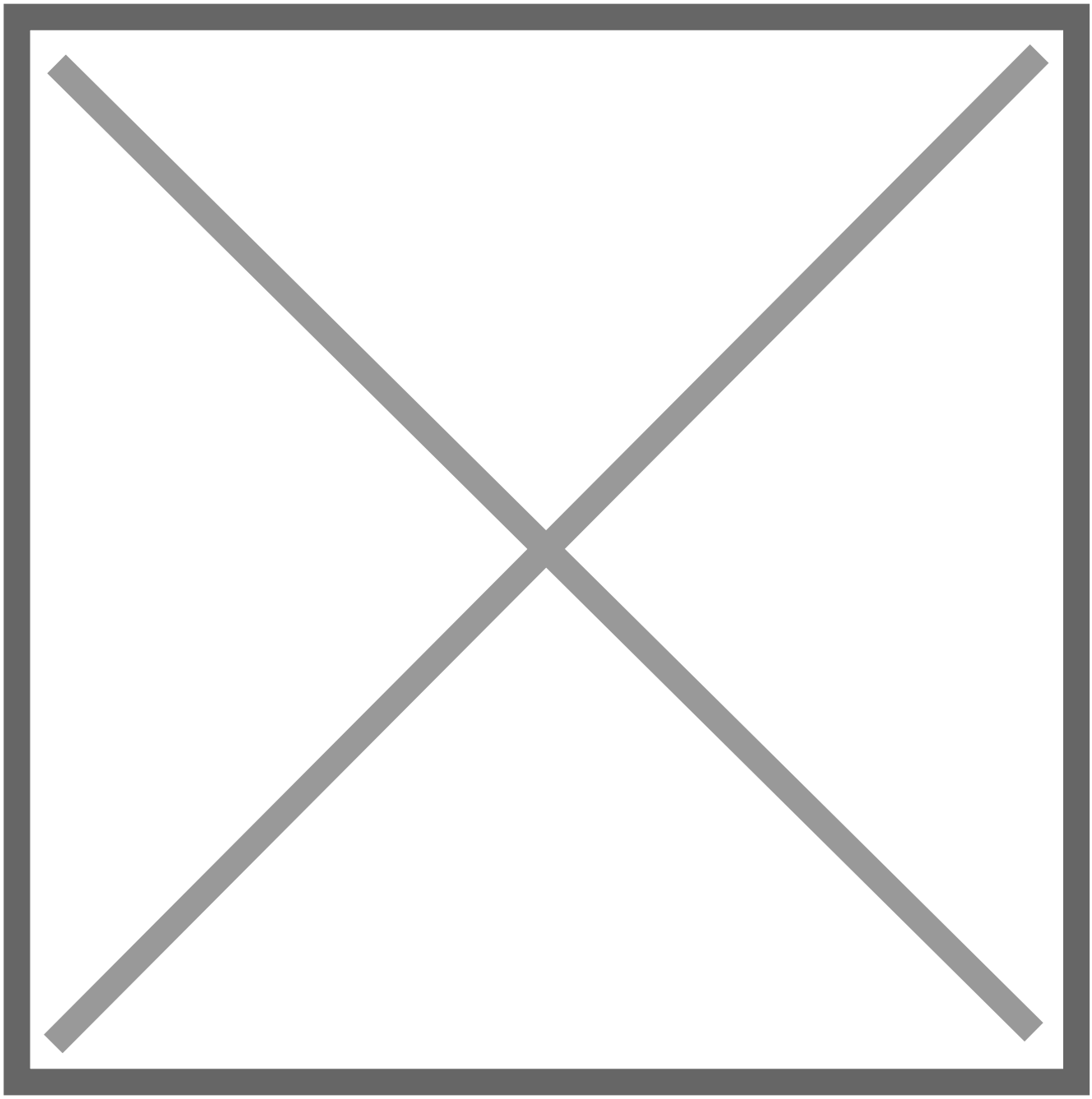
Vatican
Vatican News



Two ambulances are seen March 23, 2025, in Romanina, a suburb of Rome. On the same day Pope Francis was discharged from Rome's Gemelli hospital after a five-week stay for treatment, a group of Vatican doctors took their Lenten alms initiative a step further, drove two ambulances from the Vatican to Romanina and helped provide medical care to a group of migrants. (OSV News/Courtesy of the Dicastery for the Service of Charity)

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Vatican City — April 7, 2025
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Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Charity, was driving one of four ambulances donated to Ukraine with the help of U.S. Catholics.

With Easter approaching, Pope Francis wanted to make a concrete gesture to show his closeness to "tormented Ukraine," the dicastery said in a press release April 7.

The pope wanted to send his papal almoner to Ukraine to deliver four ambulances that are fully equipped with medical instruments needed to save lives, it said. The ambulances, which bear the coat of arms of Vatican City State, "will be destined for war zones."

The cardinal was assisted by three other drivers who came from Ukraine, the press release said. It will be the Polish cardinal's 10th mission to the war-torn nation as a special envoy sent by Francis, and he was to remain in Ukraine for a few days "to be with the people so tried by the conflict, to pray with them and to be an expression of the pope's closeness."

When the pope formally proclaimed the Holy Year dedicated to hope, he had said that "the need for peace challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken."

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One concrete step is the gift of the four ambulances, the dicastery said, becoming "a sign of Jubilee hope anchored in Christ."

The ambulances were purchased with donations provided by U.S. Catholics through Cross Catholic Outreach, Father Eloy Rojas, a missionary of mercy and hospital chaplain in the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, told Catholic News Service March 28.

Rojas was part of a small team of U.S. priests who partner with the U.S.-based Catholic relief and development organization and who met with Krajewski in Rome in late March.

The priests were delivering the latest batch of funding from Cross Catholic Outreach and seeing what U.S. donations have been able to provide.

Rojas said the cardinal was excited to show the group that with the donations they had raised in dioceses all over the United States, he was able to buy "not one, but four ambulances to support people in Ukraine."

The cardinal then invited Rojas and the others to "have a ride in the ambulance with the cardinal as the driver," the priest said. The cardinal took them around Vatican City and even outside the walls to Rome.

Being driven around with the cardinal as their driver, he said, was an inspiration, showing him "how to be a better priest, how to be a priest with humility" and to serve the poor.