



MESSAGE FROM BISHOP MARCUS REGARDING THE UKRAINE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Over the past few days, we have heard distressing news about the war in Ukraine and seen the harrowing pictures of the destruction and the humanitarian crisis that the conflict is causing. Over one million people have fled from danger. Families have been torn apart and for those remaining, their living conditions deteriorate by the hour.

Our first response as Catholics must be to pray earnestly for the suffering people of Ukraine and for those who have had to leave their homes to seek a safe refuge for themselves and their family. We must also pray for peace with all our hearts.

Service of Prayer for Ukraine

I wish to let you know that a **Service of Prayer for Ukraine will be held at Leeds Cathedral on Thursday 10th March 2022 at 10:30am**. I will be joined at this service by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Asghar Khan, and other members of Leeds City Council, as well as representatives of other Christian denominations and religious faiths. I extend an invitation to anyone who wishes to attend, particularly those who live in the City of Leeds and those who are who are members of the Ukrainian community. It will be a simple service of readings, prayers and music, with the Lord Mayor giving an address. **Please do advertise this event in the most appropriate ways you can, given the short notice.**

In addition to our prayer, we also need to ask ourselves, 'What can I do?'

What can we do?

Aid agencies have found themselves overwhelmed by donations in kind and so are now specifically asking for financial donations only. We can help therefore by:

Donating through CAFOD and the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal

The DEC have launched an appeal for humanitarian support. The UK government will match any donations collected through members of the DEC like our own Catholic Agency, CAFOD, who are a part of this group. Your donation could also be eligible for Gift Aid. To donate, please go to: <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Ukraine-Humanitarian-Appeal>

Donating through Caritas Internationalis

Caritas Ukraine has 'requested that Caritas Internationalis hold income for the emergency appeal for onward transfer at its request.' This is due to the uncertain banking and access arrangements in Ukraine and to allow monies to support refugees in other countries. Therefore, we are encouraging those who wish to, to donate online to **Caritas Internationalis**, to speed up the process and ensure funds are being given to legitimate organisations through the Caritas federation.

Donating to Catholic Care to support our ongoing local work

As the principal expression of Caritas in the Diocese of Leeds, Catholic Care's mission is to deliver care and support to those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised in the Diocese. While our work is not international, we are working with the Home Office and various partners to be in a position to welcome Ukrainian refugee families and those affected by war into our communities. You can donate online at: www.catholic-care.org.uk

Registering an interest as a Community Group to welcome a refugee family

On the 1st March the Home Secretary announced that there will be new routes introduced for Ukrainians seeking sanctuary, potentially through agencies like Catholic Care who are already Lead Sponsors and work with parishes to 'sponsor' and welcome a family. At the current time details are limited, however, we anticipate this will be similar to the scheme currently operated for refugees from Syria. If you are interested in exploring this opportunity, please contact our Community Sponsorship Co-ordinator, Email: sue.parsons@catholic-care.org.uk

Supporting the work of Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)

ACN is providing emergency help to the suffering Church in Ukraine. If you would like to learn more about their charitable work, you can find all the latest information here: <https://acnuk.org/>

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Peace, intercede with her Son, the Prince of Peace, for the sake of the peoples of Ukraine here in our country and in their beloved homeland.

✠ **Marcus Stock**

Bishop of Leeds & Chairman of Catholic Care

4th March 2022

A PRAYER FOR UKRAINE

Loving God,

We pray for the people of Ukraine,
for all those suffering or afraid,
that you will be close to them and protect them.

We pray for world leaders,
for compassion, strength and wisdom to guide their choices.

We pray for the world
that in this moment of crisis,
we may reach out in solidarity
to our brothers and sisters in need.

May we walk in your ways
so that peace and justice
become a reality for the people of Ukraine
and for all the world. Amen.