

Responding to the continuing Russian Invasion of Ukraine...

The Bishops Conference of Scotland Statement on Ukraine 15 March 2022

"Together with Pope Francis, we fervently pray for an end to the conflict in Ukraine and for all those who have become victims of such senseless violence. We continue to be shocked at the horrific loss of life and destruction and appalled at the humanitarian catastrophe which is unfolding before us.

While we welcome the steps taken by the UK Government to resettle Ukrainian refugees in the UK, we hope that open sanctuary will speedily be offered to them, giving them the right to live, work and remain here as is happening in other countries.

We hope too that the Scottish Government will assist Ukrainians who come to Scotland with visa sponsorship, accommodation and other coordinated practical help. We urge our fellow citizens to give an open and generous welcome to those who seek refuge from the bloodshed and chaos in their nation, as we recall the words of St. Matthew "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matthew 25:35).

We commend those who wish to offer homes or work to refugees and encourage everyone who can manage to give financial help while asking people to pray for those who are suffering so grievously. The Catholic Church has begun the process of identifying properties which may be suitable for Ukrainian refugees.

We encourage Scotland's Catholics and all people of good will to open their arms to the refugees from Ukraine."

Donations can be made to the SCIAF Ukraine Appeal which will go towards Caritas Internationalis' response both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries: <https://www.sciaf.org.uk/get-involved/appeals/741-ukraine-appeal>

Help for Ukrainian refugees – a message from J&P Group

Jim Roarty writes: 'Sunflower Scotland is an Edinburgh-based organisation with friends and families in Ukraine. They have set up direct links with humanitarian groups in Lviv and Dnipro. They have so far sent off five lorry-loads of aid and will be sending at least two more. See their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SunflowerScotland>.

Here is the shopping list of their requirements extracted from their Facebook page.

Ukraine needs:

- thermal underwear,
- knee pads,
- camping goods (thermos flasks, candles, cooking pots, flashlights, camping stoves),
- sterile gloves,
- sterile bandages,
- baby formula and baby food, including lactose free,
- nappies of all sizes for babies and adults,
- sleeping bags,
- painkillers, first aid kits, bandages,
- toiletries, baby toiletries, toilet paper, paper towels,
- dry food (pasta, rice, sugar, flour, yeast, dry milk, tea, coffee), including gluten and lactose free,
- pull ring canned food,
- antiseptics and disinfectants.

Please do not donate any clothes, shoes or toys!

If you have factory packed boxes, they can remain sealed, just need to be labelled. Otherwise, please put the goods in logical groups in separate boxes and leave them open. We box the items in categories - medicine, hygiene items, nappies, canned food, dried food, etc. This way it is easier to get through customs and much easier to distribute the aid when in Ukraine.

Thank you very much for your support, kindness and help!"

If anyone has a supply of usable cardboard boxes, these would also be much appreciated.

Please leave donations at the back of either of the two churches and the J&P Group will arrange to transport them to the Tesco Car Park in Musselburgh to be loaded into the lorry.'

POPE FRANCIS' PRAYER FOR PEACE

(Pope Francis recited this prayer at his weekly general audience on March 16. The prayer was composed by Archbishop Domenico Battaglia of Naples)

Forgive us for the war, Lord.

Lord Jesus, son of God, have mercy on us sinners.

Lord Jesus, born under the bombs of Kyiv, have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, dead in the arms of a mother in Kharkiv, have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, in the 20-year-olds sent to the frontline, have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus, who continues to see hands armed with weapons under the shadow of the cross, forgive us, Lord.

Lord Jesus, born under the bombs of Kyiv, have mercy on us. Lord Jesus, dead in the arms of a mother in Kharkiv, have mercy on us.

Forgive us if, not content with the nails with which we pierced your hand, we continue to drink from the blood of the dead torn apart by weapons.

Forgive us if these hands that you had created to protect have been turned into instruments of death.

Forgive us, Lord, if we continue to kill our brother. Forgive us, Lord, if we continue to kill our brother, if we continue like Cain to take the stones from our field to kill Abel.

Forgive us if we go out of our way to justify cruelty, if, in our pain, we legitimize the cruelty of our actions. Forgive us the war, Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, son of God, we implore you to stop the hand of Cain, enlighten our conscience, let not our will be done, do not abandon us to our own doing. Stop us, Lord, stop us, and when you have stopped the hand of Cain, take care of him also. He is our brother.

O Lord, stop the violence. Stop us, Lord. Amen.

A REFLECTION FROM GEOFF DOBSON

'I am aware that lots of people have their own take on how to solve this war and that they get very heated about it. This prompted me to write a "non-directive prayer to God re the war", at least not in military / diplomatic strategy. It follows:

"Dear Lord, please grant the people of Ukraine, Russia and Belarus, Your Peace, Your Justice, Your Reconciliation, Your Forgiveness, Your Love. Amen"

I find myself praying that repetitively through the day.

My wife Sheelagh tells me that during WW 2 Canon Franklin had daily prayers for peace and to protect Portobello. People argue that is why not a single bomb fell on Portobello. Interesting!'

NB Collecting for Ukraine is taking place at Tesco in Musselburgh this Saturday and Sunday (19/20 March) – no clothes or shoes but otherwise same as last week.