

**REDEMPTORIST NORTH AMERICAN SECRETARIAT FOR PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION
ONGOING FORMATION AND FAITH-SHARING
THE UKRAINIAN REDEMPTORIST MARTYRS**

Time Frame: 90 minutes

CENTRE OF BEAUTY:

- Mission Cross
- Cloth
- Icon or picture of the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs
- Candle
- Bible

HANDOUTS:

- Brief Biographies of the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs
- Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit
- Prayer in honour of the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs (attached)

MATERIALS:

- Name Tags (if needed)
- Pens/pencils
- Paper

NOTES:

In preparation for this session, copies of the biographies of the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs are distributed to all participants, in order that they may read the short article before coming together.

SATURDAY MORNING OR WEEKDAY EVENING SESSION

GATHERING and WELCOME

OPENING PRAYER– Prayer of St. Alphonsus to the Holy Spirit (attached)

Experience– Share with the participants these words, written by the Superior General of the Redemptorists, Fr. Michael Brehl, of martyrs and martyrdom:

“The witness of martyrs has always been very significant for the Church. The first disciples of Christ viewed martyrdom as following closely in the footsteps of Jesus and sharing his sufferings... The witness of the martyrs goes beyond the act of enduring a violent death. It expresses the reason for which they are willing to give their lives: as witnesses to Jesus Christ and to announce plentiful redemption for all. Martyrdom is a proclamation of the Good News, and the martyrs become witnesses to the Gospel, continuing to do good” for the sake of their sisters and brothers.”

Reflection– What is your response to Fr. Brehl’s words? Invite the group into a conversation about their response to his proposal that the final act of sacrifice was really a result of a much longer process of a life-long practice of sacrifice. Is this how you have thought of martyrdom? What is your response to this proposal?

Generalization–

From the foundation of the Redemptorists in 1732, for over 200 years, no Redemptorist suffered martyrdom. This changed in Spain in 1936. Since then, Redemptorist martyrs from Spain, Slovakia and Ukraine have been beatified.

Discuss the article which participants have read in preparation for this gathering: a brief biography of the four Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs. Some reflection questions were appended to the article.

You might wish to use the following questions as a discussion guide:

1. What impressed you about the four Ukrainian Redemptorist martyrs as you read and reflected on these very brief notes?
2. What can we draw from the spirituality of these brave servants of God that we could apply to our own lives or our own day?
3. As you read about the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs, was anything affirmed for you? If so, what?
4. Did anything you read challenge you? If so, what was it?

Action: Name one thing that you will take home with you from tonight's session.

Closing Prayer:

**Prayer in Honor of the
Redemptorist Ukrainian Martyrs**

O Lord, our God,
you call all to believe in you and to follow your way.
We thank you for the grace you gave
to Nicholas Charnetsky, Vasyl Velychkovsky,
Zenon Kovalyk, and Ivan Ziatyk and to all their spiritual companions,
such that they were able to pay
the ultimate price of faithfulness to you in giving their lives.
We thank you for glorifying them in your heavenly kingdom,
that they may be for all of us
a shining example of your powerful presence in our lives.
We pray that you give us the grace of faithfulness and generosity
as we seek to respond to your love.
Through their intercession,
help us always to stand firm in the Truth
and be faithful to you and your commandments.
O Holy Mother of God and our Mother of Perpetual Help,
lead us to your Son, Jesus.
Give us the courage to follow him always.
We place ourselves under your protection.

For all the glory and honor belong to you,
Almighty Father, Eternal Son, and Life-giving Spirit,
now and for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT



L. You are **fire**;
R. enkindle in me your love.

L. You are **light**;
R. enlighten my mind with the knowledge of eternal things.

L. You are the **Dove**;
R. give me innocence of life.

L. You are the gentle **Breeze**;
R. disperse the storms of my passions.

L. You are the **Tongue**;
R. Teach me how to bless you always.

L. You are the **Cloud**;
R. shelter me under the shadow of your protection.

L. You are the **Giver** of all heavenly gifts;
R. animate me,

L. I beseech you, with your **grace**;
R. sanctify me

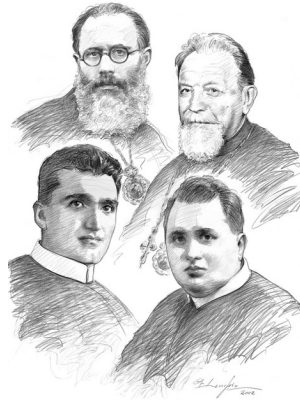
L. with your **charity**;
R. enlighten me

L. with your **wisdom**;
R. adopt me by your goodness as your child, and save me in your infinite mercy;
so that I may ever **bless** you, **praise** you, and **love** you;
first during this life on earth, and then in heaven for all eternity.

Amen.

