

CHURCH REPORTER

3/2022

Newsletter for the English speaking members and friends of the Church Law Society
Prague – Brno – Olomouc – Stříbro – České Budějovice

6th March 2022 | Volume 7



Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, Professor of Masaryk University, during his speech at the protest demonstration in support for the Ukraine at the Wenceslas Square, the heart of Prague, on Sunday 27th February 2022.

Photo by Deník N

Professor Tomáš Halík at Demonstration in Support of Ukraine

Prague – Frankfurt – Paris – Lyon – Vienna – Tbilisi –
Bratislava – Vilnius

On Friday, 4th March 2022, another demonstration of the Prague people from a series of demonstrations in support of Ukraine took place on Wenceslas Square at 6 pm. Templeton Prize laureate Mons. Tomáš Halík, Catholic priest and professor of Charles University, leading dissident during the totalitarian period before 1989, gave an introductory speech. We bring its full wording:

I belong to the generation that experienced the Soviet invasion more than half a century ago, the fraternal aid that was followed by the cowardly surrender of the then Czechoslovak communist leadership (with one honourable exception) and the signing of a declaration of **temporary** stay of the Soviet troops. That's what the Russians want in Ukraine today.

However, that **temporary** stay with the slogan of eternal friendship with the occupiers was to last forever according to the old principle: where a Russian soldier's boot enters, he will never return from there.

Proclaimed **eternity lasted twenty years**, the sad years of general – but above all cultural and moral – devastation of our country. It ended with a radical reorganization of Europe after the fall of communism, the plague from Russia.



Following the example of Hitler's **blitzkrieg**, today's ruler of Russia wanted to destroy Ukraine, and if Ukraine surrenders and the world responds with formal protests and mild sanctions like after the annexation of Crimea, he is determined to move on.

However, Ukraine is teaching the whole world a **lesson in amazing heroism**, and its great president, who will speak to us directly in a moment, shows everyone what it means to be a great politician and a great statesman. He unequivocally **deserves this year's Nobel Peace Prize** for his efforts to avert the aggressor and restore peace to his country, and thus the hope for peace and security in today's endangered world.

Two years ago, a pandemic of contagious diseases from China began to spread around the world, and many of us could not imagine what it would bring to the world. However, we can imagine what the virus of destruction from power-hungry Russia means.

In particular, our countries of the former Soviet bloc, which the Kremlin war criminal would like to get on the table for his insatiable hunger for power, must appeal to the conscience of the world not to leave Ukraine. **The freedom of Ukraine must not fall!** It would encourage dictators around the world.

The road to democracy began on Maidan by expressing **Ukraine's desire for the European Union**, and today this call is being heard from the barricades of the bleeding country. Ukraine and all thinking and seeing people in the world know **the value of European unification**, and this will for unity in the EU and NATO is a rare positive fruit and the other side of this historical experience.

We now see all the danger of the vast industry of Russian propaganda lies, all the disinformation sites, all politicians like Klaus and Okamura who helped Russia's **efforts to isolate and extract our country** from a vital alliance in the EU, and even if they change their rhetoric for a while, we must not never trust them again. All the disinformers, Russia's fifth column, will surely come out of their holes soon.

Let us be grateful that **today we have a prime minister and a government** we can be proud of.

Ukrainians, workers, doctors, students who have lived and worked among us for years, are putting their lives in risk for their homeland. We will now take good care of their wives and children and will not leave their fight without support.

They set an **example** to the whole world. We will soon have the **EU Presidency**, the opportunity to purify and re-enhance the prestige of our country.

Let us show ourselves as **good patriots and good Europeans**, let us show that these two values are intrinsically linked.

Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the freedom and unity of Europe!

Prague Demonstration Continued

The organizers of the demonstration, the *Million Moments for Democracy* Association, presented a rich programme of poetry readings, songs, poems, performances of theatre groups, analyses of the historical situation prepared by several leading representatives of the Czech intellectual scene. At the end, the Czech and Ukrainian national anthems were sung.

