



BISHOP'S REFLECTION

June 2020

“A Call to Peace & Prayer”

As Bishop of Stockton, I call on the people of our diocese to pray for our communities and our nation in this painful, turbulent time. Prayer is needed now as urgently as it has been at any point in our lifetimes.

We pray for the repose of the soul of George Floyd, whose senseless killing at the hands of those in positions of trust has triggered justified outrage and anger. Let us pray also for his family, and all those who are grieved by his death.

We pray for an end to the racism and injustice that fuels anger and perpetuates cycles of violence.

We pray for all victims of violence in our society. Every act of violence dishonors God who bestows life and commands us to cherish it. We pray for all whose lives are not respected or protected as they should be.

We pray also for an end to the destructive rioting, looting and violence that does not soothe anger, but intensifies it. These acts of violence and destruction create a cycle of misery and breed resentment, hatred and bitterness. They do not heal our grieving hearts but harden them.

We pray also for those charged with protecting our streets and our communities, that they may be protected from harm. Let us remember that these men and women who put themselves at risk for our safety are mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, and are themselves not the cause of the anger that seizes our communities.

We pray for those whose lives have been disrupted by rioting, whose livelihoods have been destroyed, and whose contributions to communities have been erased. Destroying the livelihood of a family does nothing to honor Mr. Floyd and pushes peace farther from our grasp. We pray that the cycle that creates ever more victims will stop.

We pray for our state and nation, already reeling from the pandemic and economic disaster and now confronting violence and turmoil.

We ask God Our Father, during this month of June in which we honor the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to send His peace to comfort the afflicted and to protect the innocent. May the pierced and wounded heart of Jesus bring His love into our hearts. Only when we share God's love with one another, when we see Him in the person of our brothers and sisters, will we know lasting peace and an end to the sin of injustice, bitterness and violence.

In the midst of this civil unrest, let us keep in mind the words of Rev. Martin Luther King: “Without Justice, there can be no peace” - and in the words of Pope St. John Paul II: “There is no peace without justice, and no justice without forgiveness.”

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Grace and Mercy,

Bishop Cotta