For the **healing of a nation**

Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director of ACN (UK) reports back on a project trip to Ukraine



Light of hope: Placing a candle in a tent chapel in Kiev's Maidan Square

© Jakub Szymczuk

The conflict in Ukraine continues to cause misery for those caught up in it.

As I saw first-hand, Church leaders stand with the people in a country caught between the East – Russia – and the West – the European Union.

Corruption, the crisis over Crimea and the violence connected to the political upheavals has had a devastating impact on society.

Latin Rite Catholic Bishop Stanislav Shyrokoradyuk told me: **"At least five to 10 people are dying during the 'ceasefire' per day.** It is very difficult to take these funerals every day. In Mariopol – in the south-east – recently eight people died in an attack during a funeral procession."

But Aid to the Church in Need's assistance is making a real difference. Thanks to your support we have been helping the displaced with food, clothing and shelter as one million people fled violence and conflict.

The words of Russian Orthodox Archpriest Mykolay Danilevich echoed the views of many Christian leaders I spoke with: "The events of Maidan" – the political protests of 2013-14 – "brought the Churches closer together. We were there on the streets with the people. **"The faithful of our Church are on opposite sides of the war. Our Church, if possible, has to be above this social-political strife.**

"The Church enjoys a great deal of trust, but our faithful do not want the Church to become a political party. It was a time to forget differences and for us to work together to save the country."

Thank you for standing by the Christians of Ukraine, and allowing us to support the Churches to work together to address the serious pastoral and humanitarian needs resulting from the recent crisis. ●



Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church

Aid in a time of **growing crisis**

When I met Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church – an eastern Church in full communion with Rome – he described the crisis that the Church is trying to tackle in the country.

He told me: "There are a huge number of refugees. We need to care for them and for those who were injured in Maidan and have been injured in the east of Ukraine. "There are physical and spiritual wounds… In the Church we are trying to create a centre for pastoral care in crisis situations and to create programmes. We have applied to Aid to the Church in Need for help."

And ACN responded to his urgent appeal with a raft of projects to help those driven out of their homes by the civil conflicts which have afflicted the country. The charity is supporting a wide range of emergency projects, including a mobile soup kitchen for the displaced, help for those who have suffered psychological trauma and chaplaincy work in the Crimea, including ministering to the wounded – in addition to our ongoing support for seminarians, Religious orders and catechetical work. Only through your generosity has the Church been able to reach out in love. ●

> "There are a huge number of refugees. We need to care for them and for those who have been injured..."
>
> Major Archbishop Shevchuk



A refugee centre in Kiev run by volunteers

Helping **the c**

Out of the sleet of a freezing Lviv day, Sr Luiza Ciupa came to see me. Her work educating a generation in the Faith after 70 years of communist atheism has been vital for the Church's growth.

Sr Luiza spoke about the importance of the summer camps for children that she is running with ACN's support, especially in the present crisis.

Because of the conflict, not everyone could come to the camps but three young Catholics from Crimea were among those taking part.

They are also doing psychological work with children. Sr Luiza said: "We had some camps in Trans-Carpathia where half of the children have parents who have been wounded in Maidan...

Please offer hope by making a kind donation to support these and other similar projects around the


© Petro Didula

Humanitarian **help**

"We are very grateful for the help we receive from Aid to the Church in Need and other organisations.

"Thanks to them we have rebuilt our seminary, constructed pastoral centres and restored churches. We feel and appreciate the solidarity at this difficult time." These were the warm words that Bishop Stanislav Shyrokoradyuk, the Latin Rite Catholic Bishop of Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhya spoke to me when I met him.

Bishop Stanislav is currently heading up humanitarian help for displaced families who have had to flee their homes because of the conflict. He told me: "In Kharkiv we have 20,000 refugees and a further 10,000 in the region. We have just obtained 300 pairs of shoes for the children – who fled in summer shoes. Winter is here – as you see and feel."

Aid to the Church in Need has given almost £12,000 to help support Bishop Stanislav's humanitarian help – which includes people's daily bread.

The bishop, who trained under Soviet oppression, told me: "One hundred people come to eat something in our church in Kharkiv and different churches provide for different needs.

"We have just distributed a truckload of bandages to five hospitals in need of these – there are some very basic needs."

Bishop Stanislav described growing cooperation with other Christian groups. "The crisis has brought us closer together as churches."

He concluded by passing on his blessing to all our benefactors: **"Thank you for all you do and for your prayers."**

Thank you for enabling us to help them so far. With your help we will be able to answer his call when it comes. ●

children

It was so important to do this – and we have to do more."

But Sr Luiza said the conflict has seen small miracles, with families opening their doors to take in complete strangers. And thanks to your generosity and compassion, the Church has been able to work small miracles too.

