



SCJ News

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

Never too old to fall in love

At 83, Fr. Bernie Rosinski successfully defends thesis

“After 60 years I found my true love,” said Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, as he began the public defense of his thesis for a master’s degree in Scripture from Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

The “true love” he was referring to is Scripture. “It preoccupies me,” he said. “I wish that I knew more about it. There is no end to knowing. You can learn more and more but then you just find that there is more and more to learn.

“It is replete with mystery, and no exercise, no drills, no courses can lead one to its mysteries better than absolute meditation through devoted study.”

The defense, which took place March 30 at SHSST, was the culmination of over four years of work. At 79, with degrees from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and a doctorate in education from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., Fr. Bernie decided that it was time to work on one more.

When he applied for the master’s program Fr. Bernie was retired and doing help-out ministry in South Dakota (as he continues to do now). When asked what prompted him to return to school he answered with his

own questions:

“Why tempt fate?” he said. “Why deliberately stumble over these facts: that I now nap in the morning and afternoon, that my memory is not what it once was, that my eyes do not see what they once were able to see?”

“The answer? Interest and desire! Scripture is where God’s revelation to the human race is recorded. I want to learn more about his revelation and how to discern his word and meaning. A formal degree program will help keep my nose to the wheel and help me be motivated when discouraged, for I dread the possibility that my reputation among my SCJ brothers would be forever sullied should I be a ‘drop-out’.



Fr. Bernie explains his thesis (above) and later (below) takes questions from SHSST faculty.

“I like to be known as a person who finishes what he starts!”

And so he did. The title of his thesis is “The Owner of the Vineyard in Matthew 20:1-6; the ‘Evil Eye’ and Other Mysteries.”

After a 30-minute presentation (including a detailed handout on the operation of vineyards), and questions from his thesis director and principal reader (Dr. Richard Lux, professor



“...while the context of this parable [Matthew 20:1-6] may have been more easily comprehended by ancients who lived in an agricultural world, it is virtually unintelligible to most of today’s urbanized citizens who greatly lack all understanding of how food gets to the table and, in a mechanized age particularly, how hard the life of agricultural workers was in ancient times.”

- Fr. Bernie Rosinski in “The Owner of the Vineyard in Matt 20:1-16: The ‘Evil-Eye’ and Other Mysteries.” Read his full thesis at: www.tinyurl.com/BRthesis

emeritus of Scripture Studies) and second reader (Dr. Patrick Russell, SHSST academic dean and associate professor of Scripture Studies) Fr. Bernie learned that his defense was indeed a successful one and that he would be awarded his Masters of Arts in Scripture from SHSST.

So what now? He entered into the master’s program so that he would have the discipline to study. At 83 is he going to give himself a break?

“I don’t feel like I need the same structure now,” he said. “There is

much that I want to study; the desire to learn is my motivation now.”

His current passion is the Sea of Galilee, the area where much of the ministry of Jesus took place. “Being in Chamberlain, on the shore of the Missouri River, has prompted me to think about Galilee, wondering what it was like in Jesus’ time. There must have been many boats, towns. There had to have been a system for docking, rental fees, taxes. I’d love to study the many activities that took place along the lake.”

Cultural traditions come together at St. Martin of Tours

At St. Martin of Tours parish in Franklin, Wis., many of the cultural traditions of the Vietnamese community that is a part of the parish are incorporated into prayer. This year’s good Friday service was one such example where the Stations of the Cross were read in both Vietnamese and English, songs in both languages were sung, and white headcloths, a sign of mourning often seen at Vietnamese funerals, were worn by all as Jesus’ body was brought to the tomb.



Always in service to others

Just weeks after his 95th birthday Br. Gabe Kersting dies

Br. Gabriel Kersting, SCJ, died April 7, in Seminole, FL. (near St. Petersburg) where he was in hospice care close to the Sacred Heart Community in Pinellas Park. He was 95.

