



The Holy See

***POPE FRANCIS' CONDOLENCES
UPON THE DEATH OF MAJOR ARCHBISHOP
OF KYIV-HALYČ (UCRAINA)***

Your Beatitude,

On the day in which we bid a Christian farewell to the dear earthly presence of the Major Archbishop emeritus of Kyiv-Halyč, Cardinal Lubomyr Husar, I should like once more to be among those who pray to the heavenly Father, entrusting to Him the chosen soul of our Brother.

I am inspired to do so by the extraordinary flow of people, of which I have become aware, who have hastened to pay homage to the Cardinal's mortal remains. This presence is the eloquent sign of what he represented: one of the Ukrainian people's highest and most respected moral authorities of recent decades.

I turn to You, Your Beatitude, to whom I am bound by a longstanding relationship of esteem, to comfort You for the loss of one who was for You a father and spiritual guide.

He was so for the entire Greek Catholic Church, which he gathered from the heritage of the "catacombs" to which she had been obliged by the persecution, and to which he restored not only the ecclesiastical structures, but above all, the joy of her history, based upon faith through and beyond all suffering.

Following the arduous and intense period of his ministry as "father and leader" of the Greek Catholic Church, with the onset of old age and illness, his presence among the people altered in style, but, where possible, became even richer and more intense. As ever a wise master, he intervened fairly regularly in the life of your country: his words were simple, understandable to all, but most profound. His was the wisdom of the Gospel; it was the bread of the Word of God broken for the common man, for the suffering, for all those who were seeking dignity. His exhortations

were gentle, but also very demanding of everyone. He prayed ceaselessly for all, feeling that this was his added responsibility. And so many felt represented, beckoned and consoled by him, both believers and non-believers, even beyond confessional differences. All understood that a Christian was speaking, a Ukrainian impassioned by his identity, always full of hope, open to the future of God. He had a word for each person; he “felt for” people with the warmth of his great humanity and exquisite kindness. Above all, he loved to dialogue with young people, with whom he had an exceptional capacity to communicate, many of whom approached him gladly.

I am touched to think that today the whole of Ukraine mourns him, but that many may be certain that he is already resting in the embrace of the heavenly Father. They feel that, after having had in him an example of consistent and credible life, they can continue to benefit from his prayers with which he will protect his still suffering people, scarred by violence and by insecurity, and yet certain that Christ’s love does not disappoint.

Grateful for this unique, religious and social presence in the history of Ukraine, I invite you all to be faithful to his steadfast teaching and total abandonment to Providence. May you continue to feel his smile and his caress.

Upon all of you, beloved Ukrainians, in the country and in the diaspora, I invoke an abundance of heavenly blessings.

From the Vatican, 5 June 2017

FRANCISCUS P.P.