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Minutes of the 878th Provincial Council Meeting December 19-20, 2017, Hales Corners, WI

PRESENT: Fr. Ed Kilianski, provincial superior; Fr. Quang Nguyen, Fr. Christianus Hendrik, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Duy Nguyen and Br. Frank Presto, councilors; Dn. David Nagel, provincial treasurer; Sr. Cathy Bertrand, SSND, by video conference for discussion of the 2018 Provincial Conference; Fr. Tom Cassidy and Dr. Patrick Russell (academic dean for Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology) for discussion of a proposed MA program designed for students for the District of India; Br. Duane Lemke for discussion of the State of the Province report; Mary Gorski, recording secretary.

- I. Check-in — Members of the council shared information about themselves, their communities and ministries. Items of note:
 - Sacred Heart Community at SHML — Fr. Q. Nguyen updated the council on several members of the community: Br. Ben Humpfer was recently diagnosed with brain cancer and is in hospice care; Fr. Paul Casper is experiencing leg weakness and thus using a wheelchair, though he has had some physical therapy with a walker; Br. Andy Lewandowski stayed with the community briefly following cataract surgery; Fr. Jan de Jong is in Holland for a month; Fr. Johnny Klingler is also gone for the next month; Fr. Jim Schroeder is traveling for a week over the holidays.
 - Vocations — Five people are expected to attend a Come and See weekend in February.
 - General Finance Commission — Dn. Nagel said that the recent meeting of the commission in Neustadt, Germany, went very well. Besides meetings, the commission also took time to visit the formation community in Freiburg.
- II. Provincial Conference — The council had a video conference with Sr. Cathy Bertrand, who has been asked to facilitate the 2018 Provincial Conference (January 30 – February 1).
 - A. Goals — Sr. Bertrand began by asking the council “What do you want people to walk away with from this gathering?” Responses:
 - With fewer SCJs available for ministry many burdens are placed on those in leadership (local and at the province level). There is concern that local superiors and pastors (or pastoral team leaders) are not getting the collaborative support that they need, or that simply too much is being asked of them.
 - Local communities and ministries are becoming more multicultural; this will increase in the future as more SCJs from other entities come to the US Province. What can the province do to better facilitate this? How can SCJs from other cultures be better prepared for community life and ministry in the US Province and how can current members better welcome their international confreres? The province is very good at addressing the administration of welcoming an international SCJ (such as immigration paperwork and ESL studies) but more needs to be done in preparing individuals for life and service in a culture different than their own.
 - The intention of international SCJs needs to be better clarified so that the province knows whether the SCJ hopes to join the US Province and spend most of his years of

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active ministry with it, or if his commitment is for a limited period of time. Both the individual and the province need to identify expectations.

- Expectations need to be clarified regarding how members of a community work together to support the ministries attached to it.
- There needs to be space for people to be individuals, but the community itself should be the priority. SCJs must be present both in community and ministry. How do SCJs balance individual needs and desires with that of community and ministry? How do local communities and ministries have the conversations needed to help everyone “get on the same sheet of music.”
- Are members of the province properly prepared for the responsibilities that they are given? Priests with only a few years of experience as ordained ministers are named as pastors; this is not unique to the SCJs, dioceses and other religious communities are doing this as well. Are young priests prepared for the administrative tasks of being a pastor? Do they need to be, or could such tasks be handled by a lay employee? Should the province look at other models of ministry; can it reimagine how current ministries operate?
- It should be emphasized that this not a moment to look at what ministries the province should or should not continue, but instead, to look at the ministers and local communities.
- The concerns of those in active ministry need to be heard. Problems cannot be solved in a three-day conference but issues that must be addressed can be identified. This is an essential first step.
- Are younger members of the province interested in continuing the current ministries of the province or do they have another vision?
- How can the next generation be prepared for necessary internal ministries?
- Those gathered need to realize that they are the future leadership of the province.

B. Participants — Approximately 35 SCJs are expected to take part in the conference. Fr. Kilianski will send individual letters of invitation within the next few days. Participation of all SCJs in active ministry is mandatory. Fr. Kilianski will send the council and Sr. Bertrand a list of those whom he invites. It was noted that it would be helpful if some basic information about each person be listed, such as his current community and ministry and how long he has been with the US Province.

