

FULLY ALIVE

A Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine Publication

Adventures in Ukraine

HIDDEN TREASURES

THE ADVENTURE began when two young Basilian sisters came to the Shrine in the summer of 2003. They informed us of a house that the Basilian sisters owned in Lviv, one that they would soon sell. They were worried about it because Blessed Vasyl had hidden some documents in the garden. The nuns had been digging but they could not find them. If those documents weren't found soon, they could be lost forever.

This past spring, May 2004, Mary Jane Kalenchuk and Fr. John Sianchuk went to Ukraine to do research on Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky, especially to interview those who knew him personally. **In the back of their minds was this hidden treasure. Was it still there?** Would they be able to find it? On their second day of interviews they spoke to the Basili-



Sr. Teofilia Rudka OSBM who buried Blessed Vasyl's documents the garden in 1967

an sisters from that very house. The sisters remembered preparing a flask for some important documents Blessed Vasyl had had with him. But where they were buried, they did not exactly know. The sister that did the actual digging and burying was out of town. No sooner was this conversation finishing, when who walks in, Sr. Teofilia, the one who buried them. She took Fr. John outside and showed him the approximate area where it was buried, about a meter square between a pear tree and a walnut tree. But that was almost 40 years ago. The pear tree had grown to become a huge tree, while the walnut tree had died and was only a stump.

The following week Mary Jane and Fr. John returned with some Redemptorist seminarians to do a dig. The digging began normally but soon the

roots appeared. Of course the roots weren't there forty years ago. With much difficulty a meter square hole about 80 cm deep was dug, but no hidden treasure was found. Finally, when they were about to give up, one of the sisters asked if they could remove the old stump since it was already half dug up. As they began digging around the stump, **suddenly a plastic bag was unearthed.** In that bag was a brown jar and in that jar was something wrapped in plastic. With great jubilation this treasure was brought from the earth, only to hear



Fr. John finding the hidden treasure

from the sisters that that wasn't it. They had placed the documents in a different type of bottle.

Carefully the jar was opened, the contents taken out and unwrapped. The paper was very moist and therefore was not opened until later that evening after they had dried somewhat. That evening they discovered three documents from the jar. Very carefully they were unfolded to prevent as little damage to the documents as possi-

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Blessed Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine

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Two folded moist papers were found wrapped in plastic in the bottle

ble. **One document** was from the Basilian fathers from Rome dated May 3, 1967. The **second document** was typed with no letterhead or signature, having only some pen markings at the bottom. This document had instructions about life in the underground Church. The **third document** was typed on a piece of cloth with instructions to a bishop. Later they deduced that all three came from Rome with the last two from Cardinal Josyf

Slipyj. These were certainly precious documents, but the sisters were convinced that this was not the bottle which they buried. Unfortunately the sister who buried the documents had left the city and was not available.

However, within minutes who walked in miraculously, if not Sr. Teofilia. She too immediately said that it was not the bottle, but after looking at the documents her memory became clearer and she said that perhaps at the last moment they changed bottles since the one they had prepared was too small. But she wasn't 100% sure. The next day upon returning to the site of the dig, one of the sisters living at the home asked whether one of the documents was a cloth. This confirmed that indeed these were the documents Blessed Vasyl buried in 1967. When the sister heard what the documents contained, she grabbed her head and said that if those documents were ever found in their house, they would have all been arrested

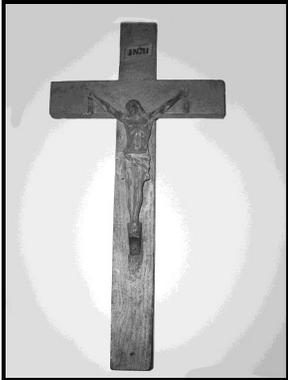
and imprisoned or perhaps even



The three hidden documents from Rome, the smallest being on cloth

worse, accused of being spies of the Vatican and the West.

