

out] on April 24 at the Holy Mass to make a contribution for helping the people but also a contribution which will be one for peace.

And of course, summoning everybody to prayer is very important because we know that prayer moves mountains.”

**The words of Bishop Borys Gudziak of Paris,  
head of External Relations  
for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church  
speaking on Vatican Radio on 6th April 2016.**

## **International Appeal by Pope Francis for the Christian Community in the Ukraine.**

A high ranking leader of Ukraine’s Greek Catholic Church has praised Pope Francis’s appeal to raise funds to aid the people of Ukraine who have suffered two years of ongoing conflict. Speaking to Vatican Radio, Bishop Borys Gudziak of Paris, head of External Relations for the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, said the collection which will be taken up in churches across Europe today-Sunday 24 April, “has great material significance, but even more moral significance.”

He said the Pope’s decision to appeal for help and for peace in Ukraine is a natural extension of the current Jubilee Year of Mercy and comes on the eve of publication of the papal exhortation wrapping up the Synod on the Family.

In the interview, Bishop Gudziak says, “officially, ten thousand people have been killed” since the conflict erupted between government forces and pro-Russian separatists two years ago. “Tens of thousands have been maimed or injured: without legs, without arms, without eyes – paralyzed. There are hundreds of thousands of people with post-traumatic shock and 2.5 million people had to leave their homes because five million people were directly affected by the war,” he adds.

He goes on to say that half a million people have left Ukraine and two million are internally displaced persons. “Remember that Germany accepted 1.1 million refugees (Germany has 80 million people), Ukraine (without the affected areas of Crimea and Donbas), has 40 million. And those 40 million accepted two million refugees. But the GDP of Germany, the budget of the country, is 45 times as big as that of Ukraine.”

The Greek Catholic prelate applauds the generosity of Ukrainians and the fact that there is no talk of putting refugees in “concentration camps...the people have been absorbed” by local communities.

But after two years of what he calls a “hybrid war, which is not [a declared war],” the population, he says, “is exhausted. There’s a lack of medicine, a lack of insulin for diabetics, anaesthesia for people who are operated on. Many people are operated without anaesthesia in [affected] areas.

There are many homeless people. There are people who are losing their minds. They have great psychological trauma. Today, the New York Times reported that there are 1.5 million hungry people in Ukraine.”

Of the collection to be taken up at Mass in Europe’s Catholic churches today, Bishop Gudziak says “it is always

important to help those who are poor and suffering. And this collection will do that. It will do it without regard for confessional or ethnic background, or language spoken. It will be distributed in a way that it gets to the people who need help.”

But even more importantly, he says, “it is necessary for Catholics and Christians and all people of good-will in Europe to be reminded about what is happening. When I was at the French bishops’ conference three weeks ago, many bishops were surprised that the war is still going on. Because of the situation in Syria and Iraq, all of the attention has been moved to the Middle East and people think the war is finished – that the Russian invasion is no more. But it continues. There’s shooting every day, there [are] people killed almost every day.

And so it is important that the European community strengthens its resolve in discussing these issues with Russia to stop the war, to stop the killing, to stop the flow of refugees.”

If the war were to continue and the front were to expand, Bishop Gudziak warns, “you could have 5-10 million immigrants fleeing the war, going through Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, to the West. So the situation in Ukraine is very important for Europe. And that is why the Holy Father appealed to all of the Catholics in Europe [to turn