Dozens of Ukrainian flags and a number of Czech and EU flags were still flying above the crowd of thousands. The crowd reacted boisterously to all the speeches. Many Ukrainians living in the Czech Republic could be seen in the front rows.



President Zelensky to All the Peoples of Europe

Soon after Professor Halik's opening speech at Friday's demonstration, all participants listened with enthusiasm to the speech delivered live from the bunker in Kiev by President Volodymyr Zelensky to all those gathered simultaneously in the above-mentioned European cities. Here is an excerpt:



“I would like to call upon you, the nations of Europe, not to be silent. I would like you to come out to the streets and support Ukraine, support our efforts and support our fight. Because **if Ukraine will not stand, Europe will not stand. If we will fall, you will fall.** So do not turn the eye blind on this. Come up and support Ukraine as much as you can.

If we win, and I am sure we will win, this will be the victory for the whole democratic world. This will be the victory of our freedom, of light over darkness. And if we win, we will become as blossoming as Europe and Europe will be flourishing more than ever.

Glory to Ukraine, Слава Україні!”

On 24th February 2022 Russia Launched War Against Ukraine. We Expected This Horrific Event

We rose to a new day on Thursday, 24th February 2022 with dismay and horror. The news had spread around the world that in the early hours of that day Russian troops *attacked* the sovereign territory of the Ukrainian Republic from all sides. The *lie, repeated* for weeks by Russia’s top official, that the buildup of Russian troops on the Russian-Ukrainian and Belarusian-Ukrainian borders was just a military exercise and that Russia had no intention of invading Ukraine, had come true. He has shamefully misled us all. Those who warned of a Russian offensive were right.

We are glad that our Church Law Society did not succumb to the naive notion that the Russian dictator would not dare to attack. We devoted the entire previous issue of Church Reporter No. 2/2022, 19th February 2022, to warning of the imminent Russian danger. We were fascinated by the naiveté with which some politicians in Western European countries and the US approached the Russian threat, and so did the press in those countries.

On the front page of our latest Church Reporter newsletter, as a warning message to our friends west of our borders, we brought a documentary photo of the sudden invasion of Czechoslovakia by Russian troops on 21st August 1968. Russian tanks on the Wenceslas Square were pictured there, heading for the monument of St. Wenceslas, the main patron of the Czech nation, and protesting Czech youth intertwining in the middle of tanks. The older generation is still recovering its shock from the sudden invasion of our country by Russian troops. At the moment, the mouth of the Russian conqueror is opening up before us, and we fear that the occupation of our country in 1968 will soon be repeated if Ukraine does not survive and win.

Jiří Rajmund Tretera, Záboj Horák



*Prague, Wenceslas Square, 21st August 1968 in the morning:
Russian tanks and protesting Czech people.*

Source: ČTK

First Czech Reaction to Russian Attack on Ukraine

We proudly listened to the proceedings of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic, which immediately gathered on Thursday, 24th February 2022. The meeting began with the Ukrainian national anthem and the welcome of the Ukrainian ambassador to Prague. After the debate, the House unanimously voted all the deputies present and called Russia an attacker. All political parties of the government and the opposition joined the common view. The Czech Republic calls for and will join immediate and effective sanctions against Russia. Reluctant and mild sanctions are not enough.

We eagerly listen to every speech by Prime Minister Professor Petr Fiala and agree with the government's firm stance.

