

Pope Francis Brings World Attention to Unjust War against Ukraine with Donations By Andriy Chirovsky  
*Special to Crux* April 23, 2016 (Excerpts)

Could the pope be trying to win back the hearts of Ukrainians and their allies by taking up this collection? The declaration, signed at an airport lounge in Havana on February 12, includes 27 paragraphs in a beautiful ecumenical tone, and three that most Ukrainians in Ukraine and in the diaspora (fifty-some million people) find alarming, if not offensive: Paragraph 26 speaks of “the hostility in Ukraine” without even the slightest allusion to the fact that Russia has breached the territorial integrity of Ukraine by occupying and annexing Crimea, and by sending troops and some of the most destructive new weapon systems into Eastern Ukraine under the guise of a “separatist rebellion.”

Pope Francis exerted significant energy during an in-flight press conference on the way home from Mexico to defending the head of the UGCC, whom he knew as a young bishop from his days in Argentina. By mentioning that he had met with the presidents of both Ukraine and Russia, he also tacitly acknowledged that the conflict in Ukraine was not an internal civil war —as the Moscow Patriarchate claims— but rather a matter of two countries. In early March Sviatoslav and the Permanent Synod of the UGCC (its governing body between meetings of the full Synod of Bishops) met with Pope Francis at the Vatican. Even though the meeting was originally to be about papal recognition of the fidelity of Ukrainian Greco-Catholics in the face of bloody persecution and the amazing flowering of this Church after an underground existence for half a

century, the timing was ripe for the hierarchs of the UGCC to bring to the pope’s attention not only the problematic nature of several of the Havana Declaration’s paragraphs, but also to the immense humanitarian crisis in Ukraine that has been caused by the Russian government’s aggression. In the short period between the Havana Declaration and the Ukrainian bishops’ meeting with the pope, the new papal ambassador to Ukraine, Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, was savvy enough to visit the front lines in Eastern Ukraine and report back to the pope, together with extensive video footage of the devastation.

This, of course, struck a chord with Pope Francis, who insistently calls the Church to solidarity with the poor and suffering in the world. He listened intently to the reports of the Permanent Synod of the UGCC and informed them that he had watched Gugerotti’s video in preparation for the meeting. He wanted to do something.

Francis is a master of gestures. His oral interventions and even his texts leave many bewildered at times, but his gestures come across clearly.

So the bishops of the UGCC under the leadership of their patriarch and Bishop Borys Gudziak, who heads their Department of External Affairs, devised a plan that would not only address the suffering but also bring Ukraine back into the news and into the imaginations of Europeans. Together with Pope Francis they came up with a grand gesture: a collection in all the Catholic Churches of Europe to aid in the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine caused by the ongoing war.

On Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis made the appeal, choosing April 24 as the date of the collection.

What exactly is happening in Ukraine? Gudziak gives some clear answers. Some ten thousand have been killed. Tens of thousands have been maimed by the war. It is estimated that those suffering from post-traumatic stress is in the hundreds of thousands. The amount of infrastructure destroyed equals in value the annual budget of the Ukrainian government.

Estimates of people affected by the war range up to five million people. Some two million left the country. Another two million are internally displaced refugees, and another million suffer in place.

Now figure in the internal refugee situation. Forty million impoverished Ukrainians have generously accepted two million refugees and are doing whatever they can to return their lives to some semblance of normalcy.

Pope Francis wants Catholics to take notice and get involved. Caritas Ukraine and other charities are doing an incredible job getting the help to where it is needed most. Is this Europe-wide collection a gesture to calm Ukrainian criticism of the Havana declaration? Perhaps. Is it a gesture of mercy toward a long-suffering Christian people? Most certainly.

*Andriy Chirovsky is a Mitred Protopresbyter in the UGCC. He holds the Peter and Doris Kule Chair in Eastern Christian Theology and Spirituality at Canada's Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies, which he founded in 1986. Readers in North America can also contribute towards the April 24 collection for Ukraine through the Catholic Near East Welfare Association [atcnewa.org](http://atcnewa.org) and in Canada at [cnewa.ca](http://cnewa.ca), labeling their donations as aid for Ukraine.*

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon  
[www.skeparchy.org](http://www.skeparchy.org) Wynyard Pastoral District  
Fr. Jeffrey D. Stephaniuk 306-560-8885  
Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, April 24, 2016

Sympathies to the family of +Joseph Bashutsky

7:00p.m. Funeral Prayers

Sunday, April 24, 2016

Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church  
Wynyard, Saskatchewan

Funeral Service

10:30 a.m.

Monday, April 25, 2016

Sacred Heart Ukrainian Catholic Church  
Wynyard, Saskatchewan

Saturday, April 30 Wishart 5 pm Foam Lake 7 pm

Sunday, May 1 Holar 9 am Wynyard 11 am

Sunday, May 8 Foam Lake 9 am Wynyard 11 Krasne 1

Saturday, May 14 Wynyard 5 pm

Sunday, May 15 Wishart 9 Foam Lake 11 Kuroki 1

Saturday, May 21 Wishart 7 pm

Sunday, May 22 Wynyard 9 am

Foam Lake 11 and Praznyk

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 Wynyard Divine Liturgy

Wednesday 9:30 am Foam Lake Divine Liturgy

Wed, April 27: Wynyard Knights of Columbus 7:30 pm

Knights of Columbus Garage Sale Saturday, April 30

Wynyard: Thank you! for the help and attendance at the Perogy Plus supper on April 18