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Il Superiore Generale

Prot.n. 015/2022/JR

PRAYER SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

May the Spirit of Peace enlighten us!

The serious situation of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia today creates great anxiety and concern for our brothers in the ASSUM Province of Poland who have responsibility for the Passionist presence and mission in Ukraine. We express our fraternal solidarity with the four Passionist religious: 3 Ukrainian nationals and 1 Polish national, who minister in the town of Smotrych and surrounding areas in Western Ukraine and are most immediately affected by this crisis.

On 15 February 2022 I sent the following message to our brothers in Ukraine and Poland through the Provincial, Fr. Łukasz Andrzejewski:

*My dear brothers and sisters in Ukraine and the ASSUM Province,
Greetings in the Lord and peace be with you!*

I know that you are living in a time of great anxiety and concern with regard to the present border tensions with Russia and the imminent threat of invasion. Together with you, the rest of the world is also very concerned. We are all living in hope that the path of diplomacy and dialogue will prevail and give way to the threat of war.

Having visited some parts of Ukraine and the Passionist presence there in August last year, I have a better sense of the people, their history and long suffering, and their hopes for developing the country and its independence. So, it is sad to see the intervention of the present crisis.

While following the constantly evolving news with regard to this situation, I want to assure you all that you and the peoples of both Ukraine and Russia are very much supported in my thoughts and prayers. The community Mass here in the Generalate this morning was offered for the intention of reconciliation and peace in both Ukraine and Russia. You are remembered and supported.

I'm sure that any news you want to communicate "from the ground" in Ukraine will be greatly appreciated by your brothers and sisters in the Congregation.

Our Passionist invocation: "May the Passion of Jesus be always in our hearts" is particularly meaningful in this situation, and we ask Our Lady, Mother of Hope to listen to the cries of the people and strengthen their hope.

In fraternal support and prayer...

I share with you the following news received from Fr. Łukasz (Provincial) this morning, 24 February 2022:

Russia and Belarus launched a military invasion of Ukraine this morning. Martial law has been declared in Ukraine and the situation is very serious. Schools have been closed, fuel at gas stations is rationed, and the Ukrainian currency, the hryvnia going to be a worthless piece of paper. There is an increasing amount of false information on the Internet about conflict and its causes. The Russians want to blame the Ukrainians for the war, but this is not true. From early morning, explosions can be heard in major cities. The first reports of the wounded and the dead appear.

I am in constant contact with the fathers working in Smotrych. At the moment, communication takes place via the Internet, as the telephones are not working. In Podolia, where our brothers work, the situation is currently calm, but the monastery in Smotrych is getting ready to accept refugees from eastern Ukraine.

I ask all the brothers, if possible, to pray for Ukraine for the cessation of hostilities and for lasting peace in a region so badly affected by decades of wars and occupation.

We can imagine that this must be a very frightening and anxious time for the people, particularly in Ukraine, though this war, if continued, will have much wider-reaching effects and consequences in Europe and beyond.

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, having made a heartfelt appeal for peace in Ukraine, has expressed great pain in his heart today at news of the invasion and calls us to counter the power of arms with the "weakness of prayer". He has invited everyone to make 2nd March (Ash Wednesday), a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace.

Supporting the request of the ASSUM Provincial, Fr. Łukasz Andrzejewski and Pope Francis to hope for the cessation of hostilities and pray for peace in Ukraine, I invite all members of the Passionist Family, individually and communally, to observe a **DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER FOR PEACE on 2nd March 2022.**

“As believers, we do not lose hope for a glimmer of conscience on the part of those who hold in their hands the fortunes of the world.

And we continue to pray and fast

—as we shall do this coming Ash Wednesday—

For peace in Ukraine and in the entire world.”

—Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State

“May the Passion of Jesus be always in our hearts.”

Fraternally,



P. Joachim Rego, C.P.
Superior General
24 February 2022