



MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER

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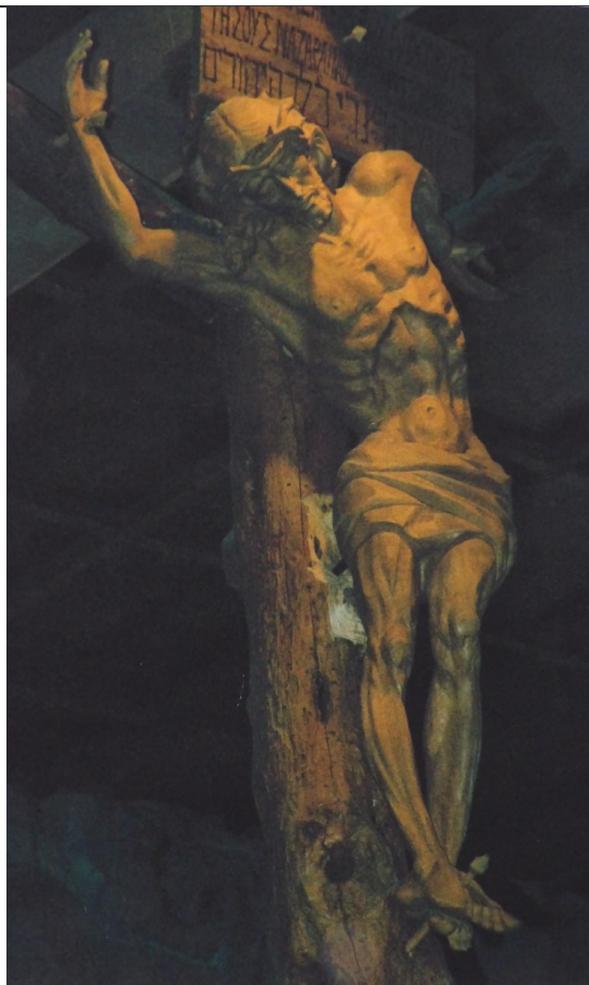
March, 2022

A PASSION FOR PEACE

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

February 24, 2022. The day Putin's Russian troops invaded Ukraine. It was a historic day. I wonder if it will become a date etched in our minds like 9/11/2001? Tragedies of this magnitude have a tendency to change forever our lives and our world. The Cuban missile crisis transpired over 13 days in October of 1962, when I was a freshman in high school. In my life, that is the first time I can remember worrying about the possibility of a nuclear world war and praying for peace. World War II ended in 1945. My parents met during the war and were married in 1947. I was their oldest, born in 1948. I have no memory of World War II as a lived experience. There have been armed conflicts in and between countries during my life time, especially recently in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Pope Francis calls these "a world war in pieces". But somehow the martyrdom of a peaceful, free, democratic, Christian nation in the heart of Europe seems closer to home. Horrific scenes come to us in media images in a much more visceral way.

If you have read any of my past newsletter articles, you know there was never any national or international news mentioned with commentary and reflection. Certainly, I love the United States of America and pray for our country's well-being at every level, as I



*For the sake of his sorrowful passion,
have mercy on us and on the whole world.*

sure I even know all the reasons why this evil, unjust, aggressive war has moved me so deeply. I pray and work and move through each day since then with a heart full of sadness. I ponder a phrase from a letter of St. Paul: "...where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more." (Rom. 5:20) It is another way of saying that ultimately good is stronger than evil; light cannot be overcome by darkness; life triumphs

do for all peoples and nations of the world. But I have never felt it proper or necessary to make a mediation on the current state of political affairs. Until now. This is the month of March, dedicated to Saint Joseph. His main feast day is March 19. I have had in my mind since last December what I wanted to share about my favorite saint this month. In prayer this morning, it came to me that the reason I could not write was that my mind was on the slaughter of the innocents in Ukraine. The moral leadership of President Zelinsky and the extraordinary courage and determination of the Ukrainian people to defend their land and language, culture and country, freedom, faith and families, has moved me to tears. Tears of deep admiration. This proud, noble people have galvanized support from the free world in ways we may never have seen before in our lives.

Since Feb. 24, I have been crying and praying. I am not of Ukrainian descent. I am not

Continued on page 2

A PASSION FOR PEACE

(Continued from page one)

over death. How do we see that dramatized in the life of Jesus? Picture Jesus on the cross. The perfect innocent man. Unjustly condemned. Tortured nearly to death. Killed in a merciless, slow, publicly humiliating way. I think one of the moving aspects of the Ukrainian situation is that it brings to mind in concrete and overwhelming detail what the death of Jesus was like. Jesus is suffering and dying again these days in Ukraine.

