



FULLY ALIVE

Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine

A life Centered on God's will

On July 9, 1955, Father Vasyl Velychkovsky was released from prison after spending ten years in the Soviet coal mines of the Vorkuta region in northern Russia. He came home to Lviv, Ukraine, to find that the people were in hiding, afraid to practice their Catholic faith for fear of being arrested. Father Vasyl was able to practice his Catholic faith secretly in prison with fellow prisoners; why could he not do this with the faithful who were abandoned?

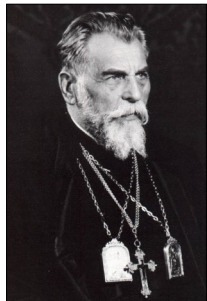
With an open heart and trust in God's will, Father Vasyl started organizing the faithful secretly, celebrating Divine Liturgies, hearing confessions, and preaching the word of God in homes, forests, gravesides, or anywhere that appeared to be safe. Father Vasyl encouraged other priests to do the same carefully, forming the Underground Church.



Sacred vessels used for the Unground Church

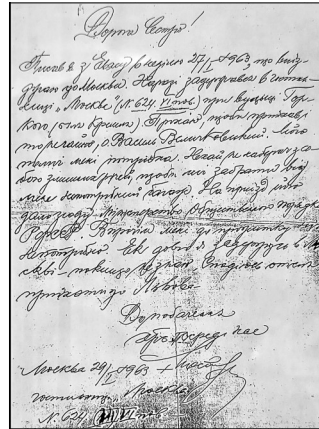
In 1959, Rome appointed Father Vasyl as a bishop of the underground church. However, there was no bishop in Ukraine to ordain him.

In a dramatic turn of events in 1963, Metropolitan Josyf Slipyj, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, was released from an 18-year imprisonment in Siberia. His release was specifically to allow him to attend the Second Vatican Council in Rome. While in Moscow, he was granted a rare opportunity to meet with one family member. He seized this chance to send telegrams to several of the priests in Ukraine, including one to Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky. He wrote:



Metropolitan Joseph passed away September 7, 1984

"I ask Father Vasyl Velychkovsky to come immediately [to Moscow]. I need his help. Tell him not to take anything with him so that he can take my unnecessary baggage."



Without any hesitation, Father Vasyl boarded the train to Moscow, not knowing what the outcome would be. He was the only priest that responded.

On February 4, 1963, in a Moscow hotel room, Metropolitan Slipyj secretly consecrated Father Vasyl to the episcopacy with a simple ceremony, without any of the majesty and pageantry that would have normally accompanied such an event.

This was a historical event for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. It was a thread that would keep the church connected, alive and vibrant to this very day. The consecration remained a secret for a long time.

The only memento from this event was a simple wooden hand carved walking stick given to Father Vasyl by Metropolitan Josyf. Metropolitan Josyf passed this stick on to Father Vasyl as a symbol of his episcopal authority. This walking stick substituted for the episcopal crozier. Father Vasyl was the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archbishop who lead the underground Church in Ukraine.

Father Vasyl's Episcopal consecration was kept a secret and only a chosen few knew about it.

As soon as he returned to Lviv, his small apartment became his episcopal cathedral and chancery. Bishop Vasyl was able to



organize secret seminaries in Lviv and Ternopil. The seminarians were educated by other priests and were ordained in ordinary homes.

Bishop Vasyl ordained new priests to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church despite the fact that the Catholic Churches and Monasteries were confiscated by the state. It was very dangerous to practice ones Catholic faith.



He worked very hard to re-establish the Redemptorist Congregation as well as the Sisters of Saint Basil and the Studite Sisters.

To ensure that the Underground Church was not left without a bishop, Bishop Vasyl consecrated a fellow Redemptorist priest, Father Volodymyr Sterniuk, to the episcopacy on July 2, 1964.

Bishop Volodymyr's identity was kept secret and he was not to function as a bishop. He would only do so, if Bishop Vasyl was arrested or exiled. Bishop Volodymyr became the head of the Underground Church in 1972, after Bishop Vasyl was exiled from Ukraine.



