

SCJ NEWS

a newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart

October 2010

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Much has changed, and much is the same in province birthplace



The line is a staple of province communications, from the website to vocation materials: "Ministry in the United States began in 1923 in a small mission on the Lower Brule Indian Reservation in South Dakota."

This birthplace of the province is briefly noted in just about every descriptive piece written about the SCJs in the United States.

From that small foothold in the country, the Priests of the Sacred Heart continued their mission in the country, expanding to Mississippi, Texas, Wisconsin and many other locations. Yet a commitment has remained to its birthplace, to the spot where Fr. Matthias Fohrman, the first SCJ in the United States, began ministry to Native Americans and other residents of South Dakota's rural reservations.

Well, not EXACTLY on the same spot as Fr. Fohrman. That's under several feet of water as the result of a nearby dam. The town — and St. Mary's Church — where the SCJs began min-

istry, relocated in 1962.

Much has changed since 1923, but some things remain the same.

This too is a line that is often repeated. You will see it again when you read the story (starting on page 4) about the South African Province. Though they are continents far from one another, there are some interesting similarities in the two SCJ missions. Both South Dakota and South Africa have their roots in the German Province.

In 1923 German SCJs began ministry in South Dakota, but the same year they also set foot for the first time in South Africa.

Immigrants began both missions, and now both missions continue with the assistance of international SCJs. In South Africa, ministry is a joint effort of German, American, Polish and most recently, Indian SCJs who work together with indige-

nous South Africans to continue the congregation's commitment to the country.

In South Dakota, American SCJs now minister with the help of the Indonesian Province. Since January, Fr. Christianus Hendrik, SCJ, has been a part of the Lower Brule Pastoral Team. He is the first of several Indonesian SCJs who are expected to serve in South Dakota.

Fr. Hendrik is part of a pastoral team that includes Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, and Fr. Joe Dean, SCJ, as well as Dn. Steve McLaughlin (a permanent deacon), Srs. Mary Clement Eiden, SCC, Charles Palm,



Scenes from South Dakota: UPPER LEFT – A volunteer with the Daughters of Charity makes a new friend on the reservation; UPPER – Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, of the Lower Brule Pastoral Team; LOWER – Sr. M. Clement Eiden, SCC, another member of the pastoral team, tutors a young student. NOTE: All photos courtesy of Fr. Bernie Rosinski.



St. Catherine's Church at Big Bend on the Crow Creek Reservation. It is one of six parishes to which the Lower Brule Pastoral Team ministers.

OSB, and Elaine Tworek, SLW, and two lay pastoral associates — Tom Howell and Cora Weiand.

Together, the team serves six parishes in two dioceses: Rapid City on the west side of the Missouri River, and Sioux Falls on the east side of the river.

The team ministers not only to a variety of parishes, but to a variety of cultures as well. On the east side of the river, two parishes are made up of primarily Native Americans enrolled in the Dakota tribe on the Crow Creek Reservation, while the third is mostly Anglo. On the west side, two parishes are primarily Anglo, and parishioners in the third are mainly Lakota Native Americans enrolled in the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe on the reservation of the same name.

Native American culture

To prepare for ministry among Native Americans Frs. Joe and

Hendrik took part in a workshop with the Basic Directions Institute, operated by the Jesuits at a retreat center in the Diocese of Rapid City. The week-long program "was extremely helpful," said Fr. Joe. "It explained things that I had already witnessed and put perspective on them."

All three SCJs said that it is at a funeral where those new to reservation ministry really come face to face with Native America culture.

A funeral for a Native American includes two nights of wakes and then the funeral. A prayer service is held both nights, and on both nights, people are invited to share memories about the deceased. "This can go from 30 minutes to two hours or more," said Fr. Joe. "And then there is the dinner."

The second night is similar to the first. "People can go as long as they want," said Fr. Joe. "Things happen, they say, 'when they are meant to; they begin and end when they are meant

to.'"

The team often finds itself navigating between two interpretations of time, the more rigid "industrial" time, that most Americans are used to, and a looser sense of time "that is found in many cultures, including those on the reservations," said Fr. Joe.

