

Reverend Father Thomas Dense

Dear brothers and sisters:

For me it is a blessing to be here today with you sharing the mysteries of our salvation in this Eucharist of Thanksgiving to God.

All of you receive a warm greeting from the people of Our Lady of La Altagracia Parish. God and the Blessed Virgin Mary bless you always.

Since January of last year I am the new parish priest in Our Lady of La Altagracia, replacing our beloved Father José F. Méndez Gerónimo. I am from the city of La Vega, a city north of the Dominican Republic. In La Vega, the first cross of the Evangelization of America was placed; the first Christian was baptized in America and the first sermon was written that years later laid the foundations for the universal declaration of human rights.

I come from a humble family but full of the graces of God. We are five brothers and two sisters. I'm the fifth one. At an early age I felt the Lord's call to be a priest because I became an altar boy at 12 years old. Life gave me a hard blow at the age of fourteen when my mother died and the next year my father. I was ordained in 2011 and have been a priest for seven years.

When I arrived at Our Lady of Highest Grace, Fr. Feliciano told me: "My brother Father Columbus, here the people are poor on a material level but they have a lot of faith and we have a sister parish called St. Gregory in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. They help us every year to supply some of our people's needs. I told him: with God in heaven, the cross on the altar, the Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross, St. Gregory on one side and I on the other, the work will be more than better.

This has been the way, as the Gospel tells us today, you have become servants of the most needy in our parish. Brothers and sisters, Mother Teresa of Calcutta tells us that a drop of water before the immense ocean does not mean anything, but if that ocean was missing that drop of water what that ocean would be.

I bring you the words of hope of our poor and sick who are helped by you; I bring you the thanksgivings of them; I bring you the prayers entrusted to the Lord for you and your family members.

Your generous financial help has allowed us to meet many needs. Here is a report of what we have done with the resources that you have sent us this past year.

1-We have helped 23 people with medicines and their hospital services.

2-We have improved 4 houses for 4 very poor families.

3-We bought a new refrigerator for the rectory because the one we had burned because of an electrical failure.

4-We repaired the electric generator in the rectory which was also damaged by the electrical failure.

5-We bought the new batteries for the electric generator in the rectory.

6-We helped purchase school supplies for 6 children of a Las Yayas widow.

7. We purchased food, gas for the truck, paper and ink, and other supplies for the parish office.

Brothers and sisters, what the psalmist today has done is to cry out (THE LORD SUSTAINS MY LIFE), and good because when I realize this truth that he supports my life, my faith, my hope and all that I am, then I can help others.

When I know that the LORD sustains my life then I am able to serve the needy.

When I know that the LORD sustains my life then I am committed to continue loving Him and announcing Him.

When I know that the LORD sustains my life then I am a fulfilled and happy Christian.

The sick and needy of our Parish tell you today, Fr. Thomas and all of you faithful of this parish of San Gregorio,.... They tell you “**thank you for your generosity, love, dedication and sacrifices !!!**”

THANK YOU BECAUSE HE WHO WALKS IN LOVE is never tired and never tires those around the self.

THANK you FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART!!!.

GOD BLESS you all.

Fr. Colon