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U.S. Province Priests of the Sacred Heart

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Minutes of the 911th US Provincial Council Meeting September 14-15, 2021

PRESENT: Fr. Ed Kilianski, Provincial Superior; Fr. Quang Nguyen, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Christianus Hendrik (video conference), and Fr. Vien Nguyen, Councilors; Dn. David Nagel, Provincial Treasurer; Br. Frank Presto, Provincial Secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary. Fr. Raúl Gómez-Ruiz, SHSST President-Rector, joined the council for an update on the seminary. Fr. Byron Haaland, Fr. Andrzej Sudol, Fr. Joseph-Thien Dinh and Duy Nguyen were present for discussion for the formation program. Br. Duane Lemke was present for discussion of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation. Mary Balistreri was present for discussion of healthcare concerns. Excused: Br. Andy Gancarczyk.

I. Check-in — Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries, and communities. Items of note:

- The full South Dakota community recently held its first in-person meeting since the start of the pandemic. Fr. Hendrik spoke briefly about a few members of the community.
- Fr. Q. Nguyen noted that several members of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML are struggling with significant health concerns. Br. John Monek is very weak; he was to be anointed the next day. Fr. Johnny Klingler seems to be doing well with the visit of siblings, who are here for his birthday.
- The potential candidate who was to come before the Admissions Board in October has decided to withdraw from the process.
- The local SCJ community in Mississippi invited approximately 100 people from the parishes to come to an introductory session about the Dehonian Associates program. Approximately 40 people attended one of four sessions (one was in Spanish, three were in English). It is expected that most will continue with the one-year Dehonian Associates study program, which was first used in 2016.
- Br. Diego Diaz has been able to rearrange his ministry commitments so that he can be more present at the schools. At Holy Family, this has allowed several students from Spanish-speaking homes to enroll at the school.
- Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology is in session; there is a sense of being “back to life,” said Fr. V. Nguyen, noting that classes and staff are all in-person.
- Fr. Mark Mastin is now living on campus as a formator to the non-SCJ SHSST seminarians.
- Br. Andy Gancarczyk and Fr. Andrzej Sudol each received his permanent residency documentation from the US government (green cards). Br. Presto said that the process used to take a few months, but now can take several years. Fr. Jerzy Mordalski has not been able to return to the United States following a family visit in Poland due to pandemic-related travel restrictions. Travelers who are not US citizens or green card holders cannot travel to the US if they have been in Schengen countries (most of Europe) within 14 days of their travel.

II. Finance

- A. Audits — The on-site work for the audits of the Province Development Office, the Province Office, and SHSST has been completed. All should be ready for review at the October

Provincial Council meeting. John Kuxhause, province accountant, will be available at the meeting to answer questions. The audits were done by CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP.

- B. Province Development Office — Dn. Nagel reported that donations have been good during the past year, and expenses are lower than recent years. The oversight of the program by the development team at St. Joseph’s Indian School has worked well.
 - C. SHSST remodeling project — The majority of the SHSST remodeling work was done prior to the start of the fall semester. However, the occupancy permit was postponed due to delays in the installation of the permanent HVAC systems. This was because of supply chain issues regarding the computer chips for the units. Students stayed in a nearby hotel for approximately a week; the expense was shared by the province and SHSST. It is expected that the final occupancy permit will be issued at the end of September.
 - D. SCJ Medical Plan — The plan renews on October 1; the estimated monthly premium per individual is expected to be \$1,340 (this is up from \$1,225). The province now has coverage, under a separate policy, for organ transplants. This year, the stop-loss coverage was used for two SCJs.
 - E. Fall meetings — Board meetings, as well as meetings of the Investment Committee (November 18), will take place in the next few months. Dn. Nagel noted that St. Joseph’s Indian School is developing a program to give staff and house parents a “critical history” of the school. The school is trying to find an appropriate balance between sharing challenges of the past, while also celebrating the unique nature of St. Joseph’s when looking at it under the broader umbrella of Native American boarding schools.
 - F. Car requests — The Cameroon Province requested a grant from the US Province to purchase an adaptive car for an SCJ priest who has had an amputation. The District of Ecuador also requested a grant to purchase a vehicle. The council endorsed Fr. Kilianski’s decision to not fulfill the requests at this time. The US Province is committed to expenses related to the SHSST remodeling project. Also, the council agreed that such requests should go through the General Treasurer — not to individual entities — to allow the General Administration to have a full picture of the expenditures and grants in the congregation.
- III. Formation — Frs. Byron Haaland, Andrzej Sudol, Joseph Dinh and Duy Nguyen joined the council for a dialogue and update on the formation program. The novices recently had their first meeting of the Intercongregational Novitiate in Chicago; it took place at Catholic Theological Union. Approximately 50 novices from various orders are in the program this year. The SCJ novices will soon go with Fr. Byron to South Dakota to learn about SCJ ministries there and enjoy some cultural sightseeing. The formation community at Sacred Heart Monastery is settling into the new routines of school, prayer and general community life. They have done several social events together, including a day trip to Chicago. The SHM formation community and Novitiate community also do shared gatherings, among them: a BBQ for Labor Day, and First Fridays.