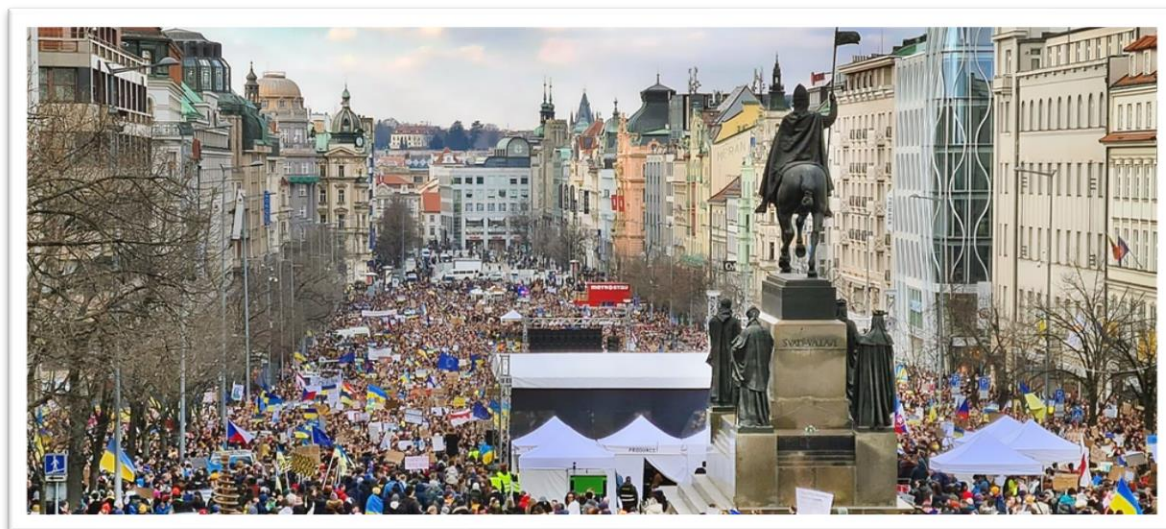
The same day, the Czech Bishops' Conference condemned the Russian attack and issued its condemning statement and called on the faithful to provide immediate material assistance to Ukraine.

The Faculty of Law, Charles University in Prague, issued its statement, based on its expertise in international law, condemning the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The administration of the Church Law Society asked its members to take the same views and readiness to help Ukraine and its people.

Further Reactions to Russian Aggression in Czech Republic

Demonstrations in support of Ukraine take place daily in Czech cities. It was especially large on Sunday, 27th February 2022 in the centre of Prague on Wenceslas Square, which was attended by an estimated 80 000 people. It was convened by the well-known non-profit organization Millions of Moments for Democracy. The Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala and the Ukrainian Ambassador to the Czech Republic Jevhen Perebyjnis made their speeches.



*Demonstration in support of Ukraine, Wenceslas Square in Prague,
Sunday, 27th February 2022.*

It was stated that the citizens of the Czech Republic had already donated over 1.5 billion Czech crowns (EUR 58 million) to help Ukraine from their private funds. Another roughly 2.5 billion cost state aid to Ukraine in the form of military supplies and humanitarian aid.

Material, medical and food assistance to the citizens of the Czech Republic is provided by non-profit organizations, individuals and the Czech state directly to Ukraine by planes or trucks passing through Slovakia.

On Thursday, 3rd March 2022, in the early evening, trucks with humanitarian aid sent by the Catholic Caritas Czech Republic started a nearly 2,000-kilometer journey from Prague to Zaporozhye in southeastern Ukraine to Caritas Mariupol. It is a long-term partner of the Diocesan Charity of Ostrava and Opava (Northern Moravia). The trucks brought mainly hygiene items, durable food and baby food to inhabitants of the war area.

The Czech state is in charge of the supply of weapons and ammunition to Ukraine and the supreme coordination of the reception of refugees.

According to Interior Minister there are already **100 000 refugees from Ukraine in the Czech Republic** on 6th March 2022, mostly women with children and the elderly. The assistance centres provide them with registration, which refugees must arrange within three days of arrival, accommodation, visas and health insurance. In Prague, the centre first operated

in the main Municipal Library, which, however, did not have enough capacity, but due to great interest, it was moved to the Congress Centre yesterday with a capacity of several thousand seats. Assistance is provided by the police and fire brigade.

The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren offered accommodation for 1 100 refugees in its parish buildings. Dozens of other Protestant churches also offered help.

On Tuesday, 1st March 2022, the Wenceslas Square came to life for the second time. A charity concert for Ukraine was held there, broadcast by the main Czech public television, Czech Television, at which leading Czech artists performed.

On Friday, 4th March 2022, the Czech Ministry of Defense registered 284 requests from Czech citizens who decided to leave as soldiers to fight for the freedom of the Ukrainian country.

