



DIOCESE OF STOCKTON
Message from Bishop Myron Cotta
February Message

My Brothers and Sisters,

The month of February contains several special celebrations in regard to our Catholic Faith. February 2 is the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. Also, on this day, we acknowledge the World Day for Consecrated Life. It is a day that we give praise and thanks to God for all the women religious, past and present, who have faithfully served the people of God for many years in our Diocese, and throughout the world.

On February 11, we celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Related to this Marian Feast, is the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. Since Our Lady's appearance to St. Bernadette in 1858, Lourdes has been a special place of hope and healing for millions of people seeking wholeness of life, spiritual and physical.

Then, on February 14, we have the popular celebration of St. Valentine's Day. During this special day we focus upon "love" and the universal symbol of love which is the "heart." The heart is mentioned many times in the Holy Scriptures as it conveys how God desires, from the "core of our being," our heart, all of our love.

We are reminded of the importance, as we walk our Christian journey, to have a humble and courageous heart. We are to pray that we have a faithful and hopeful heart, even in the midst of our troubles, disappointments and tragedies. Daily, we are to desire a heart filled with the love that come to us from "the heart," the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Himself!

This St. Valentine's Day, as many will be reflecting on their love for each other, let us focus on the "heart of the matter:" the all-encompassing love of Christ Jesus. Let our eyes be fixed on his pierced and wounded heart. It is this heart which poured forth the "grace and mercy" which saves us from all that is "unloving" - our sins. May the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of his Mother, Our Lady of Lourdes, be our strength and comfort throughout the month of February.

*In the Peace of Christ,
Bishop Cotta*