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Vatican's media strategy on war in Ukraine

Strategia medialna Watykanu w sprawie wojny na Ukrainie

Abstract

Since the beginning of the Russian offensive in Ukraine on 24th February 2022, the Vatican media were busy making known the distress of the Ukrainian people, whereas the Pope and the Secretariat of State seemed to be taking a more general position, to maintain contacts with Moscow and to keep the door open to mediation. In general, Vatican media controlled by the Dicastery for Communication have published numerous articles on the topic, very clearly denouncing Russia's responsibility. In comparison to this consistent approach, some of Pope's statements – apparently not very well prepared in terms of strategic institutional communication – fell under public scrutiny. Nevertheless, Pope often labelled the aggression a "sacrilege" and appealed for an end to the violence and long-term welcome of Ukrainian refugees. This contribution sums up the year-long (24th February, 2022 – 24th February, 2023) Vatican media communication on the topic of this war. The combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the English version of the Vatican News website production is used to show the tendencies in the context of overall strategic institutional communication of the Holy See. The topic is also seen from the point of the non-corporate (independent) Catholic journalism limited to America Magazine, La Croix, Avvenire, and The Tablet.

Keywords

Vatican, media strategy, war in Ukraine, Vatican News, America Magazine, La Croix, Avvenire, Tablet

Abstrakt

Od początku rosyjskiej napaści na Ukrainę watykańskie media były zajęte informowaniem o niepokojach narodu ukraińskiego. Tymczasem papież i Sekretariat Stanu zajmowali bardziej ogólne stanowisko, pozwalające utrzymywać kontakty z Moskwą i zachować otwarte drzwi do mediacji. Ogólnie rzecz biorąc, watykańskie media kontrolowane przez Dykasterię ds. Komunikacji opublikowały liczne artykuły na ten temat, bardzo wyraźnie potępiając odpowiedzialność Rosji. W porównaniu z tym konsekwentnym podejściem, niektóre wypowiedzi papieża – najwyraźniej niezbyt dobrze przygotowane pod względem strategicznej komunikacji instytucjonalnej – zostały poddane publicznej krytyce. Niemniej jednak papież często nazywał agresję „świętokradztwem” i apelował o położenie kresu przemocy i długoterminowe przyjęcie ukraińskich uchodźców.

Niniejszy artykuł podsumowuje całoroczną watykańską komunikację medialną na temat poruszanej wojny (od 24 lutego 2022 r. do 24 lutego 2023 r.). Połączenie ilościowej i jakościowej analizy treści angielskiej wersji strony internetowej Vatican News zostało wykorzystane do pokazania tendencji w kontekście ogólnej strategicznej komunikacji instytucjonalnej Stolicy Apostolskiej. Temat jest również postrzegany z punktu widzenia niekorporacyjnego (niezależnego) dziennikarstwa katolickiego w tytułach America Magazine, La Croix, Avvenire i the Tablet.

Słowa kluczowe

Watykan, strategia medialna, wojna w Ukrainie, Vatican News, America Magazine, La Croix, Avvenire, Tablet

Introduction

There is probably no doubt where Pope Francis and the Vatican stand on Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 – speaking continuously about perverse abuse of power, brutal violence, massacres of civilians, and unacceptable armed aggression, recognising Ukrainian sovereignty and subjectivity, and expressing continual admiration for its people's courageous resilience. "Francis has pushed the neutrality of the Holy See in a more prophetic direction, without shutting the door on dialogue."¹ In the recent period, State Secretary Cardinal Pietro Parolin also labelled Vatican's diplomatic approach as "positive neutrality".

Nevertheless, what does this "neutrality" mean? Let us sum up the papal initiatives in this war. On the second day of the Russian invasion already, Pope Francis personally went to the Russian embassy to the Holy See in an unusual gesture. There he asked the ambassador to tell Vladimir Putin that Pope was ready and willing to mediate peace between Russia and Ukraine. Then the Pope spoke to President Zelensky several times by phone.

