



SCJ News

A newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians)

Formation journey continues

Three enter novitiate

Congratulations to Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong, Jacob Smith and Michael Wodarczyk who entered the Novitiate on August 14. The Entrance to Novitiate ceremony took place at the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Franksville, WI, about a 20-minute drive south of Sacred Heart Monastery. Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, officiated.

"Why do I want to be a Dehonian?" said Jonathan, reflecting on why he asked to enter the novitiate. "I want to imitate Venerable Fr. Leo John Dehon's journey of being totally committed to the love and devotion of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. I requested entrance to the Novitiate to prepare for vows with the Priests of



The 2021-22 Novitiate Community: Fr. Byron Haaland (novice master), Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong, Michael Wodarczyk, Jacob Smith and Fr. Andrzej Sudol

the Sacred Heart as a sign of continuing my faith-filled journey with the community, as well as to learn, apply, and follow the teachings, spirituality, way of life, and character into my spiritual, social, ministerial, and intellectual life. This corresponds well with my devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, my devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and my devotion to the Chaplet of Divine Mercy."

Jonathan, who at 20 is the youngest of the novices, was born in California and raised in Louisiana. A candidate for the past two years, until his novitiate year he was a student at Cardinal Stritch University in suburban Milwaukee.

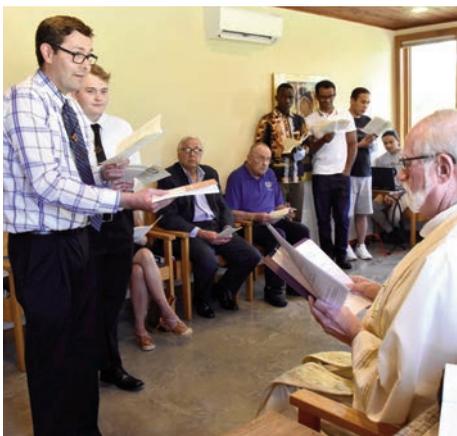
For Jacob, it was the influence of

an SCJ priest that solidified his desire to enter the Novitiate. "My request to enter had many factors, but first among them was the model of Fr. Bob Tucker, who died earlier this year," said Jacob. "I'm so grateful for the example of the loving Heart of Christ that he gave to me as my formator and friend, and I want to be that person for others like Fr.

Bob was for me. I can see that the Priests of the Sacred Heart embody the love of the Heart of Christ and I pray that through entering the Novitiate and taking vows

My request to enter had many factors, but first among them was the model of Fr. Bob Tucker

- Jacob Smith



Michael receives the Rule of Life from Fr. Ed.



Smiling into the late afternoon sun, local Dehonians join the new novices and Fr. Ed for a group photo. Among those tucked in the back row: Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, vicar general, who was visiting the United States after over a year's delay due to the pandemic.

myself, I can (with God and the congregation's help) shape myself to be an emissary of the Sacred Heart's love like Fr. Bob was."

Jacob, 21, just completed his third year of candidacy, during which he has been attending Marquette University in Milwaukee. He is originally from Houston.

At 33, Michael is the eldest of the new novices. Before entering candidacy he earned a degree in accounting and worked full-time in inventory control. When asked why he was requesting entrance to the Novitiate, Michael's answer was short and to the point: "I want to be Dehonian! I like daily prayer and Mass with the community. I requested entrance into the Novitiate to continue learning about the Priests of the Sacred Heart and Dehonian Spirituality so that I can be a Dehonian." Michael is from Brookfield, WI, just a short drive from Sacred Heart Monastery.

Prior to novitiate, Michael was a seminarian at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

Fr. Byron Haaland, SCJ, is the novice master, and Fr. Andrzej Sudol, SCJ, is associate novice master. Fr. Andrzej also served as the postulancy director for the three new novices.

Continuing the commitment

Formation is a time of gradual discernment. After completing novitiate, an SCJ professes temporary vows that can be renewed each year until final vows. There are currently six SCJs in temporary vows studying in the United States: Fraters Phong (Paul) Hoang, Henry Nguyen, Hubert Liassidji, Thuan Nguyen, Hung Pham and Truc Tran.

