



March 3, 2021

Papal Pleas for Peace: Even if unheeded, Pope Francis continues tradition

~ by Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis knows his appeals for an end to the war in Ukraine carry little weight with Russian President Vladimir Putin, but he also knows he has an obligation to continue speaking out and rallying others to join him in praying for peace.

In April 2021 – 10 months before Putin invaded Ukraine – the Pope expressed his concerns about a buildup of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border and an escalation in the fighting between Ukrainian and Russian-backed separatists in Eastern Ukraine.

He did the same in December, in January and repeatedly in February as it seemed Putin was serious about launching an offensive.

Emphasizing the seriousness of his concern, Pope Francis did not summon the Russian ambassador to the Holy See, but instead went in person to the embassy on February 25.

One week before Putin launched the invasion, Pope Francis told members of the Congregation for Eastern Churches – including Eastern Catholic leaders from Ukraine, Iraq, Syria and Ethiopia – that too often “the warnings of both popes and men and women of goodwill are unheard.”



Humanity, he said, seems to have “an attachment to war, and this is tragic.”

Still, Pope Francis noted, modern popes, beginning with Pope Benedict XV before World War I, have tried to appeal to consciences and to warn of the “useless slaughter” and the unforeseen consequences of going to war.

Papal appeals for peace and dialogue always look first to the impact violence and war will have on civilians, especially the elderly and children. In military calculations, they are “collateral damage,” but as Pope Francis noted on February 27, they are always the first victims of conflict.

The most thorough papal examination of the folly of war to date is “Pacem in Terris,” published in 1963 by Pope St. John XXIII.

In June, the Vatican publishing house released “Peace on Earth: Fraternity is Possible,” a collection of Pope Francis’ words and speeches on the importance of praying and working for peace.

“We can no longer think of war as a solution because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits, one of the main criteria of just-war theory, he wrote in the document. “In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a ‘just war.’ Never again war!”

To read the full article, please click [here](#)

Pope Calls for Day of Prayer, Fasting for Peace in Ukraine

~ by Junno Arocho Esteves, Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – As war in Ukraine loomed over the world, Pope Francis called on people to pray and fast for peace in Ukraine on Ash Wednesday.

The Pope called on believers and nonbelievers to combat the “diabolical insistence, the diabolical senselessness of violence” with prayer and fasting.

“I invite everyone to make March 2, Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting for peace,” he said. “I encourage believers in a special way to devoted themselves intensely to prayer and fasting [today]. May the Queen of Peace protect the world from the folly of war.”

“I would like to appeal to those with political responsibilities to do a serious examination of conscience before God, who is the God of peace and not of war, who is the father of all and not only of some, who wants us to be brothers and sisters and not enemies,” he said.



In a statement, Archbishop Shevchuk, head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church said Putin “destroyed foundational principles for a long-term process of restoring peace in Ukraine” and “created the path for a new wave of military aggression against our state.”

The Archbishop continued, “All of humanity has been placed in danger,” because Putin’s action asserts that “the powerful have a right to impose themselves on whomever they wish, with no regard for the rule of law.”

To read the complete article, please click [here](#)

Religious Sisters Remain in War-Torn Ukraine to Serve the People

~ by Gina Christian, Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) Women religious in Ukraine are facing Russia's full-scale invasion of that nation with determined faith and a commitment to service.

Two sisters of the Order of St. Basil the Great spoke with CatholicPhilly.com directly from Ukraine via telephone.

We understand that this is our new mission, to welcome the refugee," said Basilian Sister Lucia Murashko, whose convent, the monastery of SS Peter and Paul is located about 125 miles from Donetsk in eastern Ukraine.

Earlier on February 24, when Russian airstrikes began to impact Ukrainian cities, Sister Murashko and her three fellow religious welcomed two families, with more expected as residents flee the attacks.

Yet, amid a fast-moving and fluid situation, Sister Murashko said through "a special grace of God" she "feels very calm."

"We feel peace here," she said. "We do not want to move from here; we want to help people and stay with them as long and as much as we can."

Area residents are grateful for that support, she said, "especially one neighbor who is eight months pregnant and advised by her doctor not to travel."

A recent pilgrimage of men and women religious, which concluded in eastern Ukraine just hours ahead of the invasion, has provided renewed spiritual energy for the days ahead, said Sister Murashko.

"We were walking on the main street and the people were crossing themselves and making bows to the crucifix," she said. "They came to us and gave us strength to serve and ...to continue our mission here, so we cannot want to go anywhere else."

To read the complete article, please click [here](#)



Nuns from the Order of St. Basil during a pilgrimage that ended just hours before the Russian invasion.

(CNS photo/Sr. Anna Andrusiv, via CatholicPhilly.com)

Catholic Sisters Week

March 8 - 14



Catholic Sisters Week (CSW) invites all to celebrate women religious from March 8-14. CSW is an annual celebration that began in 2014 to honor women religious with a series of events that instruct, enlighten, and bring greater focus on the lives of these incredible women. It's a chance to recognize all that they do, with the hope that as more young women learn about women religious, more will choose to follow their example.

Visit the [CSW website](#) to learn about the organization, find an event near you and join in honoring women religious, or plan an event of your own and spread the word. You can post your event for others to see [here](#).

Additional Resources can be found through Global Sisters Report [Resources](#), [Communicators for Women Religious](#), and [A Nun's Life Ministry](#). Check out this [great video](#) from the Pope's February prayer intention for inspiration.