Originally from Pittsburgh, Pa., Br. Gabe worked in the Merchant Marines as a deckhand from 1942 to 1946 before following his vocation with the Priests of the Sacred Heart. He made his first profession when he was 26.



Br. Gabe

Br. Gabe spent much of his religious life as a support person to others. He served at the novitiate (St. Marie, IL), at Dehon Seminary (Great Barrington, MA), at Sacred Heart Southern Missions (Mississippi) and at Kilroe Seminary (Honesdale, PA).

In 1959, he moved to province administration, again as a support person, serving as secretary to the provincial superior for 14 years.

It was when he was the provincial’s secretary that Br. Gabe began thinking of the missions. He went to the airport to pick up Fr. John Strittmatter, SCJ, a missionary from South Africa who was home in the

States for meetings. “He told me what he was doing in South Africa and it really stayed on my mind,” said Br. Gabe. “He said I should come down and try it [missionary life] and by the end of that car ride I was ready to go!” In 1973, he was on his way to South Africa.

“My greatest pride and joy was the church I painted,” said Br. Gabe. He and an assistant re-painted the inside of St. Mary’s Church in De Aar, the cathedral of the diocese. With hundreds of intricately designed tin tiles on the ceiling, needing two or three coats of paint each, the job wasn’t an easy one. “We were on scaffolds at least 30 feet high for hours at a time.”

“He poured all his energy and heart into that because as a simple man anchored in Jesus, he felt that he was painting God’s house,” said Fr. John Czyzyski, SCJ, in the funeral homily for Br. Gabe, “and he wanted to make that as beautiful as his ability would allow him to achieve.”

After 20 years overseas, Br. Gabe returned to the United States. He spent two years with the novitiate community in Chicago, and in 1997, joined the Pinellas Park community. Although he lived at a nursing facility in his last years, Br. Gabe continued to be a member of the Sacred Heart community; local SCJs, as well as the whole province, made it a priority to visit with Br. Gabe. He was surround-

ed by members of the community at the time of his death.

Several years ago Frater James Nguyen, SCJ, reflected on his visit with the retired missionary just before he professed his first vows:

“**I at times played golf with Gabe. It was delightful to see the way he reacted when he got off a good shot. He would look up to heaven, smile and say: “Thank you, Lord!” I am not sure what he said when he got off a bad one. Maybe the same thing.**”

Fr. John Czyzyski during his funeral homily for Br. Gabe. The full homily is available at the following link:

www.tinyurl.com/kersting

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“Of the many wonderful people we met during our novitiate trips was Br. Gabriel Kersting. Although he has Alzheimer’s disease and could not remember much from the past, just seeing his mere presence and his joyful witness to religious life was so graceful. In his 90s, Br. Gabriel experienced and saw things for the first time, like a child, on a daily basis. ‘I think of heaven a lot. And I believe I am close to it each day, but I feel like a kid again,’ he said.

“One of my favorite memories of him was when we were walking down the pier in St. Petersburg and we saw a boy with Down Syndrome. Br. Gabe

pulled me aside and said, ‘Look into those eyes, how can you not see the grace of God in them?’

“The memory stays with me.”



Photos from the funeral are at: www.scjusa.smugmug.com



Fr. Radek Warenda, vice-secretary general

Communicating who the SCJs are

Soon after it took office, the general administration identified communication as one of its top priorities.

“Good communication is at the very core of our charism,” said Fr. Heiner Wilmer, SCJ, superior general, speaking to participants at the January meeting of SCJ communication professionals. “It is exemplified by the image of Fr. Dehon with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. When we tell the stories of our works, when we really reach the people we want to address, then we carry on the heritage of our founder.”

Now, the work of that gathering is being taken a step further with the establishment of an International Com-

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munications Commission. Members include: Fr. Radek Warena (vice general secretary), Fr. Stefan Tertünte (director of the Centro Studi Dehoniani), Mary Gorski (communications director of the US Province) and Fr. Antonio Rufete Cabrera (responsible for communications in the Spanish Province). André Lorenz, a communications professional from Germany and Fr. Pedro Iglesias Curto, secretary general, are working with the commission.

