



Dear friends from Ukraine:

First of all, I would like to apologize for not having written you before in order to thank you for the distinction you have been so gentle and caring to award me. As you may know, my physical limitations sometimes –as it has happened now– prevent me from doing not only what I would like most but even what I feel I absolutely must do. But you surely know by now that you live in my heart and that I never forget you.

The news of this award completely surprised me and utterly filled me with joy. I was also astonished, even bewildered. At present, Ukraine goes through what probably are the most difficult days of its recent history as an independent nation. How was I to expect that, in this predicament, you would think of me? It was also so undeserved, because my loving little work was more than enough a reward for me already.

Nonetheless your nice medal has moved me deeply. In addition, it has given to me one of the most wonderful experiences in my life. When I showed it to my mother, who is 93 years old, and told her of your kindness, she was moved to tears. She felt so jubilant, and proud of me that she could not speak. For her it was one of the happiest moments in her life, and consequently also for me.

I think this is really what matters: to do wholeheartedly whatever you do; to do it from the deep of your heart, for the benefit of the people that need it. Every time we do so time and distance actually vanish, and frontiers and the barriers of language disappear. Your generosity, I have felt it as a beautiful little miracle.

I thank you for the honour you have awarded me, but even more for the happiness you have brought to my family and friends.

I wish you all the best in these difficult days in which Ukraine sails through such dire straits. I am hopeful that your brave people will prevail.

With loving regards,

Julio Atance

