



SCJ News

A newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians)

Looking back at 2016



Lighting candles at the start of the Lunar New Year at St Martin of Tours parish. Fr. Yvon Sheehy is pastor; the associate is Fr. Joseph Dinh, who is also pastor to parish's the Vietnamese community.

As we begin a new year we reflect on some of the special moments of 2016, beginning with the February celebration of the Lunar New Year at St. Martin of Tours parish in Franklin, Wis. "Tet" (Lunar New Year) is one of the most significant celebrations in the Vietnamese calendar. Fr. Joseph-Thien Dinh, SCJ, associate pastor of SMOT and pastor to the Vietnamese faith community that meets there, was the celebrant at the February 7th New Year's Eve Mass. In 2017 the US Province will commemorate ten years of ministry to the Vietnamese Catholic community in Milwaukee. Fr. Yvon Sheehy, SCJ, is pastor of SMOT.

General visitations begin

Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, SCJ, began his first full year as a member of the General Council with the first visitation of the new administration's term. The former provincial superior of the US Province joined Fr. Heiner



Fr. Heiner and Fr. Steve are welcomed to India at the start of the first visitation.

Wilmer, SCJ, general superior, on a visitation of the Indian District. Fr. Steve shared some of his first impressions of India on the province blog.

"We spent our first full day with the District Council and listened in on their perspectives and ordinary business," wrote Fr. Steve. "They face dual challenges of financing their projects, and providing well-trained people who can help those projects flourish. Many of the parishes we serve are in poor mission areas. While we are proud that they are consistent with our SCJ mission focus, they are unable to be financially self-sufficient and require support from the district and grants from abroad. Thankfully, we have had generous help from our benefactors. A goal is to work toward greater financial stability within India, which will take some time.

"Fr. Heiner encouraged the Indian District to find and articulate its own identity. *As our presence develops, what will we as SCJs, as Dehonians in India, be known for?*"

SCJ helps to develop first French African Bible

One of the first challenges of bringing the Word of God to others is ensuring that it is in a language – literally and metaphorically – that can be understood. It was with this goal in mind that the Daughters of St. Paul undertook a massive



Fr. Joseph Mukuna

project: translating the African Bible not only into French, but French in an African context. One of the contributing scholars to the work was Fr. Joseph Mukuna, SCJ, a member of Congolese Province currently doing post-graduate studies at Loyola University in Chicago. He is an alumnus of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology's ESL program.

"Language," he said, "is the best place to begin to identify and establish commonalities. So, when talking to Africans one must develop, among other things, a good mastery of local languages with attention to idioms, slangs and other cultural nuances. We tried to incorporate these."

La Bible Africaine is enriched with commentaries and footnotes that reveal the wealth of African cultures.

Responding to the needs of refugees around the world

"Whatever we imagine, we can do. We can change things."

The quote is from Professor Ed Fallone, associate professor at Marquette University Law School, speaking at the Panel Discussion on Migration sponsored by the North American Committee on Immigration. Three Milwaukee-area professors talked about the root causes of and possible responses to today's migration concerns during the March 30th presentation at the Provincial Conference Center.

Who are today's refugees? According to Prof. Louise Cainkar, associate professor of sociology at Marquette University, the countries of

the Middle East are the largest source. "But they have also taken on the greatest burden," she added. Among them "they host more than 30 million refugees." Turkey has the greatest number, but Lebanon and Jordan also welcome a considerable amount.

"These countries have been taking in Syrian refugees since 2011; yet it only was termed a 'crisis' when the refugees began arriving on western European borders," she said.

Since the country's beginning, immigrants have affected change in the United States. Prof. Fallone likened it to what happens in a family; a daughter marries, a child is born. "My family changes when new people come into it," he said. "In the same way, the country changes when new people enter it. Just as in a family, we have to be accepting and loving."

He urged faith leaders to encourage a sense of welcoming that could move beyond the Church.

Even the pencils get blessed

During extended visits to Asia Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, maintains a journal that often finds its way onto the province blog. On May 18 he wrote from the Philippines, where he had been teaching English. The entry was about celebrating Mass in Cagayan de Oro City. He wrote:

"St. Augustine Cathedral is about a 15-minute car ride from our house and is in the center of town. It's a big, very airy structure, as the climate would dictate. As a result, our large congregation was joined by a much smaller collection of birds flying hither and yon. Didn't see any dogs but they often appear in church as well. Last Sunday at Immaculate Conception, for example, there were at least three sleeping dogs (under pews) before Mass started.

