Opinion
Spirituality
Guest Voices



(Unsplash/Liv Hema)



by David Bonior

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

Send your thoughts to *Letters to the Editor*. Learn more

May 19, 2022

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

Editor's note: *Every now and then, someone prepares a prayer or a reflection to open a meeting that warrants wider distribution. That happened at NCR recently when David Bonior, an NCR board member and the former Democratic whip in the U.S. House of Representatives, read the prayer he prepared April 21. Sadly, it remains as timely now as it was then.*

It is published below with his permission.

—Bill Mitchell, NCR CEO/publisher

On this Thursday of Easter Week the joy of the Resurrection and the hope it brings is challenged and tempered by the ghastly and horrific wars that we continue to witness around the globe.

From Myanmar to Yemen to Sudan and now Ukraine, it is as Pope Francis has called it an "Easter of War." The brutal war and targeting of defenseless civilians by Putin and his army in my ancestral home of Ukraine have dampened for me the joy of Easter and the hope of the Resurrection.

Yet, as Catholics, Christians, Muslims, Jews, we are taught to take action and not wring our hands. There is much to be done. In Ukraine and now beyond its borders there are millions in need of our love, compassion and our resources. How can we watch the heartbreaking pain of the refugees? To see their personal anguish is almost unbearable. I hear people say, "I don't watch the news anymore."



A bird sits on a cross amid newly made graves at a cemetery May 15 near Mariupol, Ukraine, during the Ukraine-Russia conflict. (CNS/Reuters/Alexander Ermochenko)

But we must see. And we must act on what we "see." Ukraine's neighbor countries have opened their arms to Ukrainian refugees — to house, to feed, to comfort. Let us hope in the future that this welcoming will be extended to all, no matter of race, religion, ethnicity or sexual orientation. Is that not what we have been taught to do for all refugees, migrants, asylum-seekers?

Within weeks our southern border will see an even larger number of refugees and asylum-seekers arrive in McAllen and Brownsville, Texas.

Sr. Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus and her team of volunteers will have their hands full. Let us raise our voices and open our wallets in support of these refugees and those providing front-line support.

Advertisement

There's an ancient Middle Eastern story that applies to us today. It's the story of a wise man who could answer any riddle in life. One day a young man decided to play a trick on the old man.

"I'll capture a bird," he told his friends, "hold it cupped in my hands, and then ask whether it is dead or alive. If the old man says 'dead' I'll let it fly away. If he says 'alive' I will crush it before opening my hands."

With the cupped bird in his hand, the boy went to the old man and asked, "Is the bird I have in my hands dead or alive?"

"The answer," replied the old man, "is in your hands."

As board members and staff let us recommit ourselves to use our publication as a beacon of light for a more peaceful and just world.

Amen.

This story appears in the **War in Ukraine** feature series. View the full series.
A version of this story appeared in the **May 27-June 9, 2022** print issue under the headline: A prayer for Ukraine (and the world).