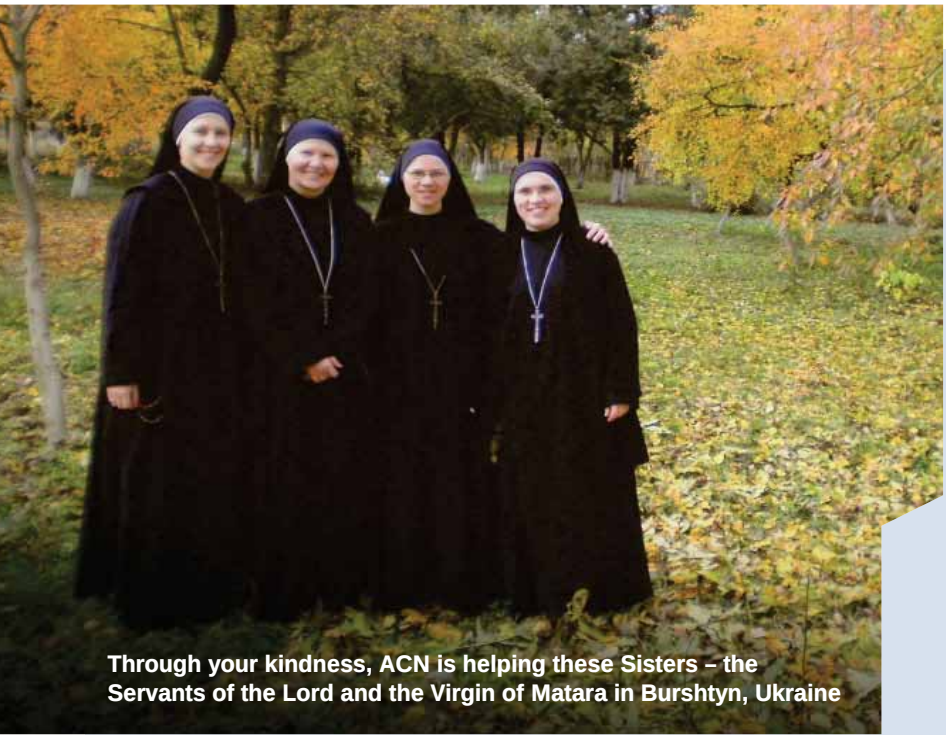
Sr Luiza thanked Aid to the Church in Need's benefactors: "Thank you for being open to the needs of your neighbour… For as Jesus said: 'What you have done for the least you have done for me,' – for Christ.

"The children and catechists in Ukraine pray for the benefactors. Every time the catechists begin their sessions they pray for you. God bless you all! Thank you!" ●



Faith in the future: Sister Luiza, Director of Catechesis in Ukraine, and Neville Kyrke-Smith, with youngsters in Ukraine

Left: Youngsters receiving Christian education from a seminarian supported by you



Through your kindness, ACN is helping these Sisters – the Servants of the Lord and the Virgin of Matara in Burshtyn, Ukraine

Thanks to your help ACN is supporting Religious in Ukraine with subsistence aid and training for novices

45 Sisters in Odessa-Simferpol Diocese

20 Benedictine Sisters in Kiev

45 Basilian novices

27 Sisters in Kiev

They are praying for you and for all our benefactors.

Seminarians

Before the fall of communism, there were barely 300 priests in the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church, with an average age of 70. Today there are 3,000 priests, with an average age of 38. Thanks to your generosity, every one of these priests was helped through their seminary studies by Aid to the Church in Need.

www.acnuk.org/ukraine
watch video of Bishop Borys Gudziak



Holy Spirit Seminarians, Lviv

Novice monks and seminarians in Ukraine are being supported by you

Ukraine, **a country in crisis**

November 2013: Protests begin centring on Kiev's Maidan Square after Ukrainian President Yanukovych abandons closer trade links with the EU and opts for closer cooperation with Russia.

February 2014: Mr Yanukovych is forced from office and pro-Western Olexander Turchynov becomes interim President.

20th February 2014: Kiev sees its worst day of violence with 88 people killed within 48 hours.

March 2014: Russia takes possession of Crimea from Ukraine; pro-Russian separatists in the eastern Ukrainian cities of Donetsk and Luhansk declare independence.

June 2014: Following the election of Petro Poroshenko as President, the EU signs a landmark agreement with Ukraine.

July 2014: 298 people die after Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 is shot down over rebel-held eastern Ukraine.

Winter 2014: Pro-Russian separatists continue to fight Ukrainian forces in eastern Ukraine but a fragile ceasefire still holds. The UN reports that more than one million have been displaced by the conflict.

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