**Statement from the Executive of the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious of Ireland**

**on the war in Ukraine**

It was with shock and disbelief that we awoke last Thursday morning to the news that the Russian Federation had invaded Ukraine. Our thoughts turned at once to the Ukrainian people who are now suffering greatly and to the innocents caught up in this struggle. The words of Pope St John XXIII in *Pacem in terris* come to mind: “Each (nation) has the right to exist, to develop, and to possess the necessary means and accept a primary responsibility for its own development. Each is also legitimately entitled to its good name and to the respect which is its due… some nations may have attained to a superior degree of scientific, cultural and economic development. But that does not entitle them to exert unjust political domination over other nations. It means that they have to make a greater contribution to the common cause of social progress.”

We offer our prayerful support to the missionaries and religious who have chosen to remain in Ukraine during this conflict and who have received refugees fleeing the fighting. May the Lord be close to you all in these terrible times, for “The Lord is close to the broken-hearted; those whose spirit is crushed he will save.” (Psalm 34,19)

Pope Francis has asked that Ash Wednesday become a day of special prayer and fasting for peace in Ukraine. We stand in solidarity with the suffering people of Ukraine and those people in the Russian Federation protesting against this war. We call on all our members and all people of good will to join with us on this Ash Wednesday in prayer and fasting for peace.

Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB David Rose

President, AMRI Secretary General, AMRI