08/03/2022

Archiepiscopal Encyclical on the Invasion of Ukraine



Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

Πάντες δὲ ὑμεῖς ἀδελφοί ἐστε. (κατὰ Ματθαῖον 23:8)

All of you are brothers and sisters. (Matthew 23:8)

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We find ourselves in deep pain and sorrow of soul over the horror that has ensued from the invasion of Ukraine. I do not say, “Russia,” because many thousands of the Russian People are protesting this unprovoked and unreasonable attack at risk to their own lives and freedom. This attack must be squarely set upon the shoulders of Vladimir Putin, who is risking global peace for his own selfish political agenda.

We are witnessing an immense tragedy of human suffering: the targeting of

civilians, assassination and terror, and the deaths of innocents, especially children. Yet, we know that Ukrainians and Russians are children nourished from the same breast. They are brothers and sisters in Christ. How is it possible that such a fratricide is taking place on the Holy Ground of Kyivan Rus'? As Orthodox Christians, we ask ourselves: what can we do? His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has been unequivocal:

...end the war now! Immediately stop any act of violence, anything that spreads pain and death. Let reason prevail, love for fellow human beings, reconciliation and solidarity, the light of the Risen Christ, the gift of life. (February 27, 2022)

We join our spirit to the spirit of His All-Holiness and exhort all our Faithful: offer prayers and tangible support for all the Ukrainian People: those of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine and those of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under the Moscow Patriarchate, those of the Ukrainian Catholic and Jewish communities, and all who find themselves in the dire circumstances of war.

We are called not only to forgive our enemies, but to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44). But let us go one step further. Let us see no enemy in any of our brothers and sisters. The love of Christ can transform us into the one family that will be able to resist evil, and bring healing to the wounds that our Church is suffering at this very moment. For peace, my beloved, let us pray to the Lord.

With paternal love in the Lord Jesus Christ,



† ELPIDOPHOROS

Archbishop of America