Furthermore, he said he had worked in an invisible diplomatic style on helping war prisoners.² He sent his closest Cardinals co-workers to Ukraine to express his closeness to suffering people (see further). The charitable activities were enormous. However, the papal public speech still seemed to be double sense, and the Pope was criticised on one side for not being hard enough on the Russian side, on the other side for intervening too much in politics and giving up the "neutral" tone.

1. State of knowledge

Despite the fact of the clear pacifist origins of the Church and its declared concentration on spiritual matters, this institution soon gained immersive symbolical and diplomatic power in the international context³; since 410, when Pope Innocent I tried to avert the sack of Rome, cross-destructive religious wars of 16th and 17th century and 1870 when Pope Pius IX was abandoned and forced to submit to the new Italian state, to the 20th-century history with its opposition to Great War⁴ and then to Nazi

¹ C. Lamb, *The tensions of papal diplomacy in the Russian-Ukraine war*. The Tablet, 18.03.2022. Available at: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/15152/the-tensions-of-papal-diplomacy-in-the-russian-ukraine-war>.

² The Editors. *Exclusive: Pope Francis discusses Ukraine, U.S. bishops and more*. America Magazine, 28.11.2022. Available at: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/11/28/pope-francis-interview-america-244225>.

³ J. Carr, *The Pope's Army: The Papacy in Diplomacy and War*, Barnsley 2019.

⁴ J. Pollard, *Papal Diplomacy and The Great War*. New Blackfriars, 2015, vol. 96, no. 1062, pp. 147–57.

and Communist totalitarian regimes. The contribution of Pope John Paul II and the whole Catholic Church to the collapse of Communism is already well-known.⁵

In the contemporary situation, we can observe the more than one-year-long Vatican mediation in the Ukrainian war. According to some commentators, three levels of the Holy See diplomacy can be distinguished – “the classic diplomatic track; the Holy Father’s personal action and follow-up; and the push for humanitarian aid”.⁶ An example of the first level was the visit of the Vatican “Minister” for Relations with States, Archbishop Paul Richard Gallagher, to Ukraine in May 2022. There he met the state leaders and visited the devastated cities of Bucha and Vorzel. Gallagher also repeatedly ensured that the Vatican defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine. An example of the second level is Pope Francis’ visit to the Russian Federation Embassy in an unprecedented gesture and then sending of Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the Pope’s almoner, and Cardinal Michael Czerny, the prefect of the Dicastery for the Service of Integral Human Development, to coordinate humanitarian aid in the devastated country in Pope’s name. An example of the third level is the overall humanitarian aid distributed by Caritas, Catholic dioceses, and parishes or the Vatican.

Hence the current situation is a specific one. “The war in Ukraine has brought to a head a tension that has run through the Francis pontificate. On the one hand, the Pope is a prophetic voice for justice, speaking out for the oppressed in various parts of the globe, while on the other, he is a head of state with considerable diplomatic influence. The approach devised by Pope Francis could be described as ‘prophetic neutrality.’”⁷ Furthermore, since Russia’s invasion, the Pope has spoken frequently about his desire to visit Kyiv but finally did not go there, despite his bravery on other previous journeys (Central African Republic, Iraq, Philippines, etc.).⁸

Popes always want to leave the door open to dialogue and mediation, as the experience of the Russian invasion shows – Francis and his colleagues, especially State Secretary Cardinal Pietro Parolin, repeatedly ensured they were ready to speak to the Russian side and named the brutality of its soldiers only with a very cautious tone. In history, Pope John Paul II did not name the perpetrators of the ethnic

⁵ D. Castillo, *Papal Diplomacy from 1914 to 1989. The Seventy-Five Years War*, Lanham 2019.

⁶ A. Gagliarducci, *Vatican diplomacy in the Ukrainian war*. Omnes, 12.09.2022. Available at: <https://omnesmag.com/en/articles/vatican-diplomacy-in-the-ukrainian-war/>.

⁷ C. Lamb, *The tensions of papal diplomacy in the Russian-Ukraine war*. The Tablet [online]. 18. 3. 2022 [22. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/15152/the-tensions-of-papal-diplomacy-in-the-russian-ukraine-war>.

