



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

Make time to unite with Pope Francis in prayer

MEDIA RELEASE

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Catholics around the world are being encouraged to join their prayers with those of Pope Francis on March 25 when he consecrates Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The act of consecration places the warring countries under the protection of Mary, the Mother of Christ, trusting in the power of her intercession. Such an act looks towards God, the source of all peace, and seeks God's peace through Mary.

"Acting as the Universal Pastor of the Church, Pope Francis will renew the consecration urged at Fatima more than 100 years ago," Australian Catholic Bishops Conference president Archbishop Mark Coleridge said.

"The bishops of Australia are united with the Holy Father as he leads the faithful around the world in this act of consecration and we invite all people to join us in praying for peace in Ukraine."

Pope Francis will perform the act of consecration in Rome at 5pm, which will be the middle of the night in Australia.

"We urge people to spend part of their day on March 25 in prayer – attending Mass, praying with family or friends, in silent prayer at a local parish or chapel or in whatever way you can," Archbishop Coleridge said.

Archbishop Coleridge said the feast of the Annunciation, when the Church celebrates Mary's "yes" to the call of God, is a good day for the consecration, a day when the world says "yes" to the call of peace.

"Next Friday we stop and turn to Jesus the Prince of Peace, who tells us that peace is possible in a world so badly wounded by war in Ukraine and elsewhere," he said.

"Thousands have died, millions have fled and millions more are living in fear. We raise our hearts, our minds and our voices to God for an end to this horrific violence and destruction."

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference recently issued a prayer for peace in Ukraine.

Prayer for Peace and Justice in Ukraine

God of peace and justice,
who change the hardened heart and break the power of violence,
we entrust the people of Ukraine to you.

Protect them in this time of peril;
let them know not death but life, not slavery but freedom.

You are Father of all;
we are brothers and sisters.

Give us the strength to live that truth in love,
choosing peace not war.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.