Church Law Society Members Help Ukraine

First Story

Two days after the start of the war, Mrs Evženie, the daughter of one of the representatives of our Society in Western Bohemia, addressed the Expedition Clubhouse Brno (Moravia). It was to ensure the transport of one paramedic and humanitarian material from Ostrava (Moravia) to Ukraine. So, she filled her Škoda Octavia car and, together with a paramedic, they found two more medics with another car, and on 26th February 2022, they set out for the Polish city of Przemyśl. She returned to Prague alone with two young Ukrainians. They were sisters-in-law, they both left their husbands in Lviv and one of them travelled to the Czech Republic with a small child. Together they had only one small piece of luggage. Now Mrs Evženie is preparing for the next trip.

Second Story

We received a set of photos from an expedition from Karlovy Vary (western Bohemia) to the small town of Zolochiv in western Ukraine (near Lviv). Dozens of citizens from Karlovy Vary joined forces to collect various items of humanitarian aid. Among them is a member of the Society Mgr. Jan Hájek, a former Czech sailor and deacon of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church, and his wife Marie, who donated medical supplies, food and medicine. The journey to Ukraine takes twenty hours.

Third Story

Mr. Ivan K., a senior lawyer at state agency in Prague, member of the Society, donated part of his monthly salary to buy weapons in favour of the fighting Ukraine and sent this amount to the account of the Embassy of Ukraine in the Czech Republic. **Account Numbers for donations:** BENEFICIARY: Embassy of Ukraine in the Czech Republic, ADDRESS: Charlese de Gaulla 29, 160 00 Prague 6, Czech Republic. WWW: <http://supportukraine.cz/en.html> donations in Czech Crowns, account number: 304452700/0300, donations in Euro: EUR IBAN CZ86 0300 0000 0003 0449 8127, BIC/SWIFT CEKOCZPP, donations in USD: USD IBAN CZ80 0300 0000 0003 0449 9496, BIC/SWIFT CEKOCZPP.



Bus from Karlovy Vary (Carlsbad) to Zolochiv (near Lviv).

From Statement of Czech Bishops' Conference

On 24th February 2022, the Czech and Moravian bishops unequivocally condemned the Russian aggression on Ukraine and expressed their full support for Ukraine.

They decided that Sunday, 27th February 2022, the Mass form *In times of war or disruption* was used in all Catholic services and that church collections in all Catholic churches that Sunday were dedicated to helping Ukraine.

In cooperation with Caritas Czech Republic, they offered humanitarian aid to those in need in Ukraine and to those who flee to our country. They called on believers to engage in concrete assistance to refugees.

They joined Pope Francis' call for believers to offer their fasting and prayers for Ukraine on Ash Wednesday, 2nd March 2022.

Mass in Prague Cathedral on 25th February 2022

On Friday, 25th February 2022, Cardinal Dominik Duka, Archbishop of Prague, celebrated the Mass for Ukraine in the Prague Cathedral of Saints Vitus, Wenceslaus and Adalbert, together with the Greek Catholic Bishop-Exarch Ladislav Hučko and representatives of the Greek Catholic Exarchate and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Prague. Bible readings were in Ukrainian. The Greek Catholic choir sang.



*From the service for Ukraine in the Cathedral of Saints Vitus,
Wenceslaus and Adalbert in Prague.*

Photo by Lucie Horníková

Mass in the Brno Cathedral on 27th February 2022

On Sunday, 27th February 2022, Mons. Vojtěch Cikrle, Brno diocesan bishop, celebrated Holy Mass for Ukraine in the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic.