⁸ R.J. De Souza, *Ukraine War Anniversary Marks a Very Strange Year in the History of Papal Diplomacy*. National Catholic Register [online]. 24. 2. 2023 [22. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.ncregister.com/commentaries/ukraine-war-anniversary-marks-a-very-strange-year-in-the-history-of-papal-diplomacy>.

cleansing during the Kosovo War in 1999 and kept contact open with Serbia. Similarly, Pope Pius XII did not name the perpetrators of Nazi atrocities during the Second World, despite his help to Jews from behind the scenes and clear statements condemning antisemitism.⁹

2. Research method and research process

As the research method there was chosen the combination of quantitative and quantitative content analysis¹⁰ of the Vatican News website production, namely of the section “Vatican” of the English version of the website, to limit the research thematically and in the time between 24th February 2022, and 24th February 2023, to limit the research temporally. The found articles (114) were coded according to several categories – their main topic (thus the topic which prevails in the selected content), “spokesman” of the text (thus the person who is prevalingly cited in the content), date, genre (meant a journalistic genre – e. g. piece of news, commentary, interview, etc.), and overall “style” of the given information, which serves as a communication tool in the context of strategic institutional communication. This coding was made by the author herself based on the previously cited literature (Ibid.).

This contribution aimed to analyse the strategic institutional communication of Vatican media, including the Pope’s public speech, which was often medialised in the secular media too. A short and openly arbitrary analysis of non-corporate (independent) Catholic journalism limited to selected articles from *America Magazine*, *La Croix*, *Avvenire*, and *The Tablet* was used as a supportive method in this article and is summed up in the Discussion section.

3. Results

In described section, the time and language version of Vatican News, 114 articles were found that thematise the Russian invasion of Ukraine somehow. The researcher coded them into five categories.

In the first category (main topic), the prevailing part of the articles was summed up under Ukraine in general (40); in the second place, there were together refugees (14) and charity in general (14). Then followed Gallagher’s mission (11),

⁹ C. Lamb, The tensions of papal diplomacy in the Russian-Ukraine war. *The Tablet* [online]. 18. 3. 2022 [22. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/15152/the-tensions-of-papal-diplomacy-in-the-russian-ukraine-war>.

¹⁰ The goal of content analysis in general (Fajkus, 2005; Hendl, 2016; Ochrana, 2012, etc.) is also to transform individual media contents into data open to evaluation and interpretation (Kronick, 1997). Therefore, coding according to the topics, sub-topics, genres, authorities spokesmen, etc. was necessary in this case study. The important information from the media contents was noted (Sedláková, 2014) and finally, the evaluation was made with the help of MS Excel.

Krajewski's mission (9), other topics or occasions¹¹ (8), Vatican diplomacy (7), nuclear threat (5), Christmas (3), Russia – mothers' revolt (1), Good Friday Way of the Cross at Rome's Colosseum (1) and special Mass commemorating the first anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (1).

Popes always want to leave the door open to dialogue and mediation, as the experience of the Russian invasion shows – Francis and his colleagues, especially State Secretary Cardinal Pietro Parolin, repeatedly ensured they were ready to speak to the Russian side and named the brutality of its soldiers only with a very cautious tone.

In the second category (“spokesman” of the text), there were primarily found Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican's Secretary of State (19), then Paul Richard Gallagher, Vatican Secretary for Relations with States (“Minister of Foreign Affairs”) (19), and Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, Papal Almoner (16). Then followed Archbishop Visvaldas Kulbokas, the Apostolic Nuncio to Ukraine (8), the combination “Krajewski, Czerny and Pope Francis”¹² (3), Vatican journalist Sergio Centofanti (3), Pope Francis (2), refugees (2), Cardinal Michael Czerny, interim prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (1), Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halyč, head of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (1), Andrii Yurash, Ukrainian Ambassador to Holy See (1), Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (1) [etc].¹³ The majority of articles (25) had no apparent spokesperson.

