

Good Morning,

While war is being waged in Ukraine, and now in Russia, beneath the radar there's been a steady mobilisation of voluntary forces across the United Kingdom. Dozens and dozens of Convoys of Pick Up trucks loaded with medical and humanitarian aid have been driven by volunteers to Ukraine. They've raised millions of pounds. A friend from a neighbouring village went out with one this summer, the next one goes in October.

On their return they write a report for their supporters. In the last one they printed a letter from a Ukrainian medic called Svetlana who said how much the aid meant to them: quote

"because war does not only exhaust the body. It exhausts faith."

She unwrapped the reason for their gratitude.

"Not the vehicles, not the boxes. Not the supplies. The people." : The 32 who drove the 20 Pick Up trucks who could have stayed at home in warmth and safety yet chose to stand beside us."

These Convoys help to sustain the people of Ukraine as they wade through the 5th year of Russia's so called 'special military operation' that has already claimed hundreds of thousands of casualties on both sides.

In the Book of Common Prayer there's a prayer for "In the time of War and Tumults". Praying for the enemy is specific: abate their pride, assuage their malice and confound their devices. These three: pride, malice and devices constitute the anatomy of all wars.

Devices cover everything from swords to drones; victory belongs to those who can confound the weaponry.

Pride is the motivator that refuses to lose face and perpetuates the conflict long after the battle has been lost.

And malice is that spiteful force which is intent on doing harm to others and which refuses to be assuaged by compassion.

In Svetlana's letter she elevates the cause,

“There are thousands of kilometres between us, different languages, different flags flying over our homes. But for a long time we have shared the same cause. Freedom. And the responsibility to defend it.”

For her the very opposite of malice would be freedom. It's marbled into the human heart. To thwart it is like a suffocation. It truly does exhaust the body. And it surely does exhaust faith – faith in the human race and faith in God.

The Right Reverend Bishop James Jones KBE

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