

Local Faith Community reaching out to the Ukraine

Friday 4 March, 2022

Bishop Philip Egan of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth says, "Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by this terrible situation in the Ukraine." He encourages us all to follow the words of Pope Francis that our Lenten observances of prayer, self-denial and almsgiving be offered to help the Ukrainian situation, so that all the parties involved refrain from any action that would cause even more suffering to the people, destabilising coexistence between nations and bringing international law into disrepute.

As the dreadful events unfold in Ukraine, we stand in solidarity with our Caritas colleagues, (who work as the Diocese's outreach organisation) in Caritas-Spes as they continue to assist those vulnerable and in need in Ukraine.

Caritas-Spes had been working in Eastern Ukraine with the displaced families from the ongoing conflict in the disputed territories, including in Avdiivka which has been under heavy shelling.

If you would like to support Caritas work in Ukraine, please donate by visiting their website <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/europe/ukraine-spes/>.

Locally our parishes are also supporting efforts by fundraising and by acting as collection points to support Ukraine:

St Mary's Church in Alton, which holds a regular free clothes bank service, has teamed up with a local Polish group sending clothes to Poland for Ukrainian refugees. Anne Bothwell, one of the local co-ordinators said, "We had so much that we were able to pack up about 500 items of warm clothing and get it sent off. It should be leaving in a lorry on Saturday. It was so good to be able to help."

Immaculate Conception parish in Portwood, Southampton is supporting the amazing efforts of the Southampton Polish Social Club, who are co-ordinating regular collections of much needed goods and deliveries to the Polish-Ukrainian border.

Holy Cross church in Eastleigh will act as a collection point to support the Southampton Polish Social Club and will be open for donations. Please check their website for when the church is open <https://www.stswithunwellsparish.org.uk/>.

For those who need a time to reflect or pray, to find a church near you please go to: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parishes>.

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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

T. 023 9421 6514

E. csmith@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

W. <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk>

Additional Contact(s):

Chris Smith, Director of Communications, Diocese of Portsmouth, Tel: 023 9421 6514 Email: csmith@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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