



METROPOLITAN ARCHEPARCHY OF PHILADELPHIA

Ukrainian Catholic

Most Reverend Borys Gudziak

810 North Franklin Street

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19123-2005

Phone (215) 627-0143 Fax (215) 627-0377

ukrmet@ukrcap.org

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“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Mt. 189:20)

For the past eight years, since the invasion of parts of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, and the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation, Ukraine has lived under constant threat. The hybrid war fomented on Ukraine by Russia continues unabated until this day.

Since that time, the Ukrainian people, in Ukraine and throughout the world, have responded to this unprovoked aggression with undaunted determination. They have countered the Russian disinformation campaign with objective truth, they have morally and financially supported the Ukrainian military and especially the wounded soldiers and citizens displaced by the conflict, and, most importantly, they have prayed to God for peace and an end to the conflict.

As you are aware, the tensions along Ukraine’s eastern border have recently intensified to the point that a full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia has become a distinct possibility.

Shaken by the threat of actual armed conflict on the European continent, the Holy Father, Pope Francis, addressed the situation in Ukraine in remarks to the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square on Sunday, January 23: “I make a heartfelt appeal to all people of good will to raise prayers to Almighty God that all political actions and initiatives may be at the service of human brotherhood rather than partisan interests.” The Holy Father then proposed that Wednesday, January 26 be proclaimed a day of prayer for peace in Ukraine in the universal Catholic Church. We wish to sincerely thank Pope Francis for this gesture of solidarity and his paternal love and care for the people of Ukraine.

Our desire as your bishops is that all our parishes and faithful take up this appeal to prayer of the Holy Father. In our parish communities, wherever possible, we ask that the parish faithful be gathered on Wednesday, January 26 for prayer vigils, divine liturgies, molebens or akathists. We also encourage that our families and individual faithful respond to this appeal with their own private devotions, prayer and fasting on that day. Let an avalanche of prayer from every corner of the world ascend to heaven so that the Lord would make an end to the threat of war, death and destruction in Ukraine and everywhere in the world.

We also encourage our faithful to take part in a “Marathon of Prayer” for peace in Ukraine initiated by the Head and Father of our Church, His Beatitude, Patriarch Sviatoslav. It will take place on Wednesday, January 26 for twelve consecutive hours from 9:00 am to 9:00 (Kyiv time); 2:00 am

to 2:00 pm (EST); 1:00 am to 1:00 pm (CST); 12:00 am to 12:00 pm (MST); and 11:00 pm to 11:00 am (PST) and can be accessed on the internet at zhyve.tv

With confidence and faith let us lift our hearts to the Lord who saves, as we pray with the Psalmist: “The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears and rescues them from all their troubles.” (Ps. 34:17)

+Borys Gudziak

Archbishop of Philadelphia, Metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States

+Paul Chomnycky, OSBM

Eparch of Stamford

+Benedict Aleksiychuk

Eparch of St. Nicholas in Chicago

+ Bohdan J. Danylo

Eparch of St. Josaphat in Parma

+Andriy Rabiw

Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia