

Aid to the Church in Need – Parish Holy Hour for Peace in Ukraine

We are asking parishes, schools and universities across the UK to organise a Holy Hour for the people of Ukraine. The testimonies coming in to our international headquarters in Germany from Ukraine are very moving.

One comes from Fr Mateusz, from the Roman Catholic parish of St Anthony in the Ukrainian capital. In an audio message to ACN he reports: *“For security reasons I can’t say much about the place where we have found refuge. There are already more than 30 of us here, including a few children, and we are experiencing God’s accompanying presence every day.”*

“People have told me that there is a lot of anger and despair out there. People are crying and mourning a lot. It is an atmosphere, which is infectious. With us, the atmosphere is different. Every day we pray together and adore Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.”



Every night Fr Mateusz spends hours with his little community in Eucharistic adoration. That gives them great strength, says the priest. *“Recently, during evening adoration, I said to the Lord: ‘I am ready for everything, and I thank you for my whole life.’ And I thought about what kind of plans God has for us, for this parish, for the believers and for Ukraine. If that can become a seed, the seed of hope and of faith for other people, then we are happy.”*

ACN is in regular contact with Fr Mateusz and countless other project partners and friends in Ukraine. The messages saying that people all over the world are praying for peace and showing their solidarity are also reaching the aid raid shelter, says Fr Mateusz. *“We are grateful for every bit of help and support coming in from all over the world and for the kind words. We thank everyone who is praying for us and giving donations to help the needs of Ukraine.”*

Despite the increasingly heavy attacks on Kyiv, one thing is very important to Fr Mateusz and his little community in the aid raid shelter: *“We are trusting that the voices of the war victims, the orphans and the widows are reaching everyone in the world – not to stir hatred in hearts or to sow bitterness. A Christian should pray for his enemies. And therefore, we should guard ourselves against all hatred and violence!”*

This Holy Hour is based on the Our Father. There are five sections, which should take around ten minutes each. Please feel free to insert music and/or extended periods of silence if you wish. You may use the structure below as a guide if you would rather have longer periods of silence.

Introduction

The following words were spoken by Pope St John Paul II in 2001:

“The more insurmountable the difficulties and obscure the prospects, the more insistent must our prayer be, to beg of God the gift of mutual understanding, harmony and peace.

We know that prayer acquires power if it is joined with fasting and almsgiving. The Old Testament taught this, and from the earliest centuries Christians have accepted and applied this lesson, especially at the times of Advent and Lent.

We ask you, Queen of Peace, to help us respond with the power of truth and love to the new and unsettling challenges of the present moment. Help us also to pass through this difficult period, that disturbs the serenity of so many people, and to work without delay to build every day and everywhere a genuine culture of peace.”

© Copyright 2001 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana JOHN PAUL II (By Pope St John Paul II) - Sunday, 18 November 2001 Angelus, 18 November 2001 |

Part 1: OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME

We begin by acknowledging God’s presence, power and worshipping God. The Greek Catholic Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, said that *“prayer for peace is more powerful than any weapon.”*

Let us silently affirm our trust in God, that he as Lord of all, is all-powerful. Let us entrust to him the people of Ukraine, with faith in his love and power to bring good out of every evil.

Silence

St Maximilian Kolbe's Prayer to the Holy Trinity

“I adore you, O our heavenly Father, because you placed in the most pure womb of Mary your only-begotten Son. I adore You, O Son of God, because you condescended to enter the womb of Mary and became truly her actual Son. I adore you, O Holy Spirit, because you deigned to form in her immaculate womb the Body of the Son of God. I adore you, O Most Holy Trinity, O one God in the Holy Trinity, for having ennobled the Immaculate in such a divine way. And I will never cease daily, from the first moment I awake, to adore you most humbly, O Divine Trinity, with my face to the ground, repeating three times: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

Lord, you are the one who truly reigns over our world. We pray that people may recognise you and turn to you in their time of distress. We pray for all those who need you as their Father today.

Amen.

Part 2: THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Let us now reflect in God's will for all peoples. We think about the coming of his kingdom and ask, even now, that his will may be done in the hearts and minds of those who want war.

