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CONSTANT IN PRAYER

A Call to the Faithful of the Eparchy of New Westminster and to all People of Good Will to a Resurgence of Prayerful Appeal to the Lord for an End to the War in Ukraine.

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation,
be constant in prayer” (*Romans 12:12*)

Dear Brothers and Sisters throughout our vast eparchy,

Our hearts ache when we think of our Ukraine - a land and a people that now groan from war, loss, and injustice. And yet there seems to be no end in sight as the killing and genocide continues daily. In times like these, we especially need unity, faith, and prayer. Therefore, I address you with a sincere appeal: **let us not grow weary of praying.**

After so many years of trying to comprehend and resist the brutal Russian invasion, we undoubtedly are exhausted. No one is more drained than the soldiers who battle at the front and the families whose homes and lives have been destroyed by shells and rockets. All who strive to speak up for Ukraine and gather humanitarian aid and pray every day also experience an exhaustion. “How long must I carry sorrow in my soul, grief in my heart day after day? How long will my enemy triumph over me?” (*Psalms 13:3*)

Yet, the faint voices of the orphans, the abused women, the defenceless elderly, and the voices from the graves of those who have sacrificed their lives for freedom beg us to continue to carry on doing what we can – especially raising our prayer to our merciful Lord.

Prayer is not just words nor should it ever serve as a gesture of protest or defiance. It is an encounter with God, Who hears, Who acts, Who never abandons. And when we pray together, as one family, our prayer becomes a powerful force.

The Lord says: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God' (*Mt. 5:9*). So let us be those who bring peace—first into our own hearts, and then into the world around us.

I ask you:

- Pray daily. As the Apostle wrote, “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17) —at home, on the road, at work. Let prayer for peace be a part of our lives.
- Support one another. If someone's faith weakens, offer your support. If someone is in despair, share your hope and give your encouragement. If someone tires of praying, offer your support not unlike Aaron and Hur who held up the prayerful arms of Moses (Exodus 17:11-13) bringing victory to God's People.
- Come to communal prayer efforts.

Together we are part of the living Body of Christ, and together we can implore the Lord:

- for an end to the war,
- for the protection of the innocent,
- for wisdom and, perhaps, for a conversion of heart for those who make decisions in this long and bloody war.
- For a righteous peace.

May our prayers be simple, but sincere and may they become a shield for those in danger and a light for those in darkness.

Let us believe: God is Love, and Love always triumphs!

With my pastoral blessing and my prayer, I ask that we try to meet daily for the Eucharistic Liturgy in our parishes during which we always pray for peace in Ukraine and for peace in so many other troubled areas of the world.



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