



Diocese of Joliet
Office of the Bishop



Palm Sunday, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you may have read in *Christ Is Our Hope* magazine, the Diocese of Joliet will begin our observance of a special Year of the Eucharist on Holy Thursday, April 1, with the Mass of the Lord's Supper. This celebration will conclude on June 26, 2011 – the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord. The goal of this celebration is, to borrow the words of Pope John Paul II, to rekindle Eucharistic “amazement and gratitude” in all the people of our local Church – clergy, religious and lay faithful. The Eucharist is the heart and soul of our Catholic faith, yet for various reasons we can take it for granted and fail to appreciate the tremendous gift that is offered to us in this sacrament – the very life of the Risen Lord Jesus. We can become like those disciples on the road to Emmaus who walk with the Lord, who converse with him, yet fail to recognize his presence. The purpose of the celebrations and programs to be offered during this Year is to help all in our diocese to deepen our love, understanding and appreciation of the Holy Eucharist and thus inspire a spiritual renewal in all areas of parish life.

The motto for the Year of the Eucharist is “Bread of Life – Covenant of Love.” This motto reminds us that as Jesus gives Himself to us in the Eucharist to be our spiritual nourishment, He also draws us into a deeper relationship with Him and with all the members of His mystical body, the Church. In that spirit, all parishioners in our diocese will be joining in a special prayer after Communion at each Mass during this Year, asking our Eucharistic Lord to embrace us individually and as the Church ever more intimately. The patroness of this Year is our Blessed Mother Mary, under her title, “Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament.” We will be seeking her intercession as well as that of special patrons each month.

A Steering Committee and various subcommittees have been working for many months to plan this Year of the Eucharist, and a listing of these special programs and events can be accessed on the Diocesan website (www.dioceseofjoliet.org) by clicking on the Year of the Eucharist logo. As part of this observance, all parishes are invited to offer some form of Eucharistic devotion on a regular basis during this year. Various parishes and Eucharistic Chapels throughout the diocese have been designated as pilgrimage sites, and we hope to receive permission to grant a plenary indulgence for those who visit and pray at those sanctuaries. Well-known speakers have been invited to offer presentations on the Eucharist in different areas of the diocese. Our Catholic School teachers and Religious Education catechists will be participating in workshops to assist them in teaching about the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Penance to our children. Clergy and parish staffs will be participating in programs on the new translation of the Mass texts to help them introduce these revised prayers in our parish liturgies (probably in Advent 2011).

All these programs and activities will lead up to our **Diocesan Eucharistic Congress on June 26, 2011, at Lewis University in Romeoville.** During this celebration, we will have prominent speakers offer presentations on the Eucharist, activities for families and people of all ages and cultures, and conclude with a large celebration of the Eucharist and a Eucharistic Procession. Please be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend this gathering of our Diocesan Church as we celebrate the source and summit of our Catholic faith – the Holy Eucharist.

Be assured of our prayers for you and your parishes during this Year of the Eucharist and please remembers us and all the clergy in your prayers as well.

Sincerely in Christ,

The Most Rev. J. Peter Sartain
Bishop of Joliet

The Most Rev. Joseph M. Siegel
Auxiliary Bishop of Joliet