



## UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

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### U.S. AND CANADIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS TO SEEK INTERCESSION OF MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH, FOR STRENGTH IN STRUGGLE AGAINST COVID-19

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**April 23, 2020**

WASHINGTON – As the world continues to face the ongoing effects of the global pandemic of the coronavirus, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has announced that the U.S. bishops will join the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops on May 1 in renewing the consecrations of the two nations to the care of our Blessed Mother.

Through a collective dedication or entrustment of a nation to Mary, an act of consecration is meant to be a reminder to the faithful of the Blessed Mother's witness to the Gospel and to ask for her effective intercession before her Son on behalf of those in need. Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, the first bishop of the United States, promoted devotion to Mary, the Mother of God, and placed the United States under her protection in a pastoral letter of 1792. The twenty-one bishops attending the Sixth Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1846 determined to name the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of the Immaculate Conception, as the Patroness of the United States, and Pope Pius IX approved this decision the following year. More recently, the dedication of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C. in 1959 was the opportunity for the bishops to once again consecrate the nation to the Blessed Mother. Several popes have likewise consecrated the world to Mary on various occasions.

The **consecration on May 1** . . . follows a similar action of the bishops' conference of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM) who consecrated their nations to Our Lady of Guadalupe on Easter Sunday. The renewal of consecration planned in this country for May 1 does not change the designation of Mary as the Patroness of the United States under the title of the Immaculate Conception. Rather, this prayer reaffirms and renews previous Marian entrustments, and unites us in solidarity with our Holy Father, who recently established the Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, as a source of protection and strength.

"This will give the Church the occasion to pray for Our Lady's continued protection of the vulnerable, healing of the unwell, and wisdom for those who work to cure this terrible virus," said Archbishop Gomez in a letter to the U.S. bishops. Each year, the Church seeks the special intercession of the Mother of God during the month of May. "This year, we seek the assistance of Our Lady all the more earnestly as we face together the effects of the global pandemic," he continued.

Archbishop Gomez will lead a brief liturgy with the prayer of re-consecration on Friday, May 1 at 3:00 pm EDT and has invited the bishops to join in from their respective dioceses and asked them to extend the invitation to the faithful in their dioceses for their participation. A liturgy guide will be available to assist the faithful who may join in by tuning into the USCCB's social media platforms: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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