



Priests of the Sacred Heart

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September 19, 2016

“Authority, a community and fraternal service, is a true ministry at the various levels at which it is exercised: local, district, regional, provincial, and general.

The example of Christ the Lord and Master, in the midst of His disciples as one who serves, is the norm and the model for it.” (cf Luke 22:24-27; John 13:13-15).

SCJ Constitutions #107

Dear Brothers,

It is hard to believe that it has already been a year since I began my ministry of service as the 15th Provincial Superior of the United States Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. What a first year it has been!

In this letter I want to share with you some of the highlights, conversations and decisions that have been made by me with the Provincial Council. I also want to present some of our plans for this second of our three-year term. Note that much of what we have done, and what we continue to do, is in direct response to the **XV Provincial Chapter** (July 7-11, 2014) and the **Election Assembly** (August 24-27, 2015).

Communication and Consultation

Communication is **vital**. Starting with our first Provincial Council meeting, held August 27, 2015 (immediately after the Election Assembly), we have sent an email to the membership with highlights from the meeting. This is a quick way to help you be informed of council discussions and decisions before the minutes are distributed. I want to thank Mary Gorski for getting this to you in a timely manner.

Including conference calls, we have had 12 council meetings (#854-856) since the beginning of the term.

Consultation is also a priority, both with the council and province membership. Regularly I contact councilors for their input on various issues and have on numerous occasions sought the advice and counsel of individual members of the province, both personally and within the council meetings. Earlier this year the membership was asked for input on our formation program. Forty-five of you responded — thank you! I plan to continue such consultation.

Appointments, Assignments and Transfers

At our Chapter and assemblies we have spoken about the need to include and involve our younger members in leadership. I and the council have appointed **younger local superiors** in our communities in Houston (Duy Nguyen), Mississippi (Thi Pham), St. Joseph Community – SHML (Joseph Dinh), Dehon Formation Community (David Szatkowski), and at Sacred Heart – SHML (Quang Nguyen).

Younger members have been asked and accepted responsibility to help prepare our assemblies, to serve on commissions and committees and to serve as pastors of our parish ministries.

It is essential that we provide our younger members with opportunities to gain both skills and experience in assuming leadership roles in our province. I thank all of you who have accepted these responsibilities.

Province Formation

Formation is at the heart of our religious life: both initial formation and ongoing, lifelong formation. The council and I began our administration with a retreat at the Siena Center in Racine. My first trip as provincial superior was to our formation house in Chicago. The entire council visited the Dehon Formation Community in December, and over Labor Day weekend I was with the community for the start of the new academic year.

As you are aware, we appointed two new directors of formation: David Szatkowski and Bob Tucker. They join Andrzej Sudol, who has been with the formation community the past two years. I thank these men for their willingness to serve and guide our candidates and young religious in this important ministry in our province and congregation.

Regarding ongoing formation, in June we held an assembly with the theme: *The Dehonian Charism and the Year of Mercy*. I was happy to see that over two-thirds of our province took part. From the input given in the evaluations it seems that most found the time to be an uplifting and positive experience. I thank John Czyzynski, Greg Schill and Vincent Suparman for their work in preparing the assembly.

Mission Education is another form of ongoing formation, both for SCJs as well as for those who collaborate with us. I am looking forward to the Mission Awareness conference to be held in Mississippi, October 9-11, 2016. I extend my thanks to Jack Kurps and all the others who are preparing the conference.

A Planning Committee has been formed to prepare the North American Retreats: *Open Hearts: An SCJ Retreat*. The retreats come out of a desire expressed by SCJs in both Canada and the United States to have a renewal of our shared heritage and spirituality. These retreats will help us to renew and delve into themes of our charism and Rule of Life. I thank John van den Hengel, Jim Schroeder and David Schimmel for undertaking this enormous task for us.

