**BCOS statement on Ukraine 15 March 2022**

“Together with Pope Francis, we fervently pray for an end to the conflict in Ukraine and for all those who have become victims of such senseless violence. We continue to be shocked at the horrific loss of life and destruction and appalled at the humanitarian catastrophe which is unfolding before us.

While we welcome the steps taken by the UK Government to resettle Ukrainian refugees in the UK, we hope that open sanctuary will speedily be offered to them, giving them the right to live, work and remain here as is happening in other countries.

We hope too that the Scottish Government will assist Ukrainians who come to Scotland with visa sponsorship, accommodation and other coordinated practical help. We urge our fellow citizens to give an open and generous welcome to those who seek refuge from the bloodshed and chaos in their nation, as we recall the words of St. Matthew “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35).

We commend those who wish to offer homes or work to refugees and encourage everyone who can manage to give financial help while asking people to pray for those who are suffering so grievously. The Catholic Church has begun the process of identifying properties which may be suitable for Ukrainian refugees.

We encourage Scotland’s Catholics and all people of good will to open their arms to the refugees from Ukraine.”

*Donations can be made to the SCIAF Ukraine Appeal which will go towards Caritas Internationalis’ response both in Ukraine and in neighbouring countries:* *https://www.sciaf.org.uk/get-involved/appeals/741-ukraine-appeal*