

This issue

Minutes of the
December 15-16, 2020,
US Provincial Council
meeting p. 1

JPR Commission meeting
notes, November 30,
2020, p. 6

Calendar, p. 8

Necrology, p. 8

U.S. Province Priests of the Sacred Heart

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Minutes of the 905th US Provincial Council Meeting December 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. Fr. Charles Brown was present for discussion of the Dehon Study Center; Fr. Raúl Gómez-Ruiz, SHSST president-rector, joined by video conference for an update on the seminary; Mary Balistreri, province director of healthcare, for discussion of health issues.

- I. Check-in — Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries and communities. Fr. Q. Nguyen noted that the Admissions Board accepted Ariel Alonto as a candidate during the November Admissions Weekend. The board meetings were done via video conference due to the pandemic; this was the first time such a process was utilized by the province. The next Admissions Board Weekend will be in May; there are several men in process as possible applicants.

Fr. Kilianski recently completed the first of the Provincial Visitations; it was with the St. Joseph Community at SHML and St. Francis Residence; on November 17 he will do the visitation of the novitiate community.

South Dakota has been hit hard by the pandemic; Fr. Hendrik said that he has had several funerals for people who have died of COVID-19.

- II. Finances
 - A. Payroll Protection Program — The Small Business Administration (SBA) forgave the PPP loan that the province received as a part of the CARES Act. The total was for \$431,036. The loan status of several province entities, such as Sacred Heart Southern Missions, is still in process but it is anticipated that these will also be forgiven. If such loans are offered again — which offer assistance in maintaining employees — the province will most likely apply for them.
 - B. Province Development Office — The Christmas development campaigns are going well; however, mail destined for sorting at St. Joseph's Indian School was delayed briefly by the US Postal Service due to a technical error which has since been addressed.
 - C. SHSST remodeling project — Construction meetings have been taking place with the Franklin City Planning Commission and others in regard to Phase III of the SHSST remodeling project. The Wisconsin state review of the plans is scheduled for early January. Costs of the project have gone up approximately \$700,000 from initial estimates. However, the bid for the remodeling was approximately \$1 million less than anticipated, so the overall cost is still within the budgeted range. Funding for the project will come from the Support and Maintenance Trust (\$1 million), the CGA pool (\$1 million) and a \$3 million loan from the SHSST Endowment Fund. Dn. Nagel said that the recent return on investments in the Charitable Gift Annuity Fund, as well as matured contracts, opens excess funds that can be applied toward the renovation.

Preparations are being done in anticipation of the start of the project in early 2021. Classrooms have been emptied; the maintenance staff is in the process of removing furni-

ture from the student rooms. Dehon House, as well as several guest rooms at SHSST and SHM, will be used to house seminarians who will be displaced during the project.

- D. Financial competencies — The General Curia, following changes from the Holy See, has increased the financial competency levels. Dn. Nagel, noting that the province levels were significantly outdated, proposed a new set of competencies. The document remains in process.
- E. Procedural audits — An engagement letter was sent to Clifton, Larsen, Allen, LLP to conduct the procedural audit of the Growth and Charitable Gift Annuity Pools. The work will be done in early February.
- F. Budgets — The annual letter regarding budgets will be sent to budget preparers in early January. Capital requests will be due by February 5; full budgets will be due April 9. The Province Finance Commission will meet April 21, and the council will review the budgets at their May meeting.

III. Administration

- A. Liturgical calendar — In recent months the General Administration has forwarded a number of prayer services for special days in the liturgical calendar of the congregation. Fr. Stephen Huffstetter asked Br. Presto if there had been any comments regarding them. When he distributed a service on December 10, Br. Presto invited SCJs to share their thoughts about the prayer aids. Eight people responded. Many wrote that they found the information within the services to be interesting but that there are too many and that they come too late to adequately plan for their use in the community. Several suggested that they would best be used in formation communities. Others said that the style of some is outdated. Another said that what might be more helpful would be to compile all of the prayer services for a year in one book that could be used as an on-going resource. For the wider public, social media materials might be helpful.
- B. Province Elections — At their November meeting, the council discussed the possibility of the pandemic impacting the ability to hold the July 26-30, 2021 Provincial Election Assembly. Fr. Kilianski sent an informal survey to voting members of the province to get their opinion on several scenarios, including a mail-in election, a hybrid model that would mix discussion online with mail-in ballots, the extension of the current administration with the election assembly at a time deemed safer for travel and large-group gatherings, or moving forward with the original dates as planned.

All of the possibilities received support; however, the option most favored by electors was an extension of the current administration and a postponement of the election assembly.

After discussing the input of the voting membership, the council voted to postpone the Provincial Election Assembly until January 3-7, 2022 and extend the current administration's term until February 7, 2022. This will allow approximately a month for the administrative transition. Fr. Kilianski recused himself from the vote. He will contact the general administration to seek permission for the extension.

Sixty-five out of a possible 73 electors responded to the survey. Fr. Ed expressed his gratitude for their input.

Discussion of the State of the Province Report is to remain on the agenda of future meetings to ensure that a plan for the report can be put in place well before the election assembly.

- C. Dehonian Associates — Fr. Kilianski has spoken with Sr. Cathy Bertrand about the possibility of becoming the next director of Dehonian Associates. She is very interested in the position and will speak to her religious superior about it. Sr. Bertrand will get back to Fr. Kilianski in January with a decision. An advertisement for the director's position was posted in *National Catholic Reporter* but there have been no inquiries from it.

The Dehonian Associates committee recently met by video conference to welcome new members. During that meeting, preliminary discussions took place regarding the next Mission Education Conference. Following the three-year schedule, the next conference would be in 2022 in Wisconsin. A possibility suggested was to have it in conjunction with the Dehon Lecture, especially if the superior general is rescheduled for that time. Another possibility is to have Mission Education be a kick-off to a year-long celebration of the 100th anniversary of the US Province.

- D. Formation — The council voted in individual votes to approve Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong, Jacob Smith and Michael Wodarczyk for postulancy. They will join Celsus Robert in the postulancy program. The council also voted to approve Frater (Paul) Phong Hoang for the Ministry of Acolyte.

- E. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Fr. Raúl Gómez-Ruiz, SHSST president-rector, joined the council for a brief update on the seminary. The seminary completed its fall semester with online classes; a decision will be made on January 11 regarding the class model to be used at the start of the spring semester. It is hoped that students can return to a hybrid model that would include in-person classes, but if COVID numbers are still high, classes will begin online. The seminary recently received a substantial grant from COVID-relief funds provided to institutions of higher learning through the Department of Education. The money will be used to help facilitate online/remote learning, as well as employment costs. Fr. Gómez spoke about the increased number of reports and other government protocol that institutions of higher learning are expected to attend to. These concern a variety of issues including Title IX regulations and international students.
- F. Province policies — The council voted to approve adaptations recently made to the province policies titled “Protecting the People of God.” This is a continuation of a process begun in 2005. Most of the adaptations are clarifications. For example, in the section that prohibits having “minors(s) or vulnerable adult(s)” stay in an SCJ residence, the word “unaccompanied” was added before the text.

Members of the province will soon be sent the revised policies, along with a signature sheet to indicate that they have read, understood and will abide by the requirements of the policies. Br. Presto was thanked for his work on this project.

- G. Ratio Formationis Provincialis — The *Ratio*, approved at the November council meeting, is available in the Members section of the US Province website. The hardcopy is at the printer and is expected to be distributed within the next two weeks.
- H. Zoom Assembly — The council briefly discussed the province assembly of those in active ministry; it took place via Zoom on November 17. Overall, there seemed to be a very favorable response to it; SCJs appreciated seeing and hearing each other. Just about everyone who was invited took part in the assembly. The format encouraged communication from all participants; Fr. Kilianski tried to engage each person. Many of the Provincial Visitations will also be done by Zoom.
- I. Health concerns — Mary Balistreri, province director of healthcare, met with the council for a dialogue on various health issues.
1. COVID-19 vaccine — Ms. Balistreri said that she has been in communication with the Franklin Health Department in regard to the COVID-19 vaccine. Most likely, the SCJs at SHML will be in the third wave of the first phase of those eligible for the vaccine. Ms. Balistreri said that the side effects of the vaccine are very minimal and she encourages everyone to get it. The council passed two resolutions regarding the vaccine:

RESOLUTION 1 — The council voted to strongly encourage all members of the US Province to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are eligible to do so.

