

## Ukraine in our heart, Prayer Vigils



*Every evening since the beginning of the Russian invasion into the Ukraine, Ukrainian Faith and Light communities have been proposing that other communities in this international movement pray for peace. Among them, members from Russian communities.*

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion into the Ukraine, Ukrainian Faith and Light communities have been gathering, via video, every evening to pray for the end of the war. Very quickly, friends of this Christian movement, present in 86 countries across the world and bringing together intellectually disabled people, their families and their friends, wished to share in this. *"And because Faith and Light is an international movement and we are friends with the Russian communities, they too have joined this daily time of prayer via video"*, said Uliana Roy, a Ukrainian and a member of Faith and Light for 20 years, on Tuesday 1 March 2022. Lithuanians, Poles, Canadians, Americans, Italians, Czechs and Slovaks also join them.

Testimony from Manca Kastelic. This Polish member of l'Arche took part in one of these prayer vigils: *"it was heart-breaking, beautiful, surreal at times... Some Ukrainians had to leave during the prayer due to ongoing*

*attack alarms. Among them, a translator. A woman from Moscow then stepped in to replace him and translated into English for us..."*

This link offers an opportunity to keep a fraternal time of prayer between the Russians and the Ukrainians, even if it is very tenuous. Uliana Roy, also a former vice coordinator of the movement in the Ukraine, insists: *"This is not a common prayer with the Russians. This may seem ridiculous and naïve to you, but we have been seeing our war dead in the news for several days and we simply do not have the spiritual strength to say that we are organising something with the Russians..."*

The Ukrainian, who took part in the retreat organised in 2017 at l'Arche in Trosly-Breuil, in the Oise (60), on the initiative of Jean Vanier, to bring together the Russian and Ukrainian communities on the theme of peace, wants to maintain hope. *"Perhaps one day, when the war is over, we will take part in common prayers but today, it is more that the Russians are joining our prayer."*