


DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Memo

To: All
From: Bishop Myron J. Cotta 
Date: December 4, 2017
Subject: December Reflection - Fátima 100th Anniversary 1917-2017

With the month of December we come to the end of the calendar year, but we in turn begin a “new” liturgical year of the Church. During this centenary year, we have reflected upon the six apparitions of Our Lady at Fátima, and now we enter the grace filled season of Advent. In this special time of year, we prepare ourselves for the Second Coming of the Lord and recall and celebrate his First Coming at Christmas. Being encouraged by Fátima’s message of peace, we are invited to prepare ourselves for the Coming of the Prince of Peace.

During this time, we are also reminded that Our Lady is a key figure in the season of Advent. With her, the “spirit of Fátima” draws us in a profound way into the great solemnity of December 8, the Immaculate Conception. Our Lady’s “fiat,” her “yes,” begs us to reflect on how we have responded during this year in giving our “yes” to the Father’s will. Have we asked the Immaculate Heart of the one who was conceived without sin, to assist us to freely choose to do the will of the Father?

Along with December 8, we have another Marian celebration on the 12th of December. It is on this day that we are invited to see and accept Our Lady as “mother.” During her appearances to St. Juan Diego, she assured him that she *is* his mother. Under the title of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Immaculate Virgin, stressed that she is with us to protect, strengthen and encourage us to center our lives in the Love that is God. It was hundreds of years later, at Fátima, that Our Lady assured us: she is our refuge, and there is nothing to fear.

If a person is privileged to visit the shrine at the Cova da Iria in Fátima, one will be surprised to discover a Nativity scene across the square from the site where Our Lady appeared. It is a great reminder that the “reality of Christmas” is always with us. The Nativity scene, in the Sanctuary of Fátima, reminds us of He who was born into this world to save us from our sins. The call to repentance, prayer and penance for the conversion of sinners is the message which echoes throughout, not only the Sanctuary of Fátima, but also throughout every Advent and Christmas Season.

During this special time of the year, may the Blessed Virgin, Our Immaculate Mother, pray for us as we prepare for the Coming of her Son, Jesus, the Christ.

May all of you have a blessed Advent and Christmas season!

Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception, pray for us.
Our Lady of Guadalupe, pray for us.
Our Lady of Fátima, pray for us