Lord God, your own Son was delivered into the hands of the wicked, yet he prayed for his persecutors and overcame hatred with the blood of the Cross. Relieve the sufferings of the innocent victims of war; grant them peace of mind, healing of body and a renewed faith in your protection and care. Grant this through Christ our Lord.

Silence

Holy Spirit prayer of St Augustine

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
That I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
To defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
That I always may be holy.

Lord, we pray that you enter our world, especially coming to those who do not recognise you. Please fill our hearts with all that is holy, as St Augustine asked in his prayer, and give us the courage to speak of the goodness of your Kingdom.

Father, we know that your love is always creative and evil is always destructive. We ask you to send the Holy Spirit who brought order at the beginning of time, to bring your creative love and orderly will to the places of panic, fear, chaos and destruction. May we be people who build up and never destroy.

Holy Spirit, strengthen and defend the people of Ukraine who need your protection. Amen.

Part 3: GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

Petitions

An ACN Prayer for Ukraine

Psalm 67: 1 RSV-CE

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face to shine upon us.

Everlasting, Merciful God,
Hear the cries of your people!

We ask you to comfort those fleeing the deafening and frightening sounds of violence.

Be their refuge!

Strengthen and encircle them in your love and guide all refugees to safety, security and a warm, welcoming reception.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit

Transform the hearts of politicians, diplomats, leaders of armed forces and those under their command

To bring an end to the violence, so that your perfect peace will take root and flourish both in Ukraine and in Russia.

Holy Mary, the Mother of our Lord, the Eternal Word,

Lead us to your Son and the truth of His death on the cross to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

We ask you to protect under your mantle all who are assisting and providing sanctuary for families fleeing the conflict.

O Morning Star! Queen of Peace!

Faithful handmaid of our Lord

Pray for all, who are affected by the bloodshed in Ukraine and intercede for us to your Son our Redeemer.

Amen.

Silence

1. We pray for those who have lost their lives to in the violence and for those mourning their loss. We ask that lives may be spared and peace restored. Lord, have mercy on those and all the souls in purgatory. Lord, make haste to come to the aid of those who are bereaved; do not delay in giving them the strength they need to hold on to your promise of eternal life. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**
2. Jesus, may you comfort those facing this war alone. Comfort the elderly, those separated from their families, all refugees, the sick, the injured and those who have lost hope. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**
3. We pray for each person working to alleviate the suffering of another. Lord God, guide all those who have to make big decisions during this crisis and help us all to be selfless in our conduct. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**
4. We pray for the Church. We ask you to bless those who serve your people in dangerous situations in Ukraine. Protect priests, deacons, religious and lay ministers as they bring your love to the sick, the desperate and those separated from their loved ones. Give them every grace they need to do your work. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**
5. We pray that people across the world will be generous in their love, prayers and material support to those who need help in Ukraine. Holy Spirit, empower all Christians with a new enthusiasm for prayer, fasting and almsgiving. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**

6. Lord God, we ask you to bless young people at this time, especially those who have to fight and those who are frightened. **Jesus, Prince of Peace: Hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers and petitions together. Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

Part 4: AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US

Now let us meditate on the need for forgiveness; in our hearts, families, between friends and colleagues, between communities and nations.

Forgiveness can be so difficult that we need God's grace to forgive. The world tells us to take revenge, to get back at people or to cause people the same pain they have caused us. But Jesus tells us, *"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* (**Matthew 6:14, RSV-CE**)

And Jesus gives us the perfect example, for when he is nailed to the cross in extreme pain, he says *"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* (**Luke 23:34, RSV-CE**)

Lord, when people are suffering atrocities, forgiveness seems impossible. May those who have suffered extreme loss at the hands of another not become broken and embittered; only your divine help can lead them to the freedom of forgiveness. We pray this for the people of Ukraine and everyone who has suffered at the hands of another.

Our Mother Mary, you too had to forgive those who killed your son. You knew the disciples left him when they needed him most. Your heart must have broken, yet you also show us the path to forgiveness. Please intercede for those who, like you, have much to forgive.