The group held its first meeting March 23-24 at the Generalate in Rome. Discussions included the development of a communications strategy for the Priests of the Sacred Heart, or "Dehonians" as they are known in many areas of the world. One of the key pieces of such a strategy is creating a common identity for the congregation. In marketing terms this is often referred to as a "corporate image." It is a set of visual cues, such logos and colors, along with words or phrases that quickly bring to

mind the organization that they represent. The apple logo of Apple Computer and the blue and white of the Facebook logo are two excellent examples of this.

Is this Dehonian?

The basis of that communications strategy is a Mission Statement. Recently, the General Council developed and approved such a statement.

"We believe that it captures our core purpose as a religious community and in particular, as men who have been called to carry on the charism of our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon," said Fr. Heiner. "The Mission Statement is not simply a communications tool. Much more important, it is a tool for us in our ministries and our life together as Dehonian confreres to help us to reflect on and answer the question: 'Is this Dehonian?'"

The statement appears below:

Mission Statement

Who we are and what we do

Our Vision: Love with heart and mind

**We are witnesses of God's transforming love in souls and society.
We spread God's love around the world with open heart and mind.**

Our Mission: Adveniat regnum tuum

Your kingdom come

**We are especially for people who are most in need and for the young.
Our Congregation focuses on education, social work, missions,
spirituality and media to announce the kingdom of God.
We live in community, are inspired by daily Eucharistic Adoration
and in a fragmented world we believe unity to be possible.**

DEHONIANS

Priests of the Sacred Heart

The Dehonian charism LIVED & SHARED

Dehonian Spirituality is a weekly electronic publication of the Dehonian Associates Office of the US Province. Sent by e-mail on Fridays, it includes prayers and reflections based in the charism of Fr. Leo John Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

One of the regular features of the e-publication is the "Lived and Shared" column in which SCJs and those with whom they collaborate reflect on how they live Dehonian spirituality in their daily lives. During Lent, several members of the North American Migration Committee and the US Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission were invited to write reflections on how they "live and share" the Dehonian charism. Excerpts from their reflections follow. Full copies of their text can be found in the archives of Dehonian Spirituality on the province website (www.sacredheartusa.org).

Called to live vow of poverty

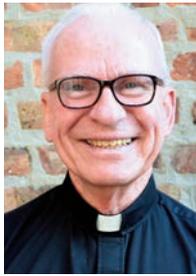
FR. JOHN CZYZYNSKI, SCJ - I cannot help but recall the way Fr. Mike Crosby, OFM Cap, speaks about our vow of poverty. He defines poverty as "the inability to have access to the resources one needs for their livelihood." If you accept that definition, and I most certainly do, then it follows that we religious are not poor. Thanks to the generosity of our benefactors, the marvelous work of the folks in our development offices and the good stewardship of those who manage our funds, we are not poor.

We have the resources we need for our livelihood. Add to that the fact of the tremendous educational experiences that are part of our formation, and it is obvious that we have access to the resources we need for our livelihood. What our vow of poverty calls us to is to live gratefully, to use well the gifts we have received, and to share with others the blessings we have received.

The fact that I have been exposed to materials circulated by members of our community who have long been involved in the ministry to social justice and the fact that now I am a member of our Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation Commission makes me add another dimension to how I believe we are called to live out our vow of poverty. Because we, as religious, have this access to resources, I believe part of being faithful to living out our vow of poverty calls us to work at helping others who are poor, who do not have this access to the resources they need to be able to attain that.

