

May God always be blest! From one extreme of the earth to the other; from sunrise to sunset; from the newborn to the completely formed adult; in all times and situations...May the name of God always be heard!

How can the name of God not be blest, who in spite of sorrows and situations not always pleasant, has shown his presence and companionship throughout 2009, and is still offering us hope at the start of 2010.

Be it in health or in sickness, we have always felt loved by God, since one or the other is a test of our trust in God, in knowing that everything depends on Him and that everything returns to Him. Nothing of what we have accomplished was achieved by our own merit only; we always had divine providence. And so, in health as in sickness, we say, "May God always be blest"

We thank God for our parents, siblings, spouses, sons and daughters who are our primary motivation to get up in the morning and do our daily tasks. In the company of our family, near and far, we feel deep in our heart the responsibility of offering our work so that they may live with dignity, just as God from the beginning wished that we may be an image and likeness of Him.

Blessed be God for the friends that make us feel different, those that make our lives happy, making us discover that brotherhood extends farther than family; those that at difficult times have been at our side bringing us support and encouragement. For those manifestations of friendship and generosity, thank you.

Blessed be God for our Priests! From our seminarians who feel deeply the calling to serve His people. Year by year, God gives us the "Yes" of a new candidate to the seminary, and in the midst of our Hispanic community, the number of seminarians is growing! At this time, there are four Hispanic seminarians of the 27 that we have in our diocese; but not only that, in 2009, Fr. Alejandro Flores was ordained, the third Hispanic priest ordained in our diocese. How can we not be grateful! And with the same gratitude that springs from our heart, on January 19, Rev. Joseph Siegel will be ordained Bishop. He was recently named Auxiliary Bishop of our Diocese of Joliet by Our Holy Father, Benedict XVI.

We are grateful because God has allowed us that in this experience called life, to have met people that have dedicated and are dedicating their existence to the service of others. I am grateful to Oliva Cervantes who has worked for over 24 years in our diocese in Family Ministry, Diaconate Office and the Hispanic Ministry Office. And like her, many other staff members of each parish perform their mission of making sure that everything runs smoothly in the Church.

How can we not proclaim the name of God with joy since He blesses our diocese with evangelization projects and movements that maintain, broaden and extend the faith in our communities. This year, we received with enthusiasm the initiative of Catholics Come Home, the invitation to the Diocesan Year of the Eucharist, the preparation for the Eucharistic Congress, the restart of the Cursillos in Spanish, the strengthening of the Charismatic Renewal Groups, and the growth of the Institute of Formation Fr. Miguel Pro.

Yes, we recognize the greatness of God because thanks to Catholics Come Home many people that for some reason have been isolated from the Church will come back to participate in the activities and to rediscover its spiritual and historical richness.

Yes, we recognize the greatness of God because thanks to the Diocesan Year of the Eucharistic and the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress, we Catholics will revitalize our love, respect and devotion for the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. It will be a time of spiritual blessings where we will foster Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament groups and everything that will help us grow in faith, hope and charity. All of these blessings will extend farther than the Catholic confines, for they will be public manifestations, live testimonies of our love for the Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Yes, we recognize the greatness of God because the Cursillo in Spanish will again renew the soul of the believer, sensitize and awaken the faith of many brothers and sisters of our diocese. We are blest and grateful because Mrs. Yolanda Magaña (magana53@comcast.net, (630) 258-2474) has taken up the responsibility of coordinating this effort, and we know that it will benefit many families.

Yes, we recognize the greatness of God because the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in Spanish is strengthened and is helping in the spiritual growth of many members of our diocese. It is a blessing to find testimonies of generosity and service as in the members of the Charismatic Renewal. The Holy Spirit enlivens our parish communities through the Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

Yes, we recognize the greatness of God because it is through Him, and only through Him, that we find the reason for the growth of the Institute of Formation Fr. Miguel Pro. We started with one Center of Formation at St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center where we had 120 participants; and now, God blesses us with the St. Teresa Center in Kankakee where we have 18 participants and with the St. Joseph Center in Addison with 53 participants. God walks in our diocese.

For these and many other reasons found at the heart of our Catholic Church, we say, "May God always be blest," because his love and forgiveness have no limits. Blest, always blest, because His love knocks at our doors and his love extends from year to year. The hope of a more humane world, more Christian and closer to God is renewed with the coming of 2010. For in spite of the pain and of situations not always pleasant, those of us who believe and hope in God, say, "May God always be blest."