Bishop Volodymyr Sterniuk,

Bishop Vasyl never had the opportunity to publicly serve as a Bishop in his beloved Ukraine. However, his ministry in the underground church kept the Ukrainian Catholic faith alive.

The consecration of Bishop Volodymyr was perhaps the most important act of Bishop Vasyl's legacy. This historical event ensured that the underground church would survive this time of persecution.

Bishop Volodymyr led the Underground Church until 1991 when the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church again became legal. He brought the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from the underground.

Blessed Vasyl was on fire with God's love, giving him the grace to accept and embrace all that was placed before him on his life journey. Are we willing to trust in God with an open heart for all of our daily encounters and decisions?

FAITH IN TIMES OF TRIAL

Over the past year and a half, prayers were said daily as we waited in hope for news and information about our Redemptorist priests, Father Bohdan Geleta and Father Ivan Levytsky. They were in Russian captivity since November 2022 after they were arrested in Berdyansk, a port city in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Ukraine.

On June 28th the news was announced, that the Fathers were released from prison and returned to their homeland of Ukraine.



On Sunday, July 14, Fr. Bohdan Geleta and Fr. Ivan Levytsky celebrated at the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy led by His Beatitude Sviatoslav in Zarvanytsia, Ukraine.

In an interview with Father Bohdan Geleta on the UGCC Zhyve Television, he expressed his gratitude to the Lord God and all those who contributed to their liberation. He also said: "Thank you to our faithful who prayed, whom we do not even know. The entire Church prayed." He expressed that while in captivity he personally sensed the feelings that the whole Church was praying,

The full interview text with Father Bohdan sharing about their experience can be found online at <https://ugcc.ua/en/data/faith-in-times-of-trial-father-bohdan-geleta-on-russian-captivity-and-long-awaited-freedom-1180/>

BLESSED VASYL FEASTDAY JUNE 27, 2024

On June 26th, on the eve of the Martyr's Feastday, pilgrims gathered at St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church – Bishop Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine in anticipation of the Feastday. The evening began with Great Vespers with Lytia and concluded with the annual Rosary Pilgrimage Procession.



Fr. Peter Babej

On the Feastday, pilgrims gathered throughout the day and evening in prayer and reflection on the life of Blessed Bishop and Martyr Vasyl Velychkovsky. The Feastday was blessed with a guest homilist Fr. Peter Babej, from Edmonton Alberta. Father's four homilies can be viewed on the Bishop Velychkovsky YouTube Channel.

The day also featured a special guest, George Welleck, a relative of Blessed Vasyl's that lives in the United States. George shared insights on the history

of the Velychkovsky family and the life of Blessed Vasyl from his family's perspective. His sharing can be found on the YouTube Channel.

The evening ended with an atmosphere of prayerful wholeness, with all pilgrims participating in a living rosary



George Welleck

Thank you to those who participated in person or through live streaming platforms. Thank you to the Redemptorists' Fathers and Brothers who helped lead the services. Thank you to the volunteers for their help throughout the two days. Visit our website for more Feastday photographs.

BLESSED VASYL MINISTRY IN UKRAINE

Did you know?

The Blessed Bishop Vasyl Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine funds and operates a satellite ministry in Ukraine. Throughout the years there have been photos and articles printed in the Newsletters about the blessed ministry that is happening in Ukraine.

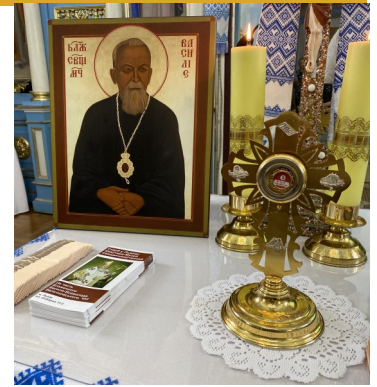
There is the work that takes place at the Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky museum, located in his original apartment in downtown Lviv. In addition and perhaps even more importantly, there is the ministry of making Blessed Vasyl known through presentations (over 6,000), prayer services and bringing of his holy relics for veneration to places throughout Ukraine and beyond.

