

News Release:

Churches "Vision" for frontline workers

Singers and musicians from churches across Ireland join together in "virtual" tribute/blessing for frontline workers.

In recognition of the dedicated service of all involved in providing essential services during these restricted times, singers and musicians in churches on the island of Ireland are being invited to take part in a unique singing, musical and blessing experience.

At a local level participants are asked to select a facility which provides an essential service and to dedicate their rendition of the specially adapted hymn: "Be Thou my Vision".

One of the organisers of the project, Fr Martin Magill, Parish Priest, St John the Evangelist Parish, Belfast said:

"The words of the hymn 'Be Thou My Vision' can be traced back to fifth to ninth century Christian Ireland to a tradition of a prayer for protection known as 'lorica' (Latin for armour or breastplate.) The references in the prayer to armour and sword are thought to be inspired by some of the imagery in St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:16-17 such as 'shield of faith', 'helmet of salvation' and 'the sword of the Spirit'. Praying for protection and blessing is particularly apt during these times."

Fellow organiser, Philip McKinley, Dublin-based Church of Ireland ordinand said:

"God blesses us abundantly and is present with us, even in very difficult times. This song is an invitation to lift our eyes, to shift our vision far beyond ourselves, to Him. Ireland is famous for its blessings, words to encourage friends, family and neighbours along the journey. We want to bless those on the frontlines with words of hope and life and relationship with the creator of all things."

Once recordings are completed churches are invited to submit these to a central coordinating team where they will be considered for inclusion in an all-island version of the hymn. This final collaborative video will be released on:

Youtube on Pentecost Sunday, 31 May at 11am.

Church-based singers or musicians in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland are invited to download from www.theirishblessing.com the Recording Guide Pack on Saturday 16th May. The deadline for recorded submissions is 12 noon on Friday 22nd May".

For further information and to arrange interviews, contact:

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Notes to editors:

The team delivering the final video comprises of Greg Fromholz, Jonny Rea, Stu Reid, Caren Collins, Ethan Tohill, Pauline Alton, Rev Rob Jones, Ciaran Corrigan, Philip McKinley and Fr Martin Magill.