

# Formation for Mission

by Fr. Robert Daly, SJ

On April 24–25, close to 75 Jesuits and lay colleagues from Boston College, College of the Holy Cross, and Fairfield University gathered for the fifth annual conference on Mission and Identity at the Connors Family Retreat and Conference Center in Dover, Massachusetts. This year's conference, "Formation for Mission," focused on collaborative programs designed to orient new faculty, staff, and administrators to the Jesuit educational tradition and ways to deepen the formation of returning colleagues.

Under the auspices of the New England Jesuit provincial and the three university presidents, the first gathering of what is now known as "Dover Days" was held in 2004 when some 60 colleagues, about 20 each from Boston College, Holy Cross, and Fairfield gathered at Holy Cross to discuss the theme of "Jesuit Mission and Faculty Culture."

The success of that meeting led to a more extensive meeting held at Dover in 2005 on the theme: "Is There an Ignatian Pedagogy?" The title was chosen to get into conversation about spirituality, recognized as being at the heart of the tension implicit in any frank discussion of Jesuit mission and faculty culture.

The development of a promising dialogue at that meeting set up the theme for the third meeting, also at Dover, in 2006, basically a reprise of the first meeting, "Faculty Culture and Jesuit Mission—What Are the Issues That Divide Us and Unite Us?" The papers that led up to this meeting and the discussion they engendered indicated an advance in our ability to name and discuss neuralgic issues.

By this time, colleagues from the three institutions had begun to discover not only that they could talk to and learn from one another about serious and challenging issues,



Some of the colleagues from Boston College, College of the Holy Cross, Fairfield University, and the Province who gathered for Dover Days. Top row, l-r, Christine Coch, Tom McGuinness, Fr. Bob Daly, SJ, Fr. Tom Worcester, SJ; bottom, l-r, Fr. Jim Fleming, SJ, Pat Bizzell, Patricia De Leeuw

but also that they could and should be working together on such issues. Hence the title of the next Dover meeting on April 19–20, 2007, on the theme: "Working Together in Mission."

As a result of this meeting, the group compiled a list of 18 issues, programs, and concerns on which the Jesuit institutions might work together. Fr. Jim Fleming, SJ, massaged the information into a questionnaire sent to the participants of the 2007 Dover meeting. The results came through loud and clear. The most important task facing us is twofold: (1) integrating/orienting new faculty, and (2) the continuing formation of "veteran" faculty.

*Fr. Robert Daly, SJ, is the assistant for higher education for the New England Province of Jesuits.*



For more information visit the Mission and Identity pages on the Boston College, College of the Holy Cross, and Fairfield University websites.