

**A message from Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski,
Apostolic Visitor for Ukrainians Resident in Ireland and Northern Ireland.**

14th September 2022

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We are now in the seventh month since the 24 February full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. President Putin was sure that he would overrun Ukraine in three short days. He did not expect that the people of Ukraine, regardless of their ethnic background, religious affiliation or language group, love their country and are determined to defend it. For Ukrainians there is no going back to the tyranny and oppression that generations experienced under Russian imperial and Soviet rule from the middle of the 17th century. When the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, the people of Eastern Europe, including Russia, had hope for the future, and, until Putin's first invasion in 2014, Ukraine had made great progress as a post-Soviet state. It is truly hard for us to believe that such a war could even be possible, with the kind of horrific brutality against the civilian population that we have seen in the last seven months. At the same time, we are inspired to see how the people of Western Europe have opened their hearts to the thousands that have fled harm's way seeking temporary refuge. In this effort communities across Ireland have also extended their traditional and world-famous Irish hospitality to newly-arrived Ukrainians, for which I am particularly grateful. The struggle is not over yet, and the cost of rebuilding will be unimaginable—broken lives and families, destroyed homes, villages, farmlands, cities, infrastructure. But for now, we give glory to God for his many blessings, and for the grace he has shown us through the kindness and generosity of the wonderful people of Ireland.

Prayer for Ukraine (composed by Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski)

Almighty and Great God,
accept our gratitude for your boundless mercy towards us.
Hear the supplication of our afflicted hearts for the land and people of Ukraine,
as they confront foreign aggression and invasion.
Open the eyes of those who have been overtaken
by a spirit of deception and violence, that they be horrified by their works.
Grant victory over the powers of evil that have arisen and bless Ukraine with your gifts of
liberty, peace, tranquillity, and good fortune.
We implore you, O Merciful God,
look with grace upon those who courageously defend their land. Remember the mothers and
fathers, the innocent children,
widows and orphans, the disabled and helpless,
those seeking shelter and refuge,
who reach out to you and to their fellow human beings looking for mercy and compassion.
Bless the hearts of those who have already shown great generosity and solidarity, and those
who prepare to receive their Ukrainian brothers and sisters in Ukraine's greatest time of need.
Bring us together as your children, your creation,
and instil in us your strength, wisdom and understanding.
May you be praised and glorified,
now and forever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.