STORIES FROM THE UNDERGROUND CHURCH



The cross which Blessed Vasyl clutched

“After when he became a Bishop, they began to follow and persecute him. The KGB would often come to our place in Ternopil. They were spying on him. They knew that he would come on the First Friday of the month. As soon as we would gather in the house, we would lock the doors. Very soon the KGB would start knocking on the windows shouting: “Open up. We know that you are in there.” We would not let them in. Bishop Velychkovsky would lie before the Blessed Sacrament clutching a Cross to his breast and say: “Do Not be afraid! Don’t be afraid and they will go away.” And that is the way it was. They never came in and caught us.”

Sister Josepha Sawka OSBM Zadvarnytsia, Ukraine

“One time it happened like this: The bishop was to have a retreat for the Basilian sisters that evening, and here at three in the afternoon he is taken for interrogation by the police. In our house three men from Latvia are waiting to be ordained. All day I anxiously await news. The three candidates are asking me: “Where is the bishop?” I respond: “Don’t worry. He’ll come. He has a retreat.” The bishop told me earlier: “Don’t tell them that I have been called out for an interrogation so that they would not worry.” After in the evening, they let the bishop go. He came in the night and in candle light he ordained them. I now cry when I see a solemn ordination. But at that time there was only a solitary candle, a vigil lamp and prayers in subdued voices so that no one would hear. A KGB agent was always at our neighbour’s house, watching our place.”

Sister Muza OSBM Lviv, Ukraine



Priests being ordained in a house during the underground church

HERO IN A TIME OF PERSECUTION

OUR TRIP TO UKRAINE was to interview three Basilian sisters who knew Blessed Vasyl. Upon arrival we soon found a whole myriad of people who knew him. Our two weeks were filled with interviews with sisters, priests, brothers, and laity who knew him. We had only scratched the surface! We had interviewed a total of 21 people, including two who were with Blessed Vasyl in prison in Vorkuta fifty years ago.

Very little was known about the life of Blessed Vasyl after his release from the labour camps in Vorkuta in 1955. Blessed Vasyl's autobiography also stops here. The only stories that we knew of his last 17 years were those he related to others during his last year of life in Canada. From the short two weeks of research, we discovered the grandure of Blessed Vasyl. He was very instrumental in reviving the underground Ukrainian Catholic Church.

After his return from Vorkuta, he saw the church destroyed, not only in buildings and structure but also in spirit. From the interviews we discovered how he acted and encouraged others to begin organizing the church in private homes. In these homes they would celebrated the Divine Liturgy and the other sacraments. He encouraged others not to be afraid – that God would protect them. He began to organize the Basilian



The first house Blessed Vasyl bought for the Basilians in 'Zymna Voda'

sisters and encourage young vocations. He bought over 10 homes for the sisters

where they could live together in two's or three's. In one village, *Zymna Voda*, he had seven such homes. They would gather often into one of them for retreats which he preached.

After becoming bishop, his little apartment became a daily meeting place for priests, sisters and seminarians. It was located conveniently in downtown Lviv near the Halyckyj Yamorok (market place). With the hustle and bustle of the area, it was relatively easy to

sneak into his apartment which had no windows facing the street and therefore was hard to spy on. In this apartment he ordained many priests and at least one bishop, Volodymyr Sterniuk, C.Ss.R.. He was a man on the move. He often went to



Blessed Vasyl's room in Lviv

the homes (monasteries) of the sisters, in Lviv, in Ternopil, and in Zavarnytsia. He was deeply loved by the sisters. Their nickname (code name) for him was *Dziadzio* (grandpa), one even called him *Dziadzunchik* (granddaddy). They warmly referred to him as such. Many did not know he was a bishop until later.

We also heard of his life and ministry in the labour camps in the far north in Vorkuta. He worked in the coal mine shaft as a ventilator operator. He would control the air flow in the mine shafts. He was seen **constantly praying a rosary** which he made out of dry black bread. Often he would confess the prisoners and even celebrate the Divine Liturgy on feast days in the mine shafts. During the Divine Liturgy trusted guards would keep watch to insure that it

was safe. In Vorkuta Blessed Vasyl was known for his prayerful presence, his wise counsel, his long-suffering and his aura of holiness. He was often abused and taunted by the prison guards

From those whom we interviewed we also received many precious artifacts which belonged to Blessed Vasyl and which are now displayed in our muse-



Small chalice, pyx and veils used by Blessed Vasyl

um. We received a small chalice used during the underground liturgies; several epithrahils (stoles) which Blessed Vasyl wore and other liturgical objects such as chalice veils, and a pyx (container for the Eucharist); a cross with which Blessed Vasyl prayed for protection, especially during times of grave danger. A lab coat was given to us which Blessed Vasyl used as a felon to camouflage from the eyes of the KGB that a Liturgy was being celebrated. We also received his mother's monastic cross, special holy cards signed by him and many, many stories and memories.

