary in his hands. Inspired, the soldier discovered the strength and power of the rosary,



learning, about prayer, Jesus and Mother Mary.

This difficult loss gave birth to a new mission in his life. This heroic warrior took on the cause of openly sharing the rosary. He tattooed a rosary on his arm. Now he honours his deceased comrade by daily praying the rosary for the protection of others, making blue and yellow rosaries and distributing them to soldiers on the front line.



*"Thanks to you, dear warrior, the Lord's name is glorified! Thanks to you and the entire Armed Forces of Ukraine, we Ukrainians are alive. We have learned to live life in wartime. We have learned to work, to care, to love, to recognize great joys in small things. We have learned to appreciate people and the time spent with them. We have learned to BE. Thanks to you, thanks to everyone who brings victory closer, we are standing. **Glory to Ukraine. Glory to the heroes.**"*

# 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. Through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl may each of you be blessed. Contributions listed below are from March 16, 2023 until May 26, 2023.*

**+ \$500**

**Mackalski Family**

**+ \$100**

**Fr. Ivan & Mrs. Marion Barszczyk,  
Holy Eucharist U.C.W.L.C. Wpg  
Saints Peter & Paul U.C.W.L.C. SK  
Sisters of Instruction of the Child  
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U.C.W.L.C. Blessed Virgin Mary Wpg  
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Ken & Hedy Pawluk  
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**In Memory Of...**

**Anne Bobinski**  
Robert & Christine Patrie  
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Robert & Christine Patrie  
**Joseph Bobinski**  
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**Mary Kokolski**  
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**Lesia Sianchuk**  
Bethpage, NY Partners in Mission  
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Robert & Christine Patrie

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Ed Jelinski  
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Yaroslava Kitasz  
**Chris Topar**  
Helen Stockburn  
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Phyllis Shindak  
**Siobhan Van De Keere**  
Elizabeth Van De Keere

To donate to the  
**Blessed Velychkovsky National  
Martyr's Shrine**

Online: [www.bvmartyrshrine.com](http://www.bvmartyrshrine.com)  
through Canada Helps  
Call: 204-338-7321  
By Mail: 250 Jefferson Ave.  
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6

Thank you

## VISITORS TO THE SHRINE



U.C.W.L.C.—Blessed Virgin Mary Branch Winnipeg



U.C.W.L.C.—Holy Eucharist Branch Winnipeg



U.C.W.L.C.—St. Joseph's Branch Winnipeg



U.C.W.L.C.—St. Andrew's Branch Winnipeg



Saint John XXIII Church—Confirmation Class & Families Winnipeg



Fr. John Sianchuk with  
Fr. Joseph Khai, C.Ss.R. from Vietnam

### SPECIAL TRIBUTE

*Thanks to the Mackalski Family—the Shrine honours the legacy of Father Michael Tkachuk, who on August 11, 2006 established the first Blessed Bishop Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky prayer group at St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church in Brandon. This devotion which continues today, resulted in countless graces and temporal and spiritual blessings for the parish and broader Catholic Community.*

### NEW

### Live Streaming Prayer Opportunity

Join us in community prayer for Ukraine during this time of the unjust war.

**Every Wednesday—1:30 p.m. CST**

Online at the Blessed Vasyl YouTube Channel or on the Blessed Vasyl Facebook Page.

# FEASTDAY JUNE 26—27, 2023

## THE BLESSED VELYCHKOVSKY NATIONAL MARTYR'S SHRINE



### Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of Blessed Vasyl's Death Monday, June 26<sup>th</sup>

**6:30 p.m.** Vespers followed by a Rosary Pilgrimage Procession & Anointing

### Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>

**10:00 a.m.** Divine Liturgy with the Diaconal Ordination of  
Sub-Deacon Ivan Dzhur, C.Ss.R.  
by Bishop Bryan Bayda, C.Ss.R.  
*Reception to follow*

**3:00 p.m.** Praying for Ukraine—Blessed Vasyl Chaplet

**3:30 p.m.** Acatist in Honour of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky  
with Homilist Bishop Bryan Bayda  
*Light Supper to follow*

**6:00 p.m.** Remembering Blessed Vasyl 50 years ago presentation

**7:00 p.m.** Divine Liturgy with Guest Homilist Bishop Andriy Rabyi  
followed by Rosary & Anointing



*Br. Ivan Dzhur, C.Ss.R.*

ST JOSEPH'S UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH  
BISHOP VELYCHKOVSKY NATIONAL MARTYR'S SHRINE  
250 Jefferson Avenue, Winnipeg, MB  
More information call: 204-338-7321  
website: [bvmartyrshrine.com](http://bvmartyrshrine.com)

All Services will be Live Streamed on  
Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine



Times listed are CDT

### SHRINE SCHEDULE

**Monday:** Shrine is closed  
**Tuesday to Friday:** 10 am to 5 pm  
**Saturday:** 10:00 am to 1:00 pm  
**Sunday:** Shrine is open during the 10 a.m. Divine Liturgy.  
The Museum is open after the Divine Liturgy.

Group tours are available. To make a reservation  
call **204-338-7321** or e-mail: [info@bvmartyrshrine.com](mailto:info@bvmartyrshrine.com)  
**Website: [www.bvmartyrshrine.com](http://www.bvmartyrshrine.com)**

#### EVERY WEDNESDAY:

**8 a.m.** Divine Liturgy in the Shrine  
**1:30 p.m.** Praying for Ukraine  
**7 p.m.** 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

E-mail: [info@bvmartyrshrine.com](mailto:info@bvmartyrshrine.com)  
Call: 204-338-7321