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Bodies of civilians who, according to residents, were killed by Russian soldiers, lie on the street in Bucha, Ukraine, April 2, 2022. (Zohra Bensemra, Reuters/CNS)



by Catholic News Service

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Kiev, Ukraine — April 4, 2022

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Videos of dead Ukrainian civilians, many apparently executed by Russian troops, are further evidence that "the struggle of Ukraine is a spiritual struggle against evil, against the devil and his servants," said Ukrainian Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych.

"A mountain of corpses, rivers of blood, a sea of tears" are the ongoing reality of Ukraine, the archbishop said in his daily video message from Kyiv April 4.

The archbishop spoke after the widespread distribution of videos from Bucha and other towns from which Russian troops had retreated. The videos show dead bodies in the streets and in the yards of homes. Many appear to have been shot in the head, execution style, and the hands of many of the corpses are bound.

Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, announced April 4 that the European Union "has set up a joint investigation team with Ukraine to collect evidence and investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity."

Shevchuk told his people that while it is right to support the military and to keep fighting the Russian invasion, the evil at play can only be vanquished with goodness, holiness and generosity.

"We know that our vices and sins must be overcome by opposing virtues," he said, in the video subtitled in English by his staff. "Pride is fought through humility, avarice is healed by sacrifice, laziness is treated by diligence," the archbishop said.

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"Today we see horrible footage. Terrible images of everything that the occupier left on Ukrainian soil. We see mass graves of people who were shot in the back of the head. We see destroyed cities and villages. We see mutilated human destinies," he said. "That is why we must get to work and fight."

"If the enemy kills us (and) sows death, let us serve life, honor human life from conception to natural death," he said.

"We see that today the enemy is robbing Ukrainians, robbing, looting," the archbishop said. In response, Ukrainians should be "generous and support those who need works of Christian charity."

Where the Russians are "destroying everything," he said, Ukrainians should try to "build, get to work," including by starting the spring planting if possible.

"Let us do good, and then evil will be defeated," he said.

This story appears in the **War in Ukraine** feature series. View the full series.