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U.S. Province Priests of the Sacred Heart

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Minutes of the 903rd US Provincial Council Meeting September 15-16, 2020

PRESENT: Fr. Ed Kilianski, provincial superior; Fr. Quang Nguyen, Fr. Jack Kurps (video conference), Fr. Christianus Hendrik (video conference), Fr. Vien Nguyen and Br. Andy Gancarczyk (video conference), councilors; Dn. David Nagel, provincial treasurer; Br. Frank Presto, provincial secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary. Mark Peters, province director of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, joined the council for discussion of JPR issues (video conference); Fr. Joseph-Thien Dinh and Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec were with the council for dialogue on formation; Fr. Raúl Gomez, SHSST president-rector, joined by video conference for an update on the seminary.

I. Check-in— Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries and communities. Highlights included:

- Fr. Ardianto Hendrik is settling in well in Mississippi; he serves on the parish team.
- The Provincial Offices were closed for a little over a week due to a positive COVID-19 test among the staff. The building was sanitized and those who were infected are doing well. Several people were able to continue their work at home.
- Vocation ministry is more challenging during the pandemic; in-person visits and large gatherings are generally not an option. However, a potential candidate is in the midst of the application process. It is anticipated that he will be presented to the Admissions Board at the beginning of December, and if approved, join the formation program as a theology student in January. It was suggested that he soon begin the application process with Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in anticipation of this.
- In South Dakota there are currently no positive COVID-19 cases in areas where the pastoral team ministers on the east side of the Missouri River. However, in Lower Brule several cases have been identified. In-person Mass has been suspended in Lower Brule. Several SCJs recently visited with the new bishop of Sioux Falls (Bishop Donald DeGrood); they had a good dialogue and the bishop seemed both impressed and grateful for the province's ministries within his diocese.
- Although school is being done remotely, many other aspects of parish life at Our Lady of Guadalupe are getting back to an "adapted" normal. Faith formation and other activities are taking place, though safety measures are in place. A Confirmation Mass will be held October 3. The community is looking forward to the arrival of Fr. Jerzy (George) Mordalski in the next few weeks. He will live with Fr. Richard Johnston at the house recently leased by the community.

II. Finance

- A. Franklin property — Developer Ken Servi originally offered \$80,000 for a section of land alongside Forest Home which is owned by the province. He later met with the City of Franklin and revised his request for purchase from 5.6 acres to 7.175 and increased his offer to \$100,000. The province investigated the value of the property, which is set at \$163,000. The province offered to sell the property for \$175,000. Mr. Servi changed his request from 7.175 to 5.09 acres. The value of this section is thought to be approximately \$120,000 (it eliminates some of the premium lots). The council is agreeable to the selling of the 5.09-acre section for \$120,000.

- B. CARES Act — The province received a PPP loan (Paycheck Protection Program) through the CARES Act. It was administered by Tri City National Bank and made with the understanding that it would be forgiven if it was used for employee retention. Tri City is now collaborating with the Priests of the Sacred Heart to establish protocols for verification of the loan's use. The province is one of the first PPP recipients with which the bank is working to develop the verification process.
- C. Dehon House — The septic system at Dehon House is being reviewed; it is anticipated that it will need significant work. Several options for future use of the house have been discussed including the possibility of using it as an isolation area for a person who has contracted COVID-19, or as housing during anticipated remodeling of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. An employee has asked if the house could be rented for a year.
- D. SHSST remodeling — Fr. Raúl Gomez, SHSST president-rector, has suggested that the seminary remodeling project be started soon and that more bedrooms with private baths be created than originally planned. The reasons for this include the desire by many for less shared bathroom space in the wake of the pandemic, as well as making the building more attractive for conference rentals. One example: the bishops who hold their meeting at SHSST currently stay at a nearby hotel. If there were enough remodeled guest rooms with private baths they could stay at the seminary.
- E. Fundraising discussions — Dn. Nagel recently met with representatives from the Province Development Office and SHSST to discuss fundraising options for the seminary.
- F. Province Development Office — Income for the office has been steady; costs are down from the previous year. However, due to the pandemic there continues to be much uncertainty regarding finances; this is felt in all areas of the economy, not just those dependent on the generosity of benefactors.
- G. Province Audit — The firm of Clifton, Larson and Allen is doing the audits for the Province Development Office and the province itself. Much of the work is being done remotely. It is anticipated that the audits will be done by early November, 2020.

