



CATHOLIC *Diocese of Fresno* CHARITIES

Dear Friends,

It simply doesn't feel like Christmas without seeing red Christmas decorations throughout our homes, our businesses, in our neighbors' front yards or in our favorite Christmas movies. The color red is symbolic of a traditional Christmas to many. It's the color of the season. But in today's world, we hear a lot more about the color purple and the restrictions it means for all of us in the days and months ahead.

Though the purple tier may symbolize something different, the color purple itself reminds us of the season of Advent that is upon us. Ironically, the color means repentance and fasting, spiritual discipline, and denying ourselves simple pleasures as one of the ways we, as Christians, show our devotion to God and prepare our hearts for His arrival.

Rewind eleven months back to January 2020, Catholic Charities began witnessing greater suffering throughout the San Joaquin Valley than ever before. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and uprooted everything we knew to be normal in our lives. Families retreated to their homes but the outpouring of calls from those in need was unrelenting... not only from individuals, but from community organizations who didn't know where else to turn. Most recently, our local communities were tested once again, this time by the SQF and Creek Fires, and Catholic Charities swiftly moved into disaster relief for families who lost everything in the blink of an eye.

Over the last year, Catholic Charities has grown and expanded into an organization that so many desperately depend on for survival. From diapers and rental assistance, to bottled water and keeping the PG&E turned on, to new beds for children and food on the table... Catholic Charities is an organization of HOPE.

This Advent season and beyond, let us come together to embrace the color purple in all its meaning. Let our faith grow stronger and let us share the love of Christ with others. A love that is always present in our world no matter how difficult it may be at times to see.

Please continue to remember those less fortunate and consider making a Christmas donation to help us serve those in the greatest of need. Thank you for your never ending support of Catholic Charities. I wish you a Christmas season full of hope and days full of love and peace.

Merry Christmas and may the love of Christ be with you always.

Jeff Negrete
Executive Director