

271.4(092)

F24

FATHER  
KOVCH'S  
ARK



## LETTER FROM MAJDANEK

...I understand that you are trying to free me. But I am asking you not to. Yesterday they killed 50 people here. If I am not here, who will help them to endure these sufferings? They would have gone to Eternity with all of their sins and in the deep despondency that leads to Hell. Instead, they are going to die with their heads held high, leaving all their sins behind. They are crossing the bridge to Eternity with happiness in their hearts and I saw peace and tranquillity unfolding before them.

I thank God for His goodness towards me. This is the only place except Heaven where I want to be. We are all equal here: Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Russians, Estonians and Latvians. I am the only priest among them. I cannot even imagine how this place would be without me. Here, I see God who is one for of us all regardless of our religious differences. Perhaps our churches are different, but it is the same great Almighty God who governs us all. When I administer the sacred liturgy, they all pray. They pray in different languages but does not the Lord understands all languages? They die in different ways, and I help them to cross this bridge to eternity.

I thank God a thousand times a day that he sent me here. I no longer have anything to ask Him for. Do not worry about me and do not lose faith in what I am doing. Instead, be happy for me. Pray for those who created this concentration camp and the system. They are the ones who need our prayers. May God have mercy on them....

**Omelyan Kovch, 1944**

# Father Kovch's Ark

Kyiv-2017

271.4-722.53 (092)

K56 **Father Kovch's Ark** - K 2017 - 144 pp ill.

ISBN 978-617-635-111-5

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Art designer **Vasyl Bilenko**

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Cover design by **Anna Vasiunyk**

The publication recounts the life and career of a Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, Omelyan Kovch (1884-1944), who was a disciple and associate of Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky. Most of his life, Father Kovch served as a pastor in the provincial town of Peremyslyany. He always stood in defense of the oppressed and persecuted regardless of their ethnic background and religion - Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, for which he suffered from various authorities. Having miraculously escaped from the NKVD, Fr. Omelyan got into the hands of the Gestapo. He ended his life in the concentration camp of Majdanek, where he continued his pastoral mission. He could have got out from Majdanek should he refuse from saving the jewsbut he chose martyrdom. In 2001, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Father Kovch a blessed martyr.

Stories about the life of the priest are interspersed with reports from the places where he lived and served. The publication features numerous archival and contemporary photographs.

The book is intended for all interested in the struggle of Ukrainians for freedom and human rights, the history of Ukraine, and moral and ethical problems of the present day.

Published with financial support of the **Foundation Renovabis** and **Ivan Vasiunyk**, Chairman of the Committee to Commemorate the Blessed Martyr Omelyan Kovch

ISBN 978-617-635-111-5

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Factual publication

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Special thanks to His Grace **Bohdan (Dzyurakh)** for  
the support of the project and **Fr. Stepan Batrukh**  
(Lublin, Poland) for help and provided materials

Photo materials courtesy UNIAN

Circulation: in Ukrainian - 3000 copies,  
in English - 1000 copies

Printed in New Print Ltd  
Kyiv, 1 Mahnytohorska St.  
Ph. (044) 5361526