

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 2018

My Dear People of God,

As we remember the birth of Our Savior, Jesus, let us graciously welcome Him, the Son of the Father, into our hearts and homes. May the Infant find a resting place within our families this Christmas season and in the New Year. May the “light” of the Messiah, “the Christ,” illuminate and dispel the “shadows” in our lives and the darkness in our troubled world. I pray that the Prince of Peace grant you that “divine” peace of mind and heart which is beyond our imagining. May this Peace of the Christ-Child be present to all throughout the New Year, 2019.

During this Christmas Season, may our youth encounter Jesus born into this world for them. I pray they come to know the Son of Mary in a more profound way, now, and in the New Year. May they desire and seek a life-giving relationship with Jesus. May Our Lady of Bethlehem lead them to her Son.

I thank all of you for your love and support over the past nine months. I look forward to 2019 as we, together, move forward as the Diocese of Stockton.

A Blessed and Merry Christmas to all! Happy New Year!

Bishop Myron J. Cotta

Diocesan Events

1. **Pastoral Center Closed** – December 24, 2018-January 1, 2019 in observance of Christmas/New Year’s. We will reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2019.
2. **Office of Worship** – January 1st, 2019, the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God will be observed as a holy day of obligation in the diocese. A general dispensation is not being given this year. For more information, please click [here](#).
3. **52nd World Day of Peace** – January 1, 2019. Click on the following links ([English](#)) or ([Spanish](#)) for the Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the celebration of the 52nd World Day of Peace, on the topic, “Good Politics At The Service Of Peace”.
4. **Bishop's Ministry Appeal 2019 Pastor/Chairperson Training – SAVE THE DATES:**
 - Wednesday, January 9, 2019 - 6:00 pm, Modesto – St. Joseph’s Church, Modesto (Room 6)
 - Thursday, January 10, 2019 - 5:30 pm (**English & Spanish**) Ryan Center, Stockton
****Video conferencing will be available for Spanish training**
 - Thursday, January 17, 2019 - St. Patrick’s Church, Angels Camp, 10:00 am (Hall)
 - RSVP forms and details to come! Questions? Contact Martha, mmccoy@stocktondiocese.org or (209) 546-7646.
5. **15th Annual Walk for Life West Coast** – January 26, 2019. Now is the time to begin planning for the Walk! Go to www.walkforlifewc.com to download flyers, sample bulletin announcements and bus registration. If your parish is sending a bus (or buses) to the Walk, send an e-mail to kfuentes@stocktondiocese.org with registration information so it can be listed on the Diocesan Website.



Informational Items

1. *****SCAM ALERT***** We recently discovered someone has been texting (and by email in the past) parishioners claiming a priest from their parish is asking them to purchase goods for him as a favor. Please mention this to your parishioners and suggest that if they have any questions about any request of this type being made of them to call their parish office.
2. **Liturgical Reminders** – The Office of Worship will be putting out occasional reminders to aid us in improving our celebrations of the Sacred Liturgy. For this week: When naming the Bishop in the Eucharistic Prayer, as with the Holy Father, only the first name should be used. For example, “...together with your servant Francis our Pope and Myron our Bishop...”
3. **Traditions for the Christmas Season** – There are many special liturgical and popular practices which help us to allow the meaning of Christmas to enter more deeply into our lives and to offer our New Year to the Lord. Other ideas can be found in the *Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy*. **Christmas-** The Christmas Proclamation can be sung before the beginning of “Midnight” Mass (Appendix I of the Roman Missal); **New Years’ Eve-** A plenary indulgence is granted for reciting the *Te Deum* publically on the last day of the year. This could easily occur before or after a Vigil Mass for January 1st; **Epiphany-** Proclamation of the date of Easter, sung following the Gospel (Appendix I of the Roman Missal); Marking doors with blessed chalk; **Baptism of the Lord-** It would be particularly appropriate to use the Sprinkling Rite at Masses on this day.
4. **ESL/Citizenship classes** – Catholic Charities Immigration Legal Services is currently enrolling students for the NEW Quarter which will begin on January 7, 2019. The classes are every Monday & Wednesday from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at St Luke’s Catholic School, located at: 4005 N. Sutter St, Stockton, CA 95204_(Room #5). Enrollment Fee is \$30, textbook included. To register for these classes you should be a permanent resident for 5 years (3 years if married to a U.S. Citizen). For more information contact Catholic charities at (209) 444-5910.
5. **9 Days for Life Novena** – January 14-22, 2019 is an USCCB sponsored multi-faceted novena for the respect and protection of every human life. Each day, a different intention is accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions, and related information. Feel free to use the 9 Days for Life bulletin/pulpit announcements, graphics, and flyers available at <http://cms.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/january-roe-events/9-days-for-life-resources-for-leaders.cfm> in your January 6 and January 13 Bulletin and on your parish social media. Watch the Life & Dignity Ministry Facebook page daily between January 14 and January 22 for a video of that day’s Novena intention lead by one of our Deacon candidates.
6. **3rd Annual Human Trafficking Community Summit** – January 11, 2019, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm, Robert J Cabral Agricultural Center, 2101 E. Earhart Ave., Ste. 100, Stockton. Sponsored by San Joaquin County Human Trafficking Task Force and San Joaquin County Office of Education. Preventing and Eliminating Human Trafficking for law enforcement, victim advocates, service providers, educators, community leaders and concerned citizens. No Charge – register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2019-end-it-summit-tickets-50086660550>

