

STATE OF THE PROVINCE REPORT
June 19, 2018—Election Assembly

Good morning Brothers,

Welcome to this 2018 United States Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart Election Assembly. I thank you again for taking time out of your very busy schedules to be here as we elect a Provincial Superior and Provincial Council.

Time passes quickly. It has been **Two years, nine months and one day** since I began my ministry of service to you as the 15th Provincial Superior of the United States Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. The last Election Assembly was August 24-28, 2015.

As is often said at the State of the Union address: the “State of the Union is Strong.” I stand before you this morning to say that the State of the Province is Strong! Fewer members, **yes!** More diverse, **yes!** More retired confreres, **yes!** A little bit older, **yes!** Hopeful for a strong future, **a resounding YES!**

I share with you now, as I have done on each anniversary of this administration, some of the highlights, conversations and decisions that have been made by me with the Provincial Council over these past (almost) three years. I 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). I believe that what we do now, at this Election Assembly, will also prepare us for the future of the province: a province that will continue to be smaller and more international, a province that will continue to welcome our confreres from entities throughout the Congregation.

Now I would now like to highlight a few things that I think are important.

Communication and Consultation is Vital

Communication continues to be vital. Starting with our first Provincial Council meeting, held in August, 2015, we have continued to send 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, our Province Director of Communication, for getting this to you in a timely manner and for the many other things she does for the province and congregation.

Including conference calls, we have had 31 council meetings (#854-881) since the beginning of the term. These numbers do not include the countless texts, emails and phone calls to councilors and other members of the province.

Consultation is also a priority, both with the council and province membership. Regularly I contact councilors for their input on various issues (and concerns) and have on numerous occasions sought the advice and counsel of the province and of individuals and groups through letters, personal meetings and within council meetings. Some may not agree that we have consulted you, but we have tried our best.

Appointments, Assignments and Transfers

At our 15th Provincial Chapter of 2014 and the assemblies of 2015, 2016 and 2017 we spoke about the need to include and involve our younger members in leadership. On our Provincial Council, three are 60 or older and three are in their 40s and 50s. The majority of our local superiors are younger: Houston (Duy Nguyen), Mississippi (Thi Pham), Dehon Formation Community (David Szatkowski), South Dakota (Christianus Hendrik) and at Sacred Heart — SHML (Quang Nguyen). Only Sacred Heart Residence, Pinellas Park (Greg Speck), Sacred Heart Monastery (Yvon Sheehy — note: due to health concerns, Duane Lemke has been asked to assume Yvon's role as temporary SHM administrator) and St. Joseph Community — SHML (Ray Kozuch) have more mature superiors/administrators. Vincent Suparman has generously agreed to be the Superior of Sacred Heart Residence in Pinellas Park. Consultations will soon be held at Sacred Heart Monastery and at St. Joseph's Community.

Younger members have been asked, and some have accepted, the responsibility to prepare the recent assemblies, to serve on commissions and committees and to serve as pastors of our parish ministries (Thi Pham in Mississippi, Christianus Hendrick in South Dakota and Francois Tsanga in Houston). Terry Langley is the elder of our parish pastors/administrators as administrator at St. Martin of Tours.

It continues to be a priority 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 additional responsibilities.

Provincial Conference

The Provincial Conference, held at the end of January and early February of this year, is another example of our trying to prepare the province and especially our younger members, for leadership and ministry positions, but especially for community.

The topic, or theme for this Conference was: "Our Future: Together in Community and Ministry."

Each of our "active" members was asked to work together to create a vision for how we can best live and serve in a way that is healthy and life-giving. We included new ways of doing ministry to guard against burn-out, including greater use of lay staff.

We also discussed ways in which local communities, and the province, can be more supportive to those in ministry. Next January we will continue with a second provincial conference: "Our Future: Together in Community and Ministry Part II."

Province Formation

Formation is at the heart of our religious life: both initial formation and ongoing, lifelong formation. The entire council and I have visited the Dehon Formation Community on numerous occasions during these past three years.