"After Mass, dozens of people come up to the priest (or priests) asking for a blessing. Sometimes it is for a special occasion, such as a birthday or anniversary, or to deal with an illness or other infirmity. Other times it

is just a request for a simple blessing. This happens in a Filipino church much more so than in the States. Today was no different; it probably took me 15 minutes to get back to the sacristy.

"I was also asked to bless a large collection of religious articles. Perhaps the most unusual request came from a young man and woman who said they were taking an exam the next day and would I kindly bless them and offer a special blessing for their pencils too?"



Fr. Tom Cassidy

Province jubilees

Five hundred years of religious life! That's what members of the US Province celebrated on June 6 during the annual Province Jubilee Mass.

This year's SCJ jubilarians included Fr. Michael Burke and Fr. John Czynski (60 years of vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart); Fr. Frank Burshnick, Fr. Joseph Dean, Fr. Joseph Doscher, Br. Benedict Humpfer and Fr. Gregory Speck (50 years); Fr. Charles Brown and Br. Frank Presto (40 years); Fr. Vincent Suparman (30 years); and Fr. Duy Nguyen and Fr. Greg Schill (10 years).

Province assembly

"The Dehonian Charism and the Year of Mercy" was the theme of the 2016 Province Assembly held June 6-10 in Hales Corners, WI.

Speakers included Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, former vicar general and now superior of the Canadian Region, who spoke about the concept of "mercy" in the founder's writings. "Fr. Dehon had some beautiful words about the power of God's mercy," said Fr. John. "Mercy makes possible the capacity in humans to be merciful to others."



The 2016 jubilarians with Frs. Stephen Huffstetter, Ed Kilianski and John van den Hengel. The celebration kicked off the 2016 assembly.

Fr. Byron Haaland, SCJ, spoke about mercy in relation to reparation and the religious vows of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. "As Priests of the Sacred we are called by way of reparation and oblation to make the Church merciful," said Fr. Byron. "This is not an option. It is our vocation, our call that drives us to go forth into the world."

Dr. Grant Silva, assistant professor of philosophy at Marquette University, addressed mercy in regards to the current migration crisis. "Mercy as compassion is the best approach to take," he said.

The final presenter on the topic of mercy was Fr. Paul Kelly, SCJ, who, reflecting on his own life, spoke about how we are personally touched by God's mercy expressed through others. "If we allow God to work in us, we can be shown the way, the way to give mercy, to receive mercy," he said.

Schools in Collaboration

St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, SD, hosted the SCJ Schools in Collaboration Summer Institute June 10-13. This year's group included members of Holy Family and Sacred Heart schools from Mississippi, St. Joseph's Indian School, and St. Martin of Tours School from Wisconsin.



and Gymnasium Leoninum in Germany were able to participate via Skype.

On-site activities focused on Lakota culture with a tour of the Akta Lakota Museum and making dream-catchers.

General treasurer visits

Fr. Luca Zottoli, SCJ, general treasurer, his assistant Aldo Ivaldi, and Fr. Jesús Valdezate, SCJ (Spanish Province), of the General Finance Commission, visited the US Province last summer. Stops included the Province Development Office and St. Joseph's Indian School to learn about the fundraising programs of each as well as the ministries that the funds support. The general administration is considering possibilities for international fundraising for the congregation.



Fr. Luca, general treasurer, and Fr. Jesús, during their visit at St. Joseph's Indian School.

Flying into Rapid City for the weekend, the students toured the Black Hills, visiting Crazy Horse and Mount Rushmore. A stop at the state capital and a cultural museum rounded off the road trip. There were short presentations on each school. Students from the SCJs' San Jeronimo in Spain

New team in Mississippi

Fr. Thi Pham, SCJ, refers to it as the "Mississippi Dream Team" – the pastoral team in northern Mississippi that serves a cluster of six parishes: Christ the King Church in Southaven, Holy Spirit Church in Hernando, St. Gregory's Church in Senatobia, Good Shepherd Church in Robinsonville, St. Joseph's Church in Holly Springs and Queen of Peace Church in Olive Branch.

Fr. Thi is the moderator of the newly configured team, replacing Fr. Bob Tucker, SCJ, who moved to Chicago during the summer to serve in formation.

The newest member of the pastoral team is Fr. Zbigniew "Ziggy" Morawiec, SCJ. Fr. Ziggy moved to Mississippi from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston. His Spanish skills will be well used in Mississippi, which has a growing Hispanic population. Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ, continues to serve the pastoral team.