On the third day, there is a short prayer service and a viewing of the body before the actual funeral begins. It is also a time for those gathered to greet each other. Depending on "when things are meant to end" the viewing, greeting and finally the funeral itself can go anywhere from a couple of hours to a full day.

"You need to be flexible," said Fr. Joe.

It's a phrase that applies to much of the pastoral team's ministry.

A three-day wake and funeral may seem long to most Americans but all three SCJs note that it is also an important opportunity.

"I am going to speak to more people at a funeral than at any other time," said Fr. Joe, noting that the church often fills for a funeral with people who might not normally come to a liturgy.

"Keeping that in mind, I always use Eucharistic prayer N. 4 because it is the biggest narrative," said Fr. Joe. "You get basically the whole story of salvation from the Catholic perspective in that prayer."

The funeral is a time to reach out to many who might not often hear a Sunday homily. "You never know who you might reach," said Fr. Joe, who tries to bring some Native American traditions to his homilies, such as sharing a bit of his own background.

"Usually I start by saying my name, and then explain that I am a priest and member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart," said Fr. Joe. He then goes on to share what he has in common with those gathered: "I tell them



PHOTOS LEFT TO RIGHT: Fr. Joe Dean SCJ, moderator of the Lower Brule Pastoral Team; Fr. Christianus Hendrik, SCJ, bundled up during his first South Dakota snowstorm; Dn. Steve McLaughlin, a Native American who is also a member of the pastoral team.

that 'I have a brother and five sisters. Of my elders, only one, my Aunt Mary, is among the living. That means that we all have something in common.' I would never do that in an Anglo community. We [priests] don't call attention to ourselves in that way."

But connection is something Fr. Joe learned is important in ministry with Native Americans. "I saw one of the speakers do this at the Basic Direction Institute and thought that it would be good to adapt," he said.

The sharing of culture is not a one way street, as Fr. Hendrik soon learned. With dark skin and long black hair, initially many people in South Dakota – Anglo and Native American — mistake him for a tribal member.

"When they learn that I am from Indonesia they are very interested," said Fr. Hendrik. "They ask me to show them where Indonesia is on the map, and what life is like there. I tell them about being a Christian in a Muslim country and they get a better understanding of what it is to have freedom."

New to parish ministry

Although much of the work of the pastoral team revolves around parish ministry, none of the three SCJs currently on the team has spent significant time in a parish, or at least not a parish in the United States.

Much of Fr. Bernie's past experience has been in academics and administration, including service at the SCJs' generalate (community headquarters) in Rome. Fr. Joe also has an extensive background in academics, having taught at Sacred Heart School of Theology for many years. Prior to his assignment in South Dakota he had a busy schedule giving parish missions around the country.

Fr. Hendrik's parish ministry experience was in the missions of Indonesia. He was ministering in West Papua when a bout with malaria cut his assignment short. Once recovered, his provincial superior asked that he go to the Philippines where help was needed. He came to Sacred Heart School of Theology's ESL program to learn English in preparation for that mission.



A dancer at a powwow in Lower Brule. Powwows are an important part of reservation life. They are a time to honor Native American culture, and to simply have fun.

While he was in the States Fr. Hendrik's provincial superior suggested a change in plans. He still wanted him to be a missionary, but instead of the Philippines, Fr. Hendrik was asked to consider South Dakota.

How did he feel about the change in plans?

"If I am needed here, I'm happy to go," said Fr. Hendrik.

That same sense of availability is what brought Frs. Bernie and Joe to South Dakota.

Several months after he retired Fr. Bernie was on a cruise ship, enjoying a trip planned for his golden jubilee of religious life. The trip came a few months after Fr. Bernie's retirement from full-time ministry. It was a retirement that left him longing for something else, but he wasn't sure what. During the cruise, Fr. Bernie decided to also make a retreat. As the ship moved along the seas Fr. Bernie spent three to four hours a day reflecting and journaling, seeking "a decision according to God's will," he said. "What I am going to do?" he asked the Lord.

