



**STATEMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS
UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
OF THE USA AND DIASPORA:**

Commemorating the Third Anniversary of the Genocidal Invasion of Ukraine

Beloved in the Lord: Christ is Among us!

With hearts burdened by the suffering of millions, yet steadfast in our faith in the mercy and justice of our Lord Jesus Christ, we, the Council of Bishops of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora, prayerfully mark the third anniversary of the brutal, unjustified and genocidal invasion by the Russian Federation into the peaceful and sovereign nation of Ukraine.

Three years of relentless aggression have brought immeasurable pain and suffering to Ukraine and her people. Millions of innocent men, women, and children have been displaced, forced to leave their ancestral homeland seeking refuge in foreign lands - throughout Europe, the United States, Australia, South America and beyond. Hundreds of thousands of lives have been lost - innocent victims of indiscriminate violence, including children torn from their families, and brave men and women of the Ukrainian Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives in defense of their beloved homeland.

We weep with the Psalmist who cried, “How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?” (Psalm 13:1). Yet, as people of faith, we hold firm to the promise of our Savior: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).

Today, we grieve not only for the lives lost but also for the thousands of children who have been forcibly removed from Ukraine and relocated to Russia, torn from their families and communities. We join the global outcry for justice and fervently pray for their swift reunion with their loved ones. As our Lord commands us to love and protect the innocent, we beseech all nations and organizations to continue their efforts to bring these children home.

We are reminded of Christ’s words: “Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13). The sacrifice of Ukraine’s defenders reflects this divine love - a selflessness that echoes the call of the Gospel to stand for truth, justice, and peace.

As we approach the solemn anniversary of February 24, 2025, we direct all parishes of our Church to dedicate Sunday, February 23, 2025, to the well-being of Ukraine. Following the Triple Litany of the Liturgy all clergy are instructed to read the prayer for the living attached hereto. At the conclusion of Divine Liturgy, a Memorial Service (Litia) will be held in every parish to pray for the repose of the souls of those who have perished – military and civilian – giving their lives in defense of Ukraine and all her people.

On February 23, 2025, we call upon every parish under our spiritual authority to ring their church bells – at 8:59 p.m. Eastern Time Zone, 7:59 p.m. Central Time Zone, 6:59 p.m. Mountain Time Zone and 5:59 p.m. Pacific Time Zone - in the United States, and at the local times throughout the Diaspora, which correspond to 3:59 a.m. on February 24 in Ukraine. This act will mark the exact hour the aggression began three years ago. On February 24, we ask all faithful, clergy, and people of goodwill to spend the day in prayer, fasting, meditation, and silence, reflecting on the suffering of Ukraine and praying for peace and justice.

Let us unite in humility before God, praying for peace, for the end of suffering and for the triumph of love over hatred. As Christ's Body – the Holy Church, we reaffirm our commitment to charitable aid, financial support, and the spiritual well-being of all our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. We encourage all faithful to continue their generous contributions to the Ukrainian Relief Fund, accessible through our official website, www.uocofusa.org.

Finally, we offer our blessings and prayers for the religious, civil, and military authorities of Ukraine, for all people of goodwill who have selflessly given their lives, resources, and talents in service to Ukraine, and for the faithful of our Church who have supported them fully. May our merciful God strengthen Ukraine and bring peace to her suffering people.

With love in Christ,

+Antony

Metropolitan of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora

+Jeremiah

Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Eparchy of South America

+Daniel

Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA and Diaspora