**Statement from Archbishop Dermot Farrell on the Invasion of Ukraine**

I wish to express my shock and dismay at the tragic events unfolding in Ukraine.   Significant diplomatic efforts have come to naught in the brutal, cynical, and a very violent invasion of Ukraine in recent days. My heart is with the people whose lives and land are being torn apart.  The images on our screens during the week bring home once again the horror and injustice of war, and evoke compassion and solidarity with the people of Ukraine, as well as with the many Ukrainians who have made Ireland their home.

What can we do in the face of such unwarranted, dehumanizing, and immoral aggression?  First, this aggression and violence cannot be accepted: there must be an outright and radical rejection of such a way of being present and asserting oneself in the world.  As we know from our own history on this island, the way of peace has to be one of dialogue, dignity, and respect.  Nothing else stands the test of time; nothing else endures (see 1Cor 13:7).

Second: we need to take seriously that this conflict is not just a terrible war in a country far away, but concerns us in many ways, by (1) changing the way we perceive and relate with other countries in Europe, by (2) limiting the possibilities of trade and commerce, and—most importantly—(3) by recognizing all affected by this war as our sisters and brothers.   Our Saviour calls us to be like our Father in heaven—to be compassionate as our Heavenly Father is compassionate. This surely is the hour of compassion.

Third: by following our Lord on the road of peace and true freedom, by rejecting any response forced upon us by aggression: “treat others as you would like them to treat you” (Luke 6:31) is still the way to life—not just for followers of Jesus, but for all people.    The rule of law and the need a for a stable international system must command the support of all right-thinking people.   Change and transformation “cannot happen by breeding discontent … or coercing people into a new way of life” (Eric Hoffer).   They are the gift of those who know how to kindle and fan generous hope that is founded on making a reality the *sharing*of our common home.

It is in this spirit and in communion with Pope Francis that I invite everyone “to make, Ash Wednesday, a Day of Fasting for Peace. I encourage believers in a special way to dedicate themselves intensely to prayer and fasting on that day.”

+Dermot Farrell

Archbishop of Dublin