Statement: Stop the Russian Military Invasion of the Ukraine!

　Yesterday (February 24), at noon time (Japan time), the Russian army launched a military invasion of the Ukraine. It was reported that there were already casualties, not only among both armies but also among the civilian population. It was also reported that the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which is in the border area of the Ukraine, has been overtaken by the Russian army. Further casualties and the possible use of nuclear weapons, must be prevented at all costs.

　Russia's invasion of the Ukraine is contrary to international law. There are no real solutions to problems using military force. Peace cannot be achieved by war.

　Today itself is a notable day in Japan because 41 years ago on this day, Pope St. John Paul II issued his "Appeal for Peace" in Hiroshima, which was 36 years after the atomic bombing. Let us listen once again to his words.

*In the face of the man-made calamity that every war is, one must affirm and reaffirm, again and again, that the waging of war is not inevitable or unchangeable. Humanity is not destined to self-destruction. Clashes of ideologies, aspirations and needs can and must be settled and resolved by means other than war and violence. Humanity owes it to itself to settle differences and conflicts by peaceful means. (“Appeal for Peace at Hiroshima”, St. John Paul II, February 25, 1981)*

　In the 21st century, when all of humanity is facing serious problems such as pandemics and climate change, for which we must be united to solve, the use of military force is not the solution

　The Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace opposes the use of military force in any form. We call on all the citizens of the world to stop the escalation of the war between Russia and the Ukraine as soon as possible and to help minimize damage from the war. Let us raise our voices to stop the war now. We also especially call on all governments around the world to help stop the war. We should abandon the idea of deterring war through military alliances and make maximum efforts to build peace through dialogue.

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Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace

Bishop Wayne Berndt, Chairperson

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