Our formation directors, David Szatkowski, Bob Tucker, Andrzej Sudol and Byron Haaland have another year of experience. I thank these men for their willingness to serve and guide our candidates, novices and young religious in this important ministry in our province and congregation. Joseph Dinh

will soon be studying in Rome in the SCJ Formation Course offered by the Congregation. He is the first from the province to take this Dehonian Course for Formators.

Additionally, we have a Novitiate and will profess two novices on August 15th. This is our first novitiate in four years. I ask for your prayers for our novices, Henry Nguyen and Phong “Paul” Hoang. They are fine young men. We pray that they may persevere and come to know and love our spirituality and charism as Dehonians.

On August 14th we will receive three novices into the novitiate (two from the US Province and one from the District of Vietnam). This is truly a blessing for our province. Additionally, Juan Carlos Castaneda-Rojas professed his perpetual vows in February and as I write this, is scheduled to be ordained a transitional deacon. Congratulations Juancho! This was the first ordination in the province in seven years. Please continue to pray for all our men in formation.

As you are aware, in the past few years three candidates and three of our young men in temporary vows left the formation program and the Congregation. Mike Fette, a long-time member of the province, also left. As part of their discernment, each left the formation program and religious life with good and varied reasons. We certainly wish them well.

Formation Program Move

At the 872nd Meeting of the Provincial Council, held on April 26, 2017, the unanimous decision was made to move our Formation House and the College and Theology programs from Chicago to Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. This move will take place in a few short weeks.

The decision was not made lightly or easily. Since I began my term as Provincial, I and the Provincial Council have been discussing and consulting with the province about how we can best use the resources, of both personnel and finances, of the United States Province for formation. I realize that some in the province did not agree or like this decision. The council and I considered all the various options and possibilities that were presented to us (through the consultation of the province by letter) and made the decision to move for the future of our province.

Regarding ongoing formation, in June we held 2017 province assembly with the theme: *The Joy of Community Expressed in our Mission*. I was happy to see that over two-thirds of our province took part. From the input given it seems that most found last year’s assembly to be an uplifting and positive experience. I thank Thi Pham for his willingness to serve as chair, as well as Greg Schill and Quang Nguyen for serving on the planning committee.

Mission Education is another form of our ongoing formation, both for SCJs as well as for those who collaborate with us. The last Mission Education conference was held in Mississippi, October 9-11, 2016, and was an overwhelming success. More than 200 attended. I extend my thanks to Jack Kurps, the Mississippi community and all the others who prepared the conference. A significant number of SCJs attended the conference and I encourage all of you to consider attending the next Mission Education to be held at St. Joseph’s Indian School in 2019.

Two of the three North American Retreats: *Open Hearts: An SCJ Retreat* have been held, one Mississauga, Ontario in 2017 and one last month in Racine, Wisconsin. These retreats came out of a desire expressed by SCJs in both Canada and the United States to have a renewal of our shared heritage, spirituality and charism. These retreats have been excellent and have helped 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 North American Dehonians. The final retreat will be held for our formation community in August. There has already been a call from province members for regularly scheduled Dehonian Retreats, perhaps every two years.

Family Associates/Lay Dehonians

Thanks to the efforts of Dick MacDonald, Jack Kurps, Andy Gancarczyk and David Schimmel, there are more and more Lay Dehonians and Family Associates in the U.S. Province. Groups of lay folks have been in formational programs in the Rio Grande Valley, at Sacred Heart Southern Missions and at St. Joseph Indian School. In the Summer of 2016, the young people who attended the World Youth Day in Poland went through a Dehonian preparation program with Andy Gancarczyk. These efforts certainly strengthen knowledge and understanding of our Dehonian charism in our province and among those who collaborate with us.

Senior Life

The 15th Provincial Chapter in 2014 “affirmed the importance of the care that is given to the seniors of our province.”

Three years ago, the intergenerational Senior Life Commission was re-established. The Commission has continued its bi-annual meetings and has advised myself and the Council on elder care and life. We have brought one member home to the community at SHML and have been able to provide care for our members (including until death) in our local communities.

I thank all members of the Senior Life Commission for their willingness to serve in this important task for our province, especially the chairperson of the Commission, Jim Schroeder.

