

Pastoral Letter

**to the Clergy, Religious and Faithful
of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada
and to all Good People**

The War in Ukraine: A Call to Prayer, Fasting, and Action

October 17, 2022

Dear Faithful,

The war in Ukraine rages on with no end in sight, claiming the lives of thousands of innocent children, men and women, with millions more on the move as refugees in search of safety, food, shelter, clothing and medicine, in addition to the destruction of countless homes, schools, hospitals and business. As winter approaches, hundreds of thousands of people will have no heat in their homes, with energy being used as a weapon of punishment.

Ukraine and its people are in crisis. Like the Holodomor-Genocide or Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, which claimed the lives of millions of people in Ukraine when the Soviet Union deliberately and methodically starved as many as one-quarter of the Ukrainian population, today's war in Ukraine by foreign aggressors has as its intent to erase the identity and history of the Ukrainian people – a genocide in the making.

In light of the recent intensified attacks, let us renew our attention to the plight of the people of Ukraine in an effort to continue to “Stand with Ukraine.”

In particular, let us renew our efforts to pray, fast, and act.

Prayer

Prayer is the privilege and duty of every person where we worship and praise the Lord God and bring forth our immediate needs and concerns.

We, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops in Canada, invite you to renew your efforts to pray daily for peace in Ukraine.

Let us pray for those who endure the war, who defend their country and nationhood, who live in fear, and who have been forced to flee their homes.

Let us pray for those who have died as a result of the war, and for those who have died today and who will die tomorrow.

Let us pray:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, we entreat You to hear the earnest prayer of Your beloved Church of Kyivan Rus' for her afflicted children abiding in the land of Ukraine. Deliver

Your vulnerable people from unjust aggressors, foreign invasion and the terror of war. O kind-hearted Lord, as You are our peace, soften the hearts of the unmerciful and convert those who promote hostilities toward reconciliation, so that your beloved children of the land of Ukraine, may abide in that tranquility, justice and freedom which reflects your Kingdom, where You reign with Your eternal Father, and Your most holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now, and forever and ever. Amen.

Fasting

The age-old practice of fasting is a means to spiritual growth and purity of heart.

Through fasting we recall the failure of Adam and Eve to fast from the forbidden fruit thereby leading to their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Through fasting, we resolve to renew our lives according to God's ways and laws.

We, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops in Canada, invite you to fast for the people of Ukraine and for peace in their country. Like the Holodomor Ukrainian Famine in 1932-1933, many people in Ukraine today have no food. In solidarity with them, let us fast.

In particular, we invite you to a three-day fast starting on Thursday, November 24, concluding on Saturday, November 26, when we commemorate the Holodomor annually throughout Canada.

Fast as best as you can. For some, that will mean only bread and water, for some no sweets, for others only one meal each day. However you choose to fast, unite your thoughts and prayers before the Lord for peace for the people of Ukraine.

Action

Almsgiving is a charitable way of expressing gratitude to God for the bounty of God's blessings in our daily lives.

Almsgiving is also a way to identify with the needs of others and respond in some meaningful way.

We, the Ukrainian Catholic Bishops in Canada, acknowledge and thank you for your unprecedented generosity in providing humanitarian aid to the people of Ukraine. May God bless your kindness and generosity!

Yet, today, as winter approaches, the people of Ukraine need your support evermore.

We invite you to consider a further humanitarian aid donation so that the people of Ukraine may have the basic necessities in life that each of us enjoys – food, shelter, clothing, and medicine, as well as heat, for their homes this winter.

Kindly donate through your local parish, [Catholic Near East Welfare Association – Canada \(CNEWA\)](#), [Development and Peace – Caritas Canada](#), [Aid to the Church in Need – Canada](#), [Canadian Jesuit International](#), or the [Ukrainian Canadian Congress](#).

Conclusion

The purpose of this pastoral letter has been to raise our awareness of the ongoing war in Ukraine and to invite you to prayer, fasting, and action towards our brothers and sisters who are in desperate need of your support.

These are not easy times. The entire world is ill at ease.

Yet, together we can make a difference in the millions of lives of the children, men and women who are counting on you.

May God bless you and your family with health, peace, love and joy.

Sincerely in Christ,

- + Lawrence Huculak, OSBM, Metropolitan Archbishop of Winnipeg; Apostolic Administrator of Saskatoon
- + David Motiuk, Eparchial Bishop of Edmonton; Apostolic Administrator of New Westminster
- + Bryan Bayda, CSsR, Eparchial Bishop of Toronto