**People of Ireland to be consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for protection against COVID-19**



On Wednesday 25th March, the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord, at noon Archbishop Eamon Martin will join with bishops and priests from all over the island of Ireland in consecrating the people of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for strength and protection from the Coronavirus, Covid-19.  People are invited to join the consecration in a moment of prayer with their families or as individuals.  The Consecration also coincides with Pope Francis’ invitation to people all over the world in praying the Lord’s Prayer at Angelus time tomorrow (live stream from St. Peter’s at 11am).

Over the last nine days, since Saint Patrick’s Day, many people have been joined in a novena in preparation for the moment of Consecration which includes the *Prayer of Consecration* *of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.*  Bishops and priests will lead the Consecration from their homes, cathedrals and churches across the country.  The faithful are invited to join their local priest or bishop from their home, *via* webcam, to prayerfully participate in this *Act of Consecration* during these unprecedented and worrying days for us all.

Archbishop Eamon said, “As Church now, more than ever, we are committed to offering prayer, solidarity and compassion in our society.  Social distancing cannot be allowed to create social isolation and, through prayer, as Pope Francis said on Sunday, we can overcome: ‘In these trying days, while humanity trembles due to the thread of the pandemic, I would like to propose to all Christians that together we lift our voices towards Heaven.’

“Pope Francis has shown strong pastoral leadership at this horrendous time especially when we consider the impact that the rapid devastation COVID19 has wrought across Italy.  Tomorrow, at midday, to mark the Feast of the Annunciation of Our Lord, as we consecrate Ireland and our people to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for protection against the coronavirus, Pope Francis has asked ‘all Christians of the various confessions, to invoke the Almighty, the omnipotent God, to recite at the same time the prayer that Jesus, our Lord, taught us’, – the *Our Father*.  Pope Francis prayerfully said, ‘may the Lord listen to the united prayer of all of His disciples who are preparing themselves to celebrate the victory of the Risen Christ.’

Archbishop Eamon Martin concluded, “In an act of profound prayer, solidarity and compassion, through our prayers, let us join in spiritual communion with Our Lord, Our Blessed Mother, Pope Francis and with each other.”

Archbishop Eamon Martin is Archbishop of Armagh, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Dromore and Primate of All Ireland.

The webcam of Saint Patrick’s Cathedral, Armagh, can be viewed on <http://armaghparish.net/cathedral-webcam/>

The [Order of Service for the Act of Consecration](https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2020/03/24/order-of-service-for-act-of-consecration-of-ireland-to-immaculate-heart-of-mary/) can be followed online.