

Scripture Reading: Psalm 9:7-10

But the LORD reigns forever, executing judgment from his throne. He will judge the world with justice and rule the nations with fairness. The LORD is a shelter for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. Those who know your name trust in you, for you, O LORD, do not abandon those who search for you.

We all are heartbroken about what is happening in Ukraine, and rightfully so. Wars result in tragic, unnecessary death and leave scars, physically and emotionally, forever. Men and women who serve in the armed forces, medical personnel, residents, refugees, bystanders from afar like you and I...sadly, the list goes on and on.

The recent images of men, women, and children already killed or wounded in Ukraine are gut-wrenching. So too are the images of those forced to leave not just their homes and possessions but their homeland. I am grateful for Poland, the land of my ancestors, and for ALL around the globe providing assistance and loving care for the innocent people who have been, and continue to be, unjustly affected by the ongoing and senseless brutality in Ukraine.

We are also deeply saddened by the deaths and injuries incurred by all engaged in battle, regardless of uniform. Unfortunately, my sister still lives with the horrific effects of war. Her husband, a Marine, did two tours of duty in Vietnam in the 1960s, where he witnessed the wrath of war and the slaughter of both armed forces and innocent civilians. After the war, he ran a successful business until approximately 20 years later, when post-traumatic stress disorder fell upon him. According to my sister, he showed zero signs of any illness during those 20 years. However, he has been out of VA hospitals for the past 30 years and is permanently disabled because of war.

My brothers and sisters...war is a living hell.

Prayer: Dear LORD, please give us your peace as you care for all creation. We pray for all those affected by the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, and everywhere your children are oppressed and under attack. Please provide the refuge we all seek for them.

~ Submitted by Drew Prusiecki for the Fourteenth Reading of Lent