



Co-laboring with the Living Lord

A Year of Prayer

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us; prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Romans 12: 4-8

May 8, 2005

Dear Jesuit brothers, lay colleagues and friends,

I am writing to invite – even urge -- all of you, Jesuit and Lay Colleagues who are engaged in the works of the Maryland Province, to join together for a Year of Prayer based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. The aim is to deepen the roots of our companionship and refresh the Ignatian vision which inspires every one of these works. Those we serve in those works -- students, parishioners, or retreatants – are also most welcome to join us.

The theme of this Year of Prayer which begins in October and concludes on Pentecost is “*Co-Laboring With the Living Lord: Ignatian Companions on Mission.*” In the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius asks us to reflect on how God dwells in us; giving us being, life, sensation and intelligence; working and **laboring** for us. In this challenging time of change, God is clearly calling us to join in his laboring in and for our world. It is in this spirit of “laboring with the Lord” that I am inviting you to join together as Ignatian Companions, Lay and Jesuit, in this Year of Prayer.

The Year has four unfolding “seasons,” each disposing us to grow in a particular grace from the Lord:

- (1) **Gratitude** – To understand and to rejoice gratefully in who we are and who we are called to become – by God’s gracious and loving desire and design.
- (2) **Healing** – To rejoice gratefully in the realization of God’s unfailingly steadfast and forgiving love – revealed in Christ crucified.

I will call back into my memory the gifts I have received—my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself. I will ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much he has given me of what he possesses, and consequently how he, the same Lord, desires to give me even his very self, in accordance with his divine design.
(*Spiritual Exercises, 234*)

(3) **Call** - To respond enthusiastically to Christ's call to join him in building up the Kingdom of truth, justice, and love, justice and peace on earth.

(4) **Co-laboring** – To live and to work willingly as the hands and feet, heads and hearts, of the risen Lord living and working *today* in us Ignatian companions, Lay and Jesuit, on mission together in the Maryland Province.

“Whoever wishes to join with me in this enterprise must be content with the same food, drink, clothing, and the like, as I have. So, too, must they labor with me by day and watch with me by night, so that, as they have shared in these labors with me, they will share also with me in our victory.” Consider what a good person will answer to such a generous and kindly leader.

(Spiritual Exercises, 93: Kingdom)

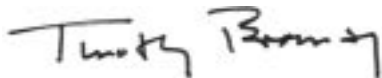
We will provide you with tools to help you participate in the Year of Prayer, including:

- A guidebook that will take you through each month of the Year of Prayer. It will include meditation material, prayer exercises, Bible passages and spiritual readings. You will receive the guidebook in September.
- A resource book with readings for further reflection.
- A website, which will include all written materials plus links to relevant sites and a page for sharing experiences.

We want to make it easy for you to participate in this Year of Prayer. There will be coordinating committees in each region of the province to assist participants in forming groups and sharing the resource materials. You will be receiving more information as the materials are gathered and the local groups are formed.

Please give serious consideration to joining us in this very important experience for the growth and development of our work as companions on the Ignatian mission in the Maryland Province. I am convinced that God is calling us to this Year of Prayer in order to help us deepen our union of minds and hearts for the sake of service to others. Let's be continually mindful of one another throughout the Year, holding each other in our hearts and prayers, and sharing gifts of insight and inspiration as opportunity presents.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Timothy B. Brown, SJ
Provincial