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A woman pushes a cart with her belongings past buildings damaged during the Russian war i

A woman pushes a cart with her belongings past buildings damaged during the Russian war in the separatist-controlled town of Volnovakha, Ukraine, March 15, 2022. (CNS photo/Alexander Ermochenko, Reuters)



by Catholic News Service

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WASHINGTON — The Administrative Committee of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops March 16 called for "the immediate cessation of Russia's armed aggression and unprovoked war on Ukraine."

"We are witnessing an unprecedented threat to world peace," it said in a statement. "This possibility of global warfare is compounded by the unthinkable consequences that would result from the potential use of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction."

The committee, led by Los Angeles Archbishop José H. Gomez as USCCB president, joined its plea with that of Pope Francis, who said March 13: "In the name of God, listen to the cry of those who suffer, and put an end to the bombings and the attacks!"

"Similar appeals have been raised throughout the Orthodox Christian world and indeed by many Russians themselves," it said, noting the war "has already exacted a staggering toll — thousands dead and an exodus of 3 million refugees — with no

end in sight."

The Administrative Committee, which met in Washington March 15 and 16, operates as the USCCB's board of directors. In addition to Archbishop Gomez, its membership is made up of the USCCB's other officers, chairmen of its standing committees, as well as a representative from each episcopal region of the United States.

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"We call on Catholics of the United States and all people of goodwill to pray for an end to this war in Ukraine and for peace based on justice and respect for international law," the committee said. "We remember always that prayer is never a feeble gesture of last resort! It is a weapon of hope."

"We continue to call on the U.S. government to aid humanitarian access and to support and provide assistance to those who remain in Ukraine and those fleeing the country," it said. "We call on all Americans to contribute generously and sacrificially to Catholic and other humanitarian agencies supporting these efforts."

The statement concluded: "At this dark time, we are united with the suffering people of Ukraine. May Our Lady of Fatima and the patron saint of Kyiv, St. Michael the Archangel, guide all peoples in the pursuit of peace and watch over all those in the path of war."