In our SCJ prayer book, *This Day of God*, there is an Act of Reparation for the Tuesday of Week I. When we pray that particular Act of Reparation, we say, **"Give us a heart of compassion, not only to help the poor, but to respect them. Give us a heart of courage, not only to feed the hungry and give a home to the homeless, but to work toward eliminating hunger and homelessness."**

We ask God, through the intercession of our founder Leo John Dehon, that those words we pray may be evident in the way we live, that we offer to those in need the resources that they require, but that we also engage in the task of changing the systems in our world that deny the poor the access to the resources they need for their livelihood.



Fr. John Czyzynski

Inspired by the desperation of another

FR. BOB BOSSIE, SCJ - In the summer of 1979, I travelled to Latin America with members of the 8th Day Center for Social Justice to try to understand the efforts of the Church to be with the people in societies oppressed by autocratic rulers, including the use of their military and police. In the outskirts of Lima, the capital of Peru, I stayed with a Maryknoll priest, Fr. Peter Rogeirre, who lived in a small house in the area called Ciudad de Dios, the City of God. This city was inhabited by families driven off their lands where they were able to live meager lives through subsistence farming.

One morning, Fr. Peter took me and a few others to an area where a woman, looking more aged than her years, stood, in what I would say was a state of shock, with her two small children amid the rubble of their shelter, their home, which was destroyed during the previous night's storm. For some reason, I imagined, probably correctly, that her husband was in the city looking for work to buy food for the day.

Fr. Peter gave her a few Peruvian dollars, to which I added a few more, to help her buy one 6 x 10 foot straw mat which would act as one wall of another, better home, similar to the homes other families in the area were able to build after saving enough to purchase "upgraded" materials. To this day, I feel guilty that I only gave her those few dollars, and I wonder where she would have gotten the money to buy the three other mats and roof necessary for the immediate shelter she needed for herself, her husband, and children.

When I returned to the comfort of my community house in Chicago, this

woman and her children became an icon for me which asked, "What will my life, my faith, do to give her and her children greater control over her life?" To this day, she and her children, and others living in such desperate conditions, continue to challenge the integrity of my relationship with God.

Fr. Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, of which I have been a vowed member since 1968, said it well when calling us to the works of justice: **"Charity is a palliative which is always welcome and often necessary; but it does not attack the root of the evil."** For these thirty-plus years, I have tried to stay true to this call of God I first recognized in this woman and her children.



Fr. Bob Bossie

Almsgiving more than writing a check

MARK PETERS (member of the North American Migration Committee; JPR director)

- Of the three Lenten disciplines, I've always found almsgiving the easiest, at least in terms of giving a little something from my excess abundance to those who have less. But I've learned that there are different types of almsgiving, just as there are different types of prayer and fasting.

Of course, there's writing a check, or these days donating online. It's quick and easy, and it makes me feel good. Same with donating food, clothing, old appliances, and the like. Someone somewhere is getting a small blessing partly through me. But it's the times I've gone beyond to other forms of almsgiving that I've been most blessed myself.

There is the giving of my time as alms. Helping out at a food pantry or meal program gets me out of my normal comfort zone and directly in con-



Mark Peters

tact with the poor, weak, and marginalized. Giving seems more meaningful when you can make eye contact with those you're trying to help.

An even more enjoyable form of almsgiving for me has involved getting to know an individual or family personally. I've had this experience through tutoring Burmese refugees at St. Michael Catholic Church in Milwaukee. My tutee, Poe Ru, already had learned English by the time I started working with him, and was mainly working on pronunciation and expanding his vocabulary. To be called "teacher" by this man who lost both arms and an eye to a land mine when he was 14, lived in a refugee camp for 20 years, and came to Milwaukee with absolutely nothing yet is now a leader in his community, is one of the most gratifying experiences of my life.

It seems to me that perhaps the most Dehonian type of almsgiving is opening one's heart to another in need.

When I got to know Poe Ru and his wife Moo Paw, I was awed by their strength, courage, and persistence in the face of so many challenges that I ended up being less of a tutor and more of a family friend.

Giving my heart to others has been a blessing to me more than any other kind of almsgiving. Whatever it has or hasn't contributed to their lives is far less consequential than the impact it's made on mine.