RESOLUTION 2 — The council voted to strongly encourage all employees of the US Province and its ministries to get a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are eligible to do so.

2. SCJs with medical concerns
 - a. Br. Clay Diaz — Guardianship for Br. Diaz has been established; Br. Duane Lemke and Br. Brian Tompkins are his guardians. The SCJs on his care team also speak to him by phone regularly (Fr. Kurps, Fr. John Czyzynski, Br. Ray Kozuch and Br. Lemke). Br. Diaz’ physical health has improved significantly; he has lost 35 pounds since June, his insulin needs have lessened, and his cardiac health is much more stable.
 - b. Fr. Bob Tucker — Fr. Tucker is making steady progress in weaning from the ventilator. Once he becomes better weaned from the vent, he will need significant physical therapy; at this time he can sit and briefly stand with assistance.
 - c. Fr. Bob Naglich — Fr. Naglich is approximately a year post-transplant and has generally been doing well, though more recently a few concerns have arisen. He is to have medical tests in the near future.
 - d. Fr. Tim Gray — Fr. Gray is now considered cancer free; he was previously treated for bladder cancer.
3. Power of Attorney — Ms. Balistreri said that she will be working with Fr. Vincent Suparman to update the POAs of several members of the Pinellas Park community. Fr. Frank Burshnick was listed on several forms; he is now deceased.

- J. Dehon Study Center — Fr. Charles Brown joined the council for discussion of the Dehon Study Center; he also met with the council about the center at its November meeting. Since the November meeting, Fr. Brown has visited the center and reviewed its materials. He said that the materials are well organized, but there is concern that many items are on flash drives. This, he said, is a fragile way to store documents.

Fr. Brown shared his proposal for the center. He suggests renaming it “The Dehon Center for Faith in Society” and moving it from SHML to SHSST in the area that now houses the museum (across the from the library). The move would require some minor remodeling (most likely, the addition of a wall) and a review of the current museum display. The center would be available to the public (moving it to SHSST would help to facilitate this) and “be guided by the social teachings of the Roman Catholic Church” and the “principles of collaboration, dialogue and consensus.” The current materials would be considered a founding collection to be expanded upon. He suggests that an advisory body be created to assist in implementing the principles of the center; he has already spoken to several people who have expressed interest in serving on the advisory committee (he hopes that at least one younger Dehonian can be a part of it). Fr. Brown envisions the center being a place for outreach to people of other backgrounds and faiths, something akin to the Donald S. Nesti, CSSp Center for Faith and Culture at the University of St. Thomas in Houston

Having the center at SHSST would help to enhance the Dehonian presence at the seminary. If it is to be moved, SHSST, and in particular, its library staff, will need to be consulted in regard to the proposed location of the center and its relationship with the library.

Fr. Brown is interested in serving as director of the center. If the council appoints him as director, he said that he would initially like to continue teaching part-time at SHSST.

In dialogue about the proposal and Fr. Brown’s interest in serving as the center’s director, councilors asked Fr. Brown if he envisions making more of the founder’s work available in English. This was something to which Fr. PJ McGuire devoted much time. Fr. Brown said that he is fluent in French (the language of most of Fr. Dehon’s writings) and would happy to continue to translate more of the founder’s works.

After Fr. Brown left the room, the council discussed his presentation. Councilors are in favor of the center’s move to SHSST; however, they would like to retain the name, “Dehon Study Center,” in keeping with the original mission of the center. Fr. Brown proposes expanding the center’s mission; the council would like the primary focus of the center — at this time — to be on making the founder’s writings better known. It is important that the advisory board (or committee) assist the director in defining the center’s priorities and then ensuring that the director remains on task in pursuing them.