BLESSED NICHOLAS CHARNETSKY AND COMPANIONS THE UKRAINIAN REDEMPTORIST MARTYRS

Feast: June 27/28



Redemptorist ministry among members of the Eastern Catholic Churches began early in the 20th century as Latin Rite Redemptorist missionaries were trained and granted faculties to assist Byzantine Catholic immigrants whom they encountered in western Canada. Once Redemptorist work was begun among Eastern Catholics in Canada, it soon followed in the people's homelands as well. In the Ukraine, as the Soviets, the Nazis, and the Soviets again dominated the people, the Redemptorists shared the struggles of those among whom they ministered. Some of the Redemptorists were martyred during the dark years of oppression. In 2001, Pope John Paul II beatified four Ukrainian Catholic Redemptorists who gave their lives in service of the Gospel.

Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky



Nicholas Charnetsky was born in Semakivci in Halychyna, Western Ukraine, in 1884. He did his theological studies in Rome and was ordained as a diocesan priest in 1909. After obtaining

his doctorate in theology he was spiritual director and professor of theology at the seminary in Stanislaviv. He entered the Redemptorist novitiate in Zboisk in 1919 and professed his vows in 1920. During his early years he was assigned to teach in the minor seminary and then to preach popular missions. Charnetsky was ordained a bishop in 1931 and appointed the Apostolic Visitor to the Ukrainian Catholics in Volyn. From 1931 to 1939 he ministered to the people of Volyn, Polisia, Pidlissia, and Belorussia. During World War II he was engaged in pastoral ministry and taught at the theological academy. From 1945 to 1956, he was held captive in about thirty Soviet labor camps and prisons. Following his release he returned to Lviv, where he acted as bishop of the suppressed Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. His prolonged imprisonment shattered his health, and he died in 1959.

The shrine of Blessed Nicholas Charnetsky is in St. Josaphat's Church in Lviv, Ukraine.

Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky



Vasyl (Basil) Velychkovsky was born in Stanislaviv, Western Ukraine, in 1903. He studied at the seminary in Lviv and was ordained a deacon in 1923. He entered the Redemptorists as a deacon, professed vows in 1925, and was soon ordained a priest. After teaching at the preparatory seminary in Zboisk, Vasyl worked as a missionary for the next twenty years in rural Ukraine. He was arrested in 1945 and was condemned to death, but the death sentence was commuted to ten years' imprisonment.

In 1963 in a hotel room in Moscow, USSR, Velychkovsky was consecrated a bishop by Metropolitan Joseph Slipyj and became the head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church. Arrested once more in 1969, he spent three years in prison. In the spring of 1972, near death, he was exiled from Ukraine. He died in Winnipeg, Canada, in 1973 as a result of a slow-acting poison that had been administered prior to his release.

The shrine of Blessed Vasyl Velychkovsky is in St. Joseph's Ukrainian Catholic Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada (www.bvmartyshrine.com).

Blessed Ivan Ziatyk



Ivan Ziatyk was born on December 26, 1899, in Odrekhova, now part of Poland. He entered the Ukrainian Catholic seminary in 1919 and was ordained in 1923. In 1936 he professed Redemptorist vows.

During the German occupation, all the Ukrainian Catholic bishops were arrested, and by 1948, Father Ziatyk was entrusted with the administration of the Church in Ukraine. He was arrested on January 5, 1950, because of his public support of papal instructions to proclaim the Catholic faith to all people. Eyewitnesses testify to the brutal treatment Ivan endured in the Siberian prison at Oserlag. On Good Friday, 1952, he was beaten so cruelly that he died a few days later on May 17.

Blessed Ivan Ziatyk is buried at Oserlag, Siberia.

Blessed Zenon Kovalyk



Zenon Kovalyk was born in 1903 in Ivachiv Horishniy, near Ternopil, Ukraine. Having joined the Redemptorists and professed vows in 1926, he studied philosophy and theology in Belgium and was ordained in 1932. He went with Bishop Charnetsky to Volyn as a parish missionary and subsequently to Stanislaviv, where he also conducted missions. Zenon was a fearless preacher of God's Word and of love for the Mother of God. He was arrested by the Soviets in 1940 and continued his pastoral ministry while imprisoned. When the Soviet prisons were opened on the arrival of the invading German army in 1941, Blessed Zenon's body was found crucified to a wall of the Zamartynivska prison. Blessed Zenon Kovalyk's final resting place is unknown.

For more information about the Redemptorists' work in the Ukrainian Catholic Church in North America, visit the website of our Yorkton Province: <http://yorktonredemptorists.com>

REFLECT AND DISCUSS...

1. What impressed you about the four Ukrainian Redemptorist martyrs as you read and reflected on these very brief notes?
2. What can we draw from the spirituality of these brave servants of God that we could apply to our own lives or our own day?
3. As you read about the Ukrainian Redemptorist Martyrs, was anything affirmed for you? If so, what?
4. Did anything you read challenge you? If so, what was it?