



FULLY ALIVE

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

Called to be Holy

Blessed Vasyl's family roots were deeply steeped with priestly vocations. His father, Volodymyr Velychkovsky, was a priest. His grandfather, Julian Velychkovsky, was a priest and so was his father, going back to over three hundred years of priestly vocations. Blessed Vasyl's mother's family was also blessed with vocations to the priesthood and religious. Her father, Nicholas Teodorovych, was a priest, and so was his father. Surrounded by such faith certainly nurtured a life of prayer, devotion and holiness in Vasyl.



Fr. Vasyl's Family

When Bishop Vasyl was declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II in 2001, work began immediately to prepare for the enshrinement of his holy relics. At the same time, research began to gain an understanding of his life. Over the years, we have been able to gather firsthand accounts about Blessed Vasyl from those who knew him, worked with him, or had their lives changed because of him.

Blessed Vasyl made choices to follow God's will no matter the circumstance. He remained active in ministry throughout his life, even if it meant living with the possibility of being arrested again, sentenced and perhaps even death.

In the Soviet camps, Father Vasyl was a spiritual father to all his fellow prisoners. They called him "our chaplain". Despite all the difficulties of prison camp life, Father Vasyl remained enthusiastic and faithful to his convictions. He managed to organize his own "parish" in the barracks. Prisoners constantly came to have their confessions heard, to receive Holy Communion, and to celebrate the Divine Liturgy secretly. Because of Father Vasyl's strong faith and his desire to bring prisoners closer to God, even here he managed to conduct his priestly ministry.

Myroslav Romash, a fellow-prisoner of Blessed Vasyl met Father Vasyl in 1950 and lived together in the same barrack of the penal camp in Vorkuta. They were neighbours, Father Vasyl's first level bunk bed was next to Myroslav's bed. An interview was conducted in 2018 with Myroslav. Sixty-eight years later, Myroslav still remembered how much the prisoners respected, honoured and loved Father Vasyl for his spiritual guidance.



Myroslav Romash

"Father Velychkovsky celebrated the Liturgy in our

barracks. The Liturgy was simple, without a cantor. The liturgical vessels were also simple, a small humble cross, a jar lid, and a broken aluminum spoon. On feast days such as Christmas and Easter there was a general celebration for all those in the barrack. Father Vasyl would invite other priests from the prison to join him. Even though the Liturgy was short, it became very solemn. We even sang softly. Father would preach a festive sermon. During the Liturgy, Father was dignified. He was not nervous. In fact, he was joyful and confident in his actions". *Myroslav Romash*

In 2008 Bishop Julian Voronovskyi shared the following. "I met Father Vasyl in 1955 when he returned from his 10 years in prison. I remember him being very energetic. A person who could ignite others. He gave impetus to the Church and stirred it up. Our Church began to act in an organized manner. In his small apartment, he collected, organized and provided leadership. In 1968, Bishop Vasyl felt that he would soon be arrested a second time, so he prepared us (Studite seminaries) for ordination to the diaconate.



Bishop Julian Voronovskyi

On November 27, 1968 he passed on a message through my brother that we should come to him. We met with him and he asked us to come back the next day at 11 p.m. We arrived in the evening, and he ordained us as deacons. At one o'clock in the morning, he celebrated another Divine Liturgy during which time he ordained us as priests. After the services, at four or five o'clock in the morning, we went home by different paths so that no one would notice us. In addition to me, Brother Bulbenko received ordination. No one knew about our ordinations, not even my own brother, who was already a priest. The bishop asked us not to act as priests yet, just in case, God forbid, they arrest active priests. This way, there will be priests available and the Church could continue to function. In January, Bishop Vasyl was arrested." *Father Julian* was ordained a Bishop in 1986, passing away in 2013.

"I had heard of Fr. Velychkovsky still from Ternopil, that he was very merciful to the poor, but I did not know that he was a bishop. I knew one poor Polish woman, Francisca. Although she was an ordinary person and not educated, she was a saint. I used to go to her place often and she related to me: "You know, I have a good confessor, Fr. Velychkovsky. He was at my



Sr. Claudia

place and confessed me."

