

Let Us Pray for Ukraine

Letter of the General Minister

Prot. N. 00141/22

Rome, 26 February 2022

Dear Brothers,

May the Lord give you peace!

These days, the media around the world are constantly reporting the tragic event of the war against Ukraine. What we see transpiring in this neighboring country is an act of violence that we would hope never to see happen, because it brings about nothing but great pain: people dying, structures being destroyed, families being left homeless, society as a whole experiencing fear and bewilderment, while supplanting in people's hearts uncertainty and despair in the place of peace.

The Capuchins returned to Ukraine 26 years ago after the collapse of the Soviet Union. I had the opportunity to visit those brothers personally last July. Today there are seven fraternities, with the presence of 36 brothers, half of them of local origin and the other half Polish.

All of them have expressed their intention to remain in Ukraine, and to share in the fate of the people there. We are grateful for this decision and join them in spirit. Some local fraternities are taking in people who are in search of places of refuge from the bombings. In our churches we offer prayers and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and our brothers seek to offer their support to everyone. I told them not to be afraid to share generously of the resources they have at their disposal, and that we would not fail to come to their help.

Let us be aware that the plight of this war does not only concern Ukraine, but also many other parts of the world, and that many of our confreres – together with many Christians – face persecution that could sometimes even be brutal. We must respond with sincerity to Pope Francis' invitation to unite in our prayer and penance for peace in Ukraine and in the world, especially on March 2nd, Ash Wednesday. And we should not limit ourselves to that day.

Like Francis of Assisi, God has entrusted us with an essential mission: to bring peace in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, announcing to the world the message of God's love for humanity: it is the Good News, the Gospel that ennobles human relationships.

But bearing in mind that the power of our voice is first contingent on everything being borne from our hearts, let us try to make sure that the current tragic events in Ukraine become for us an opportunity to return to the Lord, to decisively resume our path of openness to God and his love, and to build a stronger personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He revealed to us that the face

of God the Father is the face of unconditional love for humanity, for each person, and it is the face of forgiveness. In this way, we can contribute toward the restoration of hope and life to every brother and sister we encounter, and not leave them to destruction and death.

To the brothers in Ukraine, I assure you of our total support and admiration!

Mary, Queen of Peace, pray for us!

I send forth my blessing upon you all.

Br. Roberto Genuin
General Minister OFMCap