



Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

February 2, 2022

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord

My dear brothers and sisters,

In his earthly ministry, Jesus invited and equipped others to participate in his mission. He called ordinary people for an extraordinary mission. The Gospels tell us that his disciples were far from perfect, but Jesus never gave up on them. He patiently formed them and commissioned them to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20). Saint Paul's missionary activities also involved others. In the Acts of the Apostles, there are several references to Paul's companions during his missionary journeys: Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, Sosthenes, Silas. In the Letter to the Romans, Paul also thanks many of his co-workers in Jesus Christ: Priscilla and Aquila, Andronicus and Junia, Tryphena and Tryphosa, Urbanus (Rom 16:1-15).

We see that church ministry is never alone but rather communal and inclusive. Fr. Leo John Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, also embraced the collaborative character of ministry. When assigned as a parish priest in St. Quentin, France, he saw firsthand the textile industry workers' harsh and dangerous conditions. Feeling called to remedy these social and moral woes, he organized meetings to highlight the plight of workers, in collaboration with the laity and the clergy. He founded a religious community of men dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to work for justice, peace, and integrity and dignity of all persons.

Fr. Dehon's mission of respecting the value and dignity of the human person continues today. You are participating in his mission, which is the mission of Jesus and the Church. As provincial superior of the US Province and on behalf of its members, I would like to send you my greetings and gratitude for what you do. Through education, you form minds and hearts to love and respect the dignity of each person. Through social service ministry, you show people that God loves and cares about them. Through parish ministry, you work closely with our SCJs to help people encounter Christ. Through administrative works, you help the Priests of the

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Sacred Heart maintain and expand their mission. Through your various ministries, you touch the lives and hearts of God's people, SCJs included.

You are vital to our mission, and we are proud to call you our "co-workers." We want you to help us spread Sacred Heart spirituality and our SCJ charism. As an exercise to familiarize yourself with the Priests of the Sacred Heart, I encourage you to have a conversation with an SCJ about any of the following questions:

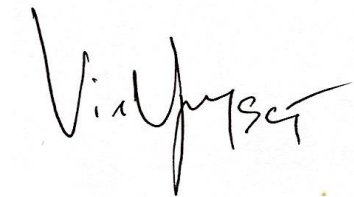
1. Who is Fr. Dehon for you?
2. Why did Fr Dehon, a son of privilege, care so much for the workers, the poor, and the vulnerable?
3. Why did Fr. Dehon found a religious congregation devoted to the Sacred Heart?
4. What is reparation? And oblation?
5. What is it about the Priests of the Sacred Heart that attracted you?
6. Or ask any other question that comes to mind.

Please share what you have heard with your co-workers and invite them to do the same.

Let's be in dialogue as we collaborate on continuing the mission of our Founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon.

If we haven't met already, I look forward to doing so in the future. Be assured of my gratitude and prayers, as well as those of my brother SCJs.

Your co-worker in the vineyard of the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vien V. Nguyen SCJ". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the "SCJ" part being more distinct and written in a slightly larger, bolder script.

Fr. Vien V. Nguyen, SCJ
US Provincial Superior