Although it is expected that each SCJ in active ministry will attend, all invited SCJs will be asked to RSVP that they are indeed coming. Fr. Kilianski needs to determine how this will be done and state it in his letter. Suggestions included responding to him directly via email, or Br. Presto. Fr. Kilianski will personally contact anyone who does not respond by a certain date. In his response the SCJ should indicate when he is arriving (if from outside the Milwaukee area) and where he is staying (or if he needs a lodging assignment). Fr. Kurps was going to check with Barbara Haag at SHML to find out if anyone had reserved a room yet for the conference.

C. Process and schedule — Most of the work of the conference will be done in groups, both small groups and as a whole. It was suggested that some of the small group work be done in community groupings (ie: SCJs from Mississippi together in one group, from South Dakota in another, etc.). Fr. Kurps will work with Sr. Bertrand to outline the process for the days and establish the schedule.

The conference will begin at approximately 8:30 on Tuesday morning (January 30) and conclude with lunch on Thursday (February 1). No evening sessions or social events are planned. Liturgy will be at SHML. Evening meals will be in the dining room near the Good Shepherd Chapel; lunch will be at SHSST. There will be a social before dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The conference itself will take place at the Provincial Conference Center. Br. Presto will confirm availability of facilities needed for prayer and meals.

Room availability may be tight. Some men may need to stay at a hotel. Organizers will assign lodging to those who have not yet made arrangements.

- D. Prayer — Fr. Hendrik will be the main celebrant and homilist of the opening Mass; Fr. Q. Nguyen will take Wednesday’s liturgy and Fr. Kilianski will have the closing Mass. Fr. Hendrik said that he can lead much of the music with guitar.

III. Membership

- A. Joseph Vu — Joseph Vu received and accepted his Indulgence to Leave the Institute.
- B. Fr. Tim Gray — Fr. Kilianski gave Fr. Gray permission to take an international trip in commemoration of his 50th anniversary of vows. He will tour in France, Italy and Greece during July and August, 2018. Part of the trip will be with his cousin and wife.
- C. Frater Long Nguyen — Long Nguyen requested that his status be changed from “brother” to “frater.” He is currently studying at Catholic Theological Union as part of his discernment toward ordination. The council voted to approve his status change from “brother” to “frater.”
- D. Fr. Ed Zemlik — Fr. Wayne Jenkins reports that Fr. Zemlik has been an asset in the Province Archives.

IV. Administration

- A. MA program for Indian SCJs — Dr. Patrick Russell (SHSST academic dean) and Fr. Tom Cassidy spoke to the council about “Adveniat Regnum Tuum Pathway: a Master of Arts Initiative.” This is a Master of Arts program designed in partnership with the District of India that will be a mix of studies at a local institute in India (Vijnananilayam Institute of Philosophy and Religion), online courses offered by Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, and a semester of on-site courses at SHSST. To be awarded the degree, students will need to pass their comprehensive exams during the spring session that follows the on-site semester.

Dr. Russell and Fr. Cassidy gave background to the program; items of note:

- The school that theology students attend in India is not of the same caliber as those in the United States. The proposed MA program offers enhanced educational opportunities for a few students from the district each year.
- The US Province has been a significant support to the District of India’s formation program. It is possible that some students who take part in this program will be able to serve in the US Province. If they do, they will be better prepared to serve both academically and culturally. The US Province also has an opportunity to get to know them before making a commitment.
- With its ESL program, SHSST has the possibility to help students with their writing skills. When they are on-site they can have help with accent reduction.
- SHSST will seek several funding sources for the program, such as direct appeals to benefactors or grants from foundations.

The council spoke about the program and raised the following questions:

- Is communications technology adequate for the online needs of the program? Fr. Cassidy and Dr. Russell said that a two-credit on-line course will be offered for the Indians next semester; this will be an opportunity to test the technology.
- Are there enough computers for all of the students? Books will be on Kindles, but are there sufficient options for other work that may need to be done on a computer?
- Who will supervise the program in India? Fr. Cassidy said that he assumed that this will be done by himself and an Indian formator.
- Will the Indian students receive their diplomas before returning to India? It was noted that they will most likely go through graduation exercises but be given an empty diploma. The diploma itself will be sent to them once they have completed their comprehensive exams. Most SHSST graduates do not actually receive their diploma at graduation.

- Will graduates of this program actually receive two master's degrees – one from the school in India and one from SHSST? The answer to this is “yes,” but the degrees are complementary; one enhances the other.
- Who will be the formation director of the Indian students when they are at SHSST? It was suggested that they be under the direction of the formation team at Sacred Heart Monastery.
- How will the costs beyond tuition be determined? Will the US Province provide clothing, computers, telephones and other items to the Indian students when they are in the United States? Expectations and limits need to be put in writing. It was suggested that students be given a computer to use while here but that it be left for another student when it is no longer needed.
- If some of the Indians remain in the US Province for ministry they must have a good command of English, both comprehension and speaking.
- Will the caste system be an issue for the Indian students? Caste prejudices will not be tolerated in US communities, formation or otherwise.