III. Administration

- A. Religious Formation Conference — The province has been invited to join the Religious Formation Conference. Its workshops are open to both members and non-members but there are discounts for membership. Members also gain access to a variety of resources. The council suggested that the formation team review the conference materials and determine whether the province should join the RFC. It is based in Chicago; the province has previously taken part in its programs.
- B. Formation — Fr. Joseph-Thien Dinh and Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec met with the Provincial Council. As they do at most meetings, the council invited the formation team to visit with them to get updates on the program and to dialogue on formation concerns. Fr. Morawiec is new to the program and said that Fr. Dinh has been updating him on the students and the responsibilities of the formation team.

The students have been divided between the formators; formators are expected to have weekly meetings with each of their students. The students are divided as follows:

Fr. Morawiec: Frater Hubert Liassidji, Jonathan Nguyen, Jacob Smith, Frater Thuan Nguyen, and Frater Phong Paul Hoang.

Fr. Dinh: Frater Thien Nguyen, Frater Hung Pham, Celsus Robert, Frater Truc Tran, and Michael Wodarczyk.

Fr. Morawiec is familiar with most of the students through his work at SHSST and as a member of the Sacred Heart Monastery Community. He has also reviewed the formation files. It was noted that the novitiate files of the recently professed need to be shared with the formators. Fr. Kilianski will contact Fr. Byron Haaland about this.

Regarding undergraduate studies, Marquette University is the preference of the Provincial Council. However, Cardinal Stritch is also a good option. The formation team must review each student to get a sense of where he will best thrive academically. It was noted that Cardinal Stritch does not offer majors in theology or philosophy but students can take enough classes in each to meet the requirements of the province formation program and the seminary application process.

The formators were reminded that it is important to have some group meetings with the professed that are separate from those with the candidates. It is important that students feel a sense of progression in formation; the rights and privileges of a professed SCJ are different than those of a candidate.

Participation in community prayer should be an expectation of all students in the program. This is not optional.

Fr. Dinh noted some of the challenges of having a formation program alongside other programs and groups, including the Sacred Heart Monastery Community and the SHSST community. This is a valid concern, said a councilor, but it is also an opportunity to learn how to balance and prioritize multiple commitments. This is a vital skill for future ministry and community life. It was suggested that Br. Duane Lemke, SHM superior, and Fr. Yvon Sheehy, residential director of ECS, attend the next council meeting along with the formation team to discuss common issues and expectations.

Talking about goals for the year, Fr. Morawiec said that a significant part of the formation program is the need to help students grow in their identity as SCJs, that this is at the heart of formation. Fr. Dinh noted the importance of helping students stay on the right path in various aspects of their lives, including academics and spirituality.

Fr. Morawiec asked about the relationship of the formators to the Vietnamese students. Fr. Kilanski said that they should be treated as any other member of the formation program. The Vietnamese District will make decisions regarding advancements in formation, but those decisions will be based on input from the formators in the US Province. A question was raised regarding travel — are the Vietnamese students able to go home for vacation? It was noted that no travel is allowed into Vietnam at this time because of the pandemic. This question will be reviewed at a later date.

The formators were asked to review the Religious Formation Conference materials and indicate whether they thought that the province should join the RFC.

Fr. Kilanski thanked Frs. Dinh and Morawiec for their ministry to the congregation.

- C. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Fr. Raúl Gomez, SHSST president-rector, joined the council by video conference to share updates on the seminary. Protocols regarding COVID-19 are in place; however, due to the Wisconsin infection rate, the seminary might not move to Phase 3 in October as hoped. The situation is closely monitored and will be adjusted as necessary.

Theresa Illingworth is leaving her job as executive assistant at SHSST for a new position with a foundation. Her last day on campus is Friday, September 18. The seminary is in the process of seeking a new executive assistant; there have already been several inquiries. Theresa has been with SHSST for 11 years.

Chris Lambert, Linda Church and Dn. Nagel have been in communication about the possibility of revisioning how IT services are provided to the Province Development Office, Provincial Office and SHSST. These talks are in the early stages. However, it was noted that technology demands will continue to increase, especially in light of the pandemic.

The seminary has submitted paperwork to have its PPP loan forgiven. Institutions of higher education have been invited to apply for more financial assistance through the Department of Education. This is to assist with classroom technology and payroll. Chris Lambert is preparing the application; the deadline is September 30.

As Dn. Nagel noted earlier, representatives from SHSST (Chris McAtee and Monica Misesy) met with Pam Milczarski of the Province Development Office to discuss possibilities for collaboration in regard to fundraising for the renovation of the south wing of SHSST. Ideas included a return to the purchase of bricks with donors' names engraved on them, as well as a "donate" button on the SHSST website that would go directly to the Development Office. Dn. Nagel and Mark Wenzel were to meet with the architect to touch base on the renovation project; work was delayed due to the pandemic.

