

Dear Mary Ward Family,

In Uzghorod we celebrated Christmas Eve with the young people from our social centre. Except for our young people who live in Mary Ward Social Centre there are also a mother and daughter from Zaporozhye as they have no place to go, their houses were destroyed.

For some of them, those from the very East Ukraine, especially the displaced, the experience of Christmas Eve according to our Roman Catholic tradition was something unknown and new. A precious Christmas gift for us for all of us was the light... They gave us more electricity for the holidays than they wrote in the schedule. We had light during the festive Masses and during the Christmas Eve dinner. This also contributed to the Christmas joy. We never thought we could enjoy so much the light and warmth.

During Advent, we tried to prepare for Christmas in the parish. During most of the rehearsals, we were without electricity, which was very difficult for us and the participants. Thanks to God and the benefactors for the modern technology that we were able to use during the choir rehearsals to use the light from the battery.

Meanwhile, all month long, cars from our Slovak CJ charitable organisation Magis and other places arrived bringing various help and used candles from Slovakia. They also brought us generators, and lamps. They even came to the electricians from Košice who helped to connect the boiler and other electrical appliances to the generator. However, we cannot use the generators very often because they are very expensive to run and also noisy. We hope the Lord will give us such a winter that we will need it as little as possible. We would like to thank everyone who collected candles and sent them to Uzghorod. We distributed the candles to two centres (in Uzghorod and Kyiv) where they were recycled and converted into tin candles (see the pictures). In Uzghorod, our volunteer, Mr Mykola and his team prepare the tin candles. He makes them at a small warehouse, protected from the cold just by a single iron door, and even that is open because of the noxious fumes.

Such converted candles are sent on to the front for soldiers and for civilians to keep warm, or to heat water for tea... Soldiers from the front and also the volunteers who arrange the transport, expressed their great gratitude not only to us, but to everyone, who collected the candles, and arranged the transport across the border... We still need more candles.

We also had the opportunity to visit soldiers in the hospital in Uzghorod who are in rehabilitation. It was the idea of our co-worker, the director of the kindergarten, Victoria. Together with parents and children we prepared sweet packages. We tried to find encouraging words, although it was not easy. They were really hard cases. But we felt God's presence.

We all of you for your prayers. Let us continue to pray for those people who are suffering so much as a consequence of the war. Please, pray for peace and an early end to the war. May the Lord reward you for each effort to relieve the pain of all those suffering.

Your sisters CJ from Uzghorod and Seredne, Ukraine