The council voted to appoint Fr. Charles Brown as director of the Dehon Study Center on a part-time basis, effective immediately. This is a five-year term that will be reviewed by the council after the first year. In making the appointment, the council established the following timeline for Fr. Brown:

1) Have a list of proposed names for the Dehon Study Center Advisory Committee ready for review by the council at its January 26-27 meeting; 2) Have an initial budget and list of priorities for the center available for review by the council at its March 9-10 meeting (both tasks are to be done in collaboration with the Advisory Committee); 3) Consult with the appropriate personnel at SHSST about Fr. Brown’s teaching schedule and how he can arrange his work as director around it; and 4) Put in place what needs to be done to relocate the Dehon Study Center to SHSST by the start of the Fall 2021 semester. It was suggested that the company that is doing the renovation at SHSST be consulted in regard to work that may need to be done to allow for the relocation. Perhaps they can do this immediately after the renovation is complete;

Before concluding their discussion of the Dehon Study Center, the council expressed its thanks to Fr. Jim Schroeder, who has assisted with the center, working with David Schimmel until David’s retirement in October.

- K. Justice, Peace and Reconciliation Commission — The JPR Commission asked Fr. Kilianski if he would be open to the commission inviting SCJs in temporary vows, and perhaps candidates, to serve on the commission. The council is open to having SCJs in temporary vows being on the commission, but not candidates. Because of its status as a commission, established by a provincial chapter, councilors believe that the only lay people who should serve on it are those who have a direct connection to the mission of the commission. For example, the JPR director sits on the JPR Commission.

IV. Personnel

- A. Fr. Joseph Quang Tran — A newly ordained Vietnamese priest is to replace Fr. J.Q. Tran in spring, assuming that travel restrictions are lifted by then. He will work with Fr. J.Q. Tran for several months at St. Martin of Tours where he will serve as associate pastor with pastoral responsibility for the Vietnamese Catholic community.
 - B. Fr. Jean-Claude Mbassi — An adaptive car will be available for Fr. Mbassi on December 21. He has his learner's permit and will be able to take his driver's test with the new car. He is looking forward to his assignment in South Dakota.
 - C. Fr. Praveen Kumar Richard — It is the superior general's desire that Fr. Richard return to India to do the development work that he was sent to the United States to learn about. Fr. Richard will most likely leave the US Province when travel is possible. Fr. Kilianski has spoken to Fr. Stephen Huffstetter about the US Province's need for international assistance. The general administration has asked other entities to consider sending someone to the United States to assist with a new campus ministry project.
 - D. Fr. Duy Nguyen — Fr. D. Nguyen plans to return to the community at the end of his leave of absence.
 - E. Frater Henry Nguyen — Frater H. Nguyen will leave for Ecuador on December 28; he will do the second half of his pastoral year there after beginning it in Mississippi. Fr. V. Nguyen will check with SHSST to see if any adjustments are needed in regard to his educational obligations with the seminary.
 - F. Fr. Richard MacDonald — Fr. MacDonald's travel plans to SHML are unknown at this time. He would like to get the COVID-19 vaccine before traveling.
- V. Future meetings — The council will next meet by conference call on Tuesday, December 22, at 1:30 p.m. central. Also, a council meeting was added to the 2021 calendar: July 27-28. Previously scheduled meetings: January 26-27, March 9-10, May 4-5, and a June 8th conference call to discuss advancements in formation; time to be determined.

Notes from Justice Peace & Reconciliation Commission Meeting
November 30, 2020

Via Zoom

Present: Fr. Guy Blair, Fr. Bob Bossie, Fr. Wayne Jenkins, Mark Peters, Fr. Ed Zemlik.

Prayer: After “check-in,” Wayne led us in a prayer of thanksgiving.

Priorities for Next Few Months: We discussed our priorities for the next few months until Mark retires. While immigration and the climate crisis remain the Province’s official top social justice priorities, we are unclear what the Province is looking for right now.

On immigration, “CCMR” (the “Catholic Coalition for Migrants and Refugees” that the US Province spearheaded but was recently turned over to other leaders) seems to have run its course, with only 14 people responding to the call for a member meeting in December and only 1 volunteering to work on legislative advocacy during the crucial first 100 days of the Biden administration. NAMC is also struggling with how to engage the US and Canadian communities, and we want to see where they decide to go at their meeting on Dec. 3 and how we might coordinate with them.