Fr. Gomez was asked about the number of MDiv students enrolled this semester; he said that he didn't have the final count at hand but thought that it was approximately 60. This is in addition to MA, Cor Unum, and other students at Sacred Heart. The seminary has been hosting "meet and greet" sessions on Zoom for those discerning a vocation; SHSST also sponsored a portion of the recent virtual CMSM gathering as a way to get the seminary's name out. A video is in process that will be aimed at vocation directors.

Fr. Kilanski thanked Fr. Gomez for his leadership at SHSST, noting that he offers an excellent service not only to the seminary but also to the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

- D. Dehonian Family Committee — The following people have been appointed as additions to the Dehonian Family Committee: Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Br. Diego Diaz, Bridget Martin and Joe Tyrell. Current members include Mary Gorski, Steve Koepke, Fr. Jack Kurps, Dn. David Nagel and Mike Tyrell.

David Schimmel, current director of Dehonian Associates, will retire in October. The following have been appointed to the search committee for a possible new director: Mary Gorski, Fr. Jack Kurps and Mike Tyrell.

- E. Justice, Peace and Reconciliation — Mark Peters, province director of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, plans to retire next year. He met with the council, via video conference, to discuss a survey that is being developed by the Provincial Council in collaboration with the JPR Commission to help the council get a sense of the direction in which the province membership would like to move in regard to social justice concerns. Using the drafts prepared by the JPR Commission, along with input from the Provincial Council, Mary Gorski will finalize a survey which will be reviewed by Fr. Kilianski. The survey will be done through SurveyMonkey and sent to province membership in the next few weeks.

Fr. Kilianski thanked the JPR Commission and Mark Peters for their work not only on the survey but on social justice in general.

- F. Ratio Formationis Provincialis — The General Council approved the *Ratio Formationis Provincialis*, but with several observations. Fr. John Czyzynski, Fr. Jack Kurps and Br. Frank Presto reviewed the observations and incorporated them into the *Ratio*. The Provincial Council voted to approve the updated *Ratio Formationis Provincialis*. It will soon be disseminated for use in the formation program.

Fr. Kilianski will write a letter indicating the approval date of the *Ratio*.

- G. Self-isolation concerns — When Wisconsin issued Stay at Home orders in March, several members of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML began to self-isolate. It was thought by many in society that after a limited period of isolation, careful interaction with others, especially members of one's own household, would return.

Although as a society there are still significant gaps in the management of the pandemic, within the community at SHML good precautions have been put in place to protect the community and its staff. There have been no positive cases of COVID-19 at SHML.

However, several SCJs at SHML continue to self-isolate from the community. Fear of the virus is understandable, but those continuing self-isolation have been inconsistent in their practice of it. Most choose not to eat in the community dining room, yet periodically attend special moments with the community. Or, while choosing not to join their own community for a meal some will visit with people outside of SHML, or go to a store or other public place. This negates the reason for self-isolation. Some SCJs purchase their own food even though food is available for the community.

Fr. Kilianski wrote to Fr. Carlos Luis Suarez Codorniu for advice. He urged Fr. Kilianski to seek dialogue and reflection with those who continue to self-isolate from the community. Community should be a place of support and well-being. No risk can ever be fully mitigated, but SHML has done a great deal to make its space safe for those living within it.

Councilors endorsed Fr. Kilianski's decision to have an individual meeting with each SCJ who has been self-isolating. These meetings will be a moment to express concerns and talk about what can be done to help each person begin to re-enter the community, even in a partial way. Inconsistencies in regard to isolation will be discussed, as well as redundant spending (outside of special moments, members of the community should eat the food that is provided, even if the person does not participate in community meals). Fr. Kilianski will soon contact each of the isolated SCJs to schedule a time to meet individually. Fr. Quang Nguyen will also take part in each meeting in his role as local superior.

- H. Province Zoom Gathering — Due to the pandemic, there has not been an opportunity for members of the province to gather together either for an assembly or for celebrations. Even provincial visitations have been put on hold.

On Tuesday, November 17, the Provincial Council will host a Zoom gathering for SCJs in active ministry in the US Province. It will take place from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. (central). This will be an informal visit, allowing SCJs to check-in with each other and share a bit about how things are going in their communities and ministries. It will also be a moment for the province membership to let Fr. Ed Kilianski and councilors know if there are ways that they can assist them during this time of pandemic.

Invitations and more information about the meeting will be sent by email several weeks prior to the Zoom visit. Fr. Kilianski is looking at the possibility of similar gatherings with other groups in the province, such as senior SCJs.

- I. State of the Province report — The council discussed the preparation of the State of the Province report for the 2021 Provincial Election Assembly. A possibility which will be investigated includes a brief video that highlights moments in the province since the last election; this would be paired with reports from communities and ministries in which a representative from each answers a question such as, “What are the challenges that this ministry faces as it looks toward the future?” The reports can assist the next administration in identifying the needs and challenges of the province.

The State of the Province will remain on the council’s agenda in the months ahead. In November, the council hopes to review a list of communities and ministries that should give reports and identify the people who would represent them.

Br. Andy Gancarczyk agreed to edit the opening video if the council decides to pursue this option.

- J. Accreditation Standards — Br. Presto reviewed the 2020 revision to the Instruments of Hope and Healing, the protection standards issued by CMSM (Conference of Major Superiors of Men). The 2020 standards were approved by CMSM in August; Praesidium was instrumental in their development. Br. Presto is in the process of adapting the province policies to the 2020 standards and plans to have a draft for the council to review at its November meeting. Among the concerns that Br. Presto noted was the fact that the term “vulnerable person” was not defined in the standards.

The new standards call for an exchange of information during the transition of administrations so that a new provincial superior is aware of situations that developed during the prior administration. Regardless of the standard, Fr. Kilianski said that the previous provincial superior was open in sharing situations and issues of concern with him during the transition of leadership and he planned to do the same.

In adapting the standards to the province policy, councilors prefer — when possible and appropriate — to *recommend* a directive as opposed to *mandating* it. This gives leadership a strong direction, but also allows for adaptation as needed for particular situations.

Councilors agreed with Br. Presto’s recommendation to encourage the next administration to set aside time at a future assembly for training. SCJs in public ministry are required to take a minimum number of training hours each year; doing such training at an assembly would allow a significant number of SCJs to get trained on a topic chosen by the provincial administration. Worthwhile topics for such a workshop include boundary issues and internet pornography.

It was suggested that when the revision to the province policy is complete that it be sent to each member of the province and that each member sign a document that indicates that he has received, read and agrees to the policy. This document would be on file at the Provincial Offices.

IV. Membership

- A. Fr. Johnny Klingler — Fr. Klingler’s health is deteriorating significantly; he is suffering from increased confusion and difficulty with mobility. Family will be visiting him in October; they will stay at a nearby hotel.
- B. Fr. Jerzy (George) Mordalski — Fr. Mordalski has been assigned as parochial vicar of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, as of September 28.
- C. Fr. Thi Pham — The council voted to approve Fr. Pham’s revised sabbatical budget for a total of \$34,852. Fr. Pham plans to camp during much of his sabbatical.
- D. Fr. Praveen Kumar Richard — Fr. Richard will transfer to Lower Brule, SD, where he will live in the community house with Fr. Hendrik and serve as a member of the pastoral team. Fr. Kilianski has spoken to him about this as a possibility; he will now contact Fr. Richard more formally about the new assignment.
- E. Fr. Duy Nguyen — Fr. D. Nguyen was to spend most of his leave of absence in Houston; however, he recently returned to Chicago to be with his father who is suffering from significant health issues. Fr. D. Nguyen plans to rent a house from parishioners of Our Lady of Guadalupe. He would like to be able to celebrate Mass; Fr. Kilianski will remind him that he needs to have faculties to do so. Fr. John Czyzynski is Fr. D. Nguyen’s contact during his leave of absence; they have been in regular communication. Fr. Kilianski said that Fr. D. Nguyen misses the community but continues to be in discernment about his vocation.

- V. Next meeting — The council will next meet by conference call on Tuesday, September 22, at 11:00 a.m. (central)

CALENDAR

November 10-11:	Provincial Council meeting
November 17:	Zoom meeting for those in active ministry
December 15-16:	Provincial Council meeting
January 26-27, 2021	Provincial Council meeting
March 9-10:	Provincial Council meeting
May 4-5:	Provincial Council meeting
June 8:	Provincial Council conference call to discuss advancements in formation; time to be determined.
July 26-30:	Provincial Election Assembly
September 14-15:	Provincial Council meeting (transition of out-going and in-coming administrations).

NECROLOGY

+Fr. Italo Rocchi, a member of the Southern Italian Province, died on September 4. He was 70 years old, professed his first vows in 1968, and was ordained a priest in 1978.

+Fr. Savino Palermo, a member of the Southern Italian Province, died on September 1. He was 92, professed his first vows in 1947, and was ordained a priest in 1956.

+Fr. Benno Hansel, a member of the German Province, died today, August 31. He was born in 1932, professed in 1956 and was ordained in 1962. Many SCJs from the US Province knew Fr. Benno from his years of ministry in South Africa.

+Fr. Kazimierz Sroczyński, a member of the Polish Province living in Switzerland, died on August 27. He was born in 1944, professed in 1961 and ordained in 1969.