Silence

A prayer from Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, UK

God of peace, your prophet Isaiah promised swords would be turned into ploughshares, and your Son's mother, Mary, proclaimed the mighty would be put down and the humble exalted: visit the people of Ukraine; deliver them from fear, violence, attack, injury, destruction, death; and give them courage, solidarity and allies in their hour of vulnerability and sorrow. Turn the hearts of those bent on war and invasion. Strengthen the hand of all seeking to halt conflict, restore order, and pursue justice.

And make this moment of peril an occasion for your Holy Spirit to show your world the cost of conflict and our dependence on one another.

In Christ our Lord, who went to his death because of our hatred, and rose again because our hatred is never stronger than your indomitable love.

Amen.

Part 5: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL

Deliverance from Evil

We face evil every day – knowing and loving God does not separate us from this, but we do have the knowledge that comes from knowing God. We hear in the book of Psalms,

“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me” (Psalm 23:4, RSV-CE)

St Michael is the patron saint of the city of Kyiv, Ukraine. A statue of St Michael has sat in Independence Square since 2002. Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk said *“Here in Kyiv we perceive that the patron of our city is the Archangel Michael, who, with the cry, ‘Who is like God?’ cast into the abyss Lucifer — the one who rose up against God’s truth and was the leader of the diabolical armies.” “We perceive today that the Archangel Michael, together with the whole Heavenly Host, is fighting for Ukraine.”*

Let’s pray together,

St. Michael the Archangel,

defend us in battle.

Be our defence against the wickedness and snares of the Devil.

May God rebuke him, we humbly pray,
and do thou,

O Prince of the heavenly hosts,

by the power of God,

thrust into hell Satan,

and all the evil spirits,

who prowl about the world

seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Silence

A prayer of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

O Christ Jesus,

when all is darkness

and we feel our weakness and helplessness,

give us the sense of Your presence,

Your love and Your strength.

Help us to have perfect trust

in Your protecting love

and strengthening power,

so that nothing may frighten or worry us,

for, living close to You,

we shall see Your hand,




Your purpose, Your will through all things.

Lord God, when we walk amongst the evil in our world, we pray that you are with us. We pray for all those who are facing great danger now, especially those in Ukraine forced to leave everything behind. We pray also for those who have stayed to defend their cities, towns and villages. May St Michael protect them, and God be with their families and friends. Amen.

Let us pray together;

St Michael the Archangel, protect all people from every natural and supernatural evil
Blessed Michaelina Josaphata Hordashevskya of Lviv, pray for those who have had to leave Ukraine
St Raphael the Archangel, bring your healing to those in pain
St Teresa of Calcutta, intercede for doctors, nurses and carers
St. Vladimir I of Kyiv, pray for a miraculous resolution to this conflict
St Joseph pray for families who have been separated by war
St Anthony of Padua, intercede for the elderly
St Luke, protect those who are especially vulnerable in Ukraine
St Elizabeth of Portugal, please intercede for peace and harmony between countries
Sts Boris and Gleb, pray for those who have lost their lives
Our Lady of Guadalupe, we ask you to intercede for the world, that all people will cherish every human life without classification.
Lord, we pray for a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the world.
Renew us, Lord, and help every person who bears your name as a Christian to be a sign of hope and a witness to your kingdom.

And finish by praying together; Our Father...

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-  **If you are a teacher, chaplain or catechist and would like to find out about our resources for use in schools and youth groups, please contact: community.outreach@acnuk.org**
 -  For primary school resources for Ukraine see: [Aid to the Church in Need | Prayer & Fasting for Ukraine \(Primary\) \(acnuk.org\)](#)
 -  For secondary school resources for Ukraine see: www.acnuk.org/resource/prayer-and-fasting-for-ukraine-secondary

Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) is a Pontifical Foundation of the Catholic Church, supporting the Catholic faithful and other Christians where they are persecuted, oppressed or in pastoral need.

Founded on Christmas Day 1947, ACN supports around 5,000 projects across the world each year.

For regular updates from the suffering Church around the world or to find out more information, please visit www.acnuk.org

Thank you for your prayers and support for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Ukraine.

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