



BISHOP'S MONTHLY REFLECTION
December 2020 – O COME, LET US ADORE HIM!

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Advent Season, with the beginning of a new liturgical year, offers to us, in the midst of the darkness of the pandemic, the opportunity to step into the light of this season of *new beginnings!* It is a time to be alert and prepared for the *coming of the Lord!* It is a season to *make straight the way of the Lord.* By repenting, reconciling and reflecting upon our relationship with God and our neighbor, we, with minds and hearts renewed, will be better prepared to come and adore Jesus this Christmas.

I am encouraging all to embrace this season of quiet preparation to anticipate the encounter of receiving the true Gift of Christmas, Jesus, in the Eucharist. Let us strive to place in our hearts a renewed and committed desire to attend Mass this Advent and Christmas season.

As we remember our brothers and sisters who may be ill, or cannot venture out to attend Mass, we encourage you to faithfully participate in the Advent and Christmas liturgies by way of live streamed and recorded Masses.

Also, in our preparation for this Advent Season, we are blessed to have two days to acknowledge a key figure in the history of salvation - the Blessed Virgin Mary. On December the 8th, we celebrate the Immaculate Conception, and on December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe. These two special days remind us that Mary encompassed, within the being of her *immaculate life - her heart* - the total longing of all of Israel for the coming of the Promised One: a Deliverer, the Messiah.

It was at Lourdes that Our Lady identified herself as the Immaculate Conception to St. Bernadette. Mary, the New Eve, would be the one chosen to cooperate with God's plan of salvation and conceive in her womb God incarnate, Emmanuel, "God with us." She, full of grace, will help us to experience this grace-filled season of Advent.

In the New World, Mary would appear to St. Juan Diego to usher in the evangelization of a whole people. She, who appeared as a young expectant mother, promised new beginnings for a captive people. Her Divine Child would free them from the captivity of sin and would assure them that she, also, was their mother and that they had nothing to fear. She, with the cooperation of Juan Diego, would introduce, and imprint on the tilma of the hearts of millions, the redeeming love of her Son, Jesus.

Let us, during this Advent and upcoming Christmas Season, allow Our Lady, the Mother of Our Lord and Messiah, to lead us to the manger of Bethlehem. There, in the quiet of our hearts, may we encounter her Child who is Light, Peace and Hope - just what we need during this troubling and uncertain time. Her Infant is the Light who overcomes and conquers all evil and darkness, even that of a destructive and deadly pandemic!

My friends, let us be attentive and *read the sign of the times* so as to better prepare ourselves for the Second Coming of the Lord; all the while, joyfully remembering his first coming.



During this Advent, a season of new beginnings, let us come home as Catholics and encounter our Hope, Jesus, the *Christ*. Let us encounter the Savior at *Mass*, in the Eucharist. As Catholics, let us rejoice, and never forget, that Christ + Mass defines the *heart* and meaning of the joyful feast of *new beginnings* - CHRISTMAS.

Mary, Immaculate, pray for us.

St. Bernadette, pray for us.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.

St. Juan Diego, pray for us.

COME LET US ADORE HIM!

In Peace of Christ,

Bishop Cotta