

Dear Brothers and Staff,

Слава Ісусу Христу (glory to Jesus Christ) and greetings from me and the friars in Ukraine!

I'll try to do a better job later with the story and the pictures, if I can, but I wanted to share some joyful news with you as soon as I could. This is about the "social center" we helped build in Fastiv, Ukraine. It's housing for refugee families, refugees who've lost their families, and other people struggling in serious ways. They also treat soldiers who have PTSD, assisting with physical and mental healthcare needs, and the same for women who've lost their sons or daughters in the war, or who've lost their husbands or children. There's a school for kids and summer camps too.

Some of you may recall that in September 2022, I visited Ukraine and spent a day here at this amazing Dominican ministry:

[St. Martin de Porres Center, Fastiv, Ukraine](#)

When I was there, our province and our Mission Foundation had raised or otherwise been able to provide about \$1.4 million for aid to our Dominican brothers in Ukraine for their support of war refugees. At the time, we'd sent some money, but we were holding onto most of it in our own bank, because the banks in Poland, through whom our Ukrainian friars would receive the funds, were charging interest to hold the money, and we wanted to avoid that fee.

While in Fastiv, I received a tour of a gutted building given to the friars for a housing project. Here's what it looked like at the time.



(Not trying to be artsy here. I just don't have the patience to figure out photo placement!)



Fr. Misha (upper left photo) told me they wanted to finish the first and second floors to begin immediately to provide housing for refugee families and others in hardship while they finished the third floor and other areas. I asked him how much money he would need. He said \$800k. I was shocked. That was the amount we had waiting for Ukraine in our bank: \$800k—exactly what they needed! We were all thrilled.

So Fr. Misha got to work and finished the renovations. Here's how the new exterior looks:



And solar panels, especially for when the power goes out due to attacks on the power grid.



Here's the interior of the chapel.



Below's an enlargement of the upper left corner of the stained glass...



Our province shield!

But that's not the whole story. We were aware of that. There's more. First, some additional photos of the interior and some of the great people we have helped—people who set for us an incredible example of faith, hope, and love, with profound courage.



They have a dental office too! I didn't get a picture of that or any of the bedrooms, but I might get some from other sources.

Icons painted on the lids of munitions (ammo) boxes...



We met the artist and his wife and son. One of his icons was presented to Pope Francis. Here's more if you're interested.

[Icons on Ammo Boxes](#)

Below, icons by summer camp kids!



The kids come here for a two-week summer camp to give them a break from their difficult lives in homes on the front lines of the war in eastern Ukraine. They told us the two things they appreciate the most are the friendships and the quiet—meaning no gunfire or explosions from aircraft, tanks, land mines, missiles, drones, and all the weapons of war. That latter part was heartbreaking.

On the last day, the children are given their icons to take home. Below are some of them. And some pics of residents and volunteers and friars too!



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Fr. Misha, who runs the center. Heroic.



This lady is awesome. Oksana. Plays guitar at Mass and clearly has other duties. She's a medic, but I wouldn't want to mess with her!



The big reveal was yesterday, July 9th, after Mass at 2 pm with the summer camp kids, residents, and visitors. I preached (with an interpreter) and we celebrated a votive Mass of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

Then I was asked to bless the entrance of the center and the new plaque. To my surprise, here's what I found when I removed the veil covering the plaque...



They honored us by naming the entire social center after our province! We had contributed about 70% of what they needed for the project so far— they need a little more to finish a few necessary things. And they like the

name because all Catholics—Latin and Byzantine—and Orthodox and Protestants can embrace it and feel at home.

Thank God for our friends and benefactors, and for our staff, who made it possible for us to support the Social Center of the Most Holy Name of Jesus!

Keeping you in my prayers,

Fr. Christopher, OP

10 July 2025



P.S. Mass with Fr. Thomas Brogl, OP, socius of the Master of the Order to the region of Europe, and Fr. Jaroslaw Krawiec, OP, vicar of Ukraine, in Krakow at the tomb of St. Hyacinth before our journey to Ukraine.