"There is an incredible representation in diversity on the team that has been already noticed by parishioners," said Fr. Thi. "I am from Vietnam, Fr. Ziggy is from Poland and, of course, Fr. Greg is from Texas!"

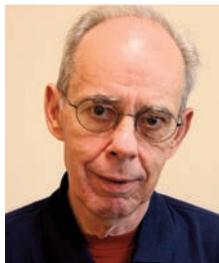
Remembering our deceased

During 2016 the US Province said goodbye to three of its members: Fr. Paul "PJ" McGuire, SCJ, died on February 22 in Milwaukee;

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: comdir@scjcommunications.org Mary Gorski, editor. Postage prepaid.



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Fr. PJ McGuire



Fr. Ray Vega



Fr. Peter Mastrobuono

Fr. Ray Vega, SCJ, died March 6 in Pinellas Park, FL; and Fr. Peter Mastrobuono, SCJ, died July 27 in suburban Milwaukee.

Originally from Jersey City, NJ, Fr. PJ was 73. Immersed in academics most of his life, he earned both a master's degree and doctorate in theology from Fordham University. His first teaching assignment was at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (1974-76). He later taught at the University of Illinois at Champaign, Seton Hall University in New Jersey, Bellarmine College in Louisville, KY, and Mt. Mary College in Milwaukee. In 1994 he became director of the Dehon Study Center for the US Province. His research on Fr. Leo John Dehon, and translation of many of the founder's works, benefited the entire congregation.

Fr. Ray, 91, was from East Chicago, Ind., and pursued his vocation after serving in the US Navy. He was

active during both World War II and the Korean Conflict as a hospital corpsman. Initially a brother with the community, he worked as a registered nurse, serving migrant workers

in Indiana, and later in the missions in Indonesia. It was while he was in Indonesia that he began to think about the priesthood. He attended the SCJ scholasticate in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, from 1970-72, and then completed his seminary training at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology before his ordination in 1973. As a priest he ministered in Indonesia, at parishes in Texas, and as a chaplain to hospitals and family centers in Tennessee and South Dakota.

Originally from Cleveland, Fr. Peter, 76, earned his STB at the Gregorian University in Rome. On summer breaks from his studies he spent time in Spain, learning to speak Spanish fluently. Most of his nearly 50 years of priesthood were in ministry with Hispanic communities in Texas, including the Rio Grande Valley and Houston. Hundreds turned out to honor him at a memorial held at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston.

World Youth Day

Br. Andy Gancarczyk, SCJ, Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ, Frater Justin Krenke, SCJ, and Frater Juancho Casteñada Rojas, SCJ, accompanied a youth group from Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, to World Youth Day in Poland in July. Also at WYD from the US Province were Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, Fr. Quang Nguyen, SCJ, and Fr. Andrzej Sudol, SCJ. Fr. Willyans Prado Rapozo, SCJ, a member of the Canadian Region, led a group from Toronto. The North Americans spent time with Dehonian youth groups from around the world prior to the official WYD activities.

"Through my participation in World Youth Day I was able to better understand the worldwide presence of the Priests of the Sacred Heart by seeing how our spirituality lives in the hearts of so many young people," wrote Frater Juancho, who attended WYD just before his vow renewal. "It gave me a new powerful feeling to see the impact that we, as Dehonians, have. It was also a confirmation that when I said YES to God as a member of the congregation it was the best decision that I ever made.

"This pilgrimage experience was life-changing for me. I will keep all these memories in my heart as a reminder that saying yes to God is worthy, that saying yes to God is incredibly rewarding, and that saying yes to God and living my vocation as an SCJ is an incredible experience that gives joy to my life."

Frater Juancho is now doing a ministry year in Brazil.

Fr. Francis named superior of Vietnamese District

On May 3rd Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, was named district superior of the Vietnamese District.

"Our congregation calls us more and more to have a missionary spirit, and a spirit of internationality," said Fr. Francis. "This is an opportunity for me to live my vocation as an SCJ



Youth from Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, team up with a Dehonian group from the Philippines



Fr. Francis Vu Tran

missionary.”

Earlier in the year Fr. General asked Fr. Francis to consider serving in Vietnam, the country of his birth. He left Vietnam when he was 11. “I grew up in the United

States, I am an American now,” he said. An American, but like many immigrants, he is one who straddles two cultures.

“I think that I can be a bridge between cultures,” said Fr. Francis. “I think that is why Fr. General asked me to serve in Vietnam, to serve as a missionary to the country.”

