

Part II of the Speech

Taoiseach [Leo Varadkar](#) made a special televised address to the nation on St Patrick's Day, speaking about the impact of the global coronavirus pandemic on Ireland

(Note:

The Taoiseach is the prime minister and head of government of Ireland. The Taoiseach is appointed by the President upon the nomination of Dáil Éireann, the lower house of the Oireachtas, and must, to remain in office, retain the support of a majority in the Dáil.)

The most basic messages of washing your hands properly and practicing good hygiene around sneezing and coughing are still the most important.

And, if you have a new cough that isn't going away or a high temperature... stay at home and phone your doctor. A test will be arranged for you.

At a certain point we will advise the elderly and people who have a long-term illness to stay at home for several weeks. We are putting in place the systems to ensure that if you are one of them, you will have food, supplies and are checked on.

We call this "cocooning" and it will save many lives, particularly the most vulnerable, the most precious in our society.

It's going to be very difficult to stay apart from our loved ones.

Most grandparents just want to give their grandkids a hug and a kiss – but as hard as this is, we need to keep our physical distance to stop the virus.

Technology can help – check in with your loved ones on Skype or Facetime and promise them you'll see them again soon.

We've already seen our fantastic community spirit spring into action.

Phone your neighbours, see if they need help, and make sure those who are living alone are not left alone.

To all the young people watching – I know you are bored and probably a bit fed up.

You want to see your friends and you might even be wishing you were back at school.

You're going to have to wait a while longer for that.

I hope you remember that this time is tough on your parents as well.

So I'm asking you to ask your parents at least once a day what you can do to help them. Keep up your schoolwork and call your grandparents.

Keep up your schoolwork, call your grandparents and try not to fight with your brothers and sisters.

Like you, my family has spoken about little else in recent days.

My partner, my two sisters, and both their husbands are working in the health service – here in Ireland and in the UK. They are all apprehensive. They have heard the stories from [China](#) and [Italy](#) of hospitals being overwhelmed and medical staff getting sick.

I am so proud of all of them.

Not all superheroes wear capes, some wear scrubs and gowns.

All of our healthcare workers need us to do the right thing in the weeks ahead. Our community services and hospitals are being tooled up.

Essential equipment is on the way.

Retired staff are returning to service. People are training for changed roles.

This is the calm before the storm – before the surge.

And when it comes – and it will come – never will so many ask so much of so few.

We will do all that we can to support them.

I am also grateful to the many people who have joined this great national effort.

Not just our healthcare staff but also our army cadets, librarians and civil servants who are learning how to do contact tracing.

The early education and childcare workers offering to look after the children of our front line staff so they can go to work.

The teachers and lecturers finding new innovative ways to teach students on-line and putting together contingency plans for the Leaving Cert and College exams.

The people who are stocking our shelves every day, and those who are serving customers.

Our hauliers, who leave their families on a Sunday evening and travel across the continent to ensure that we have the products, medicine and equipment that we need. All who have kept our supply chain moving, we thank them, a different kind of frontline service.

Our journalists and broadcasters who are helping to inform and educate. All are deserving of our respect and thanks.

[Coronavirus](#) is already having a deep impact on jobs and economic activity and will continue to do so.

Some people watching will have seen their jobs lost, businesses closed or their working hours reduced. More will be worried that this might happen to them too, especially as we do not know when the Emergency will end.

I know this is causing huge stress to you and your families on top of fear of the virus.

While we do not have all the answers now we are doing and will do all we can to help you through the time ahead.

You will receive income support as quickly and efficiently as possible and when we are through the worst, we will work as hard as possible to get people back to work and get business open again.

Everyone in our society must show solidarity in this time of national sacrifice. For those who have lost their jobs and had their incomes reduced temporarily, there must be help and understanding from those who can give it, particularly the banks, government bodies and utilities.

We went into this crisis with a strong economy and the public finances in good order.

We have the capacity and credit rating to borrow billions if we need to.

I am confident that our economy will bounce back, but the damage will be significant and lasting. The bill will be enormous and it may take years to pay it.

The Government has already signed off a 3 billion euro package for health, social welfare and business – we will take further action as needed.

Tonight I know many of you are feeling scared and overwhelmed. That is a normal reaction, but we will get through this and we will prevail.

We need to halt the spread of the virus but we also need to halt the spread of fear.

So please rely only on information from trusted sources. From Government, from the HSE, from the [World Health Organisation](#) and from the national media.

Do not forward or share messages that are from other, unreliable sources. So much harm has already been caused by those messages, and we must insulate our communities and the most vulnerable from the contagion of fear.

Fear is a virus in itself.

Please take regular breaks from watching news and media, and from consuming social media. Constantly scrolling on your phone or obsessively following the latest developments is not good for anyone.

Look after your mental health and well-being as well as your physical health.

Tonight on our national holiday I also want to send a message around the world that we are all in this together.

To the people of China, [Spain](#) and Italy who have suffered untold heartbreak and loss – we are with you.

To all of those across the world who have lost a loved one to this virus – we are with you.

To all those living in the shadow of what is to come – we are with you.

Viruses pay no attention to borders, race, nationality or gender. They are the shared enemy of all humanity. So it will be the shared enterprise of all humanity that finds a treatment and a vaccine that protects us.

Tonight I send a message of friendship and of hope from Ireland to everyone around the world this Saint Patrick's Day.

Lá Fheile Pádraig shona daoibh! (Happy St Patrick's Day)

Oíche mhaith. (Good Night)

Source

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