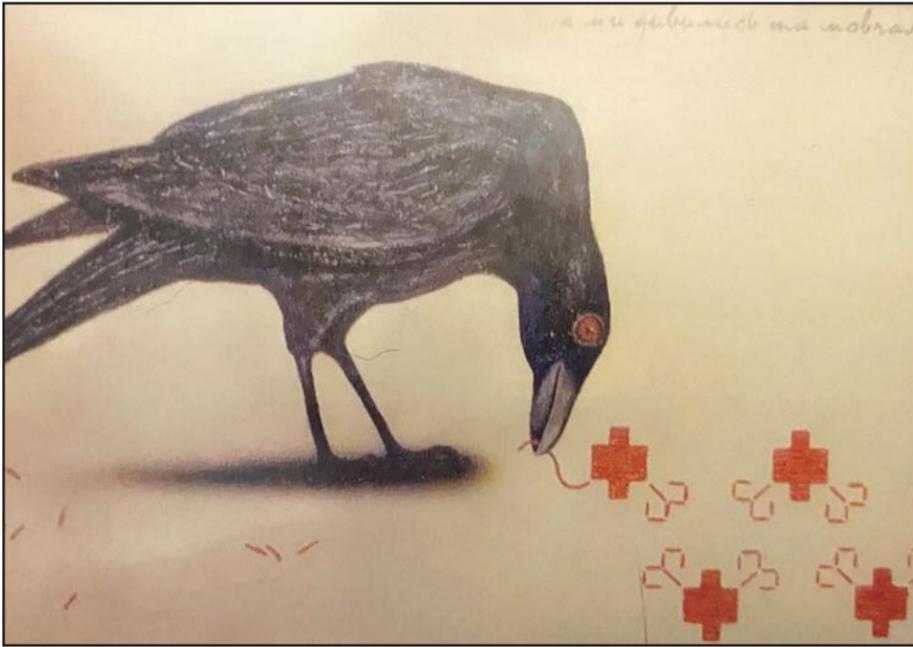


## EXPLORING OUR MUSEUM AND LIBRARY

## The War. The Black Crow. The Embroidered Shirt.

By Lubow Wolynetz, Curator



A black crow, the perpetual enemy of Ukraine, is seen pulling threads out of an embroidered cloth. Poster Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

Over the past few decades the month of May, long having held multiple profound traditional meanings in many cultures historically, has acquired a very special new significance for Ukrainians. On the third Thursday of the month Ukrainians in Ukraine as well as those living around the world display their unity and solidarity and underscore their national identity by wearing an embroidered shirt or other embroidered garment. This serves as a visual declaration to the whole world that both we and our rich culture exist, that we are Ukrainians and must be acknowledged as such, and that we are not to be mistaken for any other people or by another name. Citizens of many other countries stood in support of Ukrainian efforts to achieve this global acknowledgment by also donning embroidered shirts in solidarity with us upon this day. And so this day in May has become an International Ukrainian Embroidery Day. How will this day be observed this year considering the presence of war?

Barely 9 months ago in August 2021, with great jubilation Ukraine celebrated

the 30th anniversary of its independence. The whole nation was in its glory, radiating in its beauty, recounting its achievements, proudly honoring its past while looking forward to a dynamic future. Those who were present and participated in this celebration in Ukraine, especially in Kyiv will never forget the joyful and uplifting spirit permeating the country. The profound unity in devotion and determination to uphold and safeguard Ukrainian independence and to care for the nation's continued cultural, political and economic development. Prior to these thirty years much of Ukrainian history and culture were frequently misrepresented, appropriated, obscured or destroyed by Tsarist and Soviet Russian regimes. When Ukrainians finally began to rediscover their past they chose to proactively cherish and preserve what they found. Ukrainians began to discover the factual record of their people and soon realized how powerful the Russian propaganda efforts had been and still are in distorting the truth and in attempting to falsify the record about Ukraine. The voices of Ukrainians in the Diaspora

were "voices in the wilderness" trying to inform the world about Soviet policies in Ukraine and exposing Soviet atrocities. The Cultural institutions of the Diaspora also collected and preserved important documents and cultural treasures which otherwise might have been destroyed by the Russians. Diasporan efforts in disseminating the truth about the Russian atrocities led to a keener awareness of the deadly costs of such misinformation campaigns for much of the world.

The growing achievements and liberal spirit of Ukraine over its first thirty years of independence tormented Putin to the point of hysteria. His attempt to destroy what was accomplished and to annihilate the cultural heritage of the nation serves as a reminder and a warning to every nation or identity that seeks peace though its own right of self-determination.