Fraters Phong and Hung renewed their religious vows on August 7 at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston. Fra. Phong professed his first vows in 2018, and after completing his summer CPE session in Houston, is now doing his pastoral year in South Dakota. Fra. Hung first



Fr. Ed with Fraters Thuan, Truc and Henry. Below, Br. Diego renews his vows for his anniversary.

professed in 2020; he continues his studies at SHSST. On August 12, Fraters Henry, Truc and Thuan renewed their vows at Sacred Heart Monastery. The next day, Frater Hubert renewed his vows in Togo, where he was doing a family visit before the start of school. All are students at SHSST.

And while he has been in final vows for many years, to celebrate his 20th anniversary of first vows, Br. Diego Diaz, SCJ, renewed his vows during Mass at Christ the King parish in Mississippi on August 15.



20 Questions with Fr. Bob Bossie



Read more "20 Questions" responses at:
www.dehoniansusa.info/20Q

Q: What is your favorite food?

FR. BOB: Mint chocolate chip ice cream. No, maybe spumoni. No, chocolate. Okay, all three!

Q: What is your least favorite chore?

FR. BOB: Cleaning: my apartment, dishes, laundry.

Q: Who – living or deceased – do you most admire and why?

FR. BOB: I guess it's obvious from my book/movie selection: Martin Luther King, Jr., Jean Donovan, Dorothy Day, St. Oscar Romero, Malcolm X. For me, they model everything Jesus taught and stood for.

Q: What would surprise people to learn about you?

FR. BOB: I'd rather be a follower. But I've come to realize that that is the

Favorite color? What makes you happy? What are you good at? What is your greatest fear...

"Twenty Questions" is a regular feature in which SCJs and those with whom they minister and collaborate share a bit about themselves in an informal Q&A. Participants are given the same list of questions and are invited to answer as many as they would like.

Originally from Boston, Fr. Bob Bossie, SCJ, joined the US Air Force just weeks out of high school. Among his tasks during his four years in the military was maintaining nuclear weapons-carrying aircraft. Before pursuing his vocation to the priesthood and religious life, he was a contract worker for the military industry. He has spent much of his religious life working for social justice.

Q: Where were you born and raised? Describe your family.

FR. BOB: I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1937, the fourth of seven children – five boys and two girls. My dad and mom lost three small stores to the crash of 1929. My dad then went to work for the post office for the next 30-plus years. My mom was a homemaker and the spiritual center of the family. I spent many years with severe asthma, almost dying a few times, and often thought I wouldn't want to marry and have children for fear of passing on this terrible malady to my children. I also told my mother that I would travel the world when I grew up, partly, I think, because I could not go out to play with other children.

Q: Favorite book or movie?

FR. BOB: I have so many. Books: *The Bible, Resistance and Contemplation* by Jim Douglas, *Salvadoran Witness: The Life And Calling of Jean Donovan* by Ana Carrigan, *Malcolm X* by Alex Ha-

ley, and *Martin & Malcolm & America: A Dream or a Nightmare* by James Cone.

Movies: "Roses in December," "Malcolm X," and "Loving" (the story of Richard and Mildred Loving, 1967 plaintiffs in the U.S. Supreme Court decision invalidating state laws prohibiting interracial marriage).

Q: If you could travel anywhere in the world – without concern about the expense – where would you go and why?

FR. BOB: I've already been to 30 countries and 30 US states. I'd like to visit sub-Saharan Africa and China but I think I'd like to spend a longer period of time in Mexico because the people seem extra friendly and caring and I'd like to learn the language. Of course, I suspect I'd immediately get involved in justice and peace concerns given all the inequities.

Q: What are you good at?

FR. BOB: Lots of things: a classic jack of all trades and master of none.

Q: What is your favorite color?

FR. BOB: My brother Rich, now deceased, often asked me that question and I had a tough time answering him. I don't think of colors abstractly. Forest greens and blues come to mind but many colors in differing circumstances attract me.

Q: Do you have any hobbies or pastimes? If so, what are they and how did you get interested in them?

FR. BOB: Life itself is my hobby or pastime. Sorry, but that's my initial response. Years ago when having my life-changing experience of God, I realized that you get out of life what you put into it. I then committed myself to put my whole being into life.

