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News Release

For immediate release

**Catholic Bishops of Canada invite all Canadian faithful
to join Pope Francis and to pray for peace**

17 March 2022 – Ottawa – On Friday, 25 March 2022, Pope Francis will consecrate Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary during the Celebration of Penance that he will preside over at 5:00 pm (Rome time), in St Peter's Basilica.¹ Pope Francis wishes to place the people of Ukraine and Russia under the protection of Mary, the Mother of God, with a special liturgical act. To this end, he will consecrate the two countries to the Immaculate Heart of Mary at a penitential celebration. This act has been well received by the Catholic Bishops in Ukraine², as well as by the Russian Bishops.³

In response to Pope Francis' decision to consecrate both Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Ukrainian Catholic leaders will prepare with a novena that will **start on 17 March 2022**. They hope that all Catholic faithful from around the world will join them.⁴ In view of this appeal, the Catholic Bishops of Canada, united with the Holy Father, invite their faithful and all people of good will to participate in the novena with the following prayer:

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at-risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.