The research trip was very successful. We felt guided by Blessed Vasyl throughout our time there. So often just the right person would show up or the right information was received. We thank our Lord for helping us to come to know Blessed Vasyl deeper and to come to realize the great stature of this holy man.

Testimony of graces received

IN MAY OF 2003, I VISITED Blessed Vasyl's shrine with the Altar Servers of SS Peter and Paul Parish of Saskatoon. I was totally impressed with the Shrine, the Museum, the icon workshop, the gift shop....

I wish to inform you that since I applied Blessed Vasyl's postage-sized relic against my arthritic knee, **I have NOT experienced another 'locked knee' condition.** Previously, these knee syndromes lasted anywhere from 4-5 days to 2 weeks, forcing me to use crutches and then a cane as the condition eased off. Previously, I suffered this locked knee thing several times a year for four years. The locked knee condition is extremely painful, as there is no comfortable position for the affected leg to assume. I thank God for the intercession of his servant, Blessed Vasyl, to remove my arthritic pains. I can walk, bike, swim and even jog. I even climbed a ladder and painted my house this summer!

Now I want to inform you that a friend of mine, a lawyer by profession, has undergone cancer surgery of the bowels. I gave him the Bl. Vasyl relic which he placed on his abdomen. **He suffered no ill effects** of the chemo treatments, whatever. In fact he said that his physician could not find any residue trace of cancer at all....

Sincerely,
Dr. Joseph Lozinsky
SASKATOON, SK



If you have received any **graces, blessings or miracles** through the intercession of Blessed Vasyl, we kindly request that you write them down and send them to the Shrine office address. These testimonies help for the edification of the faithful and also for the process of canonization.

URGENT REQUEST

The Bishop Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine is searching for any **photographs, audio recordings and visual recordings** of Blessed Vasyl during his short stay in Canada 1972-73. Please call **204-338-7321** or e-mail **bvshrine@mts.net**. Your co-operation in this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Pilgrims from the far North

Many pilgrims continue to visit the Martyr's Shrine individually and in groups. One such group arrived from Nunavut on July 25th 2004. About 70 Roman Catholic Inuit along with their bishop – Bishop Rouleau of the Churchill/Hudson Bay Diocese spent a memorable day at the Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine. The day began with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Bishop Rouleau dressed in caribou skins as part of his vestments con-celebrated with the priests. The visitors enriched the liturgy with songs of praise and prayer in their native Inuktitut.

The pilgrims were then given a tour of the Museum where they learned about the life of Blessed Vasyl. There was a spiritual connection between them and Blessed Vasyl, who had spent years imprisoned in the harsh, cold Arctic. Much time was spent in the Shrine in prayer in both English and Inuktitut.

An outdoor barbeque brought out traditional foods such as caribou stew, bannock, raw and cooked Arctic Char,



caribou jerky and whale blubber. Our guests had the opportunity to try perogies and kobassa (garlic sausage). For dessert we made them feel at home by serving ice-cream. The entertainment included Ukrainian dancers and throat singers.

To commemorate their visit, the elders constructed an Inukshuk in the

yard of the church (a sign of friendship).

Although we come from different cultures, we share a spiritual bond through Blessed Vasyl and through worship. It was a memorable day that all experienced.

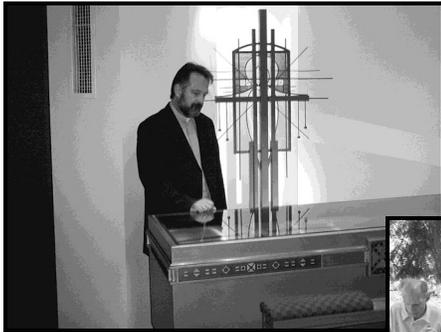
PILGRIMS AT THE MARTYR'S SHRINE



Knights of Columbus & spouses from Christ the King Roman Catholic Church



The Inuit people receive the Eucharist at the Shrine



Blessed Vasyli's relative, Fr. Andrew Onuferko praying at the Shrine



In preparation for Solemn Holy Communion children from Vita, Manitoba came to the Shrine



People from Nunavit enjoying Ukrainian food



Holy Family Seniors receiving anointing after the tour



Parishioners from Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church



Procession to the Chancery during the Martyrs' Feast day July 27



Inuit elders building an inukshuk to commemorate their visit

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. We are grateful to those who have named the Shrine as a beneficiary in memory of their loved ones. May Blessed Vasyl bless each one of you.

Contributions listed below are from April 1st 2004 until November 30th 2004.

\$1000 +

Rev. John & Marion Barszczyk
Nicholas, Stella & Nicolette Jaman
In honour of our 60th Wedding Anniversary
Maurice & Nell Lupyrypa
In memory of my mother Patricia
Laura Mackay
In memory of my baba Anne Machuga
Laura Mackay
In memory of Rt. Rev. Mitrat Ihor Shpytkovsky
Rt. Rev. Mitrat Jaroslaw Holowaty
Rt. Rev. Mitrat Gregory Oucharyk
In memory of Daniel G. Wawrykow and Judge Mary A. Wawrykow
Donna & Antonio Spanu
Dennis & Steffie Wawrykow
Marianne Wawrykow & Chris Kowal

\$500 +

Dr. Mark Semchyshyn
In memory of the Wiwchar Family
Bishop Michael Wiwchar

\$100+

Dr. Jerry Baluta
Glicaria Bilinsky
Christ the King Knights of Columbus Council No. 8124
Father Seelos Center
Bert & Val Galay
In memory of Mom, Dad, Mike and Laurretta
Roy Gulenchin
Holy Eucharist Branch, U.C.B.C.
Holy Eucharist Knights of Columbus Council # 11330
Holy Eucharist U.C.W.L.C.
In honour of Sr. Victoria Hunchak on her 50th Anniversary as a S.S.M.I.
Paul Hunchak
William Hunchak
Fr. Michael & Marilyn Krochak
Donna & Antonio Spanu
George Klos
In memory of Mary Kukura
Nick & Anna Banera
Kukura Family
In honor of Maurice & Nell Lupyrypa on the 50th Wedding Anniversary
Olga Andrewshenko
John Bjonson
Ted & Sophie Gierys
Gerry & Steffie Hrabarchuk
Dan & Bella Kalenchuk
Herman & Stella Laskowich
Matilda Lupyrypa
Walter & Anne Lupyrypa
Joe & Leona MacDonell
Gloria Morsky

Anne Price

Mary, Mother of the Church C.W.L.
Fred & Sonja Pawliw
Bishop John Pazak
In memory of my husband Michael
Jean Roshko
In memory of Rt. Rev. Mitrat Ihor Shpytkovsky
Wasyl & Jennifer Baluta
Alex, Ana & Max Baluta
Walter & Anna Pollock
Ukr. Cath. Church of Assumption, Portage. MB
Joseph & Agnes Wodzicki
Ernie & Eleanor Wozney

<\$100

Pearl Antymis
In memory of Geo Baranyk
Gloria Morsky
John M. Chomyn
Joan Chuckry
In memory of Rose Corkal
Stan & Eileen Dudzic
Paul Croteau
Andrew & Irene Duplak
Connie L. Dziedzic
Darlene Fletcher
Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg Inc.
Larry & Sandra German
Maria Harlip
Rev. Anthony Hession
Catherine Holmes
Alice Hood
D. Hood
In memory of Andrew Hykawy
Harold & Roseann Baehnk
In honor of my mother Alba
Fr. Joseph Ivel C.S.s.R.
In memory of Nick Jakimeczko
Joseph Krowiak
In honour of our 60th Wedding Anniversary
Dan & Bella Kalenchuk
Knights of Columbus, Fr. Filipow Council #8944
Knights of Columbus, St. Josaphat Council #4138
Knights of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy
Bernie & Antoinette Kolodiejchuk
Dorothy Labay
Emma Le Sann
In memory of Pat & Walter Mackay
Brenda MacKean-Barss
Joseph Majowski
Helen McMenemy
Mary Milos
Gloria Milos
In memory of Moroz and Perepeluk Families
Peter & Verna Moroz
O Tours
In memory of Stephen and Karen Ovsak

