

Diocese of Rockville Centre

Sister Donna Markham of Catholic Charities USA and Bishop John Barres of the Rockville Centre Diocese of Rockville Centre's trip to Ukraine is coming to an end.

On February 10, during their stay in Lviv, they underwent three air raids as Russia launched a large-scale missile strike.

In the morning they had a meeting with the two Lviv bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church - Metropolitan Ihor Vozniak and Bishop Volodymyr Hrutsa. They talked about serving internally displaced people and visited the crypt where the Church's spiritual leaders of the twentieth century are buried: Metropolitan Andrei Sheptytskyi, who led the Church and the people through two world wars, Patriarch Josyf Slipyi, who spent 18 years in Soviet gulags for his loyalty to the Catholic Church, and Metropolitan Volodymyr Sternyuk, who was a shepherd for the Underground Church.

Their meeting with Lviv's mayor Andriy Sadovyi was conducted in a bomb shelter as Ukraine was under a missile attack. During the meeting, the mayor of Lviv presented the NEZLAMNI rehabilitation ecosystem project and showed bionic prostheses made in Lviv.

The second air raid alarm Sister Donna and Bishop John spent with the students of the Ukrainian Catholic University at the campus shelter.

During the third alarm, they participated in the ceremony of the Light of Justice award. The award is intended to recognize Ukrainians who distinguish themselves for moral, spiritual, and ethical leadership.

This year's laureates are two prominent leaders of the Ukrainian volunteer movement: Taras Chmut (Come Back Alive) and Maria Berlinska who founded a free school to train other Ukrainian military volunteers in aerial reconnaissance.





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Sister Donna Markham of Catholic Charities USA and Bishop John Barres of the Rockville Centre diocese finished their second day in Kyiv.

They held a meeting with the financial officer of the Patriarchal Curia, Rev. Lubomyr Yavorskyi, who presented the Patriarchal charitable fund "Mudra Sprava".

They visited the main offices of Caritas Ukraine and had a meeting with Rev. Andriy Nahirniak, deputy director of Caritas Ukraine, and Rev. Viacheslav Hrynevych, Executive Director of the Caritas-Spes Ukraine Mission. The delegation also spoke with the representative of Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Ukraine, Davide Bernocchi. Together with Fr. Roman Syrotych, director of Caritas Kyiv, and his employees, helped hand out humanitarian aid kits to the displaced people from Bakhmut.

They made a short trip to Bucha and visited the church notoriously known for the mass graves. Ukrainian journalist, Sofia Kochmar-Tymoshenko, who authored a documentary about mass killings in Bucha, was their guide.

They also met a pastor of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church in Irpin, Fr. Myroslav Latynnyk. He showed the consequences of the shelling of the church and gifted them with shrapnel that hit the church.

The day ended with a meeting with Yuliia (Taira) Paevska, a legendary Ukrainian paramedic and volunteer, who was taken hostage by Russians on March 16, 2022, and spent 94 days as a prisoner.





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· Sister Donna Markham of Catholic Charities USA and Bishop John Barres of the Rockville Center diocese continue their tour in Ukraine.

They visited Kyiv where they had meetings with the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church Patriarch Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, and head of Kyiv-Zhytomyr Roman Catholic diocese Bishop Vitaliy Kryvytsky

His Beatitude Sviatoslav spoke about the visit of the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and religious organizations to the Vatican and meeting with Pope Francis, about the heroic witness of the priests, and his initiative to free Ukrainian military medics who are captured by Russians. He expressed his gratitude to American Catholics for the support and mentioned the recent visit to Ukraine by the head of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops Timothy Broglio.

Archbishop Kulbokas, Lithuanian born Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine, was one of the few diplomats who decided to stay in Kyiv during the most dangerous months at the beginning of the full-scale war when the Russian army was so close that they could hear sounds of cannons. He shared that psychologically he was ready for anything. Archbishop noted immense trauma within the Ukrainian society and the importance of such visits of solidarity.

Bishop Vitaliy Kryvytsky spoke about his recent visit to the United States and the support of global Catholic community he personally received. He has started his novitiate with the Salesians in Odesa during the Soviet times and noted that people do not want to go back to those times. He spoke of the importance of prayer in the Church during times of war and charitable initiatives his diocese undertakes.





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The Most Reverend John Barres, Bishop of Rockville Centre and Sister Donna Markham, President & CEO of Catholic Charities USA, have started their visit of solidarity in Ukraine.

They were able to visit the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv where they got acquainted with the Emmaus Center which is a unique project of the university where people with mental disabilities live on the campus and are closely involved in campus life and student activities.

They attended the funeral of two Ukrainian soldiers in the Garrison Church of Peter and Paul in the city center. Bishop Barres, Archbishop Borys Gudziak, and Bishop Stepan Sus presided at the funeral. And Bishop Barres in the name of the US bishops conveyed words of prayer and sympathy to the family and friends of the soldiers killed in action.

The delegation also visited a military hospital in Lviv.



