
Ireland: Mgr Martin (Armagh), St Patrick's experience "challenges us to listen out for the cry of the poor, the ordeal of the migrant"

St Patrick "challenges us to listen out for the cry of the poor, the ordeal of the migrant, the loneliness of those displaced through war and violence". Archbishop Eamon Martin of Ireland wrote this in a message to the people of Ireland "at home and abroad", on the eve of the traditional feast of St Patrick, Patron Saint of Ireland (17 March). The personal experience of this man, who lived sixteen centuries ago, "raises awareness of the injustice of human trafficking which shockingly continues here in Ireland, North and South, in 2023", the archbishop wrote, inviting everyone to trace our connections with the Saint, by opening "our hearts and minds to those who are struggling to survive such cruelty and exploitation in today's world". Indeed, the Patron Saint of Ireland personally experienced slavery when he was a boy, and such an experience "transformed and shaped his whole life and his relationships with God and others. In his slavery and isolation, he discovered through prayer a warm and personal friendship with God which he instinctively wanted to communicate to everyone he met", Mgr Martin explained. To shed light on this scandal, a bronze replica of the sculpture by Tim Schmalz "Let the oppressed go free" has arrived at St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh. "Alongside Saint Josephine Bakhita, perhaps Saint Patrick can be seen as a patron for those around our world today who are victims of human trafficking", the archbishop said.

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