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March 17, 2022

RE: Call for prayer for Ukraine – Sunday, March 20, 2022 at 2:00 PM EST

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are at a defining moment, and we must confront evil with prayer and compassionate solidarity. We cannot suddenly expect that we will receive better decisions from a group of global leaders whose ascension to power is steeped in transaction rather than inspiration and strong moral character. We must rely upon ourselves, the people, to stop Russia's war against Ukraine, and to prevent a third world war.

Martin Niemöller, was a prominent Lutheran pastor in Germany. He emerged as an outspoken voice against the Nazis after spending the last 7 years of Nazi rule in concentration camps. He said:

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.

Pastor Niemöller's words are the embodiment of "never again." Yet here we are in 2022 and the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, signed in 1994, prohibited the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States from threatening or using military force or economic coercion against Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. Russia breached this contract, not only today, but when it invaded Ukraine in 2014 and annexed Ukraine's Crimea and eastern border regions.

Can we say America spoke up for Ukraine? Clearly the voice of our government, and our voices, were not strong enough, otherwise Russia would not be emboldened to further their ambitions of domination and control. Today the world is speaking up for Ukraine, but are our voices loud enough? If we do not become the facilitators who confront evil, then we are repeating history and we can insert regions of Ukraine, and then Europe, and then the rest of the world into Pastor Niemöller's speech above.

Keep in mind, Niemöller's last line means evil is coming for us. Us! Western civilization is threatened *today*. As Americans, we live in a country that hasn't seen war on our own soil since

1890. It will come if we do not act. Every delivery of success to authoritarianism is a step down the lines of Niemöller's speech. If we want to live, and want our children and grandchildren to live, then we must be not afraid.

The Metropolitan Archbishop of Philadelphia of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, Borys Gudziak, has called upon us to be active in prayer. There is power in prayer. It not only stands for its purpose of glorifying God, thanking God, and petitioning God. Prayer raises our spirits and keeps us conversational in ways that remind us to raise awareness among all of our daily contacts, in person and online, that our voices are loud and clear: **We do not accept evil, we believe in peace, and we will stand with the oppressed.** We need to share in prayer together. Metropolitan Archbishop Gudziak and we are calling for us to pray in unison at 2:00 PM EST Sunday, March 20, 2022.

Very truly yours,



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