



May 25, 2022

Dear Sisters, Associates, Colleagues, and Friends,

Three months ago, the war in Ukraine began. As we strive to respond to urgent needs, we share an update on the current situation and our ongoing response in Europe. Officials of the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) **report** that the number of people forced to flee conflict, violence, human rights violations, and persecution has risen to an unprecedented level of more than 100 million worldwide. At the end of 2021, it was 90 million, driven by conflicts including in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and Nigeria. With the war in Ukraine, now eight million have been displaced within their home country, and more than six million have sought refuge outside Ukraine.

Our sisters in Europe continue to respond to the needs of Ukrainian refugees with great love. In the Bavarian Province (including the Districts of Austria-Italy and Czechoslovakia), Ukrainian children are welcome in our schools. Girls ages 14-17 are learning German, English and other subjects in our high school in Munich. The province provides financial support for them and the Ukrainian teachers who work with them. Two couples live in the Munich motherhouse. One of each couple is ill, needing dialysis twice a week. In Sweden, one Ukrainian woman with two children lives in our small house used for holidays. Our sisters in Romania offer financial support through Caritas. Our school in Vienna has welcomed 32 children and is grateful for donations for school fees, meals, and after school care. Sisters in the Czech Republic assist three women with five children, one of whom is in the kindergarten.



In Hungary, 18 refugee children are in our school in Budapest. With the help of the parents of our Hungarian students, sisters have managed to provide clothing, food, and money for the families. Parents of refugee students are given jobs in our school. Sisters also collaborate with other groups as volunteers to instruct students not in our school. Another 10 students are in our school in Debrecen and six in Szeged. In Slovenia, fewer refugees have arrived, and our sisters continue to collaborate with Caritas Slovenia in offering support.

In Poland, 54 refugees live with our sisters in six communities, among them 19 orphans, some foster families, and mothers with children. The sisters provide a safe home and resources for their full development. Three of our kindergartens have received 19 children from Ukraine. Recently, some families have decided to return to Ukraine, and our sisters assisted financially. At Easter, refugee mothers expressed their gratitude for being able to spend the feast safely with our sisters.

Sisters, we close with an expression of gratitude from **Caritas**. Let us remain united in prayer as we discern the critical global concerns we are called to address and dare to respond boldly. (cf. *Love Gives Everything*, Directional Statement, 24th General Chapter).

Your Sisters,
Roxanne, Inês, Carolyn, Julianne, Martina
The General Council