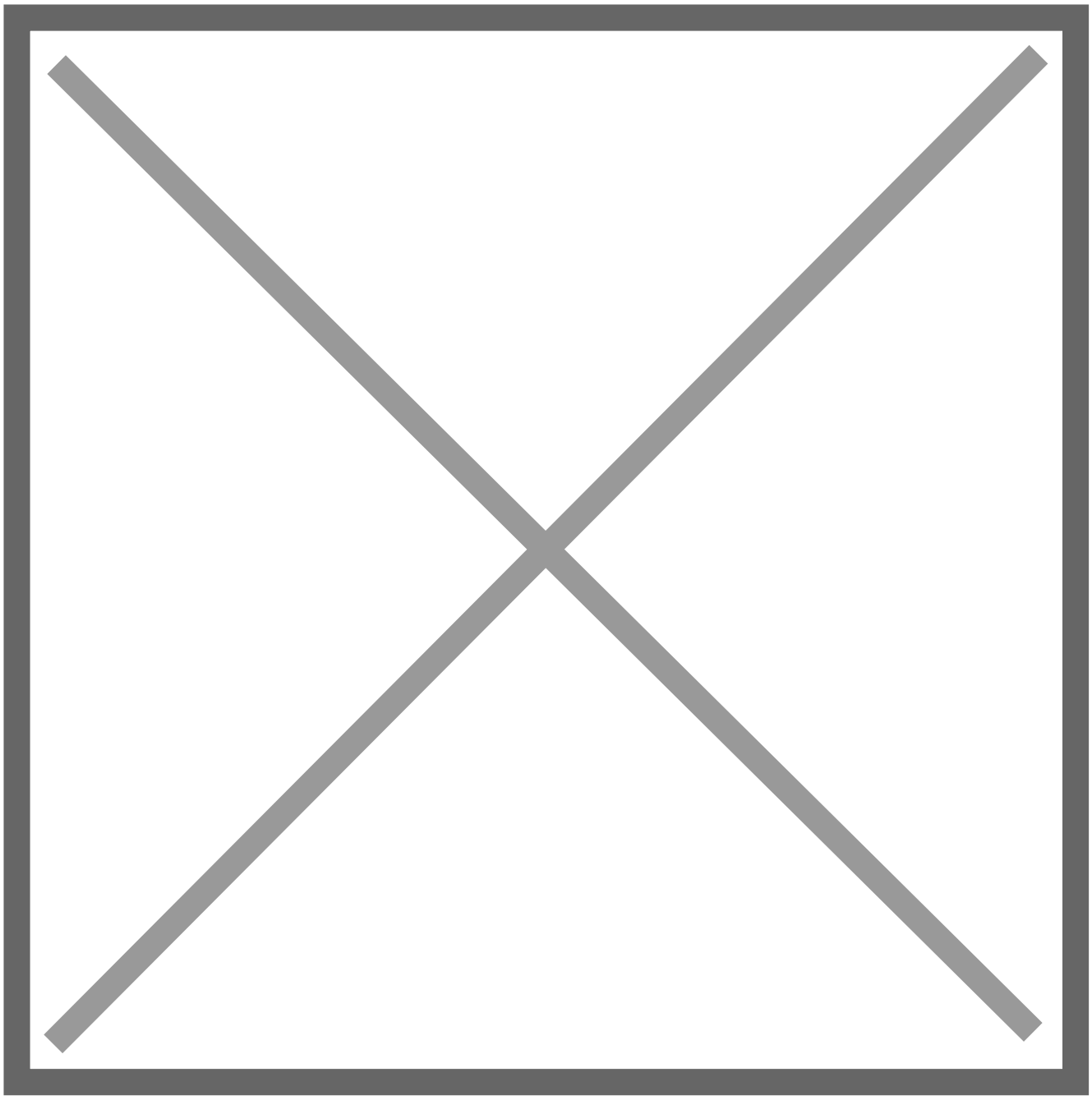
News



Firefighters work at the site of a residential building in Lviv, Ukraine, hit by a Russian drone strike March 24, 2026, amid Russia's massive nationwide attack on Ukraine that day. The building is adjacent to the Bernardine monastery complex and part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (OSV News/Reuters)

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Manhattan, N.Y. — May 6, 2026
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Several Catholic aid organizations are affirming they remain "united in hope" for Ukraine, as Russia's war on that nation relentlessly rages on.

Such commitment to support Ukraine reflects an awareness that "we are brothers and sisters in Christ," said Jennifer Healy, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' director of Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, which holds an annual collection among U.S. dioceses.

Healy, who also serves as associate director for the USCCB's national collections office, joined several speakers and participants at a May 4 briefing on Catholic efforts to assist Ukraine.

The presentation took place at the New York headquarters of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, which was established by Pope Pius XI and which provides humanitarian and pastoral support to the churches and peoples of the Middle East, Northeast Africa, India and Eastern Europe.

