



DIOCESE OF STOCKTON
Message from Bishop Myron Cotta
December 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We begin a new Liturgical Year with the “season of expectation,” Advent. The four weeks of Advent is a time for us to slow down and to take time to reflect upon the season as we prepare for the Great Feast of Christmas.

As we prepare, and make straight the way for the coming of the Lord, let us ponder the role of Our Lady during this month of December. On December 8, we acknowledge her Immaculate Conception. On December 12, we call to mind her heavenly visit to St. Juan Diego as Our Lady of Guadalupe on the hill of Tepeyac.

Mary, whom God graced from Original Sin, and who became the Mother of the long-awaited Messiah, is truly for us, “Our Lady of Advent.” Her life consisted of a “longing-desire” for the coming of the Lord. The Immaculate Heart of Our Lady pondered and patiently waited for the coming of “the Christ.”

Let us ask Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, to intercede for us this Advent Season. Let us prepare our hearts for the “Second” Coming of Jesus with a longing, and a desire, to grow in holiness. During Advent, we can grow in holiness by setting aside quiet time for: prayer; spiritual reading; Advent reflections and devotionals. Also, we can plan to go to Confession; attend daily Mass; and do charitable works of mercy.

During this season of preparation, let us respond to Our Lady’s call “to be sent” as was St. Juan Diego. He humbly and obediently delivered the good news of “the Tepeyac event.” The message sent, and the image imprinted on the tilma, would find a resting place in the minds and hearts of a conquered people. The revelation would ignite a “fire of evangelization.” May we, during this Advent Season, be sent as missionary disciples to announce the “good news” of the glorious Coming of the Lord. May Our Lady of Advent, once again, ignite a fire of evangelization to lead us out of the darkness of sin into the marvelous light and Divine Presence of her Son, Jesus!

Wishing you a blessed and grace-filled Season of Advent!
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!

Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.
Our Lady, Star of the New Evangelization, pray for us.

Bishop Myron J. Cotta