Prayer leads to action

FR. TONY RUSSO, SCJ - Prayer is one of the practices that the Church invites us to do more of during Lent. Praying can be oral, a conversation speaking and listening to God. I, along with many Catholics and my fellow SCJs, am concerned about the migrant crisis. In this case, prayer involves not only listening with our ears but also observing with our eyes.

Last December, I spent an afternoon in McAllen, Texas, at Sacred

Heart Parish, where I saw the face of migration: children and mothers being dropped off, welcomed, and cared for at the parish center. It seemed to me the modern Ellis Island. This is what I have reflected upon this Lent.

I am left with a sense of doing something about this. Prayer sometimes leads to action.

On March 6, four SCJs and Mark Peters [Province Director of Justice, Peace, and Reconciliation] journeyed to Speaker of the House Paul Ryan's office in Racine, Wis., and shared our concerns about refugees and migrants with one of his aides. The Church invites us to pray more in Lent. This Lent, for the five of us, prayer meant giving testimony about Jesus's command to love one another.

Refugees put trust in God

FR. PETER MCKENNA, SCJ - These past months we have had the privilege of welcoming and beginning to walk in friendship with many government sponsored Syrian refugee families in the Toronto area. In walking with them, these families have extended incredible hospitality to us by opening their homes and honoring us with food and drink, have expressed thankfulness and appreciation for the welcoming Canadian people, and have expressed excitement and eagerness about learning English and how much they love going to school — some of whom have never had the opportunity to attend it before.



Fr. Tony Russo

These families have generously shared their stories with us, speaking of long journeys through dangerous circumstances and of family members who remain in the midst of the war. All of them are carrying grief of loss in a variety of ways: shattered dreams, violent deaths of loved ones before their very eyes, and the loss of any sense of home, safety, and freedom.

Trauma is etched right beneath their skin. Everything has been stripped away including their dignity and their capacity to care concretely for their loved ones. As we know, grief, depending on how we carry it, can lead to bitterness and anger or to freedom, peace, and a new sense of self. Our Syrian friends have made a choice. Deeply religious people they have put all their trust in God [Allah]. They strongly believe it is Allah who has and who will continue to sustain them. They are totally dependent on Allah and hold in their hearts not only the suffering people of Syria, but also suffering people worldwide, with whom they are in solidarity. It is very challenging and humbling to be invited to accompany them.

Heart opened to face of God

KAREN MAHONEY (member of the North American Migration Committee) - About eight years ago, our parish was approached by the Archdiocese of Ottawa to sponsor a refugee family. At the time, our parish council had several items on its agenda. We were preparing a parish directory with photos of all the parishioners so we could connect the names with the faces of the members of our church. There was a major fundraising campaign underway to do some repairs on our aging church structure. The parishioners also were aging and becoming fewer it seemed, resulting in volunteer fatigue. The same people doing the same thing. I was sitting on the parish council to give a voice to the young families in the parish.

Julie [the archdiocesan representa-



Fr. Peter McKenna

tive] was thanked for her presentation and commitment to the refugees. After she left, the discussion did not go so well. There were several excuses as to why we could not entertain the possibility of sponsoring a refugee family.

I was frustrated! I felt like our church was too focused inward on our own selves and not outward on those in need. One day I was venting with a friend. I said to her, "Here we are taking pictures of ourselves and fixing our house. What does that look like to someone on the outside looking in at us?"

But with the support of our parish priest, the conversation at the next parish council meeting was turned around to "Should we?" And "How?" We have been grateful ever since.

Our parish has learned many things from sponsoring four families since Julie's first visit. Sponsorship formed a ministry that allowed us to engage in our faith in a range of practical ways. Some parishioners gave financially or donated goods no longer needed. Others have taken an active role in the lives of the families assisting with things we take for granted; navigating enrollment in government services, finding a doctor or other health care providers, language tutoring, helping them find jobs or buy their first car. Each of us has our own skill set and we share in our own way. Two of the families participate in our parish and they are a visible reminder to us that we are created for a reason, our lives have a purpose and we are all connected.

