Praise be Jesus Christ!l

*Carissima Famiglia*, My dearest Family,

“*do not grumble against one another* [ we do a lot of grumbling] *so that you may not be judged: see the judge is standing at the door*”

What is happening in Ukraine is a judgement against us.

We are on the cusp of destruction. It takes one wrong decision by someone to undo the beauty of creation.

Ah, we say, “this is unthinkable”. Not only is the unthinkable the thought of the evil one but it is always lying in so many ways just waiting for the unthinkable to be done. And it can be done by those who even hide under pious words the unthinkable, the violent, the divisive, the betraying, the murdering by tongue or by bullet.

If I might say so, there is a disease in the Christianity of the East. The noble and wonderful faith of the Orthodox is undone by the tribalism of autocephaly. What does that mean? Each of the Orthodox Churches are attached to a nation: the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Russian Muscovite Orthodox Church, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, or the Greek Orthodox Church etcetera. And it is very easy for Orthodoxy to become caught up and manipulated by the tribe’s thinking and make Christianity the servant of the will of the tribe.

There is also a disease in Western Christianity. And that’s the disease of the ego. For us the “tribe” has been replaced by the “I”, the “me”, the “ego” and so our faith is put at the service of our own will.

*The judgement is at the door* brothers and sisters.

Jesus’ gospel opens our eyes to see that ours is a country that is riven in its core – the family - by the ease of betrayal of people by divorce. It is not only those whose marriages end because God has not joined them together (and with great humility we journey with people who discover that truth). Rather many marriage relationships are so easily put aside because of the hardness of heart of those who are absolutely willing to go to war in a courtroom. Indeed, all relationships are easily put aside by absolutely willing to go to war against minorities and the marginalized in the prejudiced courtroom-conversations of coffee houses and this even under the veneer of Christianity. So many right-thinking justice warriors dismiss people and see only caricatures and so in our parliaments we are ready to go to war.

War measures are always at hand and - God forgive us - we “*swear by heaven*” that what we do is justified. Or we “*swear by earth*” that what we are doing is just the way that everyone else thinks should be done.

And the result is more even now the profiteers are calculating how the death of Ukrainians and the young soldiers that are sent to kill them can be turned to the financial benefit of provinces, of companies, of nations.

Should we be surprised, brothers and sisters, for we are so quick to turn other people and their suffering and their division to our own pleasure? By watching with fascination the sufferings of others and doing nothing about it? By walking past the homeless in the street and saying ‘how inconvenient’? By continuing to talk about our brothers and sisters in our families with whom we do not agree?

Brothers and sisters “*the judgement of God is upon us*”.

Where?

Here right here on this altar is a judgement not of death but of victory over death.

It is a judgement of peace over war.

It is a judgement of solidarity even with those who betrayed Him.

It is in judgement of love,

Let us plead for the conversion of our own hearts.

Let us plead for the wars that we wage in our own lives end so that this world might not be undone by war but re-done in the glory by Jesus Christ our peace.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.