

OFFICE OF ECUMENICAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS AFFAIRS
DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

November 2009

Dear Co-ministers:

The annual **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity** will be held as usual this coming January 18 – 25, 2010 ending with the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul. Each year a different part of the world is involved in the focus of the Week of Prayer and this year it is the Christians in Scotland, in honor of the Edinburgh Mission Conference in 1910 which was one of the major turning points for Christian Unity in a last century. Attached is an order form for all the materials available through Graymoor Ecumenical and Interreligious Institute which publishes the materials jointly produced by the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. There is another attachment of the actual service which can be downloaded free of charge. **It is important to know that orders for the inexpensive color worship aids, posters, prayer cards, scripture studies, and complete resources packets need to be placed as soon as possible since supplies are limited.** Orders received after December 15, 2009 cannot be guaranteed.

With our **cluster groupings** now in full swing, predominately Catholic areas might consider joining with other neighboring communities or towns to make it a truly ecumenical and inclusive event. Doing this helps break down barriers and promotes understanding and mutual respect among all Christians. **The entire service or parts of the prayer service can also be used not only during the special Week of Prayer, but also throughout the year** to begin Pastoral Council and Liturgy Committee meetings as well as other organizational and committee meetings—for your youth, men's and women's groups, etc. And please don't forget your Catholic schools, Parish School of Religion, Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and Children, Small Christian Communities and other forms of Life Long Learning programs. We all need to pray unceasingly for Christians to be one, for the Unity of the Church for which Jesus himself prayed the night before he died.

As you well know, **our Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI**, has made ecumenism one of the main priorities of his pontificate. In his homily to the national judicatory and ecumenical leaders of our country during his 2008 Papal Visit to the United States, Benedict lauded the successes made in recent years to strengthen Christian unity, but stressed the continued need for all Christians to work together and not let passing relativism be an obstacle to unity.

God's peace,

Fr. Bob Flannery

Director, Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