In the first years of independence talented Ukrainian and Diasporan artists produced a number of posters which conveyed powerful messages through art and iconography. The theme of these posters

invites the onlooker to ponder such ideals as the honoring and preservation of one's language, culture and history. One of the most expressive posters illustrates the destruction of Ukraine, her existence and her heritage. A black crow, the perpetual enemy of Ukraine, is seen pulling threads out of an embroidered cloth. In Ukrainian tradition an embroidered cloth has always been a symbolic representation of Ukrainian life. Embroidery for Ukrainians has always been a symbol of our identity and served as a mystical protector and defense against omens. This year's embroidery day celebration will be exceptional because of the tragic context of war and suffering in Ukraine. When we wear our embroidered clothing we are wearing the history of our nation, it's thousand year old existence now being threatened with extinction. This year, more than any other time it is necessary to venerate the glory and gift of our Ukrainian embroidery. We should not only delight in its beauty but also appreciate the deepest meaning it holds for our people. ❖



Embroidery samples. Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford.

For more information about The Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, please, visit [www.ukrainianmuseumlibrary.org](http://www.ukrainianmuseumlibrary.org), call 203-324-0499 or 203-323-8866. The Museum is open Wednesday through Friday from 1 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., or by appointment, and is located at: 161 Glenbrook Road, Stamford, CT 06902.

## Catholic school students send donations to help Ukrainian refugees

By Catholic News Service

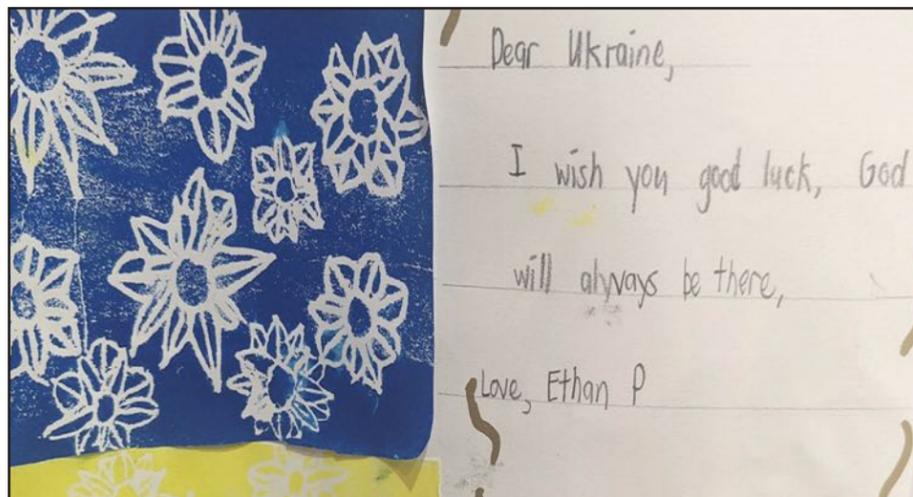
BROOKLYN, N.Y. (CNS) -- Through an art project and a dress-down day, the students of St. Sebastian Catholic Academy in Woodside, sent prayers and support to refugee families in Ukraine and in neighboring Poland.

"We were doing 'mite box Mondays' for the month of March, supporting the missions like we always do," said principal Michelle Picarello, referring to the school's ongoing collection of financial donations to help the Missionary Childhood Association, a pontifical mission society.

"When we heard we would be able to send money specifically for Ukraine, we dedicated March 21 to collect for that," she said. The school sent the parents of the 390 students a request for a minimum donation of \$1 per student and ended up collecting \$1,165.

At the same time, art teacher Sandy Ryan was also working with students on drawings that would include prayers for the children and families of Ukraine.

Deacon Lou Panico, the Missionary Childhood Association Coordinator in the Brooklyn Diocese, said diocesan Catholic schools were notified that they



could help Ukraine through a special solidarity fund set up by the National Office of the Pontifical Mission Societies which included on its online donation site, MIS-SIO.org.

This fund is to support outreach of the church in Ukraine and in Poland, as well as efforts of missionaries in Poland to welcome and care for refugee families. To date, 11 Brooklyn schools have con-

tributed more than \$17,000 to this fund.

St. Joseph the Worker Catholic Academy in Brooklyn, sent \$3,000 -- their proceeds from a dress-down day where students pay to dress out of uniform.

For these students, prayer was also part of the picture. "It started with prayer, blue and yellow prayer chains all over the building, calling to mind the colors of the Ukrainian flag, reminding all to pray for

those suffering," said principal Stephanie-Ann Germann.

The donation of \$4,377 from St. Bernadette Catholic Academy in Brooklyn is the largest donation to the fund so far.

Father Charles Keeney, diocesan director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Brooklyn, visited that school in early April and said the war in Ukraine has deeply affected young people, particularly as they see what is happening to children and mothers.

He told them about the image of empty strollers at a train station in Poland, waiting for families who fled with only the basics. "Young people here -- always mission-minded -- wanted to do something to make a difference," he said.

"I heard the stories about children my age being dropped off and parents going to fight in the war," said Leana Longhitano, a seventh grader at St. Sebastian's, explaining why she wanted to help.

"My message to young people in Ukraine would be that we have you in our prayers and we are supporting you," she said. ❖