Senior Life

The XV Provincial Chapter in 2014 “affirmed the importance of the care that is given to the seniors. It also proposed the possibility of appointing a province director of senior life with an intergenerational commission to help the administration make decisions regarding the definition of senior life, the places where seniors can live and possibly work, and other senior life concerns. It is important to get input from the seniors themselves.” [XV Chapter Synthesis Statement, No. 8]

The intergenerational **Senior Life Commission** has been re-established. The Commission sent a survey in February, 2016, to our senior members, and held its first meeting on March 29th. Representatives from the commission met with the Provincial Council on May 4th to advise us and make initial recommendations. Tomorrow, September 20th, they will hold their second meeting. I thank the members of the Commission for their willingness to serve in this important task for our province, especially the Commission’s co-chairs, Richard MacDonald and Jim Schroeder.

Visitations

Our Provincial Chapter “expressed a desire to intentionally interact and affirm each other on issues of common life, on human, emotional and physical health concerns, and on the gift SCJs have received in their charism. Building good relationships is key to developing the comfort and trust needed to challenge and affirm one another; possibilities for enhancing interpersonal skills should be explored. **Community life is a core value of religious life; it must be given priority**”. [XV Chapter Synthesis Statement, No. 1]

I began the community visitations in Mississippi, in November, 2015 and held the last one in South Dakota in April, 2016. I visited with every member of the province, completing the last visit in early June, 2016. We began each visitation with a prayer service and community meeting in *Celebration of Our Religious Life* and concluded each with a community wrap-up. The focus of the visitations this past year was on **our community life**.

After positive feedback on the style of the first year’s visitations, I am planning a similar format for the next set of visitations. They will begin at the end of this year and conclude in May, 2017. I would like them to focus on *“Living simply”* which we agreed at our last Chapter “requires more discussion and definition both because of the topic’s cultural implications, and as a way of identifying our real needs. Chapter members said that they interpreted ‘living simply’ as living transparently with budgets, being accountable to one another, recognizing what we truly need to live, and knowing how to live with a sense of generosity. Living simply helps us to live in solidarity with the poor. There was a clear call for more dialogue on the implications of ‘living simply.’ Community is vital... that said, *‘living simple’* is not just an action of an individual; the province must explore what it means to live simply on the local, province and congregational level.” [XV Chapter Synthesis Statement, No. 4]

Born to Eternal Life

I have often said in this first year as provincial superior that a major part of my ministry is to visit the sick and bury our dead. Already we have said farewell to four of our confreres: Don Barnd (October 23, 2015), P.J. McGuire (February 22, 2016), Ray Vega (March 5, 2016) and Peter Mastrobuono (July 27, 2016). We remember and we celebrate each of their lives as Priests of the Sacred Heart. May they rest in eternal peace.

Finances

As we begin to focus on “Living Simply,” I want to especially thank David Nagel for his excellent stewardship of our finances. I appreciate his hard work and dedication in his ministry as he oversees the Provincial Treasurer’s office and its staff. I am grateful to all of you who are involved in this service to the province: members of the Province Finance Commission and trustees.

Justice and Peace

I thank members of the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission for their ministry. I see our office of JPR as assisting us in our ongoing formation. In a very special way, I thank members of the North American Committee on Immigration for their help in keeping us informed on this important issue. This has been a very good way for SCJs in North America to collaborate, bringing us a closer together in our shared life as Dehonians.

Internationality

We are an **international Congregation**. As said in our XV Chapter Synthesis Statement, No. 7: “Internationality is both a gift and a challenge. The gift is the hospitality of the other where the other enriches the community with another vision of being human, of God and of another expression of the Dehonian charism.” In recent years we have welcomed confreres from other entities for ESL, advanced studies and for ministry. We currently have members ministering in our province from Indonesia, Poland, the Netherlands and Canada. We have sent members to India, Vietnam and the Philippines for long and short-term mission assignments, as well as for renewal, formation and educational opportunities. One of our young religious, Juancho Castañeda Rojas, recently began his ministry year in Brazil. The ESL program has been a great gift of internationality. It is important to be sensitive to the differences of others, and to allow for the challenge of international members expressing themselves. Internationality should be appreciated as a goal in its own right. This next year, we will welcome others into our province.

Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology

As a province we have owned and operated (and largely financed) **Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology** (SHSST) in Hales Corners for almost 90 years. In these years, the seminary, along with its SCJ monastery community, has gone through many trials, successes,

and transformations. At this point, Sacred Heart serves the church in the United States as a major seminary for some 34 dioceses and religious communities. Yearly, approximately 100 students participate in the various academic programs at SHSST (this includes an M.A. program in Theology open to lay men and women) as well as English as a Second Language.

Increasingly, it has become difficult to adequately staff SHSST with SCJ personnel. We simply do not have enough qualified SCJ confreres to cover the needs of the school. At the same time, we keenly feel the need to maintain and indeed strengthen the Dehonian character of SHSST.

As I shared with you several weeks ago, the contract of the current rector will not be renewed when it ends in 2017. We have already reached out to the General Council, as well as to various provinces of the Congregation, in our search for an SCJ rector.

Vocations

We are called to bring Father Dehon's charism to fruition and we want to participate in this activity of the Spirit. We shall respond to Christ's exhortation: *Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers for his harvest* (Luke 10:2); at the same time we shall be attentive to the Church's various initiatives in the ministry of vocations. (Rule of Life #87)

"The promotion of vocations to religious life and priesthood ought to be a part of each one's ministry." We have said this many times over the years. It is a goal that has not yet been achieved. I encourage us to seek ways to assist in vocation ministry. I thank Quang Nguyen and his volunteers (Chuck Wonch and Ben Humpfer) for working hard to invite men to join our community and province. We also thank God that we have candidates and young religious responding to the Lord's invitation to follow Him as Dehonians. They too have assisted Quang in his ministry.

Conclusion

I have attempted to highlight some of the activities and actions of the first year of this current administration. I want to be accountable to you who have entrusted the ministry of provincial superior to me. I, and members of the Provincial Council, know it is important and valuable to collaborate and dialog with each of you. Of course, we can always do better; I may have missed some things. If I have, I apologize.

Finally, I thank all of you for being Dehonians. I thank you for your cooperation, assistance, love and friendship to me as my brothers.

I especially thank my council — Quang Nguyen, Duy Nguyen, Christianus Hendrick, Jack Kurps and Frank Presto — for their dedication, commitment, counsel and invaluable service to our province.

I thank our office staff, especially, David Nagel (Provincial Treasurer) and Frank Presto (Provincial Secretary), but also the lay staff who collaborate and work with us in our ministry.

We have much to be thankful for. We have accomplished much in this first year but we still have more to do. While I still miss parish ministry at Our Lady of Guadalupe, I am proud to be your provincial; your “servant of the servants.”

Be assured of my **gratitude, thoughts and prayers**. Let us continue to propagate, display, make known and celebrate with others our Dehonian charism. Fr. Dehon saw the refusal of the love of Christ as the deepest cause of human misery. Caught up in this often unrecognized love, he wanted to respond to it by being intimately united to the Heart of Christ and by restoring His Reign in individuals and in society. Let us try our best to follow his example.

Within our communities, it is in true and fraternal dialogue, in the light of and with a view toward the common good, that we search together for the will of God.

Willingly listening to their brothers, and being informed by their views, superiors shall also know how, with the help of their council and according to the directives of the universal law, to make decisions, which are within their competence (cf PC 14; ET 25).

At the service of the common good, authority and obedience, in co-responsibility, are, in fact, two complementary aspects of the same participation in Christ’s oblation (cf ET 25).”

SCJ Rule of Life

Fraternally in the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ed Kilianski, SCJ". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

V. Rev. Edward R. Kilianski, SCJ
Provincial Superior
And the Provincial Council