

## Shevchuk in Irpin and Bucha: "Words fail us. Their blood cries out to us"

A memorial service was held yesterday at the mass graves in Bucha. His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Major Archbishop of Kiev, head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, presided over the service. He paid a visit to the towns of Irpin, Bucha and Gostomel, liberated from Russian occupation. In Irpin, the archbishop visited the Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, and in Bucha - reports the [website](#) of the Greek Catholic Church - he prayed at one of the mass graves commemorating "all the innocents killed by the occupiers." "Words fail us. Their blood cries out from here, from this land, to heaven. And the Christian heart must heed the cry of this blood." "We have come here to pray for their eternal peace," said His Beatitude Sviatoslav after the funeral service in Bucha. It's important that the sorrow be felt not only in Ukraine but in the whole world, he added. His Beatitude Sviatoslav underlined: *"If this sin is not condemned, if this crime is not denounced, it might happen again."* "Any one of us could have been in this mass grave", he said. "May the Lord God lay to rest the souls of his slain innocent servants, may He save human lives, may He protect Ukraine from those criminals who came to kill, plunder and destroy. May He grant everlasting memory to the slain innocents!" - added the Primate.



[According to Mayor Anatoliy Fedoruk, close to 300 people were buried in mass graves in Bucha alone and dozens of bodies were lining the city's war-torn streets, some with their hands tied behind their backs. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said destruction to the town of Borodyanka is "much more horrific" than in Bucha, near Kyiv. In fact, Ukraine's Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova said 26 bodies had been found under two ruined buildings while local authorities reported 200 missing. Finally, horrifying images came from Kramatorsk in the Donetsk region, where Russian rockets hit the railway station, killing and injuring civilians. "We are increasingly realising that the purpose of this war is outright extermination," said Archbishop Shevchuk. Civilians are being attacked, railway lines and roads that could be used to evacuate people from unsafe areas are being destroyed. "Last night we heard that the occupying forces seized and confiscated for their own needs the humanitarian supplies that our volunteers were trying to deliver to the local population, specifically in the Kherson region, where people are very much on the verge of starvation."](#)



[The Archbishop devoted his daily message from Kiev to this experience. "I stood beside the open mass grave, I saw their lifeless bodies and prayed for their eternal rest. In prayer, I asked myself, and I asked God, 'O Lord,](#)

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*what does it mean to love You and to love our neighbour?' "And right there, standing near that mass grave, seeing the hands of our murdered brothers and sisters, I understood one very important thing: to love our neighbour means to feel kinship with them. It means feeling that together we are persons, that we belong to the same human family. And that I could have been there, where he or she rests in that common grave. "We have a common vocation, a common destiny," the archbishop continues. "There ensues that every Christian believer, regardless of where he or she lives on the planet, whether Italian or German or Australian, upon beholding the atrocities of the occupiers in Bucha, is saying today, 'I am Ukrainian', because they feel the oneness of our human race with the innocent victims." "Let us pray that despite the hatred and murderous war, we will be able to love God and our neighbour, and remain human."*

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