¹¹ Under this subcategory was summed up the content of the lower importance for the inquiry subject, e. g. when the Russian invasion was briefly mentioned in only one sentence or in the background of the article, which has a different topic from ours (e. g. migration in general, abuse of people in general, human trafficking in general, etc.).

¹² This combination is quite important because for some time they started to act together – whereas Parolin or Gallagher were still cited and mentioned individually. For this reason, the combination of these three spokesmen is being left.

¹³ The list of other “spokesmen” follows: Ukrainian Greek Catholic Archbishop of Philadelphia, Borys Gudziak (1), President of Caritas Internationalis and Prefect of “Propaganda Fide”, Luis Antonio Tagle (1), Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (1), Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster (1), Monsignor Janusz Urbańczyk, the Holy See's Permanent Representative to the OSCE (1), Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York Archbishop Gabriele Caccia (1), President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, Archbishop Vin-

In the third category (month of publication), the most articles of 2022 were issued in March (37), then May (18), April (14), December (9), February (6), July (5), September (5), October (5), November (4), June (2). In 2023, a few articles were issued in January 2023 (4) and February (5).

As for the genres, there were primarily found news (87) and interviews (14), followed by commentaries (3), editorials (3), reflections (3), information or statements (3), and a report (1).¹⁴

Finally, as for the general “style” of the given information – resp. Its “tone and sentiment”, there were found articles selected into five categories. There were prevailing articles appealing to the “consolation of civilians” (17). Those ensuring “papal appeals for negotiation” and “hidden (unclear, unopen, discrete) diplomacy” (15), then appeals to “avoid escalation” or to “peace” (pacifism and disarmament agenda) in general (14). In contrast, the explicit and emotional, expressive “critique of the Russian side” (offensive tone) was observed in only 9 texts. The “spiritual moment” of the war or “prayer” was found in 6 texts. But the prevailing part of the texts (53) had no apparent performative inclination (Austin, 2020) – was rather barely informative – so they could not have been enrolled into this categorisation.

4. Discussion

From the micro-research above of the Vatican News’ content in selected time and topic, there is well visible how curious people representing Vatican communication on the matter of war were in their expressions. Fascinating are the dates from the fifth category, where the Vatican ceased to name aggressors openly in the prevailing part of the texts. We can look at the content again for a more detailed image of this institutional communication – by following qualitative content microanalysis.

In April 2022, one of the leading Vatican communicators stated in his commentary that the Russian aggression “had been prepared for some time with great investments and trade in arms”.¹⁵ Continuously, the Vatican ensured through its key diplomat speakers – Cardinal Parolin, and Cardinal Gallagher – that Pope Francis

cenzo Paglia (1), The Pontifical Academy for Sciences (1), Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna (1), Andrea Tornielli, editorial director of Vatican Media (1), Lucio Caracciolo, director of the Italian magazine ‘Limes’ (1), economist Gaël Giraud, SJ (1), civilians (1), workers (1).

¹⁴ From this category we do not get any extra knowledge about the institutional strategic communication of the Holy See, it was added only for the picture of the journalistic and other genres in the Vatican News.

¹⁵ A. Tornielli, Outdated mindsets and the novelty of a dream of peace. Vatican News [online]. 2. 4. 2022 [27. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-04/pope-francis-malta-apostolic-journey-editorial-tornielli.html>.

was waiting only for a sign of openness from Russia to start the peace negotiations. There was even the possibility of a papal trip to Kyiv and a separate meeting with Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill – which was finally realised as the video call and attracted significant media attention. Despite these concrete actions, that carious tone was still present, insisting that Ukraine had the right to defend itself, but we must “beware of an arms race”. That naturally disappointed Ukrainians and those who tried to help them – and even more when we add, for example, the highly mediated Holy Friday Way of Cross in the Roman Colosseum prepared partially by a pair of families – one from Ukraine and the other from Russia.¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Pope personally supported the suffering Ukrainian nation on every possible occasion.¹⁷