The new administration began its three-year term on August 12.



Chicago Formation Community, September 2016

New faces in the 2016-17 Dehon Formation Community

The Dehon Formation Community in Chicago houses the candidacy, philosophy and theology programs of the province and welcomes SCJs from around the world for sabbatical and graduate studies.

This year the community welcomed several new members, including Fr. David Szatkowski, SCJ, and Fr. Bob Tucker, SCJ, on the Formation Team. After nine years in formation, many of them as superior of the Dehon Formation Community, Br. Duane Lemke, SCJ, is on sabbatical. “On behalf of the province I thank Br. Duane for his dedication to and work for the formation program,” said Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ. “He has done much

to make the Dehon Formation Community a house of welcome to many, not only in the province but to the congregation.”

As they do each year, members of the community — candidates and SCJs — introduced themselves in a feature on the province website. Among them was Henry Nguyen who is a second-year candidate. Born and raised in Orange County, Calif., he earned a bachelor’s in psychology before beginning his theological studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

“I am interested in being a Dehonian as they seek to work with the poor and are to be among the people,” wrote Henry. “This past summer I was able to visit and work with the SCJ community in Mississippi at Sacred Heart Southern Missions. This experience deepened my desire to be an SCJ as I had the opportunity to work alongside and among those who are a part of the SCJ presence. It was a great experience to see SCJs in action.”

Henry was one of four candidates living in the community at the start of the fall semester, along with three SCJs in temporary vows and six in final vows. The community also includes Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, who as noted earlier, is doing his pastoral year in Brazil, and Angel Romero, a candidate who started with ESL at SHSST before beginning his studies in Chicago.

“What interests me in this religious community are the ideals of the founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon, in regards to spirituality and social justice,” wrote Angel, who, prior to candidacy, worked in law. “Today I see this reflected in the defense of human rights and the civil rights of people.”

Go to www.scjvocation.org to read more about our students and to get in touch with our vocation office.

Music weaves Mission Education conference together

“Mercy in Mission” was the official theme of the 2016 Mission Education Conference but the thread that

wove the theme together was music: music that brought history to life, music that drew participants out of their chairs to clap, dance and sing along, and music that brought people — from a variety of faith traditions — together in prayer.

Held October 10-11 in northern Mississippi, this was the US Province’s eighth Mission Education Conference and the second one hosted by Sacred Heart Southern Missions.

The gymnasium at Sacred Heart School in Southaven, Miss., was filled when the opening prayer began on Monday morning. A choir of teachers and staff from Holy Family School in Holly Springs, Miss., directed by the school’s principal, Clara Isom, led the conference in the first of many songs that would be sung together during the two days.

There was no post-lunch snoozing when Ekpe, a self-described “musical philanthropist,” walked into the Sacred Heart gymnasium to start the afternoon session. Dressed in colorful African garments, he moved among the crowd, playing traditional instruments of the continent. On stage the entertainer became an educator, sharing the history of African Americans as found in music, beginning with the songs of slaves to the blues that fills the famed Beale Street in Memphis. He was eventually joined on stage by some of Beale Street’s best, closing with Herbie Hancock’s classic “Watermelon Man.” Conference participants were on their feet and joining in on the song’s signature line.

Interspersed throughout both days of the conference were panel discussions facilitated by Sr. Cathy Bertrand, SSND, a member of the SHSM board of directors. The discussions were a way to bring to life



Music brought people together at Mission Ed 2016

the many ministries of Sacred Heart Southern Missions through personal accounts. *Read more about Mission Ed on the province website at: www.sacredheartusa.org*

ESL alumnus now leads Cameroon Province

An alumnus of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology's ESL program, Fr. Jean-Marie Signié, SCJ, is now provincial superior of the Cameroon Province. In fall he returned to Sacred Heart in the midst of meetings in Canada and the United States. Before one of those meetings — with the US Provincial Council — he sat



Fr. Jean-Marie Signié

down for an interview. He noted that there are now 113 SCJs in the province spread among 12 communities in Cameroon and two in Chad. Most ministry is parish-based, but the province also supports a

program for at-risk teens, some of whom live in the streets.

Fr. Jean-Marie converted to Catholicism when he was a teen, as did three of his siblings. Soon after, he felt drawn to the priesthood. During a discernment weekend sponsored by the SCJs he found a book about Fr. Leo John Dehon. "I stayed up and read it in one night. I was sold. This was what I was feeling in myself. This is what I was called to." He professed his first vows in 1990.