Sponsorship allows me to approach almsgiving with a grateful attitude. **I am grateful that my mind was open to learning about refugees and migrants when God, through Julie, knocked on my door. It has given me the strength to make changes in small ways and not be overwhelmed with the large scale problems in this world. I am grateful that my heart was opened to the face of God.**

SCJ NEWS

Two enter postulancy

In early March Paul (Phong) Hoang and Henry Nguyen were received into postulancy by Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, during Eucharist at the Dehon Formation Community in Chicago. Fr. Andrzej Sudol, SCJ, is their postulancy director.

Paul, 24, is from Vietnam but has lived in the United States with his family since 2007. Before entering formation he earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Houston in 2015. He is currently studying philosophy and religious studies at St. Xavier University in Chicago.

Originally from Orange County, Calif., Henry is 28 and has a bachelor's in psychology from California State University. He is taking classes at both St Xavier and at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Rediscovering the 7 gifts

In a recent post on the province blog Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ, a chaplain with the US Army serving at Fort Gordon, wrote about how teaching a confirmation class reminded him of something he learned during his own confirmation preparation and how it has helped him during Lent.

"Through my confirmation class I rediscovered how the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit can help me get spiritually grounded again for Lent, especially in the practice of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving," he wrote. "I likewise saw how Dehonian this discerning

process was. As a child of the sixties, I was confirmed in the 7th grade. By my adulthood, I had relegated the gifts of the Holy Spirit (wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord) to some ethereal realm never to be called upon again. However, I now saw a deeper connection of these gifts in conjunction with our SCJ Rule of Life. I began to see these gifts of the spirit in a very real and practical human way for my Lenten practices and managing my ministerial life as well."

Read Fr. Mark's full post on the province blog at www.scjusablog.org.

"A meaningful growing experience for me as a Dehonian "

Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ, is another regular blog contributor. In recent months, his reflections have been about his pastoral year in Brazil. During Lent he wrote:

"I am continuing with my pastoral experience in Brazil where I have the opportunity to really understand the meaning of going out of the



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sacristy and being among those who are in need and more vulnerable than most people," he wrote. "My getting to know more about the different ministries and the impact that the Priests of the Sacred Heart in the various regions of Brazil has been a meaningful growing experience for me as a Dehonian. It has made me able to understand the needs of others and to be present to help them.

"There is no more perfect time than this season of Lent for me to reflect on my vocation and my response to God's call to strengthen my relationship with other people... I reflect on my own vocation and of hearing God's call, which took me to a foreign land: the United States where I have been blessed by many experiences and all the amazing people I have met during my time in formation there. And today, after following my heart and missionary call, I am again in another new land — Brazil — and I am experiencing more amazing experiences and countless blessings during my pastoral year here."

Read more from Frater Juancho at www.scjusablog.org

Bishop visits SHSM schools

On March 27 Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson visited Holy Family School in Holly Springs and Sacred



Bishop Joseph Kopacz with students and staff at Sacred Heart School in Southaven, Miss.

Heart School in Southaven. Both schools are a part of Sacred Heart Southern Missions in northern Mississippi. The bishop is pictured above at Sacred Heart.

A "superior" meeting

Local superiors of the US Province and Canadian Region gathered for their annual meeting at the Provincial Offices in Hales Corners, Wis., on March 14, Founder's Day.

Some of the superiors are among the youngest in their community, which they said can at times feel awkward. Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, said that he felt similar apprehension when he became provincial superior. "I am now meeting with my seminary teachers as their superior," he said. "It does take

some getting used to, but it is a transition most of us face eventually."

The superiors ended their gathering with a Founder's Day celebration with the community at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.



Local and major superiors from the US Province and Canadian Region.

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