As the leader of the biggest Church in the world, Pope Francis emphasised the spiritual point of his mission when he personally or through his closest collaborators consoled civilians. “I can assure you that [the Pope’s] pronouncements about atrocities, about the suffering that he has been aware of in the country, is most sincere. He’s trying to be as forceful as he can to defend the Ukrainian people, to point out the fact that they have their freedom, that the integrity of this country has been transgressed,”¹⁸ said Cardinal Gallagher in Lviv. The most visible examples of this consolation and concrete humanitarian aid were three trips of Cardinal Krajewski to Ukraine in the spring of 2022. “The purpose of this trip is to be close to a people who suffer, but also to pray and to celebrate Holy Week.”¹⁹ Together with Cardinal Czerny, who met the Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia and Hungary, they manifested Christian charity and lived closeness to those who suffered.

As time passed, the Vatican and Pope Francis were criticised for not being strong enough face-to-face with Russia. The institutional statement followed soon: “In response to polemics that have arisen in recent days concerning the words of Pope Francis, a communiqué from the Holy See cites the Pope’s ‘numerous’ interventions concerning the war and recalls that he has always condemned the Russian

¹⁶ D. Watkins, Way of the Cross: Families share the pain of loss and horrors of war. Vatican News [online]. 11. 4. 2022 [27. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-04/via-crucis-good-friday-meditations-rome-pope-families.html>.

¹⁷ D.C. Lubov, Cardinal Krajewski to deliver another ambulance from Pope to Ukraine. Vatican News [online]. 9. 4. 2022 [23. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-04/cardinal-krajewski-ambulance-kyiv-injured-children-almoner-ukrain.html>.

¹⁸ D. Watkins, S. Dukhovych, Archbishop Gallagher: Vatican committed to Ukraine’s territorial integrity. Vatican News [online]. 20. 5. 2022 [27. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-05/paul-richard-gallagher-vatican-ukraine-lviv-government-authority.html>.

¹⁹ B. Capelli, M. Krawiec, Cardinal Krajewski in Kyiv for Easter Triduum with suffering population. Vatican News [online]. 12. 4. 2022 [27. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-04/krajewski-papal-almoner-ukraine-ambulance-easter-triduum.html>.

aggression as ‘morally unjust, unacceptable, barbaric, senseless, repugnant, and sacrilegious’.²⁰

For a brief comparison, in the “independent” media limited to America Magazine, La Croix, Avvenire and The Tablet, the stance towards Vatican public speech varies. Let us show one example for every media.

America Magazine had a unique opportunity to publish a long and detailed interview with Pope Francis.²¹ It raised wide media attention because it touched on a lot of sensitive topics; aside from abortion, racism, or other political issues in the US, it discussed the war in Ukraine and the participation of Russian ethnic minorities: “Generally, the cruellest are perhaps those who are of Russia but are not of the Russian tradition, such as the Chechens, the Buryati and so on.”²² Despite this sad expression, in the interview, the Pope even compared the war in Ukraine to an act of genocide from the Russian side.

French Catholic weekly La Croix Pope informed that the Pope had compared the war in Ukraine to Nazi-led “Operation Reinhard” – Germany’s secret plan to exterminate millions of Polish Jews during World War II.²³ It was a summarisation of the weekly General Audience of Pope Francis.

According to the Italian journal Avvenire, Francis criticised the ferocity and cruelty of Russian troops. In contrast, he praised Ukrainian heroism and courage in a meeting with European editors of Jesuit journals.²⁴ Nevertheless, he insisted that there were no “good guys and bad guys” in this war and that Russia was in some ways provoked by NATO’s expansion east. This opinion of Francis was widely commented on and criticised too. However, he tried to explain that he did not favour Putin: “No, I’m not. It would be simplistic and wrong to say such a thing. I am simply against reducing complexity to the distinction between good and bad, without thinking about roots and interests, which are very complex. While we see the ferocity,

²⁰ Vatican News. Ukraine, the Holy See: Pope defends life rather than taking political positions. Vatican News [online]. 30. 8. 2022 [27. 3. 2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-08/ukraine-the-holy-see-pope-defends-life.html>.