Noting that these concerns will be shared with Fr. Cassidy and Dr. Russell, the council voted to approve Adveniat Regnum Tuum Pathway: a Master of Arts Initiative. The program will begin with the 2018 Spring Semester. The first on-site students are expected in the 2019 Spring Semester.

B. Community updates

1. Mississippi — This has been a difficult time for Fr. Pham; his father recently had a stroke. Fr. Schill had a bad case of the flu. Most of the community will be away after Christmas.
2. Houston — Br. Andy Gancarczyk is doing well as business manager of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The community looks forward to Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas joining it in June.
3. South Dakota — The SCJ community in South Dakota celebrated Thanksgiving with the parish community at Fort Thompson. Fr. Mark Mastin is settling in well in the community and getting a better sense of pastoral ministry on the reservations. Fr. Vincent Suparman was to soon return from his extended home visit to Indonesia.
4. Sacred Heart at SHML — Fr. Q. Nguyen gave an update on most of the members of the community during check-in. He noted the emotional toll that the recent illnesses and deaths in the community have taken on its members. The community met to discuss this in December and will have another meeting in January.
5. St. Joseph's Community at SHML — Fr. Quang Tran has been a good addition to the community and is adjusting well. Fr Vien Nguyen's belongings arrived but Fr. V. Nguyen has not yet moved into the community.

- C. Province Director of Health Care — There have been a few misunderstandings about the role of the Province Director of Health Care (Mary Balistreri). Fr. Kilianski clarified that her role is to offer options particular to each SCJ's individual situation and advise Fr. Kilianski of them. In some cases, that might mean seeking local resources for an SCJ who is no longer able to live on his own. In other situations, she might help to facilitate an SCJ's move to one of the province retirement communities.

D. Formation

1. Ministry of Lector — The council voted to approve Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas and Frater Long Nguyen to receive the Ministry of Lector. Most likely this will be done during the provincial visitation in February.
2. Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas — The council voted to approve Frater Castañeda Rojas for final vows. The ceremony will take place February 3 at Sacred Heart Monastery.
3. Postulancy — The council voted to approve the following men for entrance to postulancy: Luis Alonso Barrantes, Kodjovi Hubert Liassidji and Angel Romero.

4. Novitiate — Dn. Nagel sent the “Declaration of Poverty” paperwork to Fr. Byron Haaland for the novices; by signing it the novices agree that any money earned by them when in vows belongs to the community.
5. Province Formation Ratio — Br. Presto reported that the committee tasked with reviewing and revising the Province Formation Ratio has met twice, most recently on December 8. The committee will share with the council sections of the revised Ratio as they are completed but the council will not vote on it until the entire project is done. Councilors are encouraged to share questions or comments with the committee during the revision.

Br. Presto said that it has been a slow process. The committee is trying to ensure that the language in the Province Ratio can be well understood by those who speak English as a second language. Councilors said that since the Ratio is a tool for formators, not their students, this does not need to be a priority. It is assumed that formators will have a strong command of English. The formation *handbook* is designed for students; these texts must be more mindful of the needs of international students.

Br. Presto said that emphasis in the Ratio is to be on the core SCJ values, including social justice concerns. In a handout with notes about the initial revisions to the Ratio there was an indication that the JPR Commission had given input. Several councilors asked about this. Br. Presto said that a member of the JPR Commission is on the Ratio Committee and he offered the comments. The council emphasized that while commission members can comment on the Ratio the commission itself has no authority regarding it.

A councilor asked if the province needed to have a formation director as noted in the Ratio. It was noted that a Province Formation Commission was established several months ago to fulfill this role.

The Ratio Committee had a few questions of clarification regarding the formation community, in particular, when it moves to Sacred Heart Monastery will it be a separate community from or a part of the SHM community? Referring to previous council discussions Fr. Kilianski emphasized that there will be one Sacred Heart Monastery Community, of which, the formation program will be a part. It was noted that consultation for local leadership of the SHM community will be done once it is in place.

