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## Focus on Religious Freedom

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### U.S. Bishops to Consecrate America to Sacred Heart of Jesus

On June 11, in celebration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the Catholic bishops of the United States will consecrate America to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. "Devotion to the Sacred Heart has developed over the centuries following the experiences of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and the apparitions she witnessed in the seventeenth century," explains Archbishop Alexander Sample, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Religious Liberty. "Popes have lauded the practice of consecration of the self, home, and even whole nations to the Sacred Heart."

For example, Archbishop Sample cites Pope Leo XIII, who in 1899 wrote of "a sort of wall being raised between Church and civil society." Consecration to the Sacred Heart, Leo XIII wrote, "can establish or draw tighter the bonds which naturally connect public affairs with God," and thus "gives to States a hope of better things." Connecting "public affairs with God", as Pope Leo XIII encouraged, reminds Americans of the blessing on our Nation when God gave us founders committed to the natural God-given rights of each man which impelled them to strive to create a "more perfect union" to protect those rights through a unique structure of government "deriving their power from the consent of the governed."

America's freedom of religion, the freedom of belief and the freedom to practice faith openly, without fear, in the home, church and the public square emanated from the founder's understanding that America's extensive individual freedoms could be preserved only by a moral and religious people. The founders showed their trust in God in public affairs by their words, actions and public prayers. They protected the right of each of us to do the same...it is our sacred duty to understand and preserve that right for ages and millions yet unborn.

The bishops are encouraging local celebrations in dioceses and parishes coinciding with the USCCB's special Mass of consecration on June 11 during the USCCB's Spring Plenary Assembly in Orlando, Florida. It will be livestreamed on the [USCCB's YouTube](#) channel. Resources are available on the USCCB website including a nine-day novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, from June 3-June 11.

"This anniversary and consecration will be a great opportunity to promote the beautiful devotion to the Sacred Heart," writes Archbishop Sample, "and to encourage the laity to offer their lives in service to God and their country."

**Read more here:** <https://tinyurl.com/mtf9jy49> <https://tinyurl.com/yvtj5kda>