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Jesuit Jubilee 2006: A Vision, A Mission, A Prayer

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Jesuit Jubilee 06

A VISION • A MISSION • A PRAYER

The Society of Jesus counts 2006 as an important year! It marks the 450th anniversary of the death (1556) of its founder, St. Ignatius of Loyola and the 500th anniversary of the birth (1506) of two of his original companions, St. Francis Xavier and Blessed Peter Faber. A year to be celebrated – a year of Jubilee.

In the world of Jesuit education, the names Loyola and Xavier are well known: they christen our campuses the world over. Faber's name dots our educational landscape as well, but it appears more on buildings than on University mastheads. All three men were deeply rooted in higher education; all three were students at the University of Paris where the idea of the Society of Jesus germinated; all three were raised to the altars of the Church after their deaths. They will get special attention at Jesuit schools in the year ahead.

Peter Faber was the first of the students at the University of Paris to be attracted to Ignatius' spirituality. As the only priest in the small band of like-minded students around Ignatius, he presided at the Mass on Mont Martre in which they vowed solidarity to one another in service to others. Later he was the companion most specialized, after Ignatius, in giving the Spiritual Exercises. His was the Prayer.

Francis Xavier's first apostolic work in India was teaching at St. Paul's College in Goa, which became the second school to be operated by the nascent Society of Jesus. His was the Mission.

Ignatius made the decision to assign his men to education as an apt means to bring people to God,

only after he began to see the good results of allowing lay students to study in schools meant exclusively for the training of young Jesuits. He recognized that this was a way of influencing those who would be leaders; he grasped the "multiplier effect." Once he did, he moved quickly: by his death only ten years later, he had opened 39 schools. His was the Vision.

By 1773, when the Society of Jesus was suppressed, Jesuits were known as "the school-masters of Europe"; there were more than 700 Jesuit schools around the world, besides some 175 seminaries and houses of studies for young men called to priesthood. Quite an accomplishment for an organization begun by a small band of university students!

In 1814, when another Pope allowed Jesuits to start up again, they began with twelve schools: five in Russia, four in Italy, two in France, and one – Georgetown College – in the United States. But the drive to teach was still vigorous, and it would not be stopped! By now there are more than 650 educational institutions operating under the Jesuit aegis, and more than two million students.

Conversations' role in Jesuit higher education makes us proud to join in this Jubilee celebration. For exhaustive listings of the many educational events marking it, visit: <http://www.jesuit.org/jubilee2006> (U.S) and <http://www.sjweb.info/jubilee2006> (World) ■

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Prayer for the Jubilee Year

Lord Jesus, we pray to you through the intercession of your Saints Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier and Blessed Peter Faber, whose anniversaries we celebrate this year.

You gifted Ignatius with the spiritual vision to build your kingdom here on earth for greater glory. You inspired Francis to bring his missionary zeal to distant lands so your name would be known throughout the world. You guided Peter in his sharing of the Spiritual Exercises so others could deepen their relationship with you.

In your loving care, inspire us today, as you did the early Jesuit companions, to a life of faithful discipleship so we may become men and women for others.

Help us be mindful of the ways in which your justice and mercy may be brought to this world, especially to those who are poor or sick, marginalized or displaced, or those who suffer from the effects of war and natural and human-made catastrophes.

Help us to seek you in all things and to discover your grace in the ordinariness of our lives.

Grant us the openness and generosity to strengthen your church on earth. May we be your faithful companions and rejoice in your presence among us in this Jubilee year. May Ignatius' vision, Francis' mission, and Peter's prayer renew our hearts and minds and the face of the earth.

We ask this in your name, our Lord and Savior. Amen.



The icon, "*Three Companions of Jesus*", from the hand of Fr. George Drance, S.J., was commissioned by the Wisconsin Province in celebration of the Jubilee Year honoring St. Ignatius on the anniversary of his death (July 31, 1556), and the anniversaries of the births of St. Francis Xavier (April 7, 1506) and Blessed Peter Faber (April 13, 1506). These three college roommates at the University of Paris co-founded the Society of Jesus with their early companions.


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