The answer? "It became clearer to me over the retreat that I still had a few arrows in my quiver," he said.

Back at the Provincialate Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, had already come to the same conclusion. The provincial superior wondered if Fr. Bernie would be willing to come out of retirement to work in Lower Brule.

"I accepted," said Fr. Bernie, who

is now 76, "and I'm glad I did... Talk about fitting a round peg into a round hole! Everything worked out so well." Though serving in the congregation's first mission in the United States was never something that Fr. Bernie had given thought to, it's become a ministry close to his heart.

"Availability can do that," he said. "It can lead you to things that you never imagined possible."

With Fr. Joe, it was also a response to a request from the provincial superior that led him to South Dakota. But instead of an individual request, it was one made to the province as a whole. If the province wasn't able to find people willing to minister in Lower Brule, the SCJs might be forced to leave a ministry that the congregation had served for 85 years.

The SCJ NEWS is published by the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJs). Articles, photos and suggestions are always welcome. Editorial offices are located at P.O. Box 289, Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289 (414) 427-4266. Email: marygorski@sbcglobal.net Mary Gorski, editor. Postage prepaid.



"I thought to myself, 'I can do anything for three years,'" said Fr. Joe Dean. And he said as much in an email to Br. Frank Presto, SCJ, provincial secretary.

"Within 24 hours Fr. Tom was on the phone, asking Fr. Joe, 'Did you really mean that?'"

Although he didn't expect such a quick response, Fr. Joe said that he really "did mean that," and a few months later he was headed to Lower Brule for that three-year assignment.

"About three months later, I realized that I would be here a lot longer," said Fr. Joe. It wasn't that he felt like he would be "stuck" there, but that "I soon learned that short-term commitments have absolutely no credibility out here, especially with the Native American community. One of the first questions that I was asked by Native Americans and Anglos was 'How long are you going to be here?'"

The answer? He tells them "One day at a time," but he easily pictures himself there until he is 70; a ten-year commitment.

A Dehonian ministry

What is Dehonian about ministry on the Lower Brule and Crow Creek Reservations? What does it matter if the Priests of the Sacred Heart are in South Dakota?

Fr. Joe answers the question by asking another: "What would South Dakota be like if the SCJs had not come here? There would be no St. Joseph's Indian School. The presence of the Catholic church, or at least a priestly presence, would not be as strong on the west side of the river.

"The Priests of the Sacred Heart have long worked with marginalized groups. Working with Native Americans in the United States is something that SCJs should be doing."

Fr. Hendrik also sees ministry in South Dakota as a significant call to the SCJs. But he widens that call beyond the U.S. Province.

"If we believe that this is an important ministry, a ministry that we are called to as SCJs, then as a whole congregation we have to take responsibility for it; that's why I am here."



Fr. Peter Surdel, SCJ, provincial superior of South Africa, with one of the younger members of St. Teresa Mission.

Another 1923 "birth"

As SCJ ministry began in the United States, it also got its start in South Africa. The two countries, both begun by the German Province, have maintained a close relationship ever since.

"**M**ulticultural" is a word that typifies much of South Africa. It is an element that adds a wonderful richness to the country, yet it is also at the root of many of the nation's struggles.

The post-apartheid national anthem of South Africa gives a taste of this multicultural richness. It is sung in a combination of Zulu, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Sesotho and English — five of the 11 most frequently spoken languages of the country.

The land was inhabited for generations by a variety of native peoples prior to the arrival of European traders, and eventually, colonists. Dutch, German and French Huguenots were the first overseas travelers to settle in the country. Later, they were joined by the British. And as power and allegiances changed hands in Europe, so too did they in the

southern tip of Africa. For many years Great Britain and the Netherlands alternatively claimed leadership of the land.

Slavery is also a piece of the country's history. Slaves were brought in from India, East Asia and other parts of Africa. They served as laborers and servants, but also as skilled tradesmen who quickly helped to build the Cape Colony.

The citizens of today's South Africa are a mix of these many cultures along with others who have immigrated to the country.

"Multicultural" is also a word that describes the SCJ presence in South Africa. As noted in the August issue of the *SCJ News* ("SCJ ministry returns to St. Teresa Mission") the Priests of the Sacred Heart first came to South Africa in 1923. Led by Fr. Wolfgang Demont of the German Province, a group of

four SCJs settled near what is now the South African Provincialate in Aliwal North.

These German missionaries established several parishes and mission stations. In 1929, they opened the first South African seminary. In operation for only 15 years, it prepared several SCJs, as well as priests for other communities, for ordination.

Arrival of American SCJs

The same year that the German Province sent missionaries to South Africa the U.S. Province was established – also by German missionaries.

Twenty-five years after it gave birth to the U.S. Province, the mother province turned to its offspring for help in South Africa.

The German Province, like much of Germany, was greatly weakened by World War II. Some SCJs were interred; others were simply unable to move beyond their borders.

American SCJs first arrived in South Africa in 1948. The district of Aliwal North was divided to allow for a new district of De Aar. American SCJs took responsibility for De Aar and the Germans continued to meet the pastoral needs of Aliwal North.

One of the greatest challenges for both regions was, and continues to be, personnel.

In the 1980s a plea was made to the Polish Province for assistance. Soon, a third province was taking a significant role in building the Catholic Church in South Africa.

In 1995, the Regions of Aliwal North and De Aar came together to form the South African Province.

Now, SCJs from the Polish Province are carrying on the dreams of those early German and American missionaries in South Africa.

Bishop Adam Musialek, SCJ, one of the first Poles to serve in South Africa, was named bishop of De Aar in 2009. And the provincial superior? Another Pole: Fr. Peter Surdel, SCJ.

Fr. Peter, like many provincial and regional superiors before him, continues to address a dual challenge: developing vocations within South Africa while also recruiting SCJs from outside

of the country to continue the ministry of the Church.

Now it is the new District of India that is sending SCJ religious to minister in South Africa. An Indian theology student — Frater Chapalamadugu Jeyaraju, SCJ — is a member of the Pan-African formation program in Pietermaritzburg preparing not only for ministry, but most likely, ministry in the South African Province.

The South African Province has also hosted an Indian student during his regency (one to two years of ministry before ordination; much like a “practicum”) and in the future, more Indian SCJs are expected to join in the multicultural ministry that is South Africa.

Multicultural experience begins in formation

As noted above, the South African Province hosts a pan-African formation program in Pietermaritzburg. Begun in 2005, it is a common project of the provinces of Cameroon, Congo, Madagascar, Mozambique and South Africa. The two newest priests for the South African Province — Fr. Ntsikelelo Bambatha, SCJ, and Fr.



Joshua Mpiti, SCJ — are graduates of the program.

There are currently a dozen students in the pan-African formation community. Besides Frater Jeyaraju, they include Frater Virgilio Francesco, an SCJ from Mozambique who is busy with a thesis that examines the role of theology from an African perspective in the development of African democracy.

It includes Frater Jean Pierre Mokozzi of the Congolese Province who, when speaking of what attracted him to the Priests of the Sacred Heart quickly corrects himself, saying “I ap-



ABOVE: Fr. Joseph Mukuna of Congo celebrates Mass at the formation community where he is doing post-graduate studies. BOTTOM: Fr. Sandro Capoferri shows Theophile Fimbo, a student from the Congolese Province, how to make lasagna. Although the formation community has a full-time cook, on her nights off the community takes turns preparing the evening meal.



Bishop Joe Potocnak, retired bishop of De Aar, celebrates a home Mass. The bishop has been splitting his retirement between the U.S. and South African Provinces.

preciated their, no, I mean OUR spirituality," he said. "It is a spirituality that emphasizes Christ's love, love in service." How does Frater Jean Pierre picture himself living "love in service?" In a parish in Congo, "or maybe as a missionary, perhaps in Venezuela."

Multiculturalism continues with a student from Congo, studying in South Africa, who considers service as a missionary in South America.

"That is something that I like here," said Frater Tadeu Ernesto, SCJ, of Mozambique. "I enjoy learning about other areas where the congrega-

tion is located. We are of different cultures but are also the same." He went on to explain that although he is away from home he still feels like he is among family, his SCJ family.

Multiculturalism extends to the formation team where the program director, Fr. Zolile Mpambani, SCJ, is a South African, and the spiritual director, Fr. Alessandro Capoferri, SCJ, is an Italian member of the Mozambique Province.

Students at the international formation house do most of their academic studies at St. Joseph's Theological Institute in nearby

Cedara. St. Joseph's is a perfect fit for the multi-cultural SCJ community. Its students and faculty represent not only the many faces of the African continent but of Asia, Europe, North and South America. Professors from the U.S. Province, including Fr. Charles Brown, SCJ, and Dr. Richard Lux of Sacred Heart School of Theology, are among the many international theologians who have taught at St. Joseph's.

[Editor's note: We encourage you to learn more about St. Joseph's in an article published on our province website at: www.sacredheartusa.org/news-events/new-beginnings/. You can also visit the institute online at: www.sjti.ac.za]

Ministry in post-apartheid South Africa

The Priests of the Sacred Heart have been with the people of South Africa during some of the country's most difficult struggles. They saw the pain of apartheid — a government policy of racial segregation — but also its dismantling. And when the first post-apartheid elections were held in 1994, SCJs, including Bishop Joseph Potocnak, retired bishop of De Aar, volunteered as election observers.

South Africa is a very different place than what it was when those first German priests arrived in Aliwal North. But much is also the same.

Under apartheid, separate churches were established to maintain racial



Some of the faces of South Africa: Bishop Evert Baaij (retired bishop of Aliwal North), Fr. Angel Gabryel (a recent addition to the province, he previously ministered in India and is originally from Poland), Fr. Benno Hansel (originally from Germany), and Fr. Zolile Mpambani (a South African who served on the General Council during Bishop Virginio Bressanelli's administration).



Faces of South Africa: Bishop Adam Musialek (Bishop of De Aar, originally from Poland), Br. Bona Schmedes (originally from Germany), Fr. John Strittmatter (an American who has spent most of his ordained years of ministry in South Africa) and Fr. Anthony Austin (one of the first South Africans to join the Priests of the Sacred Heart).

segregation. Within just a few miles there would be a church for blacks, one for coloreds (the South African term for people of mixed race), and one for white Catholics. Apartheid is gone, but often, these separate churches remain. Why? It's a question with many answers, but one of those answers goes back to the multicultural diversity of South Africa.

As noted earlier, the national anthem of South Africa features five of the 11 most frequently spoken languages of the country. The difference found in churches close to one another isn't just in the color of the worshippers' skin, it is also in culture and language. White Catholics most likely worship in English. In an historically "colored" church the language may be Afrikaans. And in a traditionally black church the language could be one of several indigenous languages, such as Sesotho, Xhosa or Zulu.

"There has been some sharing and interaction, some social get-togethers" said Fr. Angel Gabryel, SCJ, who is based in Graaff Reinet. "But it is only beginning."

It takes just a brief glance inside the three churches to which Fr. Angel ministers to see the challenges he faces. Banners are hung in all of the churches but the language of each is different.

"A person can communicate in many languages, but when it comes to prayer, people are most comfortable praying in their native tongue," said Fr. Thi Pham, SCJ, when talking about the Vietnamese Catholic community in

Milwaukee.

It is the same in South Africa where not only is there a diversity of culture, but a long history of a separation of those cultures.

The poorest of the poor

The Priests of the Sacred Heart have a long tradition of going to and serving the poorest of the poor. Just as SCJs are found in some of most economically disadvantaged counties in the United States, the SCJs of South Africa are found in two of the country's poorest dioceses: Aliwal North and De Aar.

"This is very much a mission area," said Fr. Peter Surdel about the dioceses in which the SCJs minister. "There are many differences when you compare South Africa to other African nations. In some places, South Africa is much more wealthy and developed than other nations on the continent. But at the same time the poverty found here is staggering."