The SHM formation community invites the ECS students to join them for a social on Fridays. The ECS students are also welcome at prayer.

It was noted that Fra. Phong (Paul) Hoang is on his pastoral year in Lower Brule, SD. Fr. Dinh is his primary formation contact during the year.

Before concluding their visit, councilors and the formation team discussed the issue of individualism and how it can be challenging in religious life. It is important that it be addressed in formation. People who choose to live in community must spend time in community. To do so, community life must be lived intentionally.

Fr. Kilianski thanked the formators for their work, adding that formation is the most important ministry of the province. Formation is what ensures the future of the SCJs.

IV. Administration

- A. South Dakota — The Provincial Council formally endorsed the newly appointed administration for South Dakota: Fr. Greg Schill (local superior), Frater Long Nguyen (local treasurer), Fr. Joe Dean (first councilor), and the rest of the community as house council.
- B. 100th anniversary — July 23, 2023 will be the 100th anniversary of the first SCJ ministry in the United States (Lower

Brule). Although it is anticipated that there will be a significant celebration in Lower Brule on the date itself, it was suggested that there be a year-long anniversary year leading up to it, perhaps with a celebration in each community in the province prior to the Lower Brule gathering. Other suggestions previously discussed: commemorative prayer cards, a small historical booklet (perhaps in collaboration with the development offices), a series of historical “factoids” and photos to be shared on the websites of province ministries, and an historical video.

Dr. Paul Monson, SHSST assistant professor of Church History, is researching SCJ history in South Dakota as a part of a book project. He said that he is open to assisting the province in its preparations for the anniversary.

There will be a Provincial Chapter in 2023; perhaps this can incorporate the anniversary theme.

- C. 2022 Province Election Assembly — The council reviewed the lists of SCJs who are eligible and available for elected office; these will be sent to the general administration for approval.

Councilors discussed the format of the State of the Province report (it will include both a video and written component). Br. Presto will send a letter to local superiors and ministry directors regarding their input. Their reports should be no more than two pages (preferably one) and include a summary description of the ministry/community and a list of pressing needs or issues. The reports can be delegated by the superior/director, however, each report must be signed by the person who prepared it.

Members of the council discussed contingency plans if the pandemic affects the ability to hold an in-person assembly. The council’s strong desire is to hold an assembly, but there is also the realization that the province needs to be prepared if such a gathering is not possible. Fr. Kilianski and Br. Presto will check with the General Administration to find out if electronic voting is possible if needed. It was noted that the election is only consultative; the General Administration names leadership; perhaps this means that Fr. General can grant use of electronic balloting. The Conference of Major Superiors of Men did its voting this year by electronic ballot. The Vatican has allowed for the use of electronic voting in some situations due to the pandemic.

The council reviewed the schedule of the previous election assembly and agreed that it is a good model to follow. The assembly will begin with prayer at 1:15 p.m. on Monday, January 3. The following days will begin at 9:00 a.m. No activities will be planned for the evenings; there is the possibility that the assembly may need to meet in an evening session to complete its work by the end of the week. Each evening will include a social before dinner. Mass will be at 5:00 p.m., prior to the social. Both will take place at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

The Province Jubilee Celebration for the 2020 and 2021 jubilarians is scheduled for the first evening of the assembly, January 3.

Br. Presto is organizing meals and logistics; Fr. Kurps is organizing prayer. The novices will serve as tellers under the direction of Br. Presto. SHSST will be on its winter break when the assembly takes place so rooms currently occupied by ECS students should be available.