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Priests of the Sacred Heart

luxury of the comfortable. It's incumbent upon us followers of Jesus to "take a stand and stand there" as Daniel Berrigan, SJ, famously said. And so I force myself to take leadership roles when it seems appropriate.

Q: What skill or talent would you like to have that you do not? Why?

FR. BOB: I'd like to be a better athlete. I do okay as it is but I'd like to be better. I've always enjoyed physical activity.

Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

FR. BOB: I wanted to be like my brother, Dave, who was admired, a good athlete and intelligent, a good boxer. For years he was my idol. I even took "David" as my confirmation name though "Paul" was/is my favorite name. Later, I wanted to sail and live on my own boat in the South Pacific and/or be a pilot. Even later, I found my way into SCUBA diving which fulfilled some of those desires, even thinking I'd be a SCUBA instructor. But God had other ideas.

Q: What makes you happy?

FR. BOB: : When there is true peace. When others stand up for those in need. A beautiful sky or sunset. A grove of trees. Flowers. Music and song.

Q: What is your greatest fear?

FR. BOB: Failing to be faithful to the God-of-my-life for many reasons to which I succumb often enough. I've come to paraphrase Fr. Dehon's last words: For God I lived, for God I die. God is my everything, my life, my death and my eternity. May God grant me the grace to be so faithful.

Q: What trait or habit do you dislike in yourself?

FR. BOB: I find so many traits or habits in myself with which I'm uncomfortable. My greatest weakness is to go along to get along. I suppose I could excuse that by saying I'm a middle child, a peacemaker. While that's true, I think I just want to be accepted, believe it or not.

Q: What trait or habit do you dislike in others?

FR. BOB: Cruelty. Disdain for others. Picking on the weak or marginalized.

Q: List three words that describe you.

FR. BOB: I'm "Trying my best."

Q: How did you come to know of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) and what interested you about them?

FR. BOB: After having met the God-of-my-life, the living God, I wanted to give my whole life in and with God. For me, that was to be a priest, which the good sisters in my early life often said required one to attend daily Mass. And so, in the back of a church in Florida, there were religious pamphlets/booklets. One was about vocations. I wrote to several religious communities seeking entrance. I included the SCJs because they appealed to second career vocations, "delayed vocations" they called it back then. I was, after all, 27 years of age, an old guy.

The SCJs were the only ones that responded to my urgent need to make such a commitment. I gave up my job, car, shared apartment and left a community of friends to travel to a place I had never heard of nor seen, Sacred Heart Seminary in Great Barrington, Massachusetts. Later I learned of "ecce venio", the self-offering to which we SCJs dedicate our lives, which was exactly the calling that I felt. I often reflect that God guides the weak, children and fools. Sounds like me.



Fr. Bob Bossie

Q: Do you consider yourself a Dehonian? If so, what does that mean to you?

FR. BOB: For me, union with God is my everything. This is the call of the SCJ, union with Jesus in his self offering to God for the good of all and, as we know today, the good of all creation. I take much heart from the opening phrase of #23 in our Rule of Life which is a "welcome to the Spirit." For me, that means that everything I do to be more like Jesus is because I allow, I welcome, the Spirit into my life. Without that Spirit, I am nothing. In reflecting on my life, I live for no other reason, to offer my life to God, to be in union with the God-of-my-life. Without that, my life is an empty shell, a charade.

Q: What changes, adaptations or insights do you expect to stay with you from the pandemic?

FR. BOB: I am fully convinced that we cannot and must not return to business as usual which continues to alienate and hurt those who are marginalized but also the earth itself, our home. I am much more committed, in my ever aging days, to continue to work to create a world that we can leave to the coming generations who, especially as religious, are our heritage, our legacy. I know that my energies do not allow for as much activism as in the past but it still allows me to speak in word and deed as best as I am able to promote this end.



Following COVID protocols, Padre Zezinho poses for a photo with members of his crew.

