



DIOCESE OF ALGOMA
619 Wellington Street East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 2M6



DIOCESE OF MOOSONEE
2-113 B Third Street West
Cochrane, ON P0L 1C0

*A Call to Prayer from Archbishops Anne and Fred
Lent 2022*



Ukrainian soldiers pray in front of an Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary

*“Hide your face from my sins;
wipe away all my guilty deeds!
Create a clean heart for me, God;
put a new, faithful spirit deep inside me!
Please don’t throw me out of your presence;
please don’t take your holy spirit away from me.
Return the joy of your salvation to me
and sustain me with a willing spirit.”*

(Psalm 51.10-12 Common English Bible)

We enter the holy season of Lent this year in the shadow of an unprovoked war in Ukraine following the invasion of Russian and Russian backed troops last week. We carry into Lent the burden and the responsibility of being faithful to our calling as Christians who love their neighbours in the wake of a worldwide pandemic. We remain committed to the important work of justice and truth telling and being a people of peace and reconciliation.

We invite you to join with us in observing a holy Lent, by prayer and fasting and almsgiving. In particular we ask you to pray intentionally for a de-escalation of the war in Ukraine and a peaceful resolution to the conflict that is raging.

We pray for the victims of this war – the innocent men, women, and children that have been injured or killed; for families that have been displaced from their homes and loved ones separated from one another.

We pray for doctors, nurses, hospital staff, the Red Cross, and other aid workers rendering assistance in the midst of the conflict, and others working in neighbouring countries to house asylum seekers.

We pray that God will protect all vulnerable people living in fear and give strength and resiliency to those who are caregivers.

We pray for a strengthening of those who are working to bring an end to the conflict by peaceful means, and for the leaders of the nations as they make decisions that will have global consequences. We pray especially for those who hold the power over war or peace.

We are made for community and therefore involved in one another's lives, inextricably linked. Lent teaches us about living communally and calls us into the truth of our unity as we celebrate being one body in Christ. We are seeing a reassuring communal kindness being lived out in Europe as strangers are reaching out to displaced individuals and families in crisis.

As someone who prays with Icons, I was particularly moved by the photo of Ukrainian soldiers praying before the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary before heading out to face the incoming Russian tanks.

The particular icon they are praying in front of is known as the *Hodegerita*, or The One Who Points the Way. If you look closely at the icon you will notice that the Christ child seated on his mother's lap is looking at his mother Mary's face while Mary is looking directly at us. Her face is filled with sorrow as she gazes on our broken, sinful, and suffering world.

Every icon is a window, pointing beyond itself to the One who is the source of life, love and goodness. What Mary is saying to us in this icon is not spoken with her eyes at all, but with her right hand that is pointing us to the Christ Child. She is introducing us to Jesus – her beloved Son – God's chosen One, with whom God is well pleased. Mary is showing us who to follow. "Don't look at me," Mary says, "Look to my Son." Mary leads us to Christ so that we may find in Him what Mary finds, Love Eternal.

Mary also exemplifies for us the posture in which Lent aims to shape us, a people who, in word and deed direct people's gaze upon the crucified and risen Lord, Love Eternal.

Let us return to Love this Lent and pray for new and clean hearts. As we do, we will discover that God does not ever throw us away from God's presence but will sustain us in all our doings with God's life-giving Spirit.

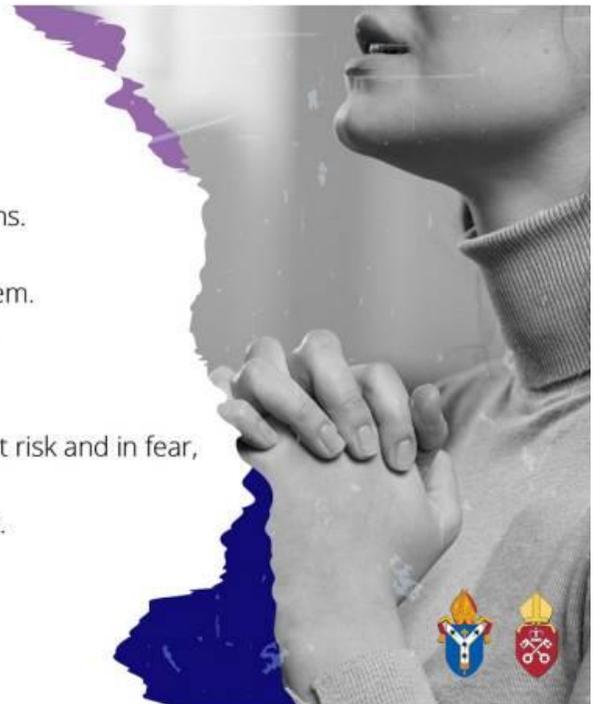
+ *Anne*

+ *Fred*

A Prayer for Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
we pray for the people of Ukraine today.
We pray for peace and the laying down of weapons.
We pray for all those who fear for tomorrow,
that your Spirit of comfort would draw near to them.
We pray for those with power over war or peace,
for wisdom, discernment and compassion
to guide their decisions.
Above all, we pray for all your precious children, at risk and in fear,
that you would hold and protect them.
We pray in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace.
Amen.

Archbishop Justin Welby
Archbishop Stephen Cottrell



Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

By Robert Knighton – St. Thomas Bracebridge

The evil being perpetrated against the people of Ukraine does not stand alone. In our human weakness, our ignorance, our sinfulness, we have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. And so, through these futile efforts of hostility and darkness, blood has been shed; lives have been shattered; hopes have been buried. Almighty God, confront today those who inflict destruction and pain, comfort those who bear the consequences of others' sinfulness.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts to the things which belong to our peace, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!" Open our eyes, soften our hearts, grant us wisdom, grant us the courage to take concrete steps to receive and live out Your peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. The way of Jesus is the way of forgiveness and reconciliation. His promised gift to us is a peace which passes understanding. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the words which always brings us together will be "brother", "sister", "friend" and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam! **Amen**

**PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE OF UKRAINE**

רבון העולמים
שומע תפילת כל פה

Sovereign of the Universe
Who hearkens to our prayers,

We stand before You in solidarity with all who are enduring the darkness of human conflict in Ukraine.

May You protect all innocent men, women and children at this moment of great peril for them, their country, for Europe and the world.

Bring fortitude to the vulnerable, resilience to the insecure and strength to those who live in fear.

Incline the hearts of national leaders towards peace and reconciliation and bless them with the wisdom, vision and perseverance needed to end this war and restore peace to the region.

Almighty God, strengthen the hands of those who pursue peace, not war. Bring harmony where there is hostility; relief where there is pain and hope where there is despair.

May He who makes peace in high places
Make peace for all on earth.

וכן יהי רצון

May this be your will
And let us say Amen.