- D. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Fr. Raúl Gomez-Ruiz, SHSST President-Rector, joined the council for updates on the seminary. An Open House took place at SHSST on September 12; approximately 80 people attended. The renovations have been well received by students and staff, as well as visitors. As are all educational institutions, the seminary is trying to navigate a prudent safety plan in the midst of growing concerns about the Delta variant of COVID-19. Soon, ionizers will be installed with the new HVAC units. Once they are in place, individual instructors will be allowed to determine whether masks will be worn in their classrooms. If the class does go without masks, the windows of the classroom are to be open to allow greater airflow.

The Dehon Lecture is scheduled for September 29 and will be livestreamed to minimize the number of people on campus. The theme will be “The Sacred Heart and Divine Mercy: a comparison and contrast between these two streams of spirituality in the life of the Church.” Livestream information will be made available soon. The second Collegial Gathering of Bishops, convened by Bishop Robert Coerver of Lubbock, is to take place October 26. Nine bishops, including the Apostolic Nuncio, are already registered.

As noted under Finance, the remodeling project is just about complete. Also, the Berghaus organ in the main SHSST chapel is undergoing a renovation. The project is expected to be completed by next February.

Fr. Charles Brown and Dr. James Stroud are finalizing the paperwork needed for the Gregorian's consideration of an affiliation with SHSST concerning the granting of ecclesiastical degrees. Fr. Brown will have an in-person meeting with representatives from the Gregorian this fall.

Fr. Gomez noted some of the challenges of complying with Title IX regulations; Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in an educational program that receives federal money. As a part of the seminary's accreditation, there needs to be an agreement specifying the particular use of SHSST within the building owned by the Priests of the Sacred Heart. There is a need to identify which parts of the building are strictly SHM, which are strictly SHSST, and which areas are shared. Fr. Wayne Jenkins will be asked to look in the archives to determine whether there are documents regarding the relationship of SHSST and the SCJs. An agreement needs to be in place by next fall. Kathleen Dahlgren, province attorney, will be consulted.

Fr. Gomez asked if it would be possible to store SHSST class pictures at the Province Development Office. Only four years will be displayed at a time; generally, jubilee years. Dn. Nagel suggested that it would be best to keep the pictures on the seminary property.

- E. Getting to know the membership — Particularly during this time of limited travel, it is difficult for SCJs in one area of the province to get to know SCJs in another area. Senior SCJs, in particular, often have little contact with young SCJs and candidates. A senior SCJ suggested to Fr. Kilianski that something similar to a curriculum vitae be done on each member of the province, allowing SCJs to have a better sense of each other. Councilors appreciated the need for people to know each other better, especially in light of the upcoming elections, but thought that a CV gives only a limited sense of a person. It doesn't speak to whether an SCJ is good in community, if he is a problem-solver, if he is attentive to his prayer life, if he communicates well. Instead of written reports on members, SCJs need to be encouraged to be more proactive in getting to know each other. The province is small enough that SCJs can ask each other about members they might not know well, or simply pick up the phone and have a conversation with someone with whom an SCJ might not have regular contact.
- F. Suffrages for the Deceased — A member of the province suggested that local communities be reminded that Suffrages for the Deceased be offered when an SCJ who once held a position of authority, such as a former member of the General Administration or a former Provincial Superior, dies. When the Provincial Office receives news of such a death it will be forwarded to local communities. Local communities are reminded to remember the deceased members of the congregation in their daily prayers. The congregational necrology is available on the general website.
- G. Fr. Charles Brown — Fr. Brown has been asked to be a presenter at the South African Bishops Conference's sabbatical program for priests and religious. He has done this previously. It will take place in March, 2022, during the SHSST break; several SCJs will be among the registrants. Fr. Kilianski gave him permission to go. The focus of Fr. Brown's presentation will be on St. Paul. During the Thanksgiving break Fr. Brown will go to Rome to meet with representatives from the Gregorian regarding a possible affiliation with SHSST.
- H. ECS — Councilors suggested that Kelly Kornacki, VP of English and Cultural Studies at SHSST, meet with them in October to discuss how international SCJs are prepared for ministry in the US Province. The council also needs to discuss the process for welcoming international members. Does the province need to have a program in place? Right now, an SCJ can request a transfer to the US Province after one year of being present in the province. Should that instead be after a full year of ministry in the province? Should contracts be made between the US Province and the home entity whenever an SCJ comes to minister in the province?
- I. Justice, Peace and Reconciliation — Following the retirement of Mark Peters as Province Director of JPR, Br. Duane Lemke assumed the role on a part-time basis. He updated the council on the work that he has been doing, as well as that of the JPR Commission. Br. Duane began by stating that his understanding of the task of the JPR Office is to "foster, encourage, and guide the work for justice undertaken by the members and apostolates of the US Province." This is based in the JPR Commission's affirmation that each apostolate is already involved in direct service and systemic change. Br. Duane plans to visit each apostolate, accompanied by a member of the JPR Commission, to learn about the JPR efforts already underway so that the JPR Office can be a better resource to SCJs and province ministries.

