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Minutes of the 916th US Provincial Council Meeting April 5-6, 2022, Oacoma, SD

PRESENT: Fr. Vien Nguyen, Provincial Superior, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Greg Schill, Br. Duane Lemke and Dn. David Nagel (video conference), Councilors; Br. Frank Presto, Provincial Secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary. Sr. Cathy Bertrand, SSND, facilitator of the Planning Retreat.

- I. Check-in — Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries, and communities. Both Fr. V. Nguyen and Fr. Schill spoke positively of their transitions into new ministries. Councilors expressed appreciation for Fr. V. Nguyen's frequent communication with them. Several councilors noted a tentative sense of post-pandemic "normal" in being able to travel to an in-person meeting and visit an SCJ community outside of Hales Corners.
- II. Prayer and introductory remarks — After check-in, the morning session opened with prayer, and then Sr. Bertrand made a few comments regarding the planning retreat. To prepare for the gathering she spoke with Frs. V. Nguyen and Kurps about objectives. She encouraged councilors to think of their gathering not as strategic planning, but as participation in an "evolving design." Three pillars of focus were identified prior to the meeting: Spirituality, Community, and Mission and Ministry. Looking at the next three years, how will this administration address these pillars of the province? Before speaking about each one, the council viewed a story done in PowerPoint images that highlighted the importance of perspective; a moment, a scene can have a radically different definition depending upon the perspective from which it is viewed.
- III. Planning for the future — The council began their Planning Retreat by reflecting on the three pillars of Spirituality, Community, and Mission and Ministry.
 - A. Spirituality – councilors were asked to reflect on and respond to several questions regarding Dehonian spirituality.
 1. "If someone was observing you as a community, in the area of spirituality, what two things would they see?"
 2. "What are the challenges or stumbling blocks in regard to Spirituality?"
 - B. Community
 1. Councilors privately reflected on the following question: "From your experience, what two things stand out in your mind and heart from your experience of community?" They were then asked to share their initial experience of community and share how that has changed over the years.
 2. What is positive in regard to "Community" in the US Province?
 3. What are some of the challenges regarding "Community" that need to be addressed?
 4. What two qualities or skills would be ideal for a person to bring to community?
 5. What is leadership called to do in regard to "Community?"

U.S. Province Priests of the Sacred Heart

P.O. Box 289
Hales Corners, WI
53130-0289
www.dehoniansusa.org
414-425-6910

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C. Mission and Ministry

1. Councilors began their reflection by answering the following: “What questions need to be addressed regarding Mission and Ministry; what does leadership need to address, what do members?”
2. What one or two things regarding Mission and Ministry require the council’s greatest attention?

D. Areas of focus — Each participant was asked to identify two focus areas for each of the pillars (Spirituality, Community, and Mission and Ministry). Those named:

SPIRITUALITY:

1. Dehonian prayer (create text, psalm and music pairings, forms and other tools)
2. Renewal program
3. Centennial; a multifaceted approach to celebrating the anniversary. It could serve as the kick-off to a renewal program. It is a moment to focus on SCJ spirituality both internally and externally.
4. Hospitality
5. Increase focus on Dehonian Associates to share Dehonian spirituality.
6. Focus on sharing spirituality with lay collaborators.
7. Use technology to communicate Dehonian spirituality.
8. Honor differences
9. Spirituality is regenerative, life-giving; it is the DNA of who the SCJs are.
10. Increase possibilities for SCJs and the laity to discuss the charism.

COMMUNITY:

1. Enhance communication skills (several councilors cited this).
2. How do we communicate that which gives life; how do we communicate who we are with lay collaborators?
3. Support local superiors; hold regular meetings with them in-person or video conference (several councilors cited this).
4. Guided conversations in community as a means of enhancing communication.
5. Activities, including webinars and shared discussion materials, to help connect members of the province.
6. Change the dynamic of how we relate to each other; seek ways to better engage with each other.

MISSION AND MINISTRY

1. Renewal – identify core values, revisit the Mission Statement, expand Dehonian Associates to all locations, create a Dehonian curriculum for students, employees, parishes and other ministries.
2. Make ministries — new and old — more Dehonian.
3. Create programs to promote the SCJ mission to help lay colleagues better “buy into” our mission.
4. Better use of technology to share Dehonian spirituality/charism.
5. Find out what the membership wants to do in ministry (especially younger members).
6. Hear what the future looks like from the eyes of younger members.

