

On Line and On Point

MARY MOTHER OF JESUS INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

marymotherofjesus.org

THE UKRAINE CRISIS



NOTE: Pax Christi USA is a co-signer of this organizational sign-on letter on Ukraine addressed to President Biden and delivered April 19, 2022.

President Biden,

As national faith-based organizations and leaders, we urge you to think creatively about how to end this catastrophe rather than maintaining it through violence and escalations.

The war in Ukraine is a spiritual, human, and ecological catastrophe. We have failed to create the social conditions for the prevention of large-scale violence.

We have failed to escape the cycle of threats, blame, and retribution which escalates hostility and distrust. We have failed to acknowledge the relevant **root causes and acknowledge**

responsibility for harm from key stakeholders. We have failed to engage

diplomacy focused on the dignity and human needs of the key stakeholders, with a willingness to compromise, and a focus on saving lives. We have failed to adequately train people in nonviolent conflict, resistance and civilian-based defense. Let's not make these mistakes again.

- We urge you to amplify the courageous and creative actions of nonviolent resistance being done in Ukraine, Russia, and elsewhere (see examples below). Like the Alliance for Peacebuilding, we also urge you to help establish communication hubs for such persons as well as invest and call for others to resource these civil society leaders and activists. This will lend concrete solidarity towards dynamics which are ten times **more likely to lead to durable democracy**.
- We urge you to encourage President Zelensky to do all he can to find a diplomatic agreement with Russia to end the war, even if the outcome includes **limits to NATO** influence or other concessions from the west. This will create space for more insightful thinking about how to address root causes and seek a more sustainable just peace. We know Russian leadership is responsible for their invasion. Yet, we have more influence on Zelensky at this point to take the moral high ground.

Mary Mother of Jesus Inclusive Catholic Community Mission Statement

We are a Christ-centered community of equals, consisting of women and men, ordained and non-ordained, empowered by the Spirit whose mission is to worship, to serve, to promote compassion, justice and care for creation. Come join us.

Send articles/info by Wed to be published on weekend: rjbannerusa@gmail.com

- We urge you to call on donors, governments, and multilateral institutions to support unarmed civilian protection to nonviolently protect civilians. For example, Operazione Colomba is in Lviv helping to accompany and evacuate marginalized persons.
- We urge you to re-humanize all stakeholders, including adversaries. This is done through the language, labels, and narratives you choose to use. Although difficult, we must avoid labels such as calling persons or groups “evil,” “diabolical,” “irrational,” “thugs” or “monsters.” This doesn’t mean we agree with or justify their actions. Yet, the more we dehumanize others, the more we escalate, narrow our imagination, and enable dynamics of violence. Re-humanization is also done through solidarity with people’s social movements and carefulness that sanctions don’t cause undue harm to their populations, especially in a way that restricts humanitarian, human rights work, or the ability of people to meet their basic needs. This can also be done by offering shelter and protection to Russian defectors. Another example is a willingness to pray for all stakeholders, including adversaries.
- We urge you to consider strategic **delegations** or a humanitarian airlift into Ukraine to generate time and space, i.e. peace zones, for interrupting the hostilities. For example, this could include one or multiple allied countries landing huge cargo planes full of medicine and food in Ukraine. Top government (and maybe religious or other) officials would be on board. Cargo planes are

not offensive fighter jets. The U.S. executed exactly **such a humanitarian airlift when Putin invaded Georgia** in 2008 which significantly contributed to the end of those hostilities.

AGREED SUCCESS—Overall agreement, from the technicians at St. Andrew, the participant/community members on ZOOM, and the participant/community members in attendance at St. Andrew, that our first “hybrid” Liturgy was an outstanding success! THANK YOU!

POEM—Let’s love each other

Let’s love each other,
let’s cherish each other, my friend,
before we lose each other.
You’ll long for me when I’m gone.
You’ll make a truce with me.
So why put me on trial while I’m alive?
Why adore the dead but battle the living?
You’ll kiss the headstone of my grave.
Look, I’m lying here still as a corpse,
dead as a stone. Kiss my face instead!
—by Rumi (translated by Haleh Liza Gafari)

OFFERINGS—If you have made a recent donation to our community, we thank you for your generosity. We are most grateful for your demonstrated care and concern. Please remember to make your regular donations to MMOJ by sending your check to MMOJ % St. Andrew UCC, 6908 Beneva Road, Sarasota. FL 34238.

Remember: MMOJ continues to donate 5% of all received offerings each month to Outreach, which will continue to focus on real issues of food and hunger in our surrounding communities.

STAFF—Russ Banner, editor; Joan Pesce, Lee Breyer, Anna Davis, text review; Beth Ponce and Dotty Shugrue, features

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OUTREACH—The current recipient of our offered financial support is All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota [AFFB] in its task of providing food for hungry and needy families and children. Please be generous. St. Andrew UCC must be on the same “outreach” schedule as there was in their vestibule an extensive display of materials from All Faiths Food Bank of Sarasota. Meanwhile, we will summarize AFFB’s efforts in OLOP as supplying the food needs of children and families in our local community.

MOVIE CORNER

I thought I would give Beth a breather, step in and mention a special service offered by Netflix. They offer a category called the 90 minute movie. For my brother-in-law, Louie, he is ecstatic over this category. Maybe 90 minutes is all you can take as well. Just letting you know that this service is available.

HELP NEEDED: Have you seen a good movie? I’d love to know. You don’t have to write the review or even have your name mentioned. Just email the movie name and if possible where you’ve seen it to ponce.beth@gmail.com. With longer days and warmer weather I do not watch as many movies so could really use your suggestions and recommendations. Thank you all. Send your comments, criticisms, suggestions, to ponce.beth@gmail.com —*Beth Ponce*

MOVE INTO ACTION [the start of a series to accomplish]—A Commitment to Accountability—How many of us have committed to practices aimed at achieving one thing, only to realize later that this was the wrong path? How many of us have made New Year’s resolutions or Lenten commitments only to remember

weeks or months later that we have not been doing them? We all do better with structures and relationships of accountability. These will help ensure that what we have committed to could actually achieve the ends we desire, as well as ensure that we are actually doing the things we say we will be doing.

ISSUE ACCOUNTABILITY

First and foremost, we must be accountable to those directly impacted by an issue. If we care about struggling for affordable and supportive housing for all people, for example, then our actions must be accountable to real people experiencing housing insecurity. This will ensure that we center tactics and uplift strategies that could actually accomplish the things that are needed. This keeps us from spinning our wheels or wasting our time [as much as is possible]. **So, what people or organizations can you build accountability relationships with? Are they made up of or accountable to those directly impacted? How might you build relationships of accountability with them?**

PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

With all the responsibilities, pressures, and fears in our lives, we need to build relationships of accountability that will help us to follow through on our commitments. Rather than burdening those directly impacted with this responsibility, how can we find people who share similar social locations or personal identities who would also benefit from a relationship of accountability? **How can we invite them into practices of shared responsibility? How can we ask each other tough questions, reflect back the things we observe, and ensure we do not renege on our commitments?**

[Next: Deepening Our Political Analysis]