

A DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER – A ‘VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE’

Bishop McKeown is inviting people to join him on Friday, 1st May on a ‘virtual pilgrimage’, to fast and pray, asking God

- to free us from this pandemic and to support those who are fighting it;
- to comfort those who have been afflicted with this pandemic; and
- to ask God for the wisdom to know how to live now and in the aftermath of the pandemic.

It is proposed that the time of prayer and penance at home will take its shape from core elements of the 3-day Lough Derg pilgrimage. Each person is invited to participate in whatever parts of the penitential ‘virtual pilgrimage’ that they feel able to adopt. If anyone is suffering from weakness or ill health, they should not overexert themselves. At the heart of the full Lough Derg pilgrimage are the following elements:

1 Fasting: To join spiritually with the Bishop on this ‘virtual pilgrimage’ people are invited, if they are physically able, to adopt the Lough Derg-style Fast from 12.00 midnight on Thursday night until after 7.00am on Saturday morning. The Lough Derg Fast consists of water or black tea or coffee (sugar is permitted) with dry bread, toast and oatcakes at one time during the day. ‘Pilgrims’ can drink water, tea or coffee anytime.

2 Praying the Lough Derg Stations: Throughout the first day, participants on Lough Derg would normally pray three ‘Stations’ outside. However, in this case, participants are invited to pray three Stations at home during the course of the day. They can join through webcam with Bishop McKeown in praying these three Stations. Details of the Station prayers will be made available later.

3 The Night Vigil: During the Night Vigil, four Stations are prayed. Bishop McKeown proposes to stay in the Cathedral during Friday night and lead the four Stations on the webcam – at 12 midnight, 1.30 am, 3 am and 4.30 am.

The Vigil will end with the special ‘Mass in time of a Pandemic’, as proposed by Pope Francis, at 6.00 am on Saturday, 2nd May.

The Messenger: Messenger Publications are offering a free online copy of the May edition (and possibly further editions) of The Messenger, given that it is impossible to distribute the paper copy in the usual manner. To access the May edition, visit: https://issuu.com/messengerpublications/docs/05_messenger_may_2020. Even if you do not normally receive The Messenger, you are welcome to access this link. If you have any difficulty accessing the link or if you have any further queries please email c.henry@messenger.ie.

The April edition of The Net will only be available on the Diocesan website - www.derrydiocese.org.