Welcoming refugees

In September the Ottawa SCJs welcomed Andre Boulad, a Syrian refugee whose family is being sponsored by the community in collaboration with Resurrection of Our Lord parish and the community's Sunday worship group. On October 24th, he was reunited with his mother and sister.



Fr. John and volunteers welcome the Syrian refugees to Ottawa.

"We brought coats with us to protect them against the cold of the approaching winter," said Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, regional superior of Canada. "Nada Sabha and her daughter, Riwa, arrived at the Ottawa airport around 1 pm from Toronto. The previous day they had flown from Beirut via Cairo to Toronto.

"The greeting at the airport was emotional. Nada had not seen her brother, Ziad, who had immigrated 11 years earlier, since the beginning of the Syrian civil war. Ziad approached the Catholic Immigration Center of Ottawa to help to find sponsors for the family who had fled from Damascus, Syria, to Lebanon in February when they were assured that they had Canadian sponsors.

"Andre enrolled in English language courses and is already at level six out of eight," said Fr. John. "He would like to continue his university studies in software engineering; he did two years in Damascus. Riwa worked at a bank and also knows English."

Happy anniversary!

The worship community at St. Luke's Hospital in San Antonio celebrated Fr. Nick Brown's 40th anniversary of ordination on Sunday, October 30th. "He has helped so many in the hospital as well as visitors to the chapel on Sunday," said Carol Keller, one of those who took part. "His sermons are interesting and inspirational. He is well liked and is a

good priest."

Most of Fr. Nick's years of ministry have been in San Antonio, first at St. Lawrence parish, and then for many years as a street minister. He now serves as a chaplain at San Antonio University Hospital and at St. Luke's Baptist.

"I'm an extremely happy priest," he said. "San Antonio has given me many memories. It is good to walk into a room and have a patient say to me, 'I know you, or someone who looks like you. There used to be someone who walked down on the streets for many years.'

"I tell the person, 'That was probably me; I used to do that.' I see people whom I've known through the years." One of those people is a woman whom he met on the streets when she was just 15. Now a grandmother, Fr. Nick celebrated her wedding, baptized her children and later had funeral services for her husband, his brother and their mother.

Golden jubilees

On November 14th the US Province celebrated the 50th anniversary of priesthood of three of its members — Bishop Joseph Potocnak, Fr. Anthony Russo and Fr. Thomas Westhoven — with a special Mass at SHSST.

Bishop Joe spent 36 years in South Africa, eventually being named bishop of the Diocese of De Aar. The opportunity to get to know another culture is something for which he is especially grateful. He is now retired and is a



Members of the worship community at St. Luke's celebrating Fr. Nick Brown's 40th



Golden jubilarians: Fr. Tony Russo, Bishop Joseph Potocnak and Fr. Tom Westhoven

member of the Sacred Heart Community in Pinellas Park, FL.

Fr. Tony did his theological studies and was ordained in Rome. After several years in formation, including serving as director of pastoral and field education at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Fr. Tony entered parochial ministry serving in Texas and Wisconsin. He also held several jobs in province administration.

"Fr. Westy," as most know Fr. Tom, spent much of his priesthood in South Dakota where he served as director of St. Joseph's Indian School and on the pastoral team of All Saints parish in Eagle Butte and in Lower Brule. Fr. Tom was also the Province Vocation Director (1990-1993) and was often the recording secretary at province gatherings.

Church has come a long ways from the auction barn!

On November 19, parishioners at Christ the King in Southaven, Miss., celebrated the 50th anniversary of their parish. Among those who joined them were Bishop Joseph Kopacz (bishop of Jackson), Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ (provincial superior of the US Province), and several SCJs who once served the parish including Fr. Richard Johnston, Fr. Pat Lloyd, Fr. Bob Tucker, Fr. Ed Zemlik and Fr. David Szatkowski.

Christ the King Church was established on March 13, 1966, as a mission of Sacred Heart Church in Walls.

Mass was initially held at the Dealers Auto Sales, a car auction barn. Vehicles were moved out the building each weekend prior to Mass.

In 1969 construction began on the first parish church; it was completed by the summer. The first Mass at Christ the King Church was celebrated on July 27, 1969; Fr. Howard Melzer, SCJ, was the main celebrant. Bishop Joseph Brunini dedicated the parish in October, 1969.

Membership and programs at the parish rapidly grew. With an increasing Hispanic population in northern Mississippi, Spanish and bilingual Masses were added to the schedule several years ago.

In 2002, the parish broke ground for a new church complex on Church Road; it includes offices and a religious education building.