SHSST graduate has spent his life evangelizing through music

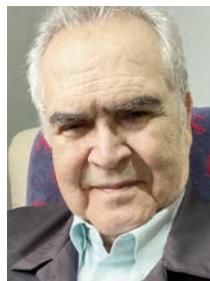
On June 8, Fr. José Fernandes de Oliveira, SCJ, turned 80. For most of those years he has been known as “Padre Zezinho,” a Christian songwriter and performer who has written over 1,800 songs and 80 books, and has recorded 120 albums. His concerts have filled stadiums and his radio show in his native Brazil continues to draw millions of listeners.

Padre Zezinho is a familiar name to many SCJs in North America not just because of his music, but because he did his seminary studies in the United States at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology and was ordained in the US Province in 1966.

Shortly before his 80th birthday – and the online concert that commemorated it (with over 200,000 viewers!) — he sat down for an interview to reflect on his life as a Dehonian, musician, songwriter and performer.

QUESTION: Music and storytelling have defined your ministry for as long as you have been a Dehonian, an SCJ. What came first, the vocation to music, or the vocation to the priesthood as an SCJ?

PADRE ZEZINHO: People give me titles, or descriptions, such as “storyteller,” “performer,” “composer,” and “writer.” I am those things, but it was never what I intended. As a child I dreamed of becoming a Dehonian priest in a parish. That was my vocation. But I never did become a parish pastor. My superiors encouraged me to evangelize with music, writing songs and performing, especially for young people. I think of Saint Efreim and the evangelization that he did through his words and music.



Padre Zezinho

QUESTION: How did the songwriting begin? Was it a hobby, or did you always see it as a ministry?

PADRE ZEZINHO: It started as a hobby. But then young people, parishioners and fellow priests liked my songs. A group of Paulist Sisters, who had a recording studio in São Paulo, invited me to record four songs for our parish. I went, not realizing that it would become something much bigger. In three months, they had sold 3,000 of the records. It became a real “hit.” After that, my songs were played on the radio and television, as well as in performances on stage, streets and churches.

Songwriting became a profession, a ministry. In 1972 I wrote a song that translates as: “I had planned a life for myself, but God had his plans. And here I am doing what God decided for me and not what I had dreamed. But I am happier than what I could have ever imagined.”

That is how I feel about the songwriting and performances. It is not what I planned, not what I dreamed of, but it was the path that God set out for me and I am happy because of it.

QUESTION: Describe your songwriting process, what inspires you to write a song, or a book?

PADRE ZEZINHO: I read, I reflect, and then try to convey the teaching of our Church in music and words.

Sometimes I start with the words, sometimes the melody; sometimes the

whole song seems to come all at once. God inspires, the work comes from heaven. I believe that music can be prophetic and that songwriters are used by God just as other prophets, just as in the psalms. We writers are used by God for His project. Priests, religious sisters and laypeople who write and perform are not

special because of our music; the songs are always a secondary

ministry. The songs are gifts for which we must be grateful and humble in receiving. It is important to remember that being well-known or famous is not the same as being wise.

QUESTION: Do you have a favorite song or book that you have written? If so, what makes it special?

PADRE ZEZINHO: Of the 1,800 songs that I have published, more than 500 have become "hits." The Paulist Sisters are compiling these into a book. That response to the music is something that is special to me.

QUESTION: When did you begin performing your music; how did that happen?

PADRE ZEZINHO: It started in the parish with people joining in, clapping their hands. I was trying to make known the work and teachings of Vatican II at St. Jude in about 1967. Some objected to the new styles, "Who is this young priest subverting our youth?" they would say. Of course, there are still some who object to what I preach through my music. Change can be difficult. But others have suffered much more than me.

QUESTION: What has given you your greatest joy in your ministry as a performer? What has surprised you?

PADRE ZEZINHO: My greatest joy is found in the joy of the people. Each day I reflect on the opening words of *Gaudium et Spes* from Pope Paul VI that remind us that the joys and hopes of the people, as well as their griefs and anxiety, are the also those of the Church. The joy of the people is the joy of the Church, so it is my joy as well.

QUESTION: How has your ministry — your songwriting and performances — changed over the years? Is the emphasis different now than when you started?

PADRE ZEZINHO: I am always changing with our Church and with our Congregation. Rivers and brooks are constantly changing but they rarely run backwards. It is the same for me, or at least it is how I try to live.