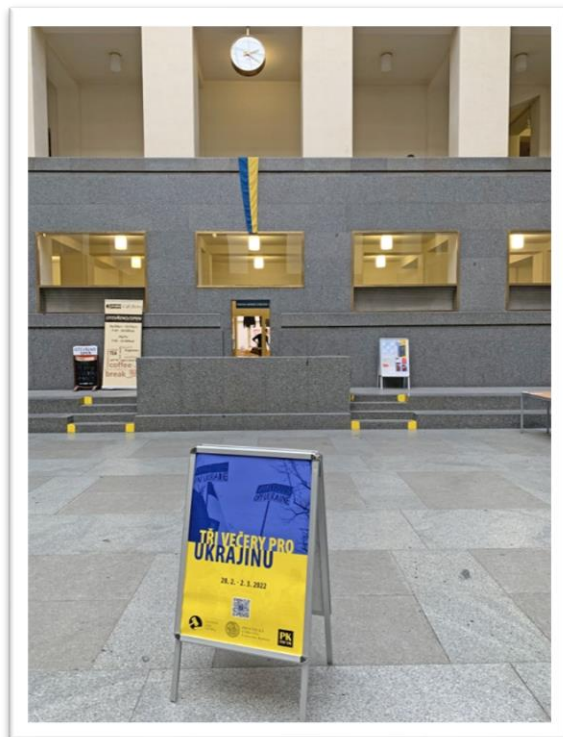


Charles University and Faculty of Law Statement

Prof. Milena Králíčková, Rector of Charles University in Prague, said in her statement of 24th February 2022: “As Rector, together with the administration of Charles University, I strongly condemn any form of aggression, especially such as the one that Putin’s Russia is undertaking right now. This is an extremely dangerous move that threatens the lives of the people of Europe – including many of my colleagues and students. It is a step that is taking the world backwards!”

The administration of Charles University has decided to suspend inter-university cooperation agreements with Russian universities as of 1st March 2022.

The administration of the Faculty of Law condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24th February 2022, describing it as a clear violation of international law. Specifically, it is a violation of the prohibition on the use of force (Article 2(4) of the UN Charter), which has long been considered an absolutely fundamental norm of international law, and also this violation reaches the intensity of an act of aggression and armed attack within the meaning of Article 51 of the UN Charter. Both Charles University and the Faculty of Law are ready to offer assistance and support to students who are or will be directly or indirectly affected by the conflict.



The Ukrainian flag flying at the Faculty of Law of Charles University and in its entrance hall as a sign of solidarity and support for the Ukrainian nation.

Photo and text Jakub Nagy

From 28th February to 2nd March 2022, the Faculty of Law of Charles University hosted an event called *Three Evenings for Ukraine*. In three evening debates with Charles University lecturers and reporters from the affected areas, participants discussed the current situation in Ukraine, its implications and the perspective of international law. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of the details of the situation, express solidarity with Ukraine and encourage the academic community to contribute financially to help Ukraine. Throughout the three nights, the room was open for voluntary contributions to the Ukraine aid collection.

Eastern Moravia Helps Ukraine

A group of parishioners and scouts from the parish of St. Philip and St. James in Zlín (Moravia) decided to act quickly. Hugo, the driver, set out first on Saturday, 26th February 2022. He was in charge of picking up the first refugees in Ukraine – mothers with their children and bringing them to the Ukrainian-Slovakian border, where other drivers from Zlín would take them over. The first refugees were brought to Zlín on the afternoon of Sunday 27th February 2022. They spent their first night in the parish house. Volunteers cooked and prepared a program for them. Subsequently, the Ukrainian refugees were accommodated with volunteer families in Zlín.



Ukrainian children and mothers upon arrival at the parish in Zlín, East Moravia.

Church Reporter – Newsletter for the English speaking members and friends of the Church Law Society, Prague – Brno – Olomouc – Stříbro – České Budějovice, published by Church Law Society, Sudoměřská 25, 130 00 Praha 3, Czech Republic.

Photo on the front page: Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, Professor of Masaryk University, during his speech at the protest demonstration in support for the Ukraine at the Wenceslas Square, the heart of Prague, on Sunday 27th February 2022.

Photo by Deník N

Editor-in-Chief:	P. Jiří Rajmund Tretera OP
Deputy Editor-in-Chief:	Záboj Horák
Executive Editor:	Jakub Nagy
Editorial Board	Tomáš Grundza, Marek Novák

Available online at: spcp.prf.cuni.cz/newsletter. Issues appear monthly.

E-mail: spcp@prf.cuni.cz

ISSN 2695-012X