

Blessed are the Peacemakers

(Mt 5, 9)

My Dear People,

The Russian invasion of Ukraine violates one of the foundational principles of the Gospel: that Christians are to be people of peace. It violates the Church's teaching on war, namely, that war can be justified under very limited and clear conditions; this violent invasion meets none of those conditions. It violates the Church's basic teaching on the value of human life: that every human person is a unique creation of God, made in God's image, with an intrinsic dignity and value.

There are enormous human and political concerns at stake here, and the stability of not only Ukraine but Europe and the rest of the world are certainly at risk. Everything about this act of violent aggression is wrong.

But even leaving every political concern and opinion aside, our Catholic Christian faith demands an end to this action purely on the basis of the teachings of Jesus and of our own faith tradition.

I ask you to join in the day of prayer and fasting on Ash Wednesday (next Wednesday) for an end to this action and the restoration of peace in Ukraine and throughout the world. But do not wait until Ash Wednesday to start. Please make it a part of your daily prayer to remember the people of Ukraine and the words of Jesus: *Blessed are the peacemakers.*

By your prayer, and to the best of your ability, by your life, be a peacemaker, starting today. Examine prayerfully your interactions with others, whether they be family members, acquaintances, or strangers. In every moment of your day, be a peacemaker. Let your prayer support your effort, and let your effort invigorate your prayer.

May the violence in Ukraine end swiftly and justly. May the world earnestly seek peace. May we, the Catholic Christian people of Saugatuck, Douglas, and the surrounding communities, focus our prayer and our actions on peace.

Lord Jesus, you said to your apostles, "peace I leave you, my peace I give you." Strengthen us in our resolve to pray and to advocate for peace — the peace that only you can give: peace that is born of charity, justice, and mercy. May this prayer be in our hearts and on our lips every day of our lives. We pray to You, who are our teacher, savior, and brother, now and forever. Amen.

In peace,
Fr. Fabio Garzon
Pastor, St. Peter Catholic Church, Douglas, Michigan

Saint Peter

A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OF LOVE, FAITH, AND HOPE