I sense the Lord is offering me a special grace of conversion. One of the ways he is speaking to me loudly and urgently is through Scripture. Whether at Mass or praying the Liturgy of the Hours, which are basically the psalms and short Bible readings, so many of the prayers seem to refer to Ukraine. Consider this from the Old Testament: "...you shall not stand by idly when your neighbor's life is at stake." (Lev. 19:16) The Ukrainian people are my neighbor. But what can I do to save their lives? As one of my women neighbors verbalized for herself: "I am ex-military. But I am too old to take up arms and help them. I am going to have to pray more!" I was not in the military nor trained as a EMT or trauma nurse. I could not even actively help the injured and suffering.

I really had to beg the Lord to help me understand what my main contribution should be. (Likely, it will not surprise you.) He indicated to me faith, prayer and charity. This is the season of Lent and that is the spiritual focus every year. I have to examine my conscience and ask myself, "Do I really believe that my faith and prayer are making a contribution? What are my acts of charity that benefit the Ukrainians?" Small, simple sacrifices each day offered for peace and protection for them. These are effective spiritual weapons. Lastly, in this invisible arsenal, is my own daily effort at conversion through the grace of the Lord. Am I reconciled with my brother or sister? Do I harbor a grudge against my neighbor? The cleric of whom I disapprove...what are my real feelings toward him? Do I condemn him? despise him? hate him? As a Christian, I cannot hate anyone, even Putin. It comes to me that if I do not root out from my heart anger, bitterness, unforgiveness and seek the reconciliation necessary, I am waging war in this world and contributing to the violence, destruction and death, which are the devil's work. So the resolution

from this meditation is to try to keep my own heart at peace, no matter what the circumstances of the present time, the person or the place. I want to begin again, as if for the first time, to wage peace not war.

As the summary of my meditation, I recall the Prayer of St. Francis, which I have memorized and prayed all my life: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me show love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope..." One of the deepest parts of my sadness for the Ukrainians is the sense that their situation is hopeless. From a worldly perspective, maybe it is. From heaven's perspective, it is not. Think of the Polish people, who point to "the Miracle on the Vistula [River]", when their small, but prayerful, soldiers were able to turn back the onslaught of a greatly out-numbered and out-armed Soviet army coming from the East to conquer them in 1920. Remember the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, when the small Christian armada went out against the largest navy in the world in its day and defeated the Ottoman Turks attacking Europe. A violent storm arose and sunk the Turkish ships. It was a miraculous victory because the whole Christian world prayed the rosary as Pope Pius V had asked.

I mention these two miracles, which occurred in Europe, because it is important not to forget history and to pray with a firm faith in our own day. It is based on our trust in God Almighty. Were you taught, as I was, to pray for the fall of the Berlin Wall? I honestly never thought I would see that happen and the subsequent reunification of Germany in my life time. Yet I have lived to see it become a reality. Join me in real faith, deep prayer and active charity for the intention of peace in Ukraine, in all of Europe, and in the world in our day. Our neighbors' lives are at stake! Let us pray the rosary for peace and join Christians and people of good will throughout the world asking for a modern miracle in Ukraine.

[Image on page one: "No Greater Love" a crucifix in the church of Our Lady, Queen of Heaven, in Oreana, Idaho.]

COMMUNITY NEWS

By Sister Mary Beverly, HSM

Days of Pilgrimage: March 26 roster is full and registration is currently closed. May 21 roster is open. See the Calendar of Events on this website for details. Fr. Bill McCann is back from his work in Las Cruces. **Solitary Retreats:** Please email me for reservation dates. Openings in April and through summer & fall.

The MARYMOUNT HERMITAGE NEWSLETTER is published by Marymount Hermitage, Inc., a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in the State of Idaho. The Hermit Sisters of Mary are a canonically approved, Catholic community of women hermits, following the Rule of St. Benedict. The newsletter is published each month by the 15th on our website only. The purpose of the newsletter is to share the spirituality and material progress of Marymount Hermitage. Please pray that we may be faithful to our way of life in prayer and penance, solitude and silence for the sake of the Church and the world. Donations are sincerely appreciated and are tax-deductible. Thank you in advance to those who have remembered Marymount Hermitage in their wills. God bless you!