7. Unified effort in ministry.
 8. Establish and utilize province committees.
 9. Identify visionaries and empower them.
 10. Create new ministry.
 11. Find better ways to do what we do now.
- E. Next steps — Beginning at the May meeting, the Provincial Council will devote the first morning of its meetings to “visioning,” seeking ways to implement many of the topics that were discussed during this Planning Retreat. There is a desire to plan for the future, not simply react to it.
- F. Conclusion — Sr. Bertrand was thanked for her assistance with the Planning Retreat.

IV. Finance

- A. Provincial Development Office — Income from mailings is similar to last year, which was slightly below the previous year. However, the mailings have done well in general and the grant to the province will exceed the \$6 million budgeted.
- B. Procedural Audit — The Growth Pool and Charitable Gift Annuity Pool audits were completed. The audit was done by CLA, as were the audits of Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake (lay rentals). No issues were cited. The audit had been done every other year, but since the cost difference is not substantial, the audit will most likely go to a yearly schedule.
- C. Budgets — The Province Finance Commission will meet on April 20 to review the budgets. The Provincial Treasurer’s Office has received most budgets.
- D. Province Finance Commission — A new member is needed to replace Fr. Greg Schill, who was elected to the Provincial Council. The current members are Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Chuck Wonch and Frater Hung Pham.
- E. Blue Book — The “Blue Book,” which is a compilation of the audits and statements of province entities, is complete. It will be available for review by councilors at their May meeting.
- F. John Kuxhause — The province accountant plans to retire in December, 2022.
- G. Mission requests — Dn. Nagel shared five requests that Fr. V. Nguyen has received from mission entities. Three are for building projects in Africa, which the US Province does not generally support outside of special circumstances. Dn. Nagel recommended support of the other two requests: 1) a request from Venezuela for teacher pay assistance, and 2) a van for Ecuador. The rest of the council agreed with Dn. Nagel. Fr. V. Nguyen will inform the Region of Venezuela that the council endorsed its request of \$4,800 to subsidize teacher salaries, and the District of Ecuador that the council endorsed its request of \$30,000 to purchase a new van. The money will come from the \$50,000 contingency fund in the Mission Budget. The funds for each will be sent to Rome to distribute.

Dn. Nagel noted that the other requests may later appear in the General Aid Fund budget of the congregation. He will communicate the council’s discussion to the entities whose requests the council did not endorse.

V. Administration

A. Houston

1. Visitation — Fr. V. Nguyen said that he enjoyed his visitation with the Texas community and that there is a positive sense of community life. The community looks forward to the arrival of Fr. Fabio dos Santos da Hora. Br. Presto informed the council that Fr. dos Santos’ R-1 visa was recently approved. The community plans to meet to discuss a Dehonian topic each month.
2. Appointments — The council voted to appoint Fr. Rafael Querobin as local superior of the Houston community and Fr. Jerzy (George) Mordalski as local treasurer. It was noted that the parish bookkeeper can assist Fr. Mordalski.

The council later voted to present Fr. Querobin to Cardinal DiNardo of Galveston-Houston as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston. The proposed start date is May 1, 2022.

B. Membership

1. Br. Diego Diaz — Br. Diaz' father is undergoing treatment for lung cancer and he would like to return to Argentina in May or June to be with him.
2. Fr. Richard MacDonald — Fr. MacDonald will assist with pastoral ministry in Mississippi while Fr. Louis Mariano Fernandes is on a home visit to India.
3. Fr. Joseph Mukuna — The Congolese Provincial Superior has given permission for Fr. Mukuna to remain in the United States for three years following the completion of his doctoral work. Once his dissertation is complete (most likely this summer) Fr. V. Nguyen plans to assign him to the St. Joseph's Community. Br. Presto has started with the R-1 visa application process for him. It is hoped that Fr. Mukuna can teach at SHSST.
4. Br. Frank Snider — Br. Frank is retiring from teaching and moving to Pinellas Park in early summer.
5. Bishop Joseph Potocnak — The bishop is scheduled to move to SHML on April 25. Fr. Andrzej Sudol will assist him with his travels from Florida.
6. Fr. Son Nguyen — Fr. S. Nguyen is scheduled to arrive in the United States from the Vietnamese District on April 21. He will be assigned to the St. Joseph's Community at SHML and serve at St. Martin of Tours.

