

Prayers for Ukraine

Psalm 55:4-5 My heart is in anguish within me, the terrors of death have fallen upon me. Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me.

In unison, we pray for peace and an end to Russian aggression and acts of war in the Ukraine. We lament the loss of life and the unnecessary suffering. We stand with the Ukrainian people and urge Russia to end this unprovoked conflict. We stand in solidarity with those protesting in Russia to try to get their government to choose a different, peaceable course of action. The unrest, uncertainty and trauma this war is causing are immeasurable and affects us all. In these moments, we pray knowing God hears our cries:

Dear God, We hang our heads in overwhelming sorrow while witnessing the massive number of deaths in Ukraine and the destruction of its cities. We deeply mourn these deaths, especially the children who have lost their young lives filled with promise. Be present with all who weep and cry out in anguish. With your divine presence, Lord, bring an end to this war by Russia. Move Russia's leaders to stop the bombardment of Ukraine and the killing of its people. Give wisdom to world leaders about the most effective ways to intervene and dissipate the harm being caused. Fill the people of Ukraine with hope and fortitude that peace will prevail and their freedom will endure. Amen.

Richard Rohr invites us to engage in the practice of lectio divina with "It Can't Be Carried Alone," a poem he wrote in response to the suffering of the Ukrainian people and as a meditation on the experience of watching events unfold from over 6,000 miles away. Read the following passage slowly four times. With the first reading (perhaps aloud), listen with your heart's ear for a phrase or word that stands out for you. During the second reading, reflect on what touches you, perhaps speaking that phrase or word aloud or writing it in a journal. Third, respond with a prayer or expression of what you have experienced and to what you are called. Fourth, rest in silence after the reading. (March 9, 2022)

It Can't Be Carried Alone

How can we not feel shock or rage at what is happening to the people of Ukraine—
As we watch their suffering unfold in real time from an unfair distance?
Who of us does not feel inept or powerless before such manifest evil?
In this, at least, we are united.
Our partisan divisions now appear small and trivial.

Remember what we teach: both evil and goodness are, first of all, social phenomena.
The Body of Christ is crucified and resurrected at the same time.
May we stand faithfully inside both these mysteries (contemplation).

In loving solidarity, we each bear what is ours to carry, the unjust weight of crucifixion,
in expectant hope for God's transformation.
May we be led to do what we can on any level (action) to create resurrection!
The people of Ukraine have much to teach the world.