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## The Pilot

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### Archbishop expresses solidarity with Ukrainian Catholics as conflict approaches 5 years

By [Wes Cipolla Pilot Staff](#)



*Archbishop Henning addresses the congregation at Christ the King Ukrainian Catholic Church in Jamaica Plain, Feb. 15. With him is Bishop Paul Chomnycky of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford. Photo courtesy Andrew Nynka, The Ukrainian Weekly*

BRAINTREE -- Archbishop Richard G. Henning concelebrated Mass at Christ the King Ukrainian Catholic Church in Jamaica Plain with Bishop Paul Chomnycky of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Stamford, on Feb. 15, renewing ties between the Roman and Ukrainian Catholic Churches as the war in Ukraine is about to enter its fifth year.

Many parishioners' relatives have been killed or displaced, and Ukrainian Catholic churches and schools have been destroyed by Russian attacks.

Father Yaroslav Nalysnyk, pastor of Christ the King, was unable to be with his dying mother due to the war.

"It gives us a chance to stand in solidarity with the suffering members of our Church," said Vito Nicastro, associate director of the Archdiocese of Boston's Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs. "We know that Ukrainian Catholics, 5 million throughout the world, are suffering for their identity and for their faith. We know that the Russian aggressive invaders want to exterminate that Church. But we don't have to go to Ukraine to pray with them, to stand with them."

The Jan. 15 liturgy at Christ the King lasted two hours.

"The Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian choir brought a very specific flavor to the liturgy that they celebrated," Nicastro said.

Bishop Chomnycky welcomed Archbishop Henning into the church and read a letter from Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia. Archbishop Gudziak thanked Archbishop Henning for visiting Christ the King.

"Your presence among the faithful is a true sign of pastoral closeness and encouragement, deeply appreciated by the Ukrainian Catholic community and by all who gathered in prayer," Archbishop Gudziak, the highest-ranking Ukrainian Catholic prelate in the U.S., wrote.

"Moments such as these strengthen our communion and remind us that, even in times of suffering, the Church walks together as one body."

He thanked the Archdiocese of Boston for supporting the people of Ukraine. Under Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley, the archdiocese established a Healing the Wounds of War in Ukraine Fund, which raised \$500,000 in 2023. Archbishop Gudziak also recalled his meeting with Archbishop Henning at the archdiocese's Pastoral Center in Braintree last March.

"Our conversation was both thoughtful and consoling," he wrote, "marked by genuine concern for the people of Ukraine and by a shared desire to respond faithfully to the intense human and spiritual challenges brought about by the war. I am thankful for your attentive listening, your words of encouragement, and your openness to continued collaboration in service of those who suffer."

Archbishop Henning thanked Bishop Chomnycky and Archbishop Gudziak for his "words of prophetic wisdom" and Father Nalysnyk for his "passionate care of this wonderful community." He told the assembly that amid the turmoil of recent years, their faith, shared with the global Catholic Church, will give them strength.

"I believe firmly that in another 1,000 years, other Christians, other Ukrainian Catholics, will look back upon this time and the firm foundation you have set, the powerful witness you have given, the resilience, the compassion, the generosity," he said.

Ukrainian groups presented Archbishop Henning with gifts, including traditional bread. Father Nalysnyk and Bishop Chomnycky gave him an icon of the Virgin Mary.

"We help each other because God gives us the strength to help each other," Nicastro said, "and we feel the love and power to go on because God gives it to us."

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