In some ways, the Church in South Africa is similar to the Church in rural South Dakota. The United States is a country with much wealth, yet on the Indian Reservations that the SCJs serve, staggering poverty is also found. And in both, the Catholics to whom the SCJs minister are spread over many miles.

The vital ministry of "presence" is a demanding one for SCJs in both locations.

"That is what is important," said Fr. Peter, talking about the Church's presence in South Africa, and in particular, the SCJs' presence. "We need to be passionate about our ministry, about letting people know that they are loved by God no matter what their circumstance. Sometimes just helping people turn away from pessimism and to have hope is the most important thing that we can do. It isn't just good for the people whom we serve, but it is also good for us as SCJs. Passion is contagious. If I am passionate about ministry, others will be too.

"South Africa is a beautiful country, but it also has many, many challenges. There is crime, there is AIDS, and vocations are few. But there is much here for us as SCJs. Our spirituality calls us to be signs of hope to the hopeless. We are called to be reconcilers..."

"Being here, we have an opportunity to offer much, but we have an even greater opportunity to receive," concluded Fr. Peter. "I have learned so much from the people here, being a part of their lives."

This year marks the 15th anniversary of the South African Province, a province whose roots go back to a small group of German missionaries pursuing a request made by Pope Pius XI.

Almost 90 years later, the SCJs' presence to the people of South Africa continues — through an international effort — just as in South Dakota.

SCJ NEWS

Two profess final vows

Br. Long Nguyen, SCJ and Frater Greg Schill, SCJ, made their final profession of vows during a prayer service at Sacred Heart Monastery/School of Theology on Saturday, October 2.

Frater Greg, 34, entered formation as a candidate seven years ago and first professed vows in 2006. Originally from San Antonio, he served as a Marine for four years before beginning his college studies. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from Southern Illinois University and a master's in divinity from Catholic Theological Union. He has also completed CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education), did a pastoral year in Mississippi and during the past summer did an intensive Spanish language program in Argentina.

Frater Greg will be ordained to the diaconate November 20 at Sacred

Heart School of Theology.

Br. Long, 31, made his first profession in 2007. Although his family is of Vietnamese descent, Br. Long was born and raised in Thibodaux, La. He attended Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, where he earned a bachelor's in sociology with a minor in mass communication. He graduated from Catholic Theological Union with a master's in pastoral studies and has ministered with Catholic Charities in Chicago and with the SCJ community in Raymondville. Now, he is a member of the community at Sacred Heart Monastery and splits his time between St. Martin of Tours parish in Franklin, Wis. and Sacred Heart School of Theology.

At St. Martin of Tours much of Br. Long's time is filled with teaching. He teaches the Sunday component in the RCIA program, teaches in the LifeTeen program, gives presentations to CCD students, and prepares altar servers. His primary ministry at SHST is with the ESL (English as a Second Language) program.

Diaconate ordination

On Sunday, October 10, Duy Nguyen, SCJ, was ordained to the diaconate at Christ the King Church in Southaven, Miss. It is one of the parishes where he will serve as a deacon, starting October 11.

A Chicago native, Dn. Duy, 32, pro-

fessed his first vows in 2006. Dn. Duy's final profession was in January, 2010.

Before entering candidacy, Dn. Duy studied at the University of Illinois in Champaign. He later transferred to the University of Chicago and earned a bachelor's degree in Information and Decision Sciences.

Dn. Duy graduated from Catholic Theological Union in spring. He has done a year of ministry in Lower Brule, S.D., and this past summer he took part in an intensive Spanish language course in Argentina.

"What attracts me to this community is the presence of the Spirit of God," said Dn. Duy as he prepared for his ordination. "I find the Spirit active and vibrant in the work we do, the community life we share, and the laughter we exchange. It is this same stirring Spirit that propelled me to the SCJs seven years ago."

Read more about Br. Long, Frater Greg and Dn. Duy on the province website (www.sacredheartusa.org) View photos from Dn. Duy's ordination at www.scjusa.smugmug.com



Dn. Duy Nguyen, SCJ

Vol. 31, No. 5
October 2010

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