- E. Chicago housing — Once the formation program leaves Chicago, housing arrangements are needed for the international graduate students who currently reside with the community, as well as Fr. Bob Bossie. It is anticipated that there will be three students (Fr. Louis Fernandes, Fr. Joseph Mukuna and Fr. Edgard Biankeu). Frs. Bossie, Fernandes and Mukuna suggest that either a four-bedroom apartment or two, two-bedroom apartments near each other be used to house the three students and Fr. Bossie.

The council appreciates the desire for community life expressed by the students and Fr. Bossie but noted that there are many costs associated with apartment rental, including a cook. The council also understands that Fr. Bossie would like to remain close to his brother. However, for a variety of reasons the council prefers that the students procure student housing. They will be encouraged to find time to be together in community and to take part in community activities in Wisconsin.

Fr. Kilianski said that when he was in Rome for the Major Superiors Colloquium that he informed SCJs from other entities that the US Province can no longer host SCJs in Chicago for study. He emphasized that international students are very welcome to come to the United States but that they can only do so in the future if they can live with a province community. There are several good schools in the Milwaukee area; international students are welcome to live at Sacred Heart Monastery and do their studies at Marquette or other local institutions.

Fr. Kilianski will speak to Fr. Bossie about several options both in Chicago and in Wisconsin.

- F. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Fr. Tom Knoebel, SHSST president-rector, sent Fr. Kilianski a message to say that he had a very positive meeting with Fr. Heiner Wilmer during his recent visit to Rome.
- G. International SCJs — Fr. Kilianski spoke about future plans for SCJs of other entities coming to the United States. The Indian District would like to send one of its men to the United States for two years to learn about development (fundraising). If this happens a plan will need to be established to ensure that he gets appropriate training at the various development offices. Perhaps he could also assist with pastoral ministry while in the various locations. Fr. Kilianski has been in dialogue with the district superior of India about the possibility of other Indian SCJs coming to the US Province.

The District of Vietnam will send a scholastic (Frater Paul Pham Duy Huan) in early 2018 to begin studies at SHSST. He will live with the St. Joseph's Community (4th Floor) until the formation community moves into Sacred Heart Monastery. Initially, Fr. Quang Tran (associate pastor at St. Martin of Tours) will serve as his formation director. Once he is at SHM, Frater Huan will be with the province formation program and its directors. In late spring two Vietnamese students will come for ESL to prepare to join the 2018-19 novitiate class; Fr. Dominic Nguyen Van Luong will accompany them and then stay in the States for a month to visit family. The Vietnamese District hopes to send novices for the 2019-20 novitiate as well. Although plans remain tentative, it is expected that some of the Vietnamese novices, once professed, will do their theological studies at SHSST. It is also anticipated that some will do so in preparation to join the US Province. The district will also continue to send students for the summer ESL program, up to six are anticipated for the 2018 session. Fr. Kilianski also gave permission for two non-SCJ priests from Vietnam and one lay person to come for ESL studies. The non-SCJs will pay their own transportation costs but the US Province will fund their ESL education.

Previously the council agreed that Fr. Quang Tran's salary from St. Martin of Tours parish is to be sent to the Vietnam District to help it develop a retirement fund. Dn. Nagel said that he will ensure that this is done; it will go through the Rome account as do all funds for the missions.

Fr. Kilianski said that he anticipates that a member of the Brazil-Sao Paulo Province will come to the US Province for ministry; he is an alumnus of the ESL program. He currently serves on his province's council; he plans to come to the United States in 2018 or 2019.

Several possibilities have been proposed regarding international SCJs coming to the United States. A councilor asked if there are sufficient ministries for them? With more personnel would the province consider opening new ministries (perhaps youth ministry), or revisiting ministries that the province has left? Fr. Kilianski said that these are questions which need to be addressed at the Provincial Conference in January. These are discussions that need to happen as the province prepares for the future.

It was suggested that someone be a "point person" for facilitating the welcoming of international SCJs to the US Province, regardless if it is to be for a short-term or lengthy stay. This person would coordinate immigration and other paperwork (not necessarily do the paperwork, but ensure that it is appropriately attended to) and oversee the person's transition to the US Province and needs while here. For example, such a person could ensure that ESL students have a place to go over the Christmas break.

The topic of international SCJs is to continue to be a topic on future council agendas.

