



The Byzantine Catholic
Metropolitan Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

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2022 Great Fast Message to Pray for the Church in Ukraine
February 24, 2022

We enter the Great Lenten Fast. Just as the hope of relief from the Pandemic began to grow, the invasion of Ukraine and threat of a larger global war has arisen. Since 1991 the faithful living in Ukraine had the joy of political and religious freedom. The occupation of parts of the Lugansk and Donetsk Provinces has already cost 14,000 lives. With the threat of Communist suppression of the entire nation, the shadow of the return to the decades of gloom has returned for the Ruthenian and Ukrainian Catholic Church members living in the nation of Ukraine.

We pray for our members who have families living in Ukraine. Especially, we pray for the families of our ten priests from Ukraine serving in the Pittsburgh Archeparchy as well as for several other priests and religious serving other churches in the United States.

The Great Fast is the season of praying, fasting and alms giving. We certainly will remember Ukraine in our praying and fasting during the Great Fast. Also, we will take a collection on the Third Sunday of the Fast for the Church in Ukraine. We ask our parishes to send the collection to the Archeparchy of Pittsburgh. We will transfer the offering to the Eparchy of Mukachevo.

We take for granted our religious and political freedom. Although our political system is far from perfect, we are allowed to worship without interference from the government. When we are persecuted for our faith, we can draw courage from the Books of the Old Testament which are filled with stories of the suffering of the people of Israel. Even though they suffered, they remained faithful to the Lord. Their enduring faith was eventually rewarded with restoration of their people.

We pray to the Lord that the invasion forces will withdraw. But if they do not withdraw, we pray that the Lord will give our people the spiritual strength to endure yet another persecution. It will likely be a time of suffering. We hope and pray that this oppression will be mild and short. And we pray that the Lord will restore their nation and our Church.

+ William C Skurla

Most Reverend William C. Skurla
Metropolitan Archbishop of Pittsburgh