Vatican



Pope Francis prays in front of the original statue of Our Lady of Fatima during a Marian vigil in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Oct. 12, 2013. The pope has invited the bishops of the world to join him in "consecrating and entrusting" Russia and Ukraine to Mary March 25, 2022. (CNS/Paul Haring)

by Catholic News Service

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Vatican City — March 18, 2022

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Pope Francis has asked bishops around the world to join him March 25 in consecrating Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, something bishops in every part of the globe had started announcing the minute they heard what the pope had planned.

"Pope Francis has invited the bishops of the whole world, along with their priests, to join him in the prayer for peace and in the consecration and entrustment of Russia and of Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary," Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, said March 18.

Three days earlier, the Vatican had announced the pope would lead the prayer in St. Peter's Basilica during a Lenten penance service and that, on the same day, the feast of the Annunciation, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, would lead a similar act of consecration at the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Portugal.

When Mary appeared to three shepherd children at Fatima in 1917 with a message encouraging prayer and repentance, she also asked for the consecration of Russia.

Even before the announcement from the Vatican, bishops from around the world had announced special services at which they would join Francis. Bishops in cities across North America joined bishops from New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Ukraine and other countries planning special services.

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