- H. State of the Province — Br. Duane Lemke met briefly with the council to give an update on the State of the Province video. Joseph Vu had developed the original idea for the project and was going to do much of the work in assembling it. He left the community and thus plans for the project have been revised. Br. Lemke is working with Br. Andy Gancarczyk on the project. It is anticipated that the State of the Province will be sent to members of the province by the end of January.
- I. 2018 Province Election Assembly — The discernment ballot for Provincial Superior and Provincial Councilors will be sent to SCJs on January 5. Regarding the assembly itself, the council stated that any SCJ may attend the assembly as an observer (this includes ESL students who are members of the congregation). Sr. Cathy Bertrand will facilitate the assembly; Fr. Stephen Huffstetter will be the representative of the General Administration. The assembly is scheduled for June 18-22.
- J. Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission — Acting on the recommendation of the commission, the council voted to appoint to Fr. Guy Blair, Fr. Ed Zemlik and Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas to the JPR Commission.
- K. General Conference — Fr. Kilianski shared with councilors the letter from the general administration about the 2018 General Conference. It will take place July 15-21 in Manila. The theme: "Dehonians in social commitments. The fidelity to the Gospel and our Charism through formation in response to social challenges." The major superiors will remain for two days following the conference for a meeting with the Superior General and General Council.
- L. Vice provincial — Major Superiors at their Colloquium in Rome were told during a conference with a canon lawyer that entities do not have "vice provincial superiors." Instead, the person who is often referred to in that role is actually the "first councilor." Fr. Kilianski thinks that it would be helpful to address this at the next chapter; he believes that it would be helpful to have a "vicar provincial."

V. Finance

- A. Province Development Office — Initial returns on the holiday mailings are good and the financial audit shows a strengthening of the office's situation. Expenses continue to remain lower than other years. The transition of the new leadership of the Province Development Office will begin at the start of the year. Kory Christianson of St. Joseph's Indian School will be the Director of Development; Dn. David Nagel will remain as Executive Director of the office and Fr. Dominic Peluse will continue as Spiritual Director. Sid Liebenson will retire in February, assisting with the transition in the weeks ahead. Mr. Christianson has already met with the Hales Corners personnel via video conference; he and others from St. Joseph's will be on-site February 5-7.
- B. Chicago Property — The closing date for the property that currently houses the Dehon Formation Community is January 17, 2018. As noted previously, the formation community will remain at the property through the end of the semester.
- C. Remodeling of Sacred Heart Monastery/Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Although there has been a delay in the installation of the new elevator, the remodeling of SHM/SHSST is expected to be completed on schedule or very close to it. All asbestos abatement is complete; demolition has begun; permits are in place. Some have voiced concerns about where the formation community will go if the renovation is not done in time. Dn. Nagel said that there is adequate space in the student section of SHSST that could be temporarily used by the community if needed.

Some suggested that the seminary community views the renovation as something that only affects the SCJs. However, the renovation is part of a multi-phase effort at enhancing SHSST. Moving the province formation community to the seminary is a significant step in demonstrating the province's commitment to SHSST and enhancing the student body.

- D. Budgets— Dn. Nagel talked about the upcoming budget process. At the beginning of the year he will send a memo to all budget preparers; among the topics he will address is the recommendation of a three-year plan that takes into account future needs to allow for better province budget forecasts. The 2018 budget timeline: February 2 is the deadline to inform the Provincial Council of capital projects for FY19; April 6 is the due date for budgets to the Provincial Treasurer's Office; the Province Finance Commission will review budgets April 24-25; and June 5-6 the Provincial Council will vote on the budgets.

- VI. Next meeting — The council will next meet by conference call on Wednesday, December 27 at 10:00 a.m. Central to review these minutes.

CALENDAR

2018

- January 1 - May 17: Treasurers Course, Rome
- January 18-23: Meeting of Dehonian Bishops, Rome
- Jan 30 - Feb 1: Provincial Conference for those in active ministry (Hales Corners)
- February 3: Final Vows, Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas (Hales Corners)
- March 5-6: Local Superiors Meeting (beginning the evening of March 5)
- March 7: Provincial Council Meeting
- April 9: North American Councils Meeting Hales Corners
- April 10-11: Provincial Council Meeting
- April 16-20: Meeting of Rectors, Rome
- May 6-12: North American Dehonian Retreat, Racine
- May 23-24: Dehonian Media Experts Meeting (Rome)
- June 5-6: Provincial Council Meeting
- June 18-22: US Province Election Assembly, Hales Corners
- July 15-21: General Conference, Philippines
- July 23-24: Major Superiors Meeting, Philippines
- August 5-12: Retreat for those in formation, Racine
- August 14-15: Provincial Council Meeting
- September 18-19: Provincial Council Meeting (transition meeting of out-going and in-coming administrations)
- October 1 - June 30 Formators Course, Rome (participants will do Italian studies prior to the course)