For the past ten years, Oleh and Tanya Chykharyvsky, have dedicated their weekends and evenings to bring Blessed Vasyl to the people. Their mission has taken them to parish communities throughout Ukraine and in Poland, France, Switzerland, Rome and Slovenia. Since they began this ministry, they have traveled over 300,000 kilometers.

Today, their ministry of outreach is needed more than ever. Despite the horrors of war, they continue to bring Blessed Vasyl to the faithful, including soldiers near the front. Through their mission and devotion to Blessed Bishop and Martyr Vasyl, they are inspiring deeper faith, hope and comfort to all those that they meet. Many soldiers have the 3rd Class Relic with them as they defend their country.

In order for our outreach ministry to continue, we need your help! Our staff in Ukraine needs a newer van. This purchase will enable Oleh and Tanya to safely travel as they do their ministry. The cost of a van is around \$40,000 (Canadian).

Please consider a gift in support of the van campaign. Donations can be made to the Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine. Please indicate that it is in support of the Van Campaign. Thank you



St. Ilya Church -Toporivtsi, Chernivtsi region.



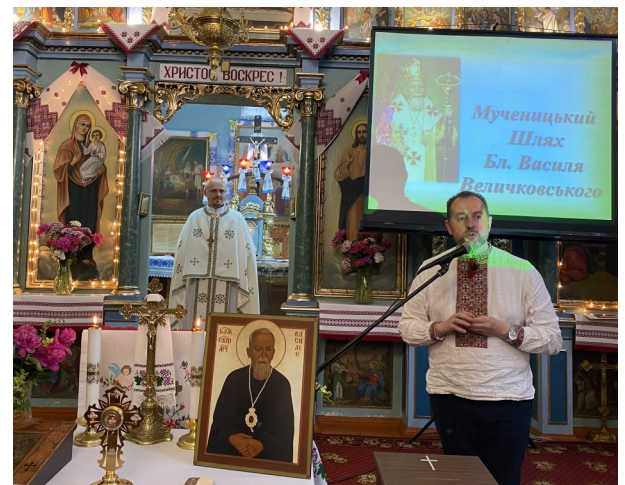
Tanya presenting at the Church of the Nativity Tarnava, Sambir district. Lviv Region



Church of Dormition—Pavlohrad Dnipetrovsk Eastern Ukraine



Tanya presenting at a Military Chapel in Eastern Ukraine



Oleh at the Nativity of John the Baptist Church Andriyaniv, Lviv Region

THANK YOU!!!

Your generous donations make it possible to conduct our ministry of 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 May 16, 2024 until September 19, 2024

\$10,000 +

George & Christine Welleck

\$1,000 +

Thanksgiving to Blessed Vasyl

Lise Anglin

In honour of Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.

Marcel Chartier

In memory of Fred & Reta Hrechka

Marcel Chartier

In memory of Rudy & Olga Zagozewski

Marcel Chartier

Claudia Jaresh

\$500 +

In memory of Judith Cross

Dolores Daniels

In memory of Jack Daniels

Dolores Daniels

In memory Bishop Michael

Hrynchyshyn, C.Ss.R.

Dolores Daniels

\$100 +

Peter Adams

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Orest & Evelyn Eveneshen

Joseph & Stephanie Green

Knights of Columbus –

Fr. Shyshkovich Council #8925

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Iris Smellie

Brody Smith, OCDS

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< \$100

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Nataliya Demkowicz

Marianne Derkach

Leslie & Caroline Dubowits

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Jean-Marc & Karol Guenette

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Chris Kyrzyk

Roland LaFleche

Robert J. Moskal

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Robert & Marietta Persian

Tetyana Pokeza

Myroslava Polyakova

Bismark Pontanon

Theodore Reznowski

Christopher Ryan

Nataliya Shylov

Jacques Tremblay

William & Mary Zaporzan

In Memory Of...

Gary Mimura

Joan Matlock

Cynthia Atkins

Tetyana Pokeza

Nick & Mary Danylyshin

Joan Matlock

Walter Dobush

Darrel & Monica Champagne

Don Dohan

Robert & Leanna Obirek

William Domitruk

Sonia Domitruk

Dubowits Fathers - Alex & Bill

Leslie & Caroline Dubowits

Margaret Hadubiak

St. Basil's U.C.W.L.C.