CNEWA and the USCCB subcommittee were joined by the Knights of Columbus in sponsoring the event, which featured an update on the situation in Ukraine by Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, who divides his time between the U.S. and Ukraine as part of his multiple leadership roles in the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and at Ukrainian Catholic University.

The gathering was preceded by Mass at the nearby Church of Our Savior, at which Bishop Gerald Vincke of Salina, Kansas — who chairs the USCCB Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe — served as the principal celebrant.

In his opening prayer at the subsequent briefing, CNEWA president Msgr. Peter Vaccari prayed for those killed by Russia's attacks on Ukraine, launched in 2014 and accelerated by a 2022 full-scale invasion.

The aggression has been classified as a genocide in multiple joint reports from the New Lines Institute for Strategy and Policy and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights.

Vaccari also interceded for "a stronger resolve" to be God's "agents of healing and hope to those who have been wounded, trafficked, abandoned; deprived of clean water, medicine and education — to those who have been stripped of their basic human dignity."

CNEWA director of programs Thomas Varghese noted that the agency's involvement in Ukraine had already been a longstanding one prior to Russia's full-scale invasion, and intensified immediately thereafter.

That aid "has been ongoing" since CNEWA was founded in 1926, with the agency initially helping Ukrainian refugees in Europe and Istanbul, and later ministering to the Ukrainian diaspora in Argentina and Brazil, according to Michael La Civita, CNEWA's communications and marketing director.

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Following Ukraine's independence from the former Soviet Union, he said, CNEWA "worked closely with the restored leadership of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church" — which had been liquidated by the Soviet regime — and was instrumental in helping to establish the UGCC's Three Holy Hierarchs seminary in Kyiv and the academy that ultimately became Ukrainian Catholic University, of which Gudziak is president.

Varghese said that CNEWA has collaborated closely with the Knights of Columbus, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and Caritas Ukraine (part of the universal Catholic Church's global humanitarian network). La Civita later confirmed

to OSV News that between February 24, 2022, and December 2025, CNEWA "rushed" more than $9.7 million in "emergency relief to church-led efforts" addressing an array of humanitarian and pastoral needs in Ukraine amid the war.

The funds have enabled pastoral care — including seminarian and clergy development — as well as emergency aid and care for vulnerable persons, particularly children, the elderly and those with disabilities, said Varghese.

Healy said her office has since February 2022 been able to provide "$9.4 million for 338 war relief projects in Ukraine and the surrounding countries who are taking care of the refugees."

Varghese stressed that the loss of funds from the now-shuttered U.S. Agency for International Development — slashed under the Trump administration — "poses a significant risk" to Ukraine's humanitarian support system, while "potentially increasing the burden" on CNEWA, the USCCB, the Knights of Columbus and other Catholic agencies.

But that's a burden they're willing to bear, said Szymon Czyszek, director of international growth in Europe for the Knights of Columbus.

He said that in founding the Knights of Columbus, Blessed Michael McGivney "set the mission" — namely, "to care for the vulnerable."

Czyszek said that to date the Knights have raised "over $24 million" from "more than 68,000 donors.

"And there are still people willing to donate, because they see the work that the Knights and the Catholic Church are doing in Ukraine," he added.

The Knights count more than 3,000 members in Ukraine, and are "part of the fabric of the communities" across that nation, said Czyszek.

As a result, he said, the organization was "able to help more than 2 million Ukrainian people," distributing "more than 10 million pounds of supplies," while sponsoring "more than 350,000 care packages" and handing out "more than 60,000 rosaries."

In his update, Gudziak — who has traveled to Ukraine 55 times since 2014, with trips to areas within a few miles of the front lines — emphasized the gratitude of Ukrainians for U.S. support.

"Every time, they say, 'Please thank the people that pray, inform, act and help,'" he said.

The archbishop said that amid the Ukrainian people's "great exhaustion" and "great loss" — with funerals of Ukrainian soldiers "a daily experience" — "not one person" in Ukraine has expressed to him "a desire to give up."

He pointed to the 4 million people displaced internally in Ukraine due to Russia's war, noting that the nation has not needed to establish refugee camps since "people are helping people" and "the poor are helping the destitute."

Citing multiple incidents of atrocities committed by Russia — among them the bombing deaths of all but one in a Lviv family and the killing of a catechist during a shopping center attack — Gudziak said that Ukrainians' determination to endure was "a question of freedom" and of "God-given dignity."

The fight is also for religious freedom, he said, pointing to Russia's historic persecution of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church over the past 300 years.

"Every time there is a Russian occupation on any part of Ukrainian territory, the Ukrainian Catholic Church is outlawed," said Gudziak.

"And so they resist, and they are grateful for the support," he said.

Describing Catholic aid to Ukraine as "steadfast," Gudziak added that the support provided "has been heart to heart, person to person, community to community" and "church to church."

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