Fr. Will Ovsak
 J. Pawlychyn
 Phyllis Radlinsky
 Dmetro & Sylvia Rohatensky
 In honor of Ron and Enda Ross
 Anne Ross
 Michalina Rudzka
 Ernest & Jean Shewchuk
 In memory of Jim Orzechowski
 Leona Shewchuk
 Anne Shpak
 Mike & Darlene Sidak
 Iris Smellie
 M. Smith
 St. Joseph the Worker Catholic School
 St. Nicholas Ukr. Cath. Church Education Office
 In memory of Bill & Julia Senko
 Marlene Pettitt

H. Stanchuk
 Rev. Geoigos M. Svoboda
 In memory of my husband Zenon
 Jenny Swydnycky
 Florence Vermenlen
 Ben Wasylyshen
 Protodeacon Michael & Olga Woroby
 Peter Wozney
 Darlene Yakemoski
 Ann Zimmerman

**We apologize for any errors. Please contact the shrine office if you require clarification.*

DONOR WALL IN PLACE



Bishop Michael Wiwchar blessing the new donor wall

allow us to provide the ministry associated with the Shrine and be able to serve all the pilgrims who come.

A BEAUTIFUL DONOR WALL was installed last June, a welcome addition to our museum space. On this wall we can honor all those who have generously and substantially donated to the Shrine. The beauty of this donor wall is that it is totally flexible, that is, new names can be added very easily. Your donations to the Velychkovsky Martyr's Shrine are cumulative, so you can build your amount to \$1,000.00 and be placed on this wall, or you can increase the amount you have already given to move up a category. Your donations to the Shrine are very important, for they

SPECIAL THANKS to Stan Kalupar for donating in memory of his wife Shirley the icon of the Martyrs and Bishop Hrynchyshyn's book on the martyrs "Clothed in White Robes"



COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

One of the best places in Winnipeg

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

I think it was very cool for you to take time and look at bishops

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

I really liked it I learned about father

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

Wow I think you guys have the greatest shrine I'd seen

STUDENTS SPEND MORNING AT SHRINE



St. Joseph the Worker School students from Winnipeg, grades 4,5 & 6 spent a memorable morning at the Shrine. A spiritual journey that some will never forget. Here are some of their comments:

NEW DOCUMENTARY

IGNATIUS PRODUCTIONS, a film production team with EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) is presently filming and editing a documentary on the life of **Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky**. EWTN is a Catholic Television Network that broadcasts catholic programming throughout the world out of Birmingham, Alabama. They became interested in doing this film after the head of Ignatius Productions, Fr. Mitch Pacwa SJ, visited our Shrine last year. He knew then that this is a story worth telling to the whole world. As you are aware producing a film is not cheap. It will be costing the Shrine thousands of dollars for this very worthwhile project. **WE APPEAL TO YOU** for financial support. Thank you.



Satellite dishes at EWTN broadcasting throughout the world



BISHOP VELYCHKOVSKY MARTYR'S SHRINE VOLUNTEERS have dedicated cumulatively over 7,000 hours in the past two years of volunteering at the Shrine. The Shrine could not be kept open if it were not for these volunteers. **What a blessing they are for us all!** Volunteers take the pilgrims on a spiritual journey through the museum and pray with them before Blessed Vasyl's Holy Relics. Many volunteers themselves have received extraordinary graces, healings and blessings through the intercession of our Martyr.

NEW VOLUNTEERS are always needed to welcome pilgrims to the Shrine/ Museum. Please contact the Shrine Coordinator.

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 to the faithful 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: bvshrine@mts.net

EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING - 7:00 pm
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:
Fr. Provincial
250 Jefferson Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2V 0M6
Canada