He is exploring ways to promote reconciliation and dialogue societally as well as within the congregation (utilizing a concept termed "radical empathy"), and how to better communicate JPR issues with the province membership. He was invited to use current province communication vehicles, as well as develop new possibilities. Br. Lemke also spoke about an idea

that he has for a “spiritual concert on gospel and Dehonian themes” to be held on an evening during a summer province assembly. It would be a mix of Dehonian readings interspersed with music performed by a nationally known singer-songwriter. St. Martin of Tours was suggested as a possible venue. The council was supportive of the idea in general, but was hesitant to commit to it since decisions regarding a future assembly will be up to the new administration which will take office in February, 2022. Councilors suggested that Br. Lemke have a proposal ready to share with the new administration.

The JPR Commission will continue to collaborate with the North American Migration Commission; the two groups will have a joint meeting via Zoom in December.

Fr. Kilianski thanked Br. Lemke for taking on the role with the JPR Office.

- J. Healthcare concerns — Mary Balistreri, province director of healthcare, talked about developing concerns about the pandemic, in particular, the Delta strain. She said that the protocols that the province has had in place, along with vaccines, have been effective. As far as she knows, no SCJ in the province has COVID at this time. Fr. Ed Kilianski noted that all members of the province have now had at least the first dose of the vaccine.

Ms. Balistreri updated councilors on several SCJs:

1. Br. John Monek — He has been in home hospice for several months, but is now significantly declining. Fr. John Czynski was to anoint him the next day. Br. Monek’s 92 birthday is on Saturday.
2. Fr. Bob Naglich — Fr. Naglich did well following his organ transplants but is now experiencing infections that are typical with such procedures.
3. Br. Clay Diaz — His physical health has stabilized, including his diabetes which is under better control than it had been. Ms. Balistreri said that Br. Diaz has wonderful social opportunities in his current living situation.
4. Bishop Joseph Potocnak — The bishop is planning to move to SHML in May, 2022.
5. Fr. Bernie Rosinski — He is suffering from significant back pain.

Fr. Kilianski thanked Ms. Balistreri for her work; she is well respected by the province membership.

- K. Pinellas Park — Fr. Kilianski informed the council that he will soon do a consultation of the Sacred Heart Community in Pinellas Park in regard to local leadership. Fr. Vincent Suparman’s current term ends in October.
- L. Final months of administration — Fr. Kilianski asked that councilors be prepared to suggest and discuss recommendations for the next administration; the discussion will take place at the December meeting.
- V. Next meeting — The council will next meet by conference call on Wednesday, September 22, at 9:30 a.m. (central).

CALENDAR

September 29:	Dehon Lecture
October 26-27:	Provincial Council meeting
December 14-15:	Provincial Council meeting
January 3-7, 2022:	Provincial Election Assembly (Province Jubilee Celebrations)
January 7:	Brief Provincial Council meeting with new administration
February 1:	Combined Provincial Council meeting of out-going and in-coming administrations

UPDATES

Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ is now a member of the Sacred Heart Monastery Community.

Fr. Guy Bertrand Wabo, SCJ, of Cameroon, has joined the Ottawa community.

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Frater Phong (Paul) Hoang, SCJ, is now with the SCJ community in Lower Brule, SD, beginning his pastoral year.

Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong, Jacob Smith and **Michael Wodarczyk** are now members of the Sacred Heart Novitiate Community in Franksville, WI.

Alfonso Pizano is the newest candidate to join the formation program at Sacred Heart Monastery.

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NECROLOGY

+ **Fr. Markus Tukiman**, a member of the Indonesian Province, died on August 20. He was born in 1970, professed in 1994 and ordained in 2001.

+ **Fr. Giuseppe Potenza**, a member of the South Italian Province, died on August 14. He was born in 1938, professed in 1957, and ordained in 1965.