

Pray for Peace in Ukraine. An Appeal of the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops of the United States

Over the last weeks, the world has become fully aware of the fact that democratic Ukraine and its freedom-loving people are increasingly surrounded by hostile military forces prone for invasion. A full escalation of the eight-year Kremlin-led war will bring about devastating bloodshed and untold human suffering. Deaths could be in the tens of thousands and refugees in the millions. The economic and political shockwaves of the social devastation and material destruction in Ukraine will be worldwide. There is ample access to analysis that explains the potential of a disaster with global repercussions.

We appeal to you not as politicians nor strategists. We entreat you as persons of faith in God: “Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever” (Ps 125:1). As pastors we appeal to you and to all people of good will to pray for peace and justice in Ukraine.

We ask that beginning tomorrow, Sunday February 13, our priests and parishes, religious communities, families and individual faithful conduct a three-day vigil of prayer for peace and the conversion of the hearts of those who preach violence and escalate war.

Given the immediacy of our appeal, we ask that each pastor and community, each family and each person participate in this vigil in whatever way is possible for them. May our churches be open throughout the day, may the prayer of the Church interchange with personal contemplation. Conduct and participate in services, pray the Jesus Prayer, the Marian Rosary, the Paracletis, sit with the Scriptures. Fast in order to focus on the hope that only God gives.

May our eyes be upon the Lord, may God’s Word be upon our lips, may our hearts be full of hope. “Cast all your anxieties on Him, because He cares about you. Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that your fellow believers throughout the world undergo the same sufferings.” (1 Pt 5:7-9).

Ukrainian faithful of all confessions have witnessed miracles. In recent history we saw the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the dissolution of the Soviet prison of nations, the liberation of our Churches, which occurred without war and bloodshed.

We put our trust in God and ask for divine intervention. “Some boast of chariots, and some of horses; but we boast of the name of the Lord our God. They will collapse and fall; but we shall rise and stand upright” (Ps 20:8-9). We pray for the safety and courage of the people of Ukraine. We admire their faith and fortitude. We beseech the Lord to preserve the country and its people from further invasion.

Pray and be full of hope. Share that hope. Know the Lord and God's love for the world!

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