One day I had a dream. I was going to her place. She was sitting on some bags in the corridor, which led to the small room. The room was filled with greenery and flowers.

I woke up and decided to go to see her. I sat on the train and came to her place. The doors were locked. I went to the back but there was no Francisca. I knocked and they opened the door for me and told me that she had died. I ask: "Who buried her?" They said: "Fr. Velychkovsky organized everything for the funeral. He bought the flowers and himself buried this poor woman." This was an act of mercy for the dead. That is why when Fr. Smal told me to go to see Fr. Velychkovsky, I went with confidence because I heard of his kindness." *Sr. Claudia Velhosh OSBM*

"Fr. Velychkovsky continued his activities, now as a bishop, even though they began to persecute him even more. Many times the KGB came to our house and would talk with us. The KGB knew that Father would come to us on the first Friday of the month. Therefore, we would have only gathered in our house and locked the doors, and they are already banging on the windows.

"Open up! We know you are in there." We never opened the doors for them. Fr. Velychkovsky would lie on the floor crosswise before the tabernacle and said; "Don't be afraid! We will not let them in and they will leave." And that is what happened."

Sister Joseph Savko OSBM

"Father Velychkovsky was tireless and unafraid. In the morning they would call him in for interrogation and in the evening he came and gave a retreat. One time Mother Mavrykia said: " 'Uncle' has planned a retreat for the sisters at our place in Zymna Voda on the evening before the Immaculate Conception."

The next day I was working at the pharmacy and one of our sisters came to me and said: "Last night 'uncle' was informed that today he has to go to the KGB office and it is unknown whether there will be a retreat." We had arranged that if sister found out more then she would come and tell me so that I could tell our sisters at home. She never came.



Fr. Vasyl with Fr. Smal

I asked to leave work at seven and went on to the street. It was slippery, very cold, and snowy, the moon was shining, and no one was on the street. This was December 22, 1965.

I was going towards Father's place. The snow was whirling around that the street was barely seen. But I saw someone coming. It was Sister Areta (Anna) Shevchuk, Fr. Velychkovsky's cook. She was coming from his place. She told me that Father was home but she did not know anything else. "Go to him and see what he will say."

I went but I was worried for I did not know what was waiting for me. 'Uncle' lived on the second floor. I went up the stairs and rang the bell. Fr. Vasyl opened the door and immediately in a whisper scolded me for walking alone at such a late hour. I explained that I came to ask whether there will be a retreat. He went to his room, took his sac with the books for the retreat, put on his coat and together we went to catch the trolley.

We came to the train station and had to wait a long time for the bus to Zymna Voda. It was late and many people had gathered. By God's grace we were able to get on the bus. I forced myself on to the bus and then pulled 'uncle' behind me on to it. On the bus we stood separately so that we would not be identified together. We were the last off the bus and silently we went to our home.

We were walking down our street when all of a sudden a meter and a half long board fell before us. I barely said anything before Fr. Velychkovsky quietly walked over it and continued on. We came to the house. The sisters were overwhelmed with joy. Father sat by the stove and began the retreat which lasted three days. All this happened without any interruptions or disturbance." *Sister Anna Vynnytsky OSBM*

Blessed Vasyl strove daily throughout his life to proclaim the Word of God and bring it to life in the lives of those he encountered.



Sr. Anna



Sr. Joseph



Father Vasyl, 1958

SR. NATALIA'S MINISTRY

A Celebration within the War

After this unjust war began in Ukraine, Sister Natalia took into her Home for Girls at Risk a pregnant 14-year-old abandoned girl. At first, she was going to look after her until the birth of her child. However, as circumstances developed, she decided, together with the girls, to have this young mother as part of their household. Timofii turned one year on May 5th. He is a happy baby and is now walking and running. Life goes on despite the dangers and hardships of the war. The girls have learnt how to care more and what it means to care for a baby and child.