C. Statement of good standing — Just as when an SCJ seeks faculties in a diocese, it has been suggested that when an SCJ comes from another entity to serve in the United States that his superior send a "Statement of Good Standing" indicating that he is unaware of anything in the person's background that might be an impediment to public ministry. The US Province is open to providing the same for its members who might serve internationally.

D. Meeting with Archbishop Listecki — Fr. V. Nguyen informed the council that he recently had a meeting with Archbishop Listecki of Milwaukee; the purpose was basically to introduce himself as the new Provincial Superior. He told the archbishop that the SCJs would like to investigate possibilities for social outreach in the archdiocese; the archbishop gave Fr. V. Nguyen the names of several clergy who might be helpful to speak to. The two also spoke of continued collaboration between SHSST and St. Francis de Sales Seminary.

E. General Visitation — The plane tickets have been purchased for the General Visitation; the details are falling into place.

VI. Next meeting — The council will next meet by conference call on Wednesday, April 13 at 1:30 pm (central)

CALENDAR

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|--------------------|---|
| April 30 - May 22: | General Visitation April 30 – May 3, Pinellas Park, FL (arrive April 30, rest May 1, depart May 3) May 4-6, Sacred Heart Monastery (SHSST commencement on May 6) May 7-11, Sacred Heart Community at SHML (on May 10 Fr. General will meet with the Provincial Council in the morning, and visit with the Novitiate in the afternoon; on May 11 he will visit with the St. Joseph's Community) May 12-15, South Dakota (depart for SD on May 12, leave SD on May 16) May 17-19, Mississippi (depart on May 19) May 20-22, Texas May 23, depart the US Province |
| May 7: | Frater Henry Nguyen's diaconate ordination, Hales Corners, WI |
| May 10-11: | Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI |
| June 24: | Feast of the Sacred Heart |
| June 28-29: | Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI |
| August 10: | Provincial Council teleconference TBA |
| August 16-18: | Province Assembly |
| September 27-28: | Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI |
| November 9-10: | Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI |
| December 20-21: | Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI |

UPDATES

Bishop Joseph Potocnak is scheduled to join the Sacred Heart Community at SHML on April 25.

Fr. Vien Nguyen has a new email address: provsup.nguyen@usprovince.org

NECROLOGY

+ **Ermin Humpal**, long-time manager of the Province Development Office, died on February 4 at the age of 100. He and his wife, Pauline (also deceased), were named honorary SCJs in 1973.

+ **Fr. Valdir Vicentini**, a member of the South Brazilian Province, died February 24. He was born in 1937, professed in 1959 and ordained in 1964.

+ **Fr. Emiel Testelmans**, a member of the Dutch Region, died on February 22. He was born in 1929, professed in 1951 and was ordained in 1956.

+ **Fr. Corrado Mosna**, a member of the North Italian Province, died March 7. He was born in 1934, professed in 1952 and ordained in 1961.

+ **Fr. Johnny Klingler**, a member of the US Province, died on March 12. He was born in 1935, professed in 1963 and ordained in 1967.

+ **Fr. Adolfo Urbina Rioja**, a member of the Spanish Province, died on March 18. He was born in 1945, professed in 1962 and ordained in 1971.

+ **Br. Lucas van Berlo**, a member of the Dutch Region, died on March 19. He was born in 1947, made his first profession in 1967 and his final profession in 1971.

+ **Fr. Nazario Pascual Merino Bajo**, a member of the Spanish Province, died on March 26. He was born in 1929, professed in 1949 and ordained in 1954.

+ **Theodorus Henricus Snijders**, a member of the Dutch Region, died on March 23. He was born in 1934, professed in 1955 and ordained in 1960.

+ **Fr. Karl-Heinz Ofenloch**, a member of the South African Province, died on March 24. He was born in 1942, professed in 1965 and ordained in 1970.

+ **Fr. Joseph Cempron Butilig**, a member of the Philippine Region, died on April 1 of cancer. He was born in 1979, professed in 2007 and ordained in 2013. He had been regional secretary, archivist and treasurer, as well as director of the Kasanag Daughters Foundation. The foundation, established in 1999, provides shelter and rehabilitation opportunities for victims of sexual violence.

+ **Fr. Léon Robert**, a member of the Franco-European Province, died on April 5. He was born in 1932, professed in 1953 and ordained in 1963.