Grace Gloria Hargrave

Karen Mayer

Olga & Myroslav Horunjak

Maria Kchik

Theresa Hutter

Nadia Michaluk

Iwan, Yaroslawa, Chrysant

& Ilyan Iwanchuk

Christine Walker

Jim Keller

Bill & Maryka Chabluk

Duane Dahl & Darlene Dahl

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Orysia Hull

Eileen Kuzenko

Marian Moshansky

Steve Prokop

Helen Stockburn

Stephen Donna Sumka

Michael Kiernicky

John & Mary Hykawy

Lecia Kiska

Andriy Harasymowycz

Paul Klimchak

Darrel & Monica Champagne

Lidia & Alexander Kotowycz

Anna Banera

Danny Kowbel

Cathy Kowbel

Jean Kowbel

Cathy Kowbel

Lorraine & Joseph Kozakewich

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Maria Kuchvara

Stepan Kuchvara

Nazar Kukharsky

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Elizabeth Paziuk

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Lillian Sianchuk
Marian Moshansky

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Luba Sirdar

Morris Smolinski
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Claire Dufault
Glenn & Valerie Wowryk

Peter & Jean Stoski
Casper & Violet Stoski

Michael & Mary Wielgoz
Casper & Violet Stoski

George Zawortny
Kay Zawortny

In Honour Of...

Rev. Vladimir Chvets
Greg Chvets

Dolores Daniels
Duane Dahl & Darlene Dahl

Fr. Walter Dudych
John & Sophia Fedorowich

Robert & Shirley Erstelle
Olga Szutiak

Grace Hargrave
Karen Mayer

Spencer Katerynuk
Olga Katerynuk

Teresa Kuzyk
Marie Gwozd

Fr. John Sianchuk, C.Ss.R.
Bruce & Cornelia Bobinski
Olga Boychuk
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Marie Gwozd
Andrew Konopelny & Nadia Panas
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Peter Konopelny & Laura Heuring
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Bishop Stefan Soroka
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Jean Derhak

Vanessa Benesh
Vanessa Benesh

Mary Boyko
Helen Zacharkiw

Jeanet Cain
Orest & Margaret Fedorchuk

Ivas Chabluk
Bill & Maryka Chabluk

Randy Crerar
Robert & Debbie Braid

Olga, Carol, Lilliana,

Gerald Draganiuk Family
Josephine Draganiuk

Jeff Ferguson
Daniel & Yvonne Barrett

John Hykawy
Olga Szutiak

Spencer & Olga Katerynuk
Olga Katerynuk

Yaroslava Kitasz
Yaroslava Kitasz

Kensley, Daryna, Rykes, Marley & Ellie Kokolski Great Grandchildren
Mary Kokolski

Alvena Krushelniski
Bill & Maryka Chabluk

Ted Malfair
Amelia Malfair

Bohdan
Luba Masley

Marian Moshansky
Taras & Christine Nahachewsky

Cesar Oandasan
Cesar & Lolita Oandasan

Ron & Sharon Paziuk
Elizabeth Paziuk

Myroslava Polyakova
Myroslava Polyakova

Olga, Laurie & Cheryl Sakundiak
Olga Sakundiak

Jane & John Seniw
Elaine Kisiow

Darrel Senkowski
Bill & Sophie Senkowski

Fr. John Sianchuk
Steve Prokop
Helen Stockburn

Phyllis Sianchuk
Helen Stockburn

Sidak Children & Grandchildren
Darlene Sidak

Iryna Wilson
Bill & Maryka Chabluk

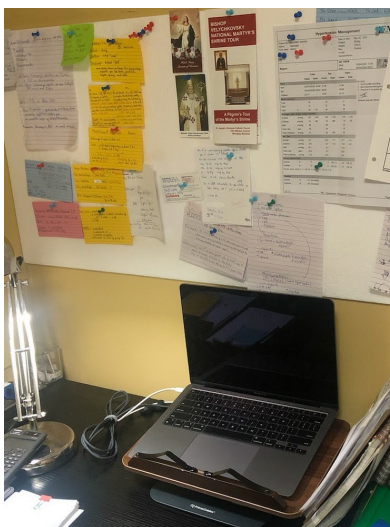
DEVOTION TO BLESSED VASYL IMPACTING LIVES

Something big is happening! I do not know how my family convinced me, but I gave in. I knew that I would be facing many challenges. There was a seventeen year gap since I last practiced my profession. The new technology would be very challenging and I am not very young. It will be tough for me to start all over again.