Province Health Care Services

At the 2014 Provincial Chapter members of the province discussed the possibility of having a health care professional work with us — both active and retired — to address our short and long-term healthcare needs. In August, 2016, Mary Balistreri, a registered nurse through St. Camillus Supportive Home Services, began working at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake serving as a health care resource to both the SCJ community and lay residents. Last year she was asked to develop a job description for a “**Director of Health Care Services for the U.S. Province.**” Following our conversation with “*Nurse Mary*”, the council further discussed the position of **Director of Health Care Services** and voted to hire Mary Balistreri as Director of Health Care Services for the U.S. Province. On August 7, 2017, she began her service with the province. I thank Mary for her willingness to serve and to develop this health care position with us. She has been incredibly helpful to all of us throughout the Province.

Visitations

I began the canonical visitations of each local community in Mississippi in November, 2015. At that time, I wrote to each member of the province sharing with you how I hoped to do the visitations. The council and I decided to have a theme for each one. We chose the themes from our Provincial Chapter of 2014. The themes: Our Community Life, Living Simply and Vocations. Each

visitation has begun with a community meeting during which we have had an opportunity to pray, reflect and share together on the questions based on each of the three themes.

A second community gathering concluded each visitation with prayer, reflection and encouragement to deepen our commitment to live together as brothers. I have received many supportive comments on this style of visitation.

As I have reflected and shared often, the visitations, especially the individual meetings, are truly graced moments for me and I hope for you also. Again, I thank each of you for your honesty and openness with me. I have learned so much about each and every one of you.

The themes that we have reflected on, as I have stated during the visitations, are just a beginning—the conversations and the work of community, our vows (especially living simply) and vocations must continue. This really is part of our on-going formation. It's not a one and done deal conversation but a continuing process.

Finances

As we continue the conversation 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. We are by no means rich and we must continue to be aware of our vow of poverty and the need to live simply. I am grateful to all of you who are involved in this service to the province: members of the Province Finance Commission and trustees. As individuals, communities and as a province we must strive to reduce our spending and live simply.

Born to Eternal Life

This past year we have said farewell to four more of our brothers: Br. Ben Humpfer (December 31, 2017), Fr. Steve Wiese (January 13, 2018), Fr. Lenny Elder (March 6, 2018) and Fr. Joe Doscher (May 14, 2018). In the three years of this administration there have been a total of 12 confreres who have been born to eternal life. I have shared with many of you that as provincial, I have felt and experienced these deaths of our brothers more personally (almost as if they were members of my own immediate family). Together we remember and we celebrate each of their lives as Priests of the Sacred Heart. May they rest in eternal peace.

Justice and Peace

I thank the members of the Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission for their ministry to and with the province. Mark Peters and our JPR Commission have made great strides in furthering our Dehonian commitment to Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. They have brought to our attention and consciousness numerous issues and concerns and how we might respond to them. Let us thank Mark and the Commission for their hard work and dedication. I see our office of JPR as assisting us in our ongoing formation.

North American Migration Committee

I also want thank the members of the North American Migration Committee. Over the last three years or more the SCJs have responded to the invitation of leadership from the US and Canada,

seeking to raise our awareness as Dehonians that there is a massive amount of injustice inflicted on the migrants all over the world. Many communities have taken specific actions such as in Mississippi. I appreciate that our novices were present at the talk regarding DACA, and I must acknowledge the interest and involvement of many of our seniors in Hales Corners.

We had Sister Norma Pimentel and Barbara Graham at our Assembly and they were well received. Barbara Graham was recently with us a second time just a few weeks ago. Grant Silva spoke to us twice and we had good attendance at a presentation of a panel which spoke to us a few years ago. The efforts of many in telling their stories helped us put together a booklet that was an indication that we are, as a Province, serious about learning and being more aware of this ongoing phenomenon. I hope that the newly elected leadership of our province and Canada will support a continuation of these efforts. Bishop-elect Heiner Wilmer, in his final letter to the congregation, mentions the marginalized, the immigrants, as important for the Congregation. As Dehonians we must keep before us.