QUESTION: What is your ministry like now that you are approaching 80? Do you continue to perform, to do your radio show, to write music or books?

PADRE ZEZINHO: I continue with

Continuing to be a beacon of hope

After months of delays due to weather and the pandemic, the Sacred Heart Chacon Family Shelter in Eagle Butte, S.D., was dedicated in June. Before the ceremony, shelter advocates met with Lakota Elder Cheryl Redbear to reflect on their special role in service to those seeking shelter, healing and a new beginning at the facility. They acknowledged the painful history that has marked generations of Native Americans with trauma that has often led to violence. Strengthened by prayer and teaching, they joined the dedication.

Bishop Peter Muhich of the Diocese of Rapid City led prayers; native Lakota songs filled the air. Greg Fisher, executive director of the Sacred Heart Center, offered thanks to the many contributors to the completion of the shelter, particularly the Chacon family.

"We are blessed to be here on this great South Dakota day," said Mike Tyrell, president of St. Joseph's Indian School. "This building is a testament to the power of a vision that goes back to 2012 and the power of sustainability and commitment on the part of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. For those who use our services, our prayer today is a beacon of hope."

The new facility expands the shelter's capacity with eight bedrooms suitable for individuals or families, two segregated bedrooms for men or families with teenage boys, additional staff offices for increased confidentiality, and meeting space for staff training and victim consultations with outside agencies.

Br. Frank Presto, SCJ, who helped to start the Sacred Heart Center in 1982 (he is now provincial secretary of the US Province), cut the red ribbon across the shelter's opening, making way for those gathered to tour the new building.

The Sacred Heart Center is an outreach of St. Joseph's Indian School. The occasion of its opening marks what began nearly 40 years ago when the Priests of the Sacred Heart started ministry in Eagle Butte with a shelter for battered women and children and a second-hand clothing store. Today, in addition to the domestic violence shelter and Bare Necessities Thrift Store, the center includes Youth Services, counseling and outreach services.



The June 22 dedication in Eagle Butte, SD

my radio show; it has about 2 million listeners. After 40 years I left television due to health concerns. I still write books, articles and songs. But I left the stage and no longer travel. We have a studio in our house where our students in theology practice and record. Me too! I taught catechetics, speech and communication for 32 years so the studio has my nickname on the front. We produce our videos there. I am currently working on a book called *Por Uma Comunicação Reparadora*, or in English, "A Communication of Reparation."

QUESTION: What advice would you offer a young person who wants to follow in your footsteps as a religious priest and musical performer?

PADRE ZEZINHO: To anyone who would want to follow in my footsteps I say: "I never wanted this." It is the Lord, Jesus, who wanted this, the Dehonians, the Paulist Sisters, and the many bishops who requested the talents that were given to me as a gift from God. I obeyed, that's how it has always worked for me, saying "yes." In the Sacred Heart, I continue as a fellow Dehonian, as a fellow priest in service to others.

Fr. Zezinho ended by saying that "I am thankful for the all that the US Province did for me in those years, 1964-67," he said. "Many blessings to my friends in the United States."

Listen to Padre Zezinho's music and view his anniversary special by searching "Padre Zezinho" on YouTube.

Look for us online at:



www.youtube.com/dehoniansusa



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SCJ NEWS



Fr. Frank Wittouck

Back in prison

For many years, Fr. Frank Wittouck, SCJ, served as a prison chaplain in Texas. He hoped to continue the ministry when he moved to Wisconsin last year, but COVID-19 closed prisons to most visitors, including new chaplains.

This summer, after a year of processing, Fr. Frank received clearance to serve at the Racine Correctional Institution, about a 30-minute drive south of Sacred Heart Monastery. Although there are other chaplains, he is the only Catholic priest at the facility (there is a Catholic deacon). Fr. Frank goes to the facility once a week to celebrate Mass and hear confessions.

"I've grown to have tremendous respect for these incarcerated guys," said Fr. Frank in an article published on the Dismas Ministry blog in 2020. "I was an Army chaplain for 20 years, so naturally I understood the realities of a rule-oriented environment, