

SCJ NEWS

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

April 2013

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Even epic weather can't drown out the many stories of what it means to be a Dehonian

The Priests of the Sacred Heart began ministry in the United States near Chamberlain, S.D., in the early 1920s.

Upon hearing this fact during the Mission Education Conference one of our province employees said she that could easily guess why:

"They were stuck!"

The tongue-in-cheek comment came in midst of news updates about an impending storm. Mother Nature turned what was to be a two-day Mission Education Conference into an abbreviated one-day event on April 8 at St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain. Some travelers made the deci-

sion to leave before the storm. Some stayed, assuming that their travel might only be delayed by a day.

Later in the week, many found themselves still stuck in South Dakota, waiting for roads to re-open and planes to resume flying.

Mission Education was held in South Dakota to give participants a first-hand look at SCJ ministries on the Great Plains.

"We sure got that," said another employee, "but even more so I have a greater appreciation for what those early SCJ priests and brothers had to endure. I cannot imagine being here in the winter, with blizzards shutting



Candidate Justin Krenke "channels" Fr. Dehon in one of the opening presentations.

down contact to the outside world for days on end... traveling to those small reservation churches, not knowing if you would be stuck there and for how long...



Mission Education participants have a few laughs while waiting to tour St. Joseph's Indian School and the student homes.

"I identify with Fr. Dehon's call to 'Go to the people,' but taken literally, that is a very challenging call during a South Dakota winter!"

Seventh Conference

Held approximately every three years, this year's Mission Ed (originally planned for April 8-9) was the seventh such gathering. Mission Education brings together SCJs, employees and other collaborators to learn about Fr. Leo Dehon, SCJ spirituality, the worldwide congregation and specifically, about the people and ministries of the host community. This was the second time that the conference was held in South Dakota. Previously it has been in Mississippi and Wisconsin.

The conference began with prayer in Our Lady of the Sioux chapel followed by words of welcome from Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, provincial superior. St. Joseph's has a special place in Fr. Tom's heart since he was principal of the school before entering provincial and general administration.

Standing at the podium in a suit he said that he "dressed up today because I heard that our founder, Fr. Dehon, will be with us."

Soon after, a thin, bespectacled man in a cassock came to the front of the chapel. With a suitcase in hand covered with stickers from the many places he had traveled in the United States, he was introduced as Fr. Leo John Dehon, SCJ founder. He came to South Dakota to talk about his observations of the United States from his original travels in 1910 and to share a bit of his background with those gath-



Franz Josef Hanneken, principal of the SCJs' school in Handrup, Germany, talks with the principals of Sacred Heart School in Southaven, Miss. and St. Joseph's in South Dakota.



Julie Lepkowski of St. Joe's and Fr. Tim Gray

ered.

After talking about how the Sacred Heart called him to take action when he saw injustice in his own time in San Quentin, France, Fr. Dehon told those gathered that "You are all here because of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. When you go home to Texas, Wisconsin, Mississippi, wherever you call home, you need to walk the talk. You need to take action, not just talk about what needs to be done.

"Christ wants his love to be seen in people, and in societies. I did it in my time, now the responsibility is yours, including the children among us. Even children can reflect the love of Christ with their friends, on the playground, on the basketball court, on the football field, in the science lab. Don't just work on your own heart, but work so that every group you belong to, every team you are on, is good, right, and just in everything it does."

The powerful words of Fr. Dehon were actually "channeled" through Justin Krenke, a third-year SCJ candidate who served as a stand-in for the founder. Justin's formation director, Br. Duane Lemke, SCJ, prepared him for his role and his interview with Mary Gorski, province communications director, at Mission Education.

Following in the founder's footsteps

Throughout the day of presentations, classroom visits and small group sharing, Mission Education participants heard short reflections

from their fellow co-workers on what it means to them to "be a Dehonian."

"I am the High School Residential Coordinator at St. Joseph's Indian School," started Robyn Knecht. "I am most like Fr. Dehon as a social service minister... I work not only with young people and families, but also with school staff who have a profound impact on the students. Fr. Dehon once wrote, 'I have been led by Divine Providence to plow many furrows, but two in particular will leave an indelible mark: Christian social action and the life of love and reparation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.'

"These words speak to the calling that I have to embody Christian social action by serving those in need with guidance that promotes positive change."

Dianne Graves, an administrative assistant at St. Joseph's, said that she is a "Dehonian because I believe in Fr. Dehon's vision and values; I feel I show them in my daily work with the students. We have a very busy office with lots of paperwork, but I put the children's needs first. In the last 36 years of employment with St. Joe's, I have worked with many, many students, showing them love, respect and compassion and treating them with dignity. I have followed them throughout the years, being a mentor to some of them. Many of our former students have children attending school here now and we share memories when they visit. I feel I make a difference in the lives of students as I respect them and they know I care about them, thus forming relationships that last a lifetime."

View more "I am a Dehonian Statements" in the News section of www.sacredheartusa.org

And stay tuned to learn where our next Mission Education conference will be held. After being stuck in the snow for several days members of our Mississippi contingent said that they would be willing to host the next gathering, "or perhaps somewhere even further south of the snow belt."



Bishop Virginio Bressanelli

SCJ bishop reflects on fellow Argentine's election as pope

The following is taken from an interview Bishop Virginio Bressanelli, SCJ, did with the German Province following the election of fellow Argentine, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, as pope. You can read the full text in the news section of www.sacredheartusa.org. Bishop Bressanelli, former general superior of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, is currently bishop of the Diocese of Neuquén, Argentina

QUESTION: What was your first reaction upon hearing the news of the election of Bishop Bergoglio?

BISHOP BRESSANELLI: My first reaction was one of surprise. I did not expect that Cardinal Bergoglio would be elected even if I believed that it could be a very good choice. We thought that his age [76] might be one reason why he would not be elected.

Feelings of surprise were taken over by the fear that he would suffer greatly as pope because I saw suffering in Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. These men accepted their call with faith and love but I saw them suffer under constant criticism from many sectors, especially from inside of the Church itself, and even sometimes by religious.

Finally, I felt joy and hope knowing that it is a man of God charged with the cross of the service of the Church and the world, in love. He will listen to the Lord, who will tell him how to follow Peter. The joy of

the people in my diocese has had a strong impact; people poured into churches and chapels to celebrate his election. I myself celebrated in the cathedral, which was filled.

QUESTION: What was your relationship to Cardinal Bergoglio?

BISHOP BRESSANELLI: He was a great pastor, a great bishop, a true leader in the church in Argentina. He had a style of closeness to people, collegial governance, communion between the bishops and laity in all areas of ministry. He reflected and responded to the socio-political and cultural challenges of an emerging culture.

I've known him since the 1980s. We lived in the same city [San Miguel] in Buenos Aires. I was a formation director and he was rector of the Jesuits' seminary. Then I saw him in Rome at the 2001 Synod. He was already a cardinal in Buenos Aires and I was superior general of our congregation.

I've seen him other times in Rome, and then in Argentina when I was appointed bishop [in 2005]. We worked together in the Episcopal Conference for eight years on a standing committee.

I've always seen him as a teacher and as a counselor. I have often discussed pastoral problems with him. He is a man who listens with great attention.

I am one of the seven bishops in Patagonia, a vast region that is about one third of Argentina. Patagonia has few priests. Many areas are inhospitable. We often lack human and material resources. Cardinal Bergoglio was close and always helped us. He promoted a sense of mission in his priests by sending the best. He would not send us just anyone. His policy was to send priests who were balanced, and filled with apostolic zeal and a good spiritual life.

QUESTION: Cardinal Bergoglio was known as a bishop of the poor. What do you think will be his contribution to the Church?

BISHOP BRESSANELLI: Cardinal Bergoglio lived a simple lifestyle. He left his episcopal residence to live unpretentiously at the curia. He used some of the liturgical clothing of his predecessor, refitting it for his smaller frame.

He used public transportation in the city. There are some nice anecdotes of his travels on public transportation on early Sunday mornings; he often visited with young people who were returning home after a late night of dancing and fun.

However, what was most significant was his approach to the poor, those of the slums. He supported priests who worked with the poor, and fought to end the exploitation of people that took place in human trafficking. He fought against drugs and against those who denied rights to others. He preached on equality of all and against the inertia of bureaucracy that can perpetuate the dire situations of the poor.

Cardinal Bergoglio also visited people in prison and people in difficulty. He was never at the cathedral on Holy Thursday. He always chose a place where he could wash the feet of the most humble and the poor.

His love for the poor led to criticism of the root causes of poverty. Together with the other bishops, he addressed this issue many times, trying to be proactive instead of simply diagnosing the social, political and economic problems of Argentina.

Cardinal Bergoglio is a spiritual man. He is a pastor. He is an intellectual who is well read. He is not naïve; not easy to fool.

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Personal diagnosis with Asperger's leads SCJ to advocate for others

Fr. Greg Schill says that even as a child he had a sense that he was experiencing the world differently than others.

With a laser beam focus of attention he often became obsessed with a single object or concern while not even seeing that which might be right in front of his eyes.

"By the time I completed the second grade I had all of the U.S. presidents memorized in numerical order, alphabetical order, and their place of birth, their date of birth and their date of death," said Fr. Greg.

Obsessed with geography, when he was in the third grade he could identify any country on the map.

History and geography were within that laser beam of focus, but English?

"I got a 'D,'" he said. "I had the lowest reading comprehension scores in my class."

It didn't make sense to Fr. Greg's family. Seemingly brilliant in some areas the young Greg was totally non-comprehending in others. It went beyond the typical student who has more aptitude for some subjects than others.

"I would become extraordinarily focused sometimes, so focused that I would only see what was 50 yards ahead as opposed to what was right in front of me – metaphorically and literally," said Fr. Greg.

History and geography fell within that long-range focus. But English?

"It just wasn't there," he said.

Frustration

Growing up, Fr. Greg continued to sense that he was different than his peers. Often, he felt frustrated and embarrassed because he just didn't understand things the ways others did. Daydreams became a way of coping with a reality that was often incomprehensible to him, something that distanced him even more from the world around him.

"Getting caught up in daydreams meant that I often missed what was close at hand," said Fr. Greg. "And sometimes, that meant that I hurt people's feelings, or at least left people feeling confused about my reaction to a situation."

But even with the challenges that faced him, Fr. Greg went on to serve in the Marine Corps and earn a degree in

political science before pursuing his vocation with the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

Throughout formation he received high marks for much of his work and his dedication to ministry. In 2009 he was named "Volunteer of the Year" at Chicago Lighthouse, a non-profit organization that assists the visually impaired.

However, his formation directors noticed that as dedicated as Greg was, there was sometimes a significant disconnect in his relations with others.

Familiar with Asperger's, a condition related to autism, a member of the formation team wondered if Greg might have a form of the syndrome. He was asked to go for a diagnosis.

"I was not happy when I was told about this," said Fr. Greg. "I resisted it at first but then realized that it would be good for me and the community to get some answers."

The formation director's hunch was correct; in 2009 Fr. Greg was indeed diagnosed with Asperger's.

Still in temporary vows, Fr. Greg worried that the diagnosis would affect his ability to move forward toward



Fr. Greg Schill visits with a young man at his home parish in San Antonio

final vows and ordination.

"However that was not the case," he said. "The formation team was behind me, as was the provincial administration. They were proactive with me throughout the process as I learned what I needed to do to modify certain behaviors to compensate for the Asperger's.

"The advantage of having the diagnosis is that now I know why I have been 'different,' and knowing that, I can be a better minister and a better community member."

Acceptance

As Fr. Greg learned more about Asperger's he gained an increased acceptance of it. He sometimes refers to himself as an "Auspie," and notes many famous figures from history who are suspected of having had the syndrome, including Sir Issac Newton, Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison. Many of the World War II code-breakers were thought to have had Asperger's as well. Their incredible focus and dedication allowed them to sort through and find connections in massive amounts of data.

It's an example of seeing a difference not as an oddity but as a blessing and tool.

Diagnosis, said Fr. Greg, opened a window that gave him an insight into who he is and how he functions. And now that he has that insight he can find ways to refocus the laser beam, or to compensate in areas such as interpersonal communications.

Related to that, Fr. Greg talked about a common misperception that many have regarding Autism and empathy.

"There is a misperception that a person with autism, especially on the Asperger's scale, has no empathy and is cold when hearing sad news or news that a friend needs emotional support," said Fr. Greg. "The truth is that often a person with Asperger's experiences a delay in fully registering what it is that he is hearing so sadness and empathy are delayed. It is not that the emotions are not there, they just don't come forward immediately.

"As a priest, I try to work around this hidden disability by asking questions of a person who is experiencing grief," he said. "I ask how the person is feeling and note the difficulty of the situation so he knows that I am walking with him."

Fr. Greg said that in some ways it is like being an actor. "But I am not being disingenuous," he emphasized. Instead, he is giving appropriate external responses while allowing his mind and emotions to catch up and fully process what was heard.

Advocacy

Since his diagnosis, Fr. Greg has worked hard to develop the tools to both compensate for and utilize the

byproducts of Asperger's. Now, he tries to help others do the same through education and advocacy.

"I attempt to help parents navigate the system to locate the services that are suitable for their child's needs," he said. "I also encourage parents to teach their children to how advocate for themselves, something which is vital as the child grows older."

When heading to college, those with Asperger's need to let roommates, fellow students, staff and educators know of their syndrome and of some of the "oddities" associated with it. The same is true when the person with Asperger's enters the workforce.

"Often a person who has Asperger's gets fired simply because of a miscommunication that can lead to misunderstanding," said Fr. Greg.

As in any situation, good communication makes things work better. Knowing why someone acts as s/he does goes a long way to dispelling conflict and frustration.

"Being aware of those who are different is a stepping stone for strengthening our relationships with one another," said Fr. Greg. "Accepting one another for who we are is essential in building the relationships that make the world a better place.

"In the words of Fr. Dehon, our founder, it is the path that leads to reconciliation."



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In the words of Fr. Dehon, our founder, it is the path that leads to reconciliation."

-Fr. Greg Schill



PICTURED ABOVE: Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki of Berlin (right) with several members of the Berlin community. A photo album from the blessing is at www.generalate.smugmug.com

Responding to the changing face of Europe, and the congregation

Get out of the sacristies and go to the people!" It is a frequently quoted line of the founder's referring to Fr. Leo Dehon's plea that fellow priests and brothers look beyond church walls to address the concerns of modern society.

In a changing social landscape, where conventional expressions of religion are just another option among many, Fr. Dehon's plea is more relevant than ever.

In August, 2012, the congregation initiated a new project in Berlin. Through it, the congregation once again seeks to respond to Fr. Dehon's call to "go to the people."

Note the use of the word "congregation."

The project may have been initiated by the German Province, in a German city, but the new community reflects the international, multicultural fabric of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

It is a congregational effort, not just the ministry of one province.

"This is an intentional,

international community," said Fr. Markus Moench, the sole German in the Berlin community.

"And it is not just a cooperative project of Europe," added Fr. Markus. Having two SCJs from Brazil brings to the community not only an international flavor but a bit of seasoning from where the Catholic Church and the congregation is growing: the southern hemisphere.

Why Berlin?

Establishing an international community in and of itself is worthwhile. But why Berlin?

It was an obvious choice, said Fr. Markus, who is a former member of the Dehon formation community in Chicago.

"Some parts of the old German Democratic Republic are depopulating, young people move to the city where they find life to be more comfortable," he said. "But they struggle to find themselves in this complex society."

In choosing Berlin, the SCJs felt

that "we could offer a Christian and Dehonian model of identity and meaning in life," he added.

The purpose of the community is not simply to offer members of the congregation an opportunity to live in a culturally mixed environment. In a city where more than 60% of the population lists no religious affiliation, the new SCJ community is a counter-cultural island. It is a Dehonian presence among a rapidly changing population that seeks spirituality but shuns the language conventionally used to describe it.

"We come to Berlin to live our faith with the local community," said Fr. Markus. "We come as servants and workers in the vineyard of the Lord. We are ready to learn — with the local people — how we can live the faith here while also spreading the Gospel message to all who will listen."

Part of that "learning and listening" will be through a program developed in partnership with the Archdiocese of Berlin. Named "SAM" after the Old Testament prophet who sought to hear the voice of God in his life, it is an outreach that seeks to help people find and listen to the voice of God in their own lives.

As Fr. Ryszard Krupa describes it, the ministry is one for both "people of faith and also to those who are without faith. The seeker and sought; the waiting and the expected." Fr. Ryszard is a Polish SCJ who comes to Berlin after 17 years of working with college students in Lublin.

Members of the new community also do traditional parish ministry (Fr. Markus is pastor of Corpus Christi parish, his first assignment as a pastor), ministry to Berlin's Portuguese immigrant community, and chaplaincy to a hospital ER unit.

Ministering as Dehonians

But it isn't the ministry itself that is unique; instead it is the commitment of the team to do ministry as an international religious community,

based in Dehonian spirituality.

"We are not ministering as individuals," said Fr. Wladyslaw Mach a Polish SCJ who spent 10 years in Vienna before being asked to come to Berlin. He is also an SHST ESL alumnus. "We are ministering together as a religious community. It is an important signal to those discerning a vocation. We are a religious community and they will see us living that.

"It is important to be able to offer a Christian response to the questions people have in their daily lives."

Fr. Markus said that the presence of the Catholic Church in an area known for secularity gives witness to young people that "faith could be an answer to their search for meaning."

Didn't plan on moving, but...

Although he didn't plan to be a part of the international venture, it was Fr. Markus who did much of the initial legwork in organizing the project.

"Our provincial superior, Fr. Heiner Wilmer, asked me to take charge of a group seeking to begin a new and unique community in Germany," he said. "We were to identify challenges that such a community could address as well as places where it could be established."

Once a location was chosen, Fr. Markus thought that his role with the project would be done.

"That was until I had another meeting with Fr. Heiner and he told me that the Provincial Council thought that I should also be a part of the new endeavor," he said. And so he was not only looking for a new congregational project but a new home for himself.

Prior to initiating the community last August, the group of five SCJs spent two weeks together working with a facilitator.

"It was an important time to get to know each other and start to plan for our community life and project together," said Fr. Markus.

Besides the SCJs already noted — Fr. Markus, Fr. Wladyslaw and Fr.

Ryszard — the group also includes Fr. Tarcisio Darros Feldhaus, a Brazilian SCJ who serves Portuguese-speaking immigrants and Fr. Márcio Auth, another Brazilian who ministers to the Portuguese-speaking while working with Fr. Ryszard on SAM.

On February 16, the new community house was blessed by Berlin's Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki. Over 250 people took part in the celebration, including Bishop Teemu Sippo of Helsinki (the bishop was

originally a member of the German Province) and Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, representing the general administration.

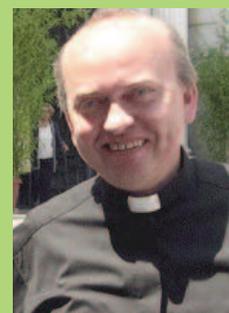
"The Priests of the Sacred Heart put their heart out for the people here; it is a new heartbeat of the city," said the cardinal during the blessing.

Members of the community might say that they are simply following the words of their founder:

"Get out of the sacristies and go to the people!"

