

The Passionists in Ukraine

August 9th, 2022



Dear Friends,

Half of the vacations are behind us, and the war in Ukraine has been going on for almost half a year. Despite the difficult conditions, the Passionists in Smotrich are taking many initiatives to help the local community and refugees. What the situation in Ukraine is like today, what we are specifically doing and what actions we plan to take, you will learn from this short letter.

The situation for the people of Ukraine is a constant life in the shadow of warfare, experienced even by towns and villages far from the front lines. In recent weeks, even in the previously peaceful Podolia region, air raid alerts have sounded frequently, and explosions of rockets downed by Ukrainian air defenses can be heard in Smotrich. Luckily in our area, none of the missiles reached their target. The biggest victims of this war are children and young people. They have basically been out of school with few interruptions since 2020. Currently, universities, schools, kindergartens and nurseries remain closed as of February 24. Only in some places teachers are organizing online teaching on their own. Children thus spend their days at home - most often alone, after all, parents have to work. The situation is also difficult in the health service and care system for the disabled. Even before the war, they were not

very efficient, now there is a lot of chaos, and measures are taken on an ad hoc basis when possible. Rising prices-especially for energy and gasoline-are also a problem for the people of Ukraine (unfortunately, they affect many others).

In recent months, the Passionists have been undertaking a number of activities to help the residents of our local community get through this difficult time.

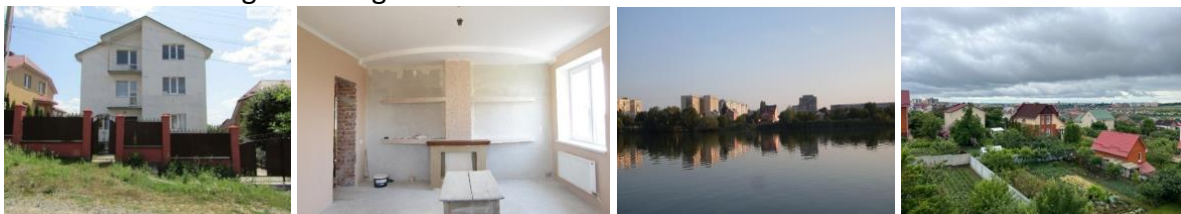
Homes of Hope

A project we launched in May this year is "houses of hope." Thanks to the support of many good-hearted people, we were able to acquire three houses, which are currently being adapted for housing for refugees who have lost everything as a result of the war and have nowhere to return to (they usually come from towns destroyed and occupied by the Russian army). The final work is currently underway to adapt these buildings, often unoccupied for a long time, to accommodate new residents, which we hope will happen in September.



Community center for children and young people

We realize that a great concern of parents who have to work is the unwillingness to leave their children alone. This is a problem especially in large cities. Therefore, we decided to use the property acquired by the Congregation in the city of Khmelnytskyi to arrange there, with the help of our friends, a day care center, where children and young people will be able to spend time in a good atmosphere under the care of pedagogues who will help them develop their talents through learning and entertainment.



Summer camps in Tynna

As has been the tradition in previous years, summer camp for children and young people were held at our sanctuary in Tynna throughout July. Its organization was possible thanks to the courage of volunteers from Poland, who came to Ukraine despite the war. Participants spent an entire week actively playing games and learning during catechesis and educational activities.



House of Mercy

The House of Mercy is constantly receiving an incoming flow of sick and disabled people from areas of warfare or at risk of warfare. Many of these people brought to us by priests or

family cannot find help anywhere else. Recently, there have been quite a few blind people in our House, who, left to their own resources, are not even able to go to shelters. Although we have already exceeded the limit of people for whom the House was designed, we try not to leave anyone without help.



Thanks to the support of our benefactors, it was possible to carry out thermal insulation work - so important before the approaching winter - and painting. For some of the work, as well as other tasks in the House found employment for refugees who settled in Smotrycz.

Meanwhile, the Daughters of Charity, who are cooperating with us on this work, have applied for funds for the installation of an elevator. It is badly needed at the moment, as many of our residents have mobility problems. The elevator will give them the ability to move around the house independently and use the garden.

The House also has a day care center for children, and the sisters have become very actively involved in helping the youngest through workshops, trips and catechesis. Children can also use the playground, computer lab, playroom, soccer and ping-pong table.



Other forms of assistance

In addition to activities in the immediate area, we are constantly supporting local hospitals, helping soldiers sent to the front to purchase thermal clothing, and organizing support for their families. Since March, we have also been working with the Christian Rescue Service and volunteers to help civilians in the zone of direct warfare.



Plans for future

A challenge for the activities we are undertaking will be the coming months of preparation for winter. In the near future we expect new refugees at our monastery - we are already getting more and more inquiries about available space from various organizations. We want to provide them not only with a roof over their heads, but also with food. In the coming months we will also want to begin preparations for opening a day care center in Khmelnytskyi, which will require construction work, as our house is not fully finished.

We would like to thank all donors for your support. We assure you all of the constant prayers that flow from both the House of Mercy and our monastery, as well as from our Ukrainian friends.

We continue to ask you to fast and pray for peace and end violent operations for the war-tormented country.