This has been a very good way for SCJs in North America to collaborate, bringing us closer together in our shared life as Dehonians.

Internationality

We are an international Congregation. As said in our 15th 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 or studying in our province from Indonesia, Poland, the Netherlands, Canada, India, Argentina, Brazil, Congo and Cameroon. In the past year we have welcomed Francois Tsonga (Cameroon), who has served in Mississippi and soon will join the community in Houston. We also welcomed Quang Tran (Vietnam) who serves the Vietnamese community at St. Martin of Tours. Diego Diaz (Argentina) and Fabio Dos Santos (Brazil), currently in ESL, both intend to part a part of our community and ministry when they conclude their English studies. Soon we will welcome two more Indonesians to live and work with us.

We have sent members to India (Tom Cassidy and Charles Brown) and Vietnam (Paul Reid, Lenny Zaworski, Tom Cassidy) for long and short-term mission assignments, as well as for renewal, formation and educational opportunities. One of our young religious, Juancho Castañeda Rojas, spent his ministry year in Brazil. As I previously mentioned, Joseph T. Dinh is in Rome for the 2018-19 International Formation Course.

The ESL program has been a great gift of internationality to us and a service to our Congregation. 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. I especially want to thank Yvon Sheehy, the SCJ Residential ESL Director, and Duane Lemke, Assistant Residential Director, for infusing new life and a new spirit of welcome into the ESL summer sessions.

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) for 85 years. In these years, the seminary, along with the 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, including the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Yearly, approximately 100 students participate in the various academic programs at SHSST including an M.A. program in Theology open to lay men and women; the new Cor Unum Cohort M.A. program; the new Adveniat Regnum Tuum Pathway -- an innovative initiative with India and perhaps the beginning of a New Indo-US collaboration, and the long established English as a Second Language program. I want to give a special thanks to Tom Cassidy for his work on the Indian program.

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.

Fr. Tom Knoebel, the President-Rector, has graciously agreed to stay on for a second year. He has, in his first year, initiated a new spirit of collaboration and cooperation among SCJs, faculty, staff and students. We made an attempt to collaborate with the Sulpicians, however they decided not to come to the seminary.

During a recent council meeting Fr. Tom spoke with us about the seminary's strategic planning process; each of the values identified in the initial draft of the strategic plan is rooted in Dehonian spirituality, including use of the terms "Ecce Ancilla," "Sint Unum," "Adveniat Regnum Tuum," and "Ecce Venio."

Ministry of Vocations

As Priests of the Heart of Jesus, 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 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. These young candidates and religious have assisted Quang along with Chuck Wonch in his ministry.

Conclusion

I have attempted to highlight some of the activities, actions and decisions of this administration. I believe in being 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. We certainly are not perfect. Of course, we can always do better. I can assure you that I/we are working hard for you every single day.

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

I especially thank our Provincial Council — Quang Nguyen, Duy Nguyen, Christianus Hendrick, Jack Kurps and Frank Presto — for their dedication, sacrifice, commitment, counsel and invaluable service to our province. We have not always agreed with one another but I believe we have worked well together.

I thank our office staff, especially, David Nagel (Provincial Treasurer) and Frank Presto (Provincial Secretary), but also the lay staff (Mary Gorski, John Kuxhause, Kevin Stanke, Nancy Grzesiak, Mark Peters and Mark Wenzel) who collaborate and work with us in our ministry.

In a previous letter, I inadvertently forgot to mention two other SCJs who work in the Provincialate. I want to thank Wayne Jenkins and the addition of Ed Zemlik for their invaluable service to the province and congregation through their work and ministry in our Province Archives. They help maintain our history and are always ready and willing to research information when needed.

In conclusion, we have much to be thankful for. We have accomplished much in these three years. We now have the important task of electing our leaders for the next three years.

It has been a privilege to serve as your provincial, a position I neither sought nor desired. It has been a real ministry of love, service and challenge. I have seen my role and ministry as the servant of servants.

I ask us now to pray to the Holy Spirit to guide us in our election of new leadership. May God's will be done.

Vivat Cor Jesu,



Edward Kilianski, SCJ
Provincial Superior