VISITORS TO THE SHRINE



A Pilgrim's Experience Visiting the Shrine for the first time

"As I opened the Shrine door, I immediately heard silence and felt its power greeting me. As the glass door gently closed behind me, I was acutely aware of the symbolism of shutting out the "world" behind me but still having the ability to see through the glass ... my sinfulness and humanity. Each soft step down the hall, I felt as if I was going through a transition passage zone, away from the "worldly" and entering towards a realm of holiness, reverence where my soul yearned to kneel before Blessed Vasyl...full of gratitude for hearing my prayers over the past few years. I could not believe that I was really there and still moments in disbelief that I knelt before his holy relics."

*St. John Paul II
Knights of Council
#18061*



*Our Lady of the
Rosary
Family Pilgrimage*



*Lourdes Prayer
Group
Pilgrimage
& Prayer Time*



BLESSED VASYL MINISTRY IN UKRAINE—TODAY



*Catechism students from Blessed Mykola Tsegelsky School
Church of the Resurrection , Lviv*



Heroiv Krut Lyceum Students in Lviv visit the Museum



Seminarians visit the Museum



Visitors to Blessed Vasyli's Apartment-Museum

THANK YOU!!!

*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 8 to May 15, 2024.*

\$1,000 +

In memory of Vera & John

Chyzowski

Terri Chyzowski

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In honour of William & Victoria

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In memory of Marlene Solman

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IN MEMORIAM



When the announcement was made at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church that a Shrine to Blessed Vasyl was being constructed and that volunteers would be needed once it opened, Marlene and her husband Vladimir Solman were the first to sign up. Marlene volunteered from 2002 to 2019.

Marlene was always willing to help in anyway. She had a great devotion and commitment to Blessed Vasyl, never missing an opportunity to spend time before his holy relics in the Shrine Chapel. Her warm hospitality and great smile welcomed many visitors over the years.

May the memory of Marlene be eternal. Вічна Пам'ять!



Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shine, relies on the generosity of donors to be able to conduct our ministry of:

- *welcoming pilgrims to the Museum and Shrine*
- *providing prayer support*
- *leading tours*
- *Promoting the knowledge of Blessed Vasyl throughout the world*
- *maintaining and operating the Museum & Shrine in Winnipeg*
- *Maintaining and operating the Museum (Blessed Vasyl Apartment) in Lviv, Ukraine*

We are very grateful to all those that continue to regularly support the Shrine.

We invite others to do the same. Thank you for considering our request.

To donate to the
Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

Online through Canada Helps: www.bvmartyrshrine.com
By Phone: 204-338-7321 By Mail: 250 Jefferson Ave. Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6

All donations of \$10 or more will receive a Charitable Donation Receipt.

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine



Photographer: Severyn Shved



Photographer: Severyn Shved

Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky

FEASTDAY

Called to be holy

June 26th 6:30pm **Vespers followed by a Rosary Pilgrimage Procession & Anointing**

Wednesday *Homily: Called to be Holy - Called to be a Martyr*

June 27th 9:00am **Divine Liturgy (English/Ukrainian)**

Thursday *Homily: Called to be Holy - Called to be a Martyr*

10:30 **Praying for Ukraine - Blessed Vasyl Chaplet**

11:00 **Moleben in Honour of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky & Anointing**
Lunch

1:00pm **Presentation - Blessed Vasyl - Moments of Holiness**

2:00pm **Acathist in Honour of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky & Anointing**
Homily: Live not by Lies

6:30pm **Divine Liturgy**
Homily: By your Endurance You will Gain Your Lives

Living Rosary and Anointing

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

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



Times listed in CDT

SHRINE SCHEDULE

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

The Shrine is open after weekend Liturgies.
Group tours are available,
to make arrangements contact the Shrine Office

Join us EVERY WEDNESDAY at 7:00 pm
For a Devotional Service in Honour of
Blessed Vasyl
(Acathist or Moleben)

For more information: **204-338-7321**
e-mail: **info@bvmartyrshrine.com**

DEVOTION TO BLESSED VASYL IMPACTING LIVES TODAY

"Blessed Vasyl, please pray for me that the lesions on my liver will be gone on my March 11th MRI.

Blessed Vasyl thank you so much. My MRI showed that one of my liver lesions is gone. Thank You God. The other lesion on my liver stayed the same. I am very grateful. Thank you."

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.*