

## **July 2024**

It was a privilege and pleasure to last Sunday be able to welcome a group from Ukraine to use St. Mary's at Blakesley to celebrate their service of Mass. The group consisted of fifteen young people, their priest and some other adults and they were visiting Blakesley through their contact with Paul Parsons. The young people all have parents serving in the military and had come to the UK to give them a break from the dire situation in their homeland.

I, along with some others from our Blakesley church congregation, was able to sit and listen to some of their service. It was very different from what we are used to and although I was unable to understand any of the words there were similarities in the liturgy. Of course, as a denomination of Christianity they worship the same one God, made known in Jesus Christ.

It was very thoughtful of the priest, having preached his sermon in Ukrainian, to offer a few thoughts on the gospel in English to those of us there. The passage for the day was taken from John's Gospel just before the crucifixion when Jesus is praying for unity between his disciples, and he reminded us of the importance of working for unity especially in the troubled world which we see around us, not least in Ukraine. The priest thanked us for our welcome and said that also important was the need for there to be unity between churches and that on that day, in St. Mary's, a small example of that unity had been demonstrated. It was very humbling.

Now that we are well into the third year since the Russian invasion of Ukraine it is important that we continue to remember the country and its people in our prayers and pray for a peaceful resolution and return to normality.

God bless

Revd Sue

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