NRVC has published 77 videos centered on the theme of Abundant Hope. All the videos can be accessed directly through the [National Religious Vocation Conference YouTube Channel](#) and shared publicly to amplify hope for religious life. ~ from the NRVC website

During this week, please contact a religious sister who has positively impacted your life to say hello and offer a word of thanks and appreciation.



Thank you, Missionary Sisters, for your service to God's people.

How to Provide Aid for Ukraine

WASHINGTON (Catholic News Service) — Various Catholic agencies are collecting donations to aid with the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, as people flee to escape Russian bombing and shelling. Here are some places to donate. This list is not exhaustive.

The international Caritas confederation is collecting funds to help Caritas Ukraine. In the United States, that is through [Catholic Relief Services](#). Internationally, you can donate through [Caritas Internationalis](#).

The Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia also has a [link to donate](#).

Two pontifical agencies also are taking donations for Ukraine: [Catholic Near East Welfare Association](#) and [Aid to the Church in Need](#). Internationally, Aid to the Church can be [reached here](#).

The Knights of Columbus launched the [Ukraine Solidarity Fund](#) for humanitarian needs in Ukraine and through refugee sites in Poland.

Donations can also be made to [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) to support the agency's work with those forced to flee conflict in Europe.



Nothing Like Being Among Good Friends!



It was a blessing that Sr. Renee Kittelson, MSC and her friends visited us here at Cabrini Senior Housing in Seattle, WA, on February 22, 2022. Thank you, Sister, for your grace-filled visit! It lightened up our day after two years of not having

any social activity. The turnout was great! Even the newer residents came and joined us in this excitement. Sister, we look forward to having more of your visits in the future!

Photos above and below: Traveling to Seattle, Sr. Renee Kittelson, MSC (3rd r. front) reunites with many dear friends at Cabrini Senior Housing where Sister once served as an administrator. Welcome back, Sr. Renee!

~ submitted by Vicky Lucio, CLM



From the Guadalupe Province Vocation Promotion Team...

Recognizing God's Abundance

~ by Brother Tim Smyth, CFC in HORIZON Journal of the NRVC

In a program we Christian Brothers do with high school students, we invite them to identify their gifts. Over the years, I've learned that, whether doing this process with students or adults, the initial response is usually the same: a reluctance. There's a reluctance because many people think you are not supposed to toot your own horn. You're not supposed to name what you're good at; you're supposed to wait and let someone else do it for you.

In religious life we know that reflecting on your gifts can be a healthy thing to do, as long as you recognize that the source of your gifts is a loving and giving God. And if we're honest, we recognize that God really gives gifts to us in abundance.

This past Lent I decided on a different approach; focusing on my gifts rather than my failings. About a week into Lent, and after some reflection, I identified a number of gifts that I feel I have and printed them up on 8" x 4" placards. I taped them on the wall, in a circle around the crucifix. Putting them there helped keep me focused on why I was doing this, to recognize the abundance in my life that has come through God's gifts.

A few weeks further into Lent, I came across some files containing worksheets from vocation meetings I had attended over the years. I found the results of exercises somewhat like I just mentioned, but in the opposite direction. Instead of identifying the gifts we saw in ourselves, participants identified the gifts they saw in others. I added those gifts to those I had placed around the crucifix. It was powerful, not just to read what others had seen in me, but to recognize that God has truly gifted me, in abundance. My Lenten plan was working!

After considerable time in reflection, I realized that there is a whole other side to this gift thing. It's the why. Why has God been so generous to me? My response became, "It hasn't been for me; we are gifted for others." We are called to use our gifts in the service of others. The abundance is given to us so that it can be shared.

As a member of a religious congregation, I have many wonderful memories. As I have moved from ministry site to ministry site, and as I have said yes to new positions and assignments, it seemed something new was drawn from me each time. I grew as a person. I continued discovering my giftedness in abundance.

Who could ask for more? I continue to live a life of **ABUNDANCE!**





Each week, as we journey through Lent, one of the Cabrini Lay Missionaries (CLM) will offer a reflection. For the First Sunday in Lent, the reflection is given by Marianne McGowan, CLM.

First Sunday in Lent

A cardinal showed up this morning at the feeder.

He seemed very sure of himself,

Preening in his scarlet plumage.

He didn't seem to know about the pandemic,

Or the political and racial divides.

Maybe he's the harbinger of Hope.

Yesterday, I sat in the chapel at Mariandale and stared at their magnificent banner hanging on the wall. The banner had only the word, "HOPE", scripted in kelly green. "HOPE".

I've stared at this banner week after week, for years. It's been a reminder that I need to let go of worries and anxieties and focus on blessings, instead. I thought this to myself as "HOPE" stared me in the face.

Lent can be a time of hope. I pray that it is. ~ Marianne McGowan, CLM



Prayer Requests

Ukrainian people

We unite our prayers with all those of people throughout the world for the citizens of Ukraine. May they be sheltered from harm and may they find safety in neighboring lands. May those who are defending their nation be kept safe. And may the fighting soon end and democracy and peace be restored.

Missionary Sisters and all Catholic Religious Sisters

During Catholic Sisters week and always, let us pray and give thanks for the lives of the vowed religious. We pray especially for the Missionary Sisters who are *Bearers of Christ's Love in the World*.