

My good friends,

Permit me to extend heartfelt thanks to: Nelly Lorenzo of El Instituto de Liderazgo Pastoral as well as Mayra Moriel de Banuelos and Luis Salinas for all their organization and dedication to the leadership program that has benefitted all so much.

I extend to you warmest congratulations on the occasion of the completion of the program of leadership training which you have accomplished after two years of dedicated effort.

Leadership, from the Christian perspective, is a call to service. It is the utilization of the personal gifts which we have been endowed with for the benefit of the community. You have been so very generous in the development of your gifts by your faithful participation in the program of the Institute of Pastoral Leadership.

I congratulate you on achieving your goal and express heartfelt thanks on behalf of the Diocese of Des Moines for your perseverance and sacrifice these two past years. It reflects your love for Jesus and the Church. Now, you are sent in the name of Jesus for service in parish communities and the diocese.

Your service will be two-fold:

- 1) Evangelization: making Jesus Christ known and loved in our times. Both explicitly and implicitly through your lifestyle and words you will always seek to let Jesus shine through.
- 2) Leadership: The gift of leadership implies being in touch and alert to the gifts of others. It enables you to recognize the gifts of others, and enable that recognition to be shared by the person who has them. It then calls for encouragement on your part of that person to develop these gifts and use them in service to others.

I, therefore, send you as missionary disciples to your communities. May you be agents of unity casting aside backbiting, gossip and division in order that the spirit of Jesus reigns above all enabling his light and love to be the center of your life together.