Sometime in September, 2023, I read about Blessed Bishop's life story and his perseverance in faith. I visited his Holy Relics to pay homage to him. From that time on my devotion to him began.

Reviewing for the board exams was not easy for me. I cried so many times. I turned to Blessed Vasyli's icon beside my study table whenever I got overwhelmed. I would kneel and ask for his blessings. Even when I was driving or doing household chores, I would sing his hymn and pray the holy rosary every single day. Nobody knew how much I struggled.

Friday was my exam day. In between the tough questions,



I would say a "Hail Mary" and call upon Blessed Vasyli "Help me". I was the last to leave the exam room with tears of uncertainty and exhaustion.

Saturday morning, I got up with a sense of peace and calm. I claimed this as the gift of the Holy Spirit as I prayed for humility to accept whatever the result. There were no tears, no anxious feelings. The first words I spoke were "thank you" to my husband and son – who motivated me so much to persevere. I could not explain the sense of peace I had that day. I started fasting. Sunday I attended the Divine Liturgy and ended my fast Sunday afternoon. My son checked online for the quick unofficial results; Blessed Bishop Vasyli brought my prayers to the arms of God! I knelt down, and my family jumped for joy.

On Wednesday, June 26, 2024, the day of Blessed Bishop Vasyli's devotional service and the eve of his Feastday, I received my license and certificate. I am officially a Registered Professional Nurse. "Oh Blessed Vasyli, Bishop and Martyr hear now your people who pray." Dorilyn Garduqru (July 1, 2024—Winnipeg)

VISITORS TO THE SHRINE



Immaculate Heart of Mary School Staff participated in a year long (2023-2024) spiritual development reflecting on the life of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky lead by Fr. John Sianchuk. The last session was in June.



In June the Grade 8 & Grade 6 Students from Immaculate Heart of Mary School made a pilgrimage to the Shrine & Museum



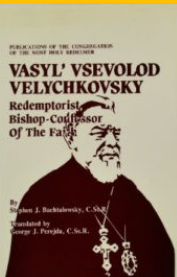
LaFlech Family from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan & Benesh Family from Winnipeg



Schurko Family from Arkansas



Peter & Mary-Anne Borowok from Australia with Bishop-Emeritus Peter Stasiuk, C.Ss.R.



Publication Correction

If you have a copy of the Vasyl' Vsevolod Velychkovsky Redemptorist Bishop-Confessor of the Faith

By: Stepen J. Bachtalowsky, C.Ss.R. Translated by: George J. Perejda, C.Ss.R.

On **Page 1 Paragraph 4**: The name for Charytyna should be **Charytyna nee Ochrymovych** instead of Onyshkevych. *We apologize for this error.*

ONLINE MINISTRY

Pray before the Holy Relics
The Rosary

The Blessed Vasyl Chaplet

all are available at anytime on the Blessed Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine YouTube Channel.

LIVE STREAMING of the Devotional Services are broadcast every Wednesday at 7 p.m. CDT on



SHRINE SCHEDULE

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

Group tours are available. To make a reservation call **204-338-7321** or e-mail: info@bvmartyrshrine.com

Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com

EVERY WEDNESDAY:

8 a.m. Divine Liturgy in the Shrine
1:30 p.m. Praying for Ukraine
7 p.m. Devotions to Blessed Vasyl (Acafist or Moleben) followed by anointing with Holy Oil blessed by his relics.

Blessed Velychkovsky National Martyr's Shrine
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Website: www.bvmartyrshrine.com