ESL alum reflects on goals of new project

Fr. Wladyslaw Mach, an alumnus of Sacred Heart School of Theology's ESL program, is one of five SCJs who are a part of a new project in Berlin, Germany. He and another Pole join two Brazilian SCJs and a German, who, as a community, offer an SCJ presence in an increasingly secularized society. Fr. Wladyslaw's primary ministry is as a chaplain in the emergency room of a nearby hospital. The following is from a reflection that he recently wrote about the new project:



Fr. Wladyslaw Mach

How do we reach people?" is the question we ask of ourselves in all the areas where we serve. Young people of today go to the big city to take part in all that it offers. Life moves incredibly quick for them; trends and fashions are just a part of it.

Somehow, we have to find a way to insert ourselves into that life so that we can share the Gospel message. I must be open to new forms of preaching. Nowadays, that includes using all the technical possibilities, such as media.

But we must also remember — most especially — the effect and role of grace.

I must at the same time be a good "manager" but act as a believer. It is not a way of ministry that necessarily shows its good effects very quickly.

It is challenging, but I believe that we have many opportunities in a big city, in the midst of a very secularized society, to be present. As a congregation we have the task of bringing the message of God's love to the people, even in such a difficult and opaque environment.

Most young people in this city are moving here because they are looking for something and/or because they desire freedom. Although this "searching" or desire for "freedom" is understood differently than perhaps in a strictly religious context, it is a good precondition.

The Good News was and is for people who are searching. And that gives us hope that our mission here in Berlin has meaning, that it can grow and bear abundant fruit.

Our work in Berlin cannot be summed up so simply in numbers, facts, successes and visible effects. We meet no crowds. But such is the nature and character of preaching. We do not reach out to a group, we reach out to individuals just as God reaches out to each of us.

SCJ NEWS

Back in the Philippines

Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, is back in the Philippines teaching ESL as he did two years ago. A veteran of general and provincial administration, he has also been tapped as a resource to the young region as it gets its own administration in order.

During his time there Fr. Bernie has been a faithful contributor to our province blog. Read his reflections at: www.scjusa.wordpress.com

Congratulations!

Fr. Joseph Dinh, SCJ, successfully defended his thesis: "Bridging the Gap for Future Generations: Developing a Plan for Ministry to Vietnamese-American Families Living in Bi-Cultural Communities." He will receive his Doctor in Ministry from Houston Graduate School of Theology on May 11.

Four named as emeriti

Frs. Thomas Knoebel, Robert Schiavone, Andre Papineau and Jan de Jong will be granted the title "Professor Emeritus" at the SHST graduation ceremony on May 3, 2013.

"Each of these priests has served at Sacred Heart for many years, helping to further the mission of the seminary and teaching and modeling for many seminarians over the years," said Msgr. Ross A. Shecterle, SHST rector, when making the announcement.

To be Dehonian in Europe

For several years SCJs in Europe have been asking themselves different versions of the same question. Basically, what does it mean to be a Dehonian in Europe today?

What is it that Dehonian spirituality can address? Is there a future for Sacred Heart devotion in Europe?

What does it mean to be a religious in a world that seeks spirituality but often shuns the language traditionally used to discuss it?

In October, 2011, European SCJs met in Clairefontaine, Belgium, to reflect on secularity and the changing role of faith and religion in the western world. Instead of being the underlying foundation of European culture, in many places, religion has now become just one of many



Fr. Tom Cassidy talks with Fr. Michael Ngo of the Franco European Province

spheres in society.

The discussions of Clairefontaine were renewed at the European major superiors meeting March 4-8 in Albino, Italy. Coupled with them was a renewed reflection on Vatican II and the council's call to a new way of being in the modern world.

"The Heart of Christ in the Future of Europe," was the title of the conference that included the major superiors and delegates of 14 European entities, the U.S. Province, and the General Curia. Approximately 35 SCJs were present.

Once again Dehonians asked themselves, "What does it mean to be a Dehonian in Europe today? Can the Priests of the Sacred Heart be relevant in modern society?"

Go to the News section of the www.sacredheartusa.org to read the full story and link to photos.

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