



**S**top passerby and bow, because indeed the land on which you have stepped is the holy land. In the middle of the XIth century our ancestors hollowed a large cave monastery in a hill, which was one of the first cave monasteries in Ukraine. It had existed for two centuries only and in 1242 it was destroyed by Tatar-Mongol invaders of Batu Khan together with the

village. Since then, the title of the village is STRADCH, as it is derived from the words `execution`, `to suffer`.

**I**n 1937 a church of the Mother of God of the Immovable Wall was built at the entrance to the cave. This church became a tomb for monks and peasants murdered by Tatars. In caves, near the entrance, an underground cave-monastery church has been preserved, in which in XI-XIII centuries the monks served the Divine Liturgy. Each grain of sand, each stone is indeed holy here, because they were sanctified with the blood of Christian martyrs and prayers of monks and pilgrims, who came here from all over Ukraine and abroad.

**I**n 1936 Pope Pius XI confirmed the sanctity and remarkable spiritual meaning of Stradetska hill for Ukrainian people, by giving Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church full Absolution for each day of the year. It means, that if pilgrims confess frank-



ly, take part in Divine Liturgy and Holy Eucharist in the temple of Stradch they will be released from all temporal punishments. In addition to this Absolution, Pope Pius XI blessed the establishment of the Way of the Cross on Stradetska hill with Jerusalem Absolutions. Therefore, for spiritual meaning, the Way of the Cross in Stradch is elevated to the dignity of Jerusalem.

These decrees turned Stradch in a unique pilgrimage place in Ukraine and worldwide. During the Soviet times, communist-atheist functionaries imposed taboo on any publications about Stradch's sanctuary and strongly tried to delete memories about the pilgrimage status of the village from people's memory.

However, faithful to God villagers came here to the temple feast every year. And with the fall of God-fighting regime, according to God's plan, Stradch has risen from oblivion and loudly praises the Lord throughout Ukraine and far abroad without any advertising and excessive noise.



**T**he Lord and the Virgin Mary bestowed Stradetska hill with tremendous grace. In 2001 Pope John Paul II beatified father Mykola Konrad and cantor Volodymyr Pryima, proclaiming them Priest-Martyrs. Their relics are located on holy Stradetska hill.



Did the enemies hope that their hatred against Christ and Ukraine and attempts to destroy the Church of Christ would only lead to it's even greater glorification and would give the Ukrainian people new patrons in heaven?! The circumstances of the death of Fr. M. Konrad and V. Pryima indicated that God's Providence had



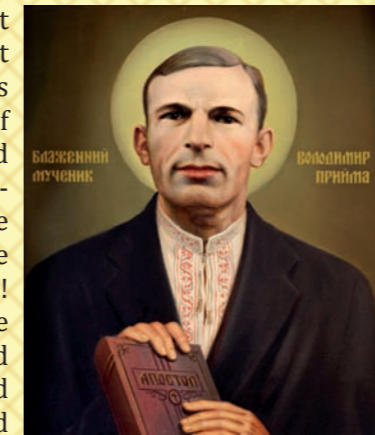
given them the martyrdom death and the glory in heaven for the faithful Christian life and boundless confidence in God.

Father Mykola was a patriot of Ukraine and he always prayed for unfortunate Ukrainian people. And miraculously the last drop of his blood reminds the outlines of Ukraine on a map of Europe. The Stradch's mar-

tyrs as the highest sanctity bequeathed to keep the unity of the Church and Ukrainian people and to sacrifice our minds, work, and, in a moment of danger, even our personal lives.

**T**wo icons of the Dormition of the Theotokos, that are kept in the parish church, and numerous miracles and grace that the pilgrims received from the Mother of God of Stradch praying before them, are other evidences of holiness of Stradetska hill.

In the temple of Stradch, on Stradetska hill a constant presence of God is felt. Here, in the silence of pine forest, in the cave corridors, where people have been praying for centuries, our Creator and Lord listens to



human pains and problems in a special way, and sends them an invisible heavenly relief. If we listen to the noise of trees, the silence of cemetery crosses, we'll suddenly hear the voice of God and understand His Divine consolation and advice on our hard earthly life.

Therefore, do not rush passerby. On this blessed by God hill, fall to the feet of the Lord and Jesus Christ in sincere prayers, entrust pain and worries to the Blessed Virgin Mary, address with faith celestial patrons Fr. M. Konrad and V. Pryima. Cleanse your soul, wash it with tears repentance and let your staying in this place bring you into the way of salvation and eternal life.

Amen.



A parochial Dormition of the Virgin Mary Church was built in 1795 and reconstructed in a rare modern style in 1927.