



EASTER HUMANITY

In recent years it seems that our annual celebration of Easter accompanies some societal calamity.

There has been bushfires, then the covid pandemic, and now the Russian-Ukraine conflict.

This current war is particularly disturbing because it arises not from nature or health issues but from a violence within the heart of our shared humanity.

War is the very opposite to the peace and joy of Easter. It is a defeat for humanity. It seems that the new humanity made present in the Easter Jesus has been cast aside. Offered light eternal, war opts for living in darkness.

In our Easter Liturgy, a totally different humanity is announced.

The Easter Vigil (Exsultet) proclamation chants "Christ your Son, who coming back from death's domain, has shed his peaceful light on humanity, and lives and reigns for ever and ever."

Embracing Easter humanity in the Risen Jesus is clearly an unending task for every age, especially our present time.

Jesuit priest, Fr Andriy Zelinskyy, Ukrainian military chaplain, describes the present war as "cruel, and is one of the most absurd, senseless wars in the history of Europe There is no reason for the violence". He calls for prayer as the way of "keeping hope alive that the war will come to an end and evil will never prevail."

Praying for hope in war has a practical dimension.

As an Archdiocese, we are becoming deeper friends with our local Catholic Ukrainian priest, Fr Wally Kalinecki, and Russian Orthodox priest, Fr Alexander Morozow. I have assured both communities of our prayers and support in these fragile times.

Ukrainian refugees are beginning to arrive in the Archdiocese. Many more will follow. I mentioned to Fr Kalinecki that our Archdiocese stands ready to provide whatever practical assistance deemed appropriate for these traumatised families.

Fr Zelinskyy challenges us by stating: "Please wake up ... we are stronger together ... we find ourselves at a time when the greatest gift we have is in danger, that is, our humanity ... come back to the gift of our humanity because it is something we need to treasure."

Easter humanity in Christ Crucified and Risen is not a sentimental religious pious thought. It is the very essence of our Christian humanity – mind, heart and deeds.

As St Paul declares, when Christ is "your life – you too will be revealed in all your glory with him." (Col. 3/4)

May the Easter Jesus bless and protect you always! He is truly Risen! Alleluia!

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