



## Letter of solidarity with Dominican Family in Ukraine

At the meeting of Dominican promoters of justice and peace in Europe on 24 June 2022 we had the opportunity to hear a report from our brother Petro Balog prior of Kiev. He spoke to us about the suffering brought to the civilian population by the Russian Federation's unjust aggression against Ukraine from 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022. He communicated to us the pain and apprehension for the victims of the war, for the millions of displaced people and refugees, for all those who have been deprived of their homes and all their possessions. He also told us of the commitment of the Dominican family in Ukraine to stand by the suffering population, to accompany the displaced, to shelter civilians during the attacks of towns and bombings.

The situation in Ukraine challenges us Dominicans to offer our reflection and our commitment to contrast the logic of war, to find ways to reduce the violence, to promote ways of active nonviolence to fight against unjust aggression and crimes, and to build peace in justice. In fidelity to the gospel we are called to witness that war and weapons don't bear solution to the conflicts and they generate injustice and suffering.

We remind the invitation of pope Francis:

"Jesus traced the path of nonviolence, which he followed to the end, to the cross, by which he achieved peace and destroyed enmity (cf. Eph 2:14-16). Therefore, whoever welcomes the Good News of Jesus, knows how to recognise the violence he carries within him and allows himself to be healed by God's mercy" (Peace Day Message 2017).

We wish to express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and in particular with the Dominican Family in Ukraine at this time of sorrow and violence. We pray to the Lord for them that there may be an immediate end of hostilities, that there could be found ways to build peace in justice, that they may welcome and comfort the many suffering people.

In recent months, the wave of international solidarity of western countries, particularly towards the Ukrainian people, has shown that it is possible to implement concrete policies of support, welcome and protection. At the same time, this situation has brought into sharper relief the difference in Europe's treatment of people fleeing the war in Ukraine compared to the treatment of migrants fleeing from other lands such as Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, sub-Saharan African countries, etc. As sister Pilar Del Barrio reminded us in her speech at the promoters' meeting, the focus on the Ukraine affair should make us more sensitive to the suffering of forgotten peoples and to the many wars going on in the world.

While expressing our solidarity with the Ukrainian Dominican family, we invite our communities to promote attention to all situations in which there are violations of fundamental rights in the world, and in particular to implement choices of welcome and solidarity, giving priority to mission projects that express compassion for those fleeing war and violence.

28th June 2022

Following the signatures of the promoters who have sub-signed the letter

- Alessandro Cortesi op – regional promoter JP Europe
- Manuel Rui op – promoter of JP Portugal
- Stephen Cummins op – promoter of JP Ireland
- Petro Balog op – promoter of JP Ukraine
- Ivan Attard op – promoter of JP Malta
- Francesco Compagnoni op – promoter of JP Prov. San Domenico Italy
- Richard Finn op - Director of the Las Casas Institute for Social Justice - Oxford
- Gabriele Scardocci op – vice promoter of JP Prov. Romana s. Caterina Italy