



# Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

November 7, 2019

Dear Brothers,

I hope that all of you have marked the dates of the next Provincial Conference on your calendars: January 7-9, 2020. Continuing with the theme of previous conferences, it is titled "Our Future: Together in Community and Ministry, Part III." **All members of the province who are under 70 and in active ministry are expected to attend this Conference.**

I have struggled to find the right words in which to extend a "mandatory invitation." I realize that the phrase is an oxymoron. But I genuinely do want to "**invite**" you to choose to be a part of these discussions that concern our future together in community and ministry. My hope is that you **want** to be a part of these discussions. I know that attendance is a sacrifice of personal time and time away from ministries. But our future, our future together as religious brothers, as Dehonians in the United States, is of vital importance.

I **invite** you to attend the January 7-9 conference, but it is an invitation that I expect ALL members of the province who are under 70 and in active ministry to accept.

Although you will not be with us in person, I invite our confreres who are 70 and over to keep the work of the conference in their prayers, to pray that the years of commitment that they have given to the congregation continue to grow in the commitment of future generations.

Previous conferences centered on community life. In particular, the 2019 conference focused on multicultural community living. It is a theme that continued into our summer assembly.

"Ministry" will be the focus of our 2020 conference. For several years we have spoken about developing a new ministry. Already a small group has begun to brainstorm on possibilities in young adult ministry. Is this where we want to focus our energies, and if so, how do we make it happen?

It is also important to talk about our current ministries. How well do we know about ministries outside of our particular areas? To have meaningful conversations about our ministries we need to have a comprehensive understanding of what those ministries are. I do not want discussions about ministry to simply become debates about what to keep and what to let go. Together, we need to prayerfully discern what we as Dehonians are called to do in the United States at this time.

As I noted, all members of the province 70 and younger who are in active ministry are expected to attend the conference. **However, I ask that you still RSVP to Br. Frank Presto at provsec@usprovince.org by December 15, 2019, so that we know that you are planning to come.** Please make your own lodging arrangements. You can reserve a room at one of the communities at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake, or at Sacred Heart Monastery. Contact the individual community superior about room availability.

The conference will begin at approximately 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning (January 7) and conclude with Mass, followed by lunch, on Thursday, at 1:00 pm (January 9). It will take place at the Provincial Conference Center. Further details will be sent after the December Provincial Council meeting.

Please, come to this conference with an open heart and mind. As I wrote last year, this is an important time in the life of our province. We are blessed with many wonderful ministries and talented SCJs who are a part of them. We are also blessed by collaborative relationships with our employees and others who are committed to carrying on the dreams of our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon. But we need to discern how we can best utilize these blessings in the future.

I also ask our senior confreres to have an open heart and mind. I know that some of you may feel that your voices aren't being heard because you have not been invited to these conferences. This is not my intent, nor that of the council. We have limited participation in these gatherings to those under 70 (in active ministry) because they are the future of the Dehonian reality in the United States. They need the space to creatively and mindfully speak together about what that reality can be and how they can live it. Keep them in prayer; may we all hear the guidance and wisdom given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Edward R. Kilianski, SCJ". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ed Kilianski, SCJ  
Provincial Superior