On the climate crisis, this is also a critical time, and we will be watching the new administration and Congress for how they respond. But beyond education, we don’t see a way to get the Province more engaged on this issue either, except for the occasional email alert. We had hoped to address the connection of this issue with migration at the June Assembly along with NAMC, but due to the pandemic that opportunity was lost. Right now, we agreed that we need to educate ourselves more about the ways that climate change is contributing to weather and natural disasters, increased pressure to migrate, public health, struggles over resources, and wars and other violence.

We hope that the upcoming JPR survey conducted by the Provincial Council will provide some helpful feedback and direction, but for now we see two other areas that will be top priorities for both the Director/Office and the Commission between now and spring:

Monitoring the formation of the Biden Cabinet and naming of other key officials and advocating for people and policies that take not only the migration and climate crises seriously, but also approach these and other issues, like universal healthcare and economic and racial justice, from a standpoint in keeping with Catholic social teaching. We may not be in a position to have a lot of impact, but we want to speak out and call others to act with us as best we can. To this aim, Mark will approach some of his colleagues in J/P ministry in other men’s and women’s religious congregations to see what they are doing and how we might collaborate. He has already reached out to Tony Cube of the USCCB about their Justice for Immigrants agenda for comprehensive legislative reforms and is awaiting a reply.

The JPR Commission will be reaching out to SCJs, those in formation, and lay people to rejuvenate the Commission since Fr. Ed Kilianski has told us that the Province is committed to maintaining a JPR Commission. We would like to invite potential members, including our Fraters and candidates, to attend one of our meetings to talk about how the Commission can promote justice education and advocacy over the coming years as the Province faces many other challenges as well. We will also talk in future meetings about various volunteer roles that will need to be filled to keep the Commission running. After the results of the Council’s survey are in, we will take them under advisement and offer our own recommendations to our leadership.

Besides these two key priorities, we will continue to look at the need and possibilities for “reconciliation” after a long period of growing divisions within our country and even our own friends, families and communi-

ties. We invite SCJs to share with us their thoughts on the growing calls for reconciliation and the response of others that reconciliation may not be possible until other steps are taken. What does a Dehonian perspective on reconciliation have to offer at this moment in U.S. history?

Next Meeting: Monday, December 14 from 11 AM - Noon and 1-2 PM via Zoom.

CALENDAR

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.
September 14-15:	Provincial Council meeting (transition of out-going and in-coming administrations).
January 3-7, 2022:	Provincial Election Assembly

Provincial Visitation schedule (meetings will be done via Zoom and in-person):

Sacred Heart Community at SHML January 4-8, 2021

Sacred Heart Monastery from January 18-22

St. Michael Community in Mississippi from February 2-4

South Dakota from February 8-10

Sacred Heart Community, Pinellas Park, FL, from February 22-25

Texas from March 1-4

March 15-17 meetings with individuals who were not covered in the community visitations.

NECROLOGY

+ **Romuald Skowronek**, a member of the Polish Province, died on November 18. He was born in 1930, professed in 1949 and ordained in 1954.

+ **Fr. Vincenzo Pinto**, a member of the South Italian Province, died on November 25. He was born in 1941, professed in 1958 and ordained in 1966.

+ **Fr. Evaristo José Martínez de Alegría Oroquieta**, a member of the Spanish Province, died on December 5. He was born in 1939, professed in 1956 and ordained in 1964.

+ **Fr. Stanisław Dadej**, a member of the Polish Province, died December 7. He was born in 1933, professed in 1951 and ordained in 1959.

+ **Fr. Ilario Cavaliere**, a member of the North Italian Province, died on December 10. He was born in 1933, professed in 1953 and ordained in 1980.

+ **Fr. Sebastianus Budiwinoto**, a member of the Indonesian Province, died on December 12, his birthday. He was born in 1942, professed in 1974 and ordained in 1977.

+ **Fr. Fransiskus Xaverius Heru Atmaja**, a member of the Indonesian Province, died on December 14. He was born in 1953, professed in 1977 and ordained in 1980.