²¹ The Editors, *Exclusive: Pope Francis discusses Ukraine, U.S. bishops and more*. America Magazine, 28.11.2022. Available at: <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/11/28/pope-francis-interview-america-244225>.

²² Ibid.

²³ J. Paquier *Pope compare,s war in Ukraine to Nazi-led “Operation Reinhard”*. La Croix, 8.12.2022. Available at: <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/pope-compares-war-in-ukraine-to-nazi-led-operation-reinhard/17014>.

²⁴ The Associated Press. *Pope Francis criticizes ‘cruelty’ of Russian troops, praises Ukrainian ‘heroism’ amid war*. USA Today, 14.06.2022. Available at: <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2022/06/14/pope-russia-ukraine-war-new-comments/7619991001/>.

the cruelty of the Russian troops, we must not forget the problems to try to solve them.”²⁵

Finally, the British Catholic weekly *The Tablet* brought news about a papal private meeting at the Vatican with Ukrainian Archbishop of the Greek-Catholic Church Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kyiv-Halych. Archbishop said he was grateful for the pontiff's “expressions of support and solidarity” when he described the “terrible consequences of crimes by Russian soldiers against the civilian population”.²⁶ He reacted also to the papal message published on the Vatican's website days ago.

5. Limits of the research

The most significant disadvantage of this micro research is its time and media limitation – the broader analysis with more comprehensive data basis of Pope Francis' speeches, all issued documents, diplomatic notes, and possibly interviews with Vatican media professionals could bring much more exciting information and their interpretation.

Conclusions

“Nothing is impossible for God: He can even bring an end to a war whose end is not in sight, a war that daily places before our eyes heinous massacres and atrocious cruelty committed against defenceless civilians,”²⁷ said Pope Francis on Palm Sunday, 2022. More than one year of the war passed away, and still, there were no signs it could end soon. Moreover, as well as in the context of secular media, those administered by the Vatican as part of its institutional communication are slowly “forgetting” the conflict the longer it lasts. It is well visible in the comparison between the number of articles published in 2022 and 2023, when the absolute majority fell into the spring of 2022, with a slight rise during the first anniversary in the spring of 2023.

This contribution aimed to show the development of the year-long Vatican media strategic communication on the topic of the Ukrainian war, including the Pope's public speech. The image of the Holy See's institutional communication is accessible through the content analysis of the media; the most famous examples of the papal public speech covered by the independent Catholic media were added to the discussion.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ J. Luxmoore, *Pope deplores 'absurd madness of war' in Ukraine*. *The Tablet*, 28.11.2022. Available at: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/16171/pope-deplores-absurd-madness-of-war-in-ukraine>.

²⁷ L. Bordoni, *Nuncio to Ukraine: Pope's call for Easter truce a time to stop and look to Christ*. *Vatican News*. 13.04.2022 [27.03.2023]. Available at: <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2022-04/nuncio-ukraine-russia-war-pope-appeal-easter-truce-interview.html>.

We can witness a big difference in the way of expression of Vatican media and the Pope himself. Whereas Vatican News covers the situation from many points of view, with the sense of reporting the stories of the war victims, and especially insists on covering the papal charitable works for Ukraine – thus style prevalingly positive and helpful –, Pope Francis in his public speech use to speak off-the-cuff and that is very sensitive when not coordinated before with the Dicastery for Communication team. Even though a lot of papal statements were “corrected” later, for the public audience it is still not easy to forget the first impression it made...

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Furthermore, among the articles from Vatican News coded above, there prevailed those appealing to the consolation of civilians, then those ensuring papal appeals for negotiation and peace in general. On the other side, a clear critique of the Russian side was observed in the minority of the texts. To sum it up, despite the very concrete charity action of the Vatican in Ukraine and its cover in the institutional media, there still is broadly present that carious tone of “neutrality”, when the aggressors are not named directly. Nevertheless, this approach is quite traditional for the Popes as the highest leaders of the Roman Catholic Church.

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