

Pastor Andriy—a dedicated and courageous HART partner—journeys to war-torn frontline villages, delivering life-saving humanitarian aid made possible by your support.

Recently, he wrote a powerful Easter reflection that we felt compelled to share with you.



## Ukraine's Suffering Through the Lens of Easter

Andriy draws a parallel between the suffering of Christ during His Passion and the agony faced by Ukrainians during the war. This perspective offers a profound lens through which believers can frame their pain and hope during this devastating time.

Andriy begins by acknowledging the arrival of Easter—a time of resurrection and hope—but emphasizes that before resurrection, there is suffering. Just as Christ endured betrayal, injustice, and death before His triumph over the grave, Ukrainians are walking through their own 'Good Friday' of overwhelming grief, hopelessness, and despair.

The horrors they face make the events of Christ's Passion feel more real, more personal, more relatable than ever before. The promise of resurrection exists, but it feels distant.

Andriy's reflection then lists the causes of this "deathly sorrow," drawing striking parallels between the Passion of Christ and the suffering of Ukraine. In this shared anguish, there is a spiritual intimacy—Christ's path is more comprehensible, and his humanity more relatable.

- **The impunity of evil** – Just as Jesus was handed over to His executioners during the "hour of darkness," Ukraine faces an enemy that seems to act without consequence.
- **The feeling of God's abandonment** – Christ cried out, "My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Ukrainians, too, feel abandoned as they endure unrelenting suffering.
- **Blatant lies and propaganda** – Just as false witnesses testified against Jesus, propaganda distorts truth and justifies injustice.
- **The helplessness of leaders** – Pilate washed his hands instead of defending Jesus; world leaders today hesitate or act weakly in the face of evil.
- **Betrayal by those once trusted** – Just as Judas betrayed Christ, former allies have abandoned Ukraine in its time of need.
- **Profiting from suffering** – Soldiers gambled for Jesus' garments, and today, there are those who exploit the war for personal or political gain.
- **Indifference from the world** – Many in the crowd merely watched as Christ was crucified, and much of the world stands by, detached from Ukraine's pain.
- **The arrogance of oppressors** – Those who tortured and mocked Christ believed themselves to be in control, much like today's aggressors revel in their perceived power, and use torture and humiliation against Ukrainians.
- **The darkness of prolonged suffering** – Andriy compares the profound horror and tragedy of war to the darkness that covered the earth during Christ's crucifixion, symbolizing the weight of evil.

Yet, despite this overwhelming sorrow, Andriy does not leave the reflection in despair. Instead, he finds comfort in the nearness of Christ.

While the resurrection is central to Christianity, the pastor honestly admits that for many Ukrainians, it feels "far away," much like Martha's distant belief in the resurrection "on the last day" (John 11:24).

Good Friday—the day of betrayal, torture, and despair—feels more tangible than Easter morning with its message of hope and triumph.

Yet, the pastor doesn't stop at despair. He draws on faith and trust in God, expressing the belief that Ukraine's suffering might lead to its own "resurrection"—a victory, an Easter morning of renewal and freedom. Just as Christ's death led to redemption, perhaps Ukraine's agony will lead to eventual triumph, justice, and peace.

The final plea—"I put my trust in You, O Lord. Help my unbelief, as well as the unbelief of my people"—is an acknowledgment of the struggle to hold onto faith in the midst of devastation. It is both a confession of doubt and a declaration of trust, echoing the cry of the desperate father in *Mark 9:24: "I believe; help my unbelief!"*

### A Call to Spiritual Solidarity

Pastor Andriy's reflection is not just about war—it is about faith under fire, about finding meaning in suffering, and about clinging to the hope of resurrection, even when the darkness seems endless.

It's a powerful reminder that just as Good Friday was not the end for Christ, Ukraine's "Good Friday" of war and sorrow can lead to its resurrection—its Easter morning. Amen.