As noted earlier, the parish is now ministered to by a pastoral team that includes SCJ Fathers Thi Pham, Zbigniew Morawiec and Greg Schill.

Busy days in Rome

Several members of the US Province and Canadian Region were in Rome in November and December. Dn. David Nagel, SCJ, was the first to arrive for meetings of the General Finance Commission. Soon after, Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ (US provincial superior) and Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ (Canadian regional superior) went to Rome for the Major Superiors Meetings. And finally, Br. Frank Presto, SCJ (provincial secretary for the US



Bishop Kopacz joined SCJs at the 50th anniversary celebration of Christ the King parish



Br. Frank Presto, US provincial secretary, gives a presentation in Rome while Fr. Pedro Iglesias, secretary general, looks on.

Province) and Fr. Richard Woodbury, SCJ (regional secretary for Canada) headed to Rome for the secretaries workshop. Fr. David Szatkowski, SCJ was also in Rome for a meeting of several of the congregation's canon lawyers.

"It has been a year-and-a-half since we have gathered together in this room," said Fr. Heiner Wilmer, SCJ, in his opening comments at the first Major Superiors Meeting of his administration. "I am respectful of this room; it is a place that has changed my life, changed OUR lives."

The reference was to the 2015 General Chapter at which Fr. Heiner was elected as superior general of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

"You are leaders, you are experienced, you are wise and each one of you cares for the many brothers and people the Lord has entrusted to us and our mission," said Fr. Heiner. He talked about parish ministry and warned the major superiors not to allow it to become the focus of their entity's work. "We have to remember that Fr. Dehon stepped out of the parish structure to focus on mission, the formation of priests, social work, education and media," he said. "How much energy do we invest in thinking and planning beyond parish work?"

"Migration is the theme of our century," Fr. Heiner continued. "Its impact is different in each country but we must react. Put it on your agenda, on the agendas of your local communities and at the level of your entity. Our response to migration may be different but we cannot avoid the theme. Each

SCJ NEWS

entity must give a concrete response to migration.”

Five new candidates!

In 2016 the US Province accepted five men as candidates for the Priests of the Sacred Heart. The first was Phong “Paul” Hoang, 24, who is a member of the Dehon Formation Community and now a student at St. Xavier University. Joining the formation community in time for the start of the 2017 spring semester will be Jose Romero-Olivas, 32, who was enrolled in the ESL program at SHSST during the past semester, Celsus Robert, 43, who recently earned an MBA in Health Care Management from the University of Southern California, Thadeus Brooks, 25, from Milwaukee, and Kodjovi “Hubert” Liasidji, 36, originally from Togo but as

of December, a citizen of the United States.

Warmth and welcome at new house from ALL neighbors

Fr. Mark Fortner, who served in Indonesia for over 30 years, was one of several visiting SCJs who took part in the December 14th blessing of the Indonesian Province’s new “Motherhouse.” The celebration began with Eucharist with Archbishop Aloisius Sudarso, SCJ, as the main presider. He was joined at the altar by Fr. Alexander Sapto Dwi Handoko, SCJ (Indonesian provincial superior), Fr. Paulus Sugino, SCJ (general councilor) and Fr. Andreas Madya, SCJ (former provincial).

Indonesia is a primarily Muslim country but the SCJs there note a warm and welcoming spirit from all



Fr. Mark Fortner (right) represented the US Province at the blessing of Indonesia’s new “Motherhouse.” Fr. Mark served in the country for over 30 years.

of their neighbors, not just fellow Christians. The night before the house blessing, neighbors — primarily Muslim — held a “Kenduri.” This is a shared prayer followed by a meal. During the December 14th celebrations a local official said that he hoped the house could “be a place that is open and useful for anyone, especially for local residents, and that the members of this house can support a spirit of peace and tolerance.”

Ecumenism lived in military

“One of the aspects of being a part of a military religious community is the need to be ecumenical with fellow Christians and have interreligious dialogue and cooperation with other faiths.” writes Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ, who serves as a civilian chaplain at Fort Gordon in Georgia. “Because the military is a microcosm of society, religious diversity is magnified and people are somewhat forced out of their comfort zones to interact with each other. Furthermore, many of our Catholics are married to spouses of other faiths.

“Just before Christmas our Catholic Community Choir joined forces with the Gospel Faith Choir. Together we sang a ‘Feliz Navidad’ that got the whole church clapping and singing.

“Sint Unum lives here at Fort Gordon!” said Fr. Mark.

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