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Minutes of the 775th Provincial Council Meeting

November 12-13, 2007, Hales Corners, Wisconsin

PRESENT: Fr. Thomas Cassidy, provincial superior ; Fr. Yvon Sheehy, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Jim Brackin, Fr. Vien Nguyen and Dn. David Nagel, councilors; Br. Frank Presto, provincial secretary, and Mary Gorski, minutes. Fr. Francis-Vu Tran was present for discussion of missions, and Br. Ray Kozuch was present for discussion of the Home Mission Leadership Conference.

- I. Minutes — The council voted to approve the minutes of the 774th council meeting held by conference call on October 22nd. They also acknowledged the following decisions that took place during that meeting:
 - A. Br. Duane Lemke — The council voted to approve Br. Lemke as a member of the Finance Commission.
 - B. Fr. John Czyzynski — The council voted to appoint Fr. John Czyzynski as administrator of the Dehon Formation Community until June 30, 2008.
 - C. Fr. Jan de Jong — The council voted to endorse the recommendation of the board of directors of Sacred Heart School of Theology to appoint Fr. de Jong to a three-year term as president-rector, beginning January 1, 2008.
- II. Personal Sharing — Councilors took a few minutes to update each other on their lives and ministries.
- III. Personnel
 - A. Fr. Tony Russo — Fr. Russo has submitted his plans for sabbatical. The information has been forwarded to Fr. Dominic Peluse, personnel director.
 - B. Fr. Ed Zemlik — Fr. Zemlik has requested permission to go to the missions for two years in Eastern Europe. He has written his request to Fr. General and Fr. Cassidy. The Polish Province said that it would welcome him.
 - C. Fr. Joseph Gole — Fr. Cassidy recently visited Fr. Gole and said that he seems to be doing well. He has been assured that the Priests of the Sacred Heart will take care of him. He is ready to move into assisted living; however, space is not available at this time.
 - D. Fr. David Szatkowski — The council voted to approve Fr. David Szatkowski's request to remain in Rome for an additional two years (approximately 2008-2010) to complete doctoral studies in Canon Law (JCD) at the Angelicum University.
- IV. Administration
 - A. Home Mission Leadership Conference — Br. Ray Kozuch joined the council to discuss HMLC. Eight religious institutes have joined with the U.S. bishops' Secretariat on Home Missions and the Catholic Church Extension Society to form the conference. Priorities of the conference will be recruiting and training lay leaders for home mission dioceses, and building greater awareness of home missions and their needs. It is to be a way to help some of the poorest dioceses in the United States in their mission.

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Br. Kozuch attended meetings as Fr. Richard MacDonald's delegate when Fr. MacDonald was provincial superior. He has been attending meetings for about five years. The area in which Br. Kozuch focused was on lay missionary development. That project is now moving forward. Br. Kozuch has also assisted in developing a "personnel inventory." This lists members of the province who have expertise in various areas that could be utilized as needed.

Does the council want to continue an SCJ presence with the HMLC? Br. Kozuch noted that the conference has resources, such as the Glenmary Missioners, which are very gifted in collaborative developments. He sees many benefits to continued participation with HMLC, but notes that it would be good to have someone with authority represent the SCJs at the meetings. Br. Kozuch was asked if he would be interested in continuing with HMLC. He said yes but only if he could have good communication with the council regarding the activities of the organization and that such information would be shared with the province when appropriate. The council thanked Br. Kozuch for his work with the HMLC and his time with the council.

The council voted to continue the province's presence with the Home Leadership Conference and to appoint Br. Kozuch as its representative, a role he has previously filled. It was noted that Br. Kozuch should report on his work with the HMLC to the council on a regular basis. The council will in turn share pertinent information with the membership.

- B. Sacred Heart Southern Missions — The council voted to endorse several items presented by the Sacred Heart Southern Missions Board of Directors. Fr. Kurps noted that the boards of the Sacred Heart League and Sacred Heart Southern Missions are preparing for the anticipated merge of the two entities next year.
1. Change to Corporate Bylaws — Regarding ex-officio directors, the SHSM bylaws were changed to read that "by virtue of their office, the provincial superior of the United States of America, Priests of the Sacred Heart *or his delegate* and the local coordinator of the Mississippi Community of the Priests of the Sacred Heart shall be ex-officio directors. The council voted to approve the change.
 2. School Sisters of St. Francis — The council voted to make the second half (\$75,000) of a \$150,000 donation to the School Sisters of St. Francis Retirement Fund in recognition of the School Sisters 60-year history of working in Mississippi schools. The original commitment was made during the previous provincial administration.
 3. Holy Spirit Church, Hernando — Fr. Tony Kelly, pastor of Holy Spirit Church, requested a grant of \$100,000 to purchase furnishings for the new Holy Spirit Church currently being constructed. It was noted that the parish raised funds for the construction of the church without assistance from SHSM or SHL. The council voted to approve the request of \$100,000 for furnishings for the newly constructed Holy Spirit Church.
- C. Sacred Heart League — The council voted to endorse several items presented by the Sacred Heart League Board of Directors.
1. Change to Corporate Bylaws — The SHL bylaws were changed to read "The Provincial Superior, Province of the United States of America, Priests of the Sacred Heart, *or his delegate*" is to sit on the board. The council voted to approve the change.
 2. Assets — Regarding the distribution of assets in the event of the dissolution of the Sacred Heart League, the board changed its bylaws to read: "After payment of such debts, all remaining assets shall be turned over to Sacred Heart Southern Missions, a Mississippi Corporation, or to its Successor; if that corporation ceases to exist then to the Priests of the Sacred Heart, a Wisconsin Corporation." The council voted to approve the change.
- D. Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (C-POSH, SD) — The council voted to endorse the recommendation of the C-POSH board of directors to have on the board "the provincial superior or his *duly appointed representative*."
- E. House Council, Chicago — The Provincial Council voted to approve the following (in order) as the local council for the Dehon Formation Community in Chicago: Br. Duane Lemke, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Fr. Bob Bossie and Br. Pete Mankins. Br. Mankins will serve as treasurer. As noted in the minutes of the conference call, listed above, Fr. John Czynski was named administrator of the community until June 30, 2008.
- F. Council of Conciliation — The council reviewed input on the Council of Conciliation. There is interest in having it continue; however, many thought that the procedures of the Council of Conciliation were cumbersome. The Provincial Council will review the procedures and present a simplified process for the Council of Conciliation at a later date.

- G. Elder Care — Fr. Brackin, province director of Elder Care, noted that there needs to be better awareness of one another in community. His concerns are in regard to elders who may be exhibiting symptoms of health issues that require medical intervention. However, there was an agreement among councilors that there needs to be better awareness overall in community. There is always a concern in respecting an individual's privacy, but that concern shouldn't be taken to the extent that it threatens the well-being of an SCJ or the community as a whole.

Related to this, councilors talked about the living situation of SCJs in the Milwaukee area. Instead of maintaining the residences the province now has would it be wise — financially and for the sake of healthier community living — to consolidate into fewer residences? Perhaps there could be two communities plus Villa Maria. Also, if Villa Maria is remodeled to allow for assisted living, should there be other community options for active retirees? Perhaps they could be better served in one of these proposed larger Milwaukee-area communities.

There are many possibilities. The building that currently houses the Dehon Study Center and serves as the residence for Fr. P.J. McGuire could become a community house for a larger group. The study center could relocate to the old archives space at the previous Provincialate, or perhaps in Chicago. A new structure could be built on the SHM/SHST campus or on the Woods Road property.

The council decided that a study group needs to be formed to research the needs of SCJs in Milwaukee and the financial implications of various community options.

The provincial treasurer was asked to form a committee of SCJs from the Milwaukee area to study housing for SCJs in the area by reviewing the value of present properties, examining current living arrangements, suggesting possible ways to reconfigure communities through the sale of existing properties or the building of new facilities, so to best serve the living needs of SCJs in the Milwaukee area.

- H. American Experience — There had been discussion that the U.S. Province should host another "American Experience," inviting SCJs from South America to the United States. Fr. Cassidy said that now that North and South America are a single region that there will be more collaborative gatherings in the future. However, it might be good to suggest that one of the collaborative meetings take place in the U.S. Province.
- I. Formation Votes — Fr. Czyzynski reminded the council that time needs to be taken in June to vote on men in formation seeking advancement, in particular vow renewals and entrance to the novitiate.
- J. Personal Effects of Deceased SCJs — Fr. Wayne Jenkins, archivist, was asked to help the council develop guidelines to assist SCJs in dispersing a deceased member's belongings. What things need to be saved? Who makes decisions regarding how items are dispersed? Fr. Jenkins shared the policy of another religious congregation as well as his records regarding how a particular deceased SCJ's items were archived. Councilors said that this was helpful but that a written policy still needs to be done. Br. Frank Presto agreed to prepare a draft of such a policy.
- K. Vision Statement — The council reviewed the responses to the Vision Statement. For the most part, replies were affirming; however, there weren't as many as the council had hoped there would be. The province has several issues as it plans for the future: how does it best minister as Dehonians with the personnel and resources available at this moment; how does it stay true to the history of the province; how does the province allow and encourage growth and new ministry; and how can community living be enhanced? Whatever direction the province follows, how does it move forward with ownership from the membership?

Some councilors suggested that the reason that there was not a strong response to the Vision Statement was because there is widespread resignation. Others thought that instead of resignation, there is simply a disbelief in many that an SCJ's ministry or living situation may change. If people don't feel that they will be personally affected they may not feel that it is important to spend time in the discussion. "As long as MY ministry is the same, go ahead and make whatever changes need to be made in the province" — is the unconscious feeling that some members of the province may have regarding future planning. Again, how does the council help ALL members of the province feel ownership for the future of the province and its direction?

It was also suggested that perhaps many SCJs know that change in the province is needed but that they want someone else to make the decisions.

To build better community-based ministry, the province must focus its efforts in fewer areas. However, leaving places such as Texas and Bailey's Harbor does not necessarily provide for a large influx of personnel into other areas.

In its discussions, the council repeatedly came back to the need for better community living. SCJ religious need to live and minister as religious, not as diocesan priests. For too long, small, skeleton communities have been in place to maintain ministries at the expense of community living.

The council looked at its priorities; Mississippi and South Dakota were named as priority areas. How can the SCJs best build community in these locations while serving the needs of the areas? Ideally, it would be good to name a team for each area and have them spend up to a year living together to develop as a team. The time together would allow for sessions with a professional facilitator to improve community living skills and perhaps continuing education on the area of ministry and its needs. It's the model that was done when the congregation was preparing to send men to the Philippines. The missionaries lived together for approximately a year to build community and discuss how they would minister.

With further discussion it became apparent that this ideal could not easily be done with the personnel available. Ministry needs don't allow the luxury of pulling so many SCJs out of full-time ministry for even a month, much less a year. And still, there is the question of personnel resources. Putting together several teams of SCJs is not an easy task. For various reasons, not all SCJs can be available for every ministry. People have different ministerial and community-living skills.

Again, the discussions returned to the need for better community living. Regardless of how teams and ministries are configured, healthy community living needs to be a priority. Councilors said that SCJs, in many cases, have simply lost the ability to live well in community. Often, it is because people are busy — it's easier to live alone, even within a community setting, than as an active part of a community. Communities need assistance in re-learning the tools of community living, such as accountability and communication. The role of the coordinator needs to be better defined and perhaps reinvented.

Also, how can men who have lived outside of community for many years find a way to comfortably return? Should the province make more of an effort to require men to live in community?

How available are SCJs? Are members of the province genuinely able to make wide-scale changes? Councilors don't want to simply consolidate for the sake of staffing issues. Ministry doesn't have to continue as it does now, even if the province remains in the areas it currently staffs. How can the province be creative in ministry? How can it better collaborate with others? How can team approaches to ministry be implemented or enhanced? As important as it is, the province shouldn't limit itself to parish ministry. Again, the SCJs are religious, not diocesan. Religious have the freedom to minister in many ways.

Men shouldn't feel that if they accept an assignment that they will be "left" in it indefinitely. Some men fear that they might not adapt well to a place such as Lower Brule, SD. However, if they went, knowing that they could make a one-to-three-year commitment, perhaps they might be more willing to give it a try. Several councilors admitted to developing a strong affection for ministries that they were initially hesitant to try.

Related, local communities need to take ownership of their ministry. Priorities can be set as to where the SCJs will be located, but the local community needs to discuss how to best serve the area it is in.

Again, it always came back to community living. Community life has to be the base for whatever ministry is done. If a community focuses on parish ministry, it has to do so as a community.

Is the province able to truly recommit itself to community life, knowing that such a commitment may not be easy?

Councilors talked about ideals for a community. Depending on the area, ideally four to six men — at minimum — should be in the community. The men need to be a mix of abilities and energy levels. Creative people are needed in each community, but not every person needs to have the same level of energy and creativity. There needs to be a willingness for communication and accountability (not simply financial accountability). Most importantly, there needs to be a willingness for members of the community to be willing to live and work together and to continually do what is needed to allow for that.

The province is at a crossroads. There either has to be a major re-founding that gives life to the province, or it follows the route of some religious institutes who have made the decision to stop recruiting candidates and continually consolidate as numbers diminish.

NEXT STEP:

To enhance community and ministry in some areas will require withdrawing from others. The council has identified the following areas as priorities for the province:

- Internal ministries (especially vocations, formation and elder needs)
- South Dakota
- Mississippi
- Sacred Heart School of Theology
- St. Martin of Tours Parish

The council is grateful to the membership for its input on the vision statement. Now, more input is needed. Each member of the province will be asked to reflect on the five areas of priority and state 1) where he is willing to serve, and 2) what needs to be in place for him to be an active member of that community.

To clarify what they are seeking, councilors gave an example. A man who currently would not be interested in Lower Brule because he feels that he would be too isolated might be willing to go there if he knew that that: 1) the assignment would be limited, 2) the living situation might be different than it is now (something other than a trailer) 3) that there would be regular opportunities for him to take vacation time in a large city, such as Chicago, and 4) that there would be at least three other SCJs living with him in community. Some of the younger men might ask that there be at least one other peer in the community. Others might have concerns about community activities such as meals and prayer.

This response cannot be optional. For the province to move forward with change the membership must buy into it. If people are unwilling to change, future planning is futile. If no one is willing to minister in a particular location, making it a priority is futile.

Although it was hoped that responses could be discussed at the December meeting, councilors realize the busy-ness of the upcoming holiday season. The membership will be asked to respond as soon as possible, but no later than early January so that responses can be fully discussed at the January meeting.

Fr. Tom Cassidy will prepare a letter for the membership that will outline the council's discussions and decisions. This will go to SCJs within the next week. In discussing areas of priority it was noted that the province should be open to new ways of doing ministry, always with a focus on building healthy community life.

- L. Missions — Fr. Francis-Vu Tran, mission secretary, met with the council to discuss his recent work. He gave a report at the meeting of the Major Superiors in Rome that he felt was well-received. He asked SCJs in missionary areas to plan ahead for financial assistance as best they can. Emergencies are going to happen, but Fr. Tran noted that the U.S. Province (as do most entities) has a budget and that it is much easier for the province to meet the funding needs of the missions if the province knows of those needs well in advance. He asked that missions seeking financial assistance try to develop a three-year plan.

Asia is a growing area that the Generalate has asked the U.S. Province to give special attention to with personnel and finances.

Fr. Tran said that he is asking several SCJs to assist him in visiting the missions. Fr. David Szatkowski will visit Congo, and Dn. David Nagel and Fr. Paul Grizzelle Reid have been asked to visit South Africa. Fr. Tran said that he had received a verbal invitation to attend a dedication in the Philippines next April.

- M. Committees — Membership on committees proposed at the last meeting is falling into place. As of the November council meeting committees included:

1. Finance: Dn. David Nagel (chairperson), Fr. Terry Langley, Fr. Chuck Wonch, Fr. Ed Kilianski and Br. Duane Lemke.
2. Elder Life: Fr. Jim Brackin (chairperson), Fr. Mike Burke, Fr. Joseph Dinh, Br. Duane Lemke, Fr. Tony Russo, Fr. Jim Schifano and Br. Long Nguyen.
3. Vocations and Formation: Fr. Yvon Sheehy (chairperson), Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, Fr. Thi Pham, Fr. John Czyzynski and Br. Duane Lemke. Others may still be added.
4. Dehonian Family: Mike Tyrell was named chairperson. He has a conference call scheduled with previous committee members to discuss future directions and membership.

5. Pre-Chapter Planning Committee: Br. Frank Presto (chairperson), Fr. Joseph Dean, Fr. Steve Wiese and Fr. Jack Kurps. Another SCJ may still be added.
 6. Community and Ministries: Fr. Bill Pitcavage (chairperson). Members to be determined.
 7. Los Jovenes: Fr. Tom Cassidy (chairperson). All “young” SCJs are invited with the expectation that they will take part in this committee.
 8. “Visioning”: Fr. Jim Walters (chairperson), Fr. Charles Brown and Fr. Bob Naglich. Other members to be determined.
 9. Justice and Peace, with a Dehonian development component (making parishes and other SCJ ministries more “Dehonian”): Dn. Mark Mastin (chairperson), Br. Ha Tran, Fr. Thi Pham, Fr. Tony Kelly and Fr. Leonard Elder.
- N. North American meeting — It is the U.S. Province’s turn to host the meeting of the administrations of Canada and the United States. Fr. Cassidy will contact Fr. John van den Hengel to discuss possibilities. Councilors suggested March 3-4.
- O. House Councils — House councils need to be named for Sacred Heart Monastery and for the Woods Road residence.

V. Finance

- A. Province Audit – Dn. Nagel reviewed the financial audit of the province. Auditors cited no significant concerns. Clarifications were needed regarding use of corporate credit cards. Often, SCJs on sabbatical, exclaustation, specialized ministry or in the missions have corporate credit cards that are paid for by the Provincialate Offices. Generally, these individuals do not have the same receipt policies as office card holders. Dn. Nagel revised the corporate credit card policy to address this issue. In particular, corporate card holders must reconcile their bills and provide receipts for purchases over \$250. Receipts are *encouraged* for all purchases, regardless of cost. Individual SCJs outside of the office with corporate cards are exempt from the receipt requirement. However, the credit card statement will be used to verify expenses and must be submitted to the Treasurer’s Office for payment to take place.

The council voted to approve the Province Audit.

Following the vote, Dn. Nagel recommended that a financial review be done for the next fiscal year in place of an audit. Recent changes in audit procedures have made the audits more appropriate for very large, corporate for-profit institutions. With the changes, non-profits and other smaller organizations seem to be better served with the financial reviews. Dn. Nagel discussed the issue with financial professionals and other religious at the recent NATRI (National Association for Treasurers of Religious Institutes) Conference. The sense was that over half of the religious represented are going to have financial reviews in place of audits.

Dn. Nagel will recommend that other province offices and institutions also have a review instead of an audit. He noted that institutions that receive government funds will still be required to have an audit.

The council voted to allow the Provincial Treasurer’s Office to have either a province financial audit or financial review. The decision regarding which would be more appropriate will be left to the treasurer.

- B. Villa Maria Property — As discussed at the last council meeting, the province is examining the possibility of expanding Villa Maria to allow for more housing and assistance options for elder SCJs. The City of Franklin, in which Villa Maria is located, has several study requirements that need to be done before such a project can be considered. The Treasurer’s Office hired the Simon Group to do the required studies. It appears that the studies and expansion on the area in question could be rather expensive due to concerns about natural resources.

Dn. Nagel said that the province is petitioning the Wisconsin Department of Transportation to reclaim frontage property adjacent to Villa Maria and Highway 100. It is thought that expansion of Villa Maria could be done on this property at a lesser cost than on areas currently under study.

- C. General Finance Commission Meeting — Dn. Nagel informed the council that he attended the General Finance Commission meetings that took place during the meeting of Major Superiors in Rome. There were updates on the three-year plan, investments, missionary activities and other financial matters. Concerns were raised about the currently weak US dollar. At the March meeting, members of the commission will meet in Lucerne, Switzerland, and review the investments held there.

- D. Formation House, Eluru, India — The council voted to meet a \$50,000 request for the District of India to cover added expenses on the new theology residence in Eluru. The Generalate is contributing an additional \$100,000 to the project.
- E. 100th Anniversary of German Province — Dn. Nagel noted that he has been invited to take part in the 100th anniversary celebrations for the German Province, October 5-7, 2008. Fr. Cassidy is also among those who will attend from the U.S. Province. It was suggested that the U.S. Province give the German Province a gift related to the Germans' beginnings here in the United States among Native Americans. Dn. Nagel will look into this. It was noted that the U.S. Province has also given the German Province a piece of art by Canadian SCJ Fr. Herman Falke.
- F. Housing, Houston Community — Members of the community formally living at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, have been given permission to move to a new residence.

CALENDAR

December 12-13 Provincial Council Meeting
December 15 Priesthood Ordination of Dn. Mark Mastin

2008

January 28-29 Provincial Council Meeting
March 3-4 Provincial Council Meeting
April 30 - May 2 Provincial Council Meeting (budgets)
June 16-20 Provincial Chapter (proposed dates)
July 15-16 Provincial Council Meeting
July 14-23, 2008 Educators meeting, Salamanca
September 8-9 Provincial Council Meeting

UPDATES

FR. STEPHEN HUFFSTETTER

Work: 605-234-3306

Private: 605-730-0472 (cell phone)

DEHON FORMATION COMMUNITY

Correct zip on p. 12 of Personnel Directory: 60615-4501

FR. JOE DEAN

Work phone on P.6 should be: 920-839-9261

It is correct on p. 46 of Personnel Directory

FR. CHARLIE BISGROVE'S full address on p. 22 of the Personnel Directory should be:

Christu Dehon Nivas

SCJ Theologate

Vanguru P.O., Eluru

WGDt, 534005

Andhra Pradesh, INDIA

It is correct on p. 39

FR. GARY LANTZ

(605) 234-1026 (phone/FAX)

It is correct on p. 16

PROVINCIALATE FAX

The correct fax number is: 414-425-2938. It is incorrectly listed under Fr. Thomas Cassidy's name on page 4 of the Personnel Directory. It is correct under the heading for the Provincialate Offices.

NECROLOGY

FR. FIORINO GHEZA, a member of the North Italian Province, who died November 16. He was born in 1931, professed in 1949 and ordained in 1958.

FR. GODFRIED EGELIE, a member of the Dutch-Flemish Province who died November 3. He was born in 1929, professed in 1953 and ordained in 1958.

BR. PEDRO JESÚS GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ, a member of the Spanish Province, who died October 22. He was born in 1948 and professed in 1967.