

**Politics can be a dirty and dishonest business. With the most horrifying consequences.**

In the Guardian on Tuesday, it said that Russian offers for “humanitarian corridors” which allow people to escape Ukrainian cities, only applied, if those corridors led to Russia or to Belarus, a Russian ally.

In short, the only way Ukrainians could escape incoming bombing, was if they walked straight into Russian arms.

And in the meantime, people die.

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Anastasia, 26, was killed while attempting to deliver supplies to a dog shelter in Bacha on Thursday week. It is believed that her car was targeted by Russian forces.

Kirill, 18-months old, was killed when his home in Mariupol was shelled by Russia artillery on Friday week.

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Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia has invaded Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Afghanistan, Poland, the Baltic States, what is now Moldova, Czechoslovakia, Afghanistan a second time, and now Ukraine. That doesn't include the countless military operations Russia has used subduing the folks who decided, they'd had enough of Russian occupation.

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It seems unfair to pick out a single nation since this kind of greed doesn't apply to Russian alone, but they are doing it at the moment. Even as we read the bible this morning, we see this sin has cursed the world for a long time.

From Abrams dislike of giving all his goods to Eli e zer his slave, for lack of an heir, to the conquests of the Roman Empire.

Rome was perhaps the worst invader of all, at its largest it covered 5,000,000 square kilometres of the then known world. And it was no less brutal in subduing its opponents nor of ruling them once that happened.

And here Jesus is in the midst of it.

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This was true in Jesus' day too. The Herod mentioned here and his father were Roman puppet rulers in Judah, and in the political environment of the day ... Jesus's popularity was a threat. After all, they had murdered John the Baptist for the same reason.

So, some Pharisees come to Jesus under the guise of "giving him a heads up" that Herod wants to kill him. Jesus responds by calling Herod a fox. You need to be cunning to stay in power when large totalitarian forces are at work.

But as we saw last week, Jesus was not put off his mission by the Devil, and he won't be swayed here, by Herod either.

He will see his calling through.

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But politics isn't just international atrocities, or from history. We all face political situations every day. Colleagues who take credit for others ideas, use others to put themselves in a good light, or use their influence in ways that are unjust and unfair.

We see it in clubs, societies and the retirement homes we are members of, people wanting to be someone or something, wanting a position for themselves or a member of their families. People using their influence to get what they want.

We see it in church too, if we look hard enough. We see it in families. Who uses what influence to get what they want?

The fact is politics are a part of what it means to be human, a part of ordinary human life. But that doesn't make it any less **a dirty and dishonest business, with the most horrifying consequences**, and I'm sure some of you have seen how these things work out in practise.

We are faced with these things every day. They affect us personally sometimes, or by proxy, like the situation in Ukraine, and all we can do, is stay true to the course Jesus has asked us to travel, as he did with God's mission for him.

"To stand firm in the Lord in this way," as Paul says.

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It is true, but like Jesus, we can be compassionate, do the right thing, and be the best we can be in as many of these situations as we find ourselves.

And we can trust ... that the God of justice will have a say in what's happening in Ukraine.

Thanks be to God.

Amen.