

26 April 2017  
17/08 MAR

Dear Brothers and Friends in the Lord,

The Peace of Christ!

As you may know, the first-ever Religious Brothers Day will be held 1 May 2017, on the feast of Saint Joseph the Worker.

In light of this event, through his Secretary of State, Pope Francis has sent a message to America's communities of brothers: "*Conscious of the immense contribution made by generations of brothers to the growth of the Church in the United States through their schools, hospitals and other forms of religious and social outreach, the Holy Father trusts that this day of recognition will confirm them in their distinctive witness of consecrated life and their generous service to God's Kingdom*" (Letter of Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio, 31 March 2017).

The Maryland and USA Northeast Provinces of the Society of Jesus wish to thank the religious brothers of all of the many congregations who have served and do serve in our country for their generosity, their service to the Church, and their witness to the Gospel. In a special way, we want to take this opportunity to thank our Jesuit Brothers.

As GC 34 reminds us: "*The Jesuit brother is a man who has accepted the call of the Father to be a 'companion of Jesus...' All members of the Society...have heard the same invitation to serve him in his Church; we have all been sent on the same mission*" (Decree 7).

We give thanks to God for the Brother's vocation and for the many Jesuit brothers who have graced the Society. We give thanks for their words and deeds which have taught us how to be a companion of the Lord and a minister of the Church.

In the spirit of that gratitude, we ask all our communities in both provinces to join in a special prayer of thanksgiving on 1 May. The attached prayer is a proposed grace before dinner.

Sincerely in Christ,



Robert M. Hussey, S.J.  
Provincial, Maryland Province



John J. Cecero, S.J.  
Provincial, USA Northeast Province

**Religious Brothers Day**  
**1 May 2017**

*Order of Blessing as Grace Before Meals*

**Presiding Minister:**

Today, on this Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker,  
we celebrate the first-ever Religious Brothers Day.

“Conscious of the immense contribution made by generations of brothers to the growth of the Church in the United States through their schools, hospitals and other forms of religious and social outreach, the Holy Father trusts that this day of recognition will confirm them in their distinctive witness of consecrated life and their generous service to God’s Kingdom.”

In that light, we come to pray as we gather for our evening meal.

**Pause**

We give thanks to you, O Lord our God,  
for all Brothers—servants and witnesses of time past;  
for Alphonsus Rodriguez and Rene Goupil,  
for Nicholas Owen and Dominic Collins,  
for Antonio Fernandez, Leonard Kimura and their companions.

For martyrs, managers, and ministers;  
doorkeepers, infirmaries, and teachers;  
administrators, fundraisers, and archivists;  
for artisans, actors, dancers, and playwrights;  
farmers, cobblers, mechanics, and treasurers;  
librarians, coaches, computer technicians;  
for launderers, painters, chefs, and cooks;  
bookstore managers, guidance counselors, and architects;  
engineers, health care providers, and media experts;  
for astronomers, gravediggers, sacristans, and directors;  
for scientists of every stripe  
for protectors and hidiers of priests under persecution  
and friends of scholastics in study;

for chaplains, retreat directors, attentive listeners;  
for every talent not here mentioned  
but done in your name —  
all friends in the Lord.

As we remember these Brothers,  
inspire our Brothers today to join their ranks—  
those here present,  
those of every land and nation.  
Give them only your love and your grace  
to be as bold as their predecessors and brave as well,  
generous and untiring,  
witnessing to your unfailing justice and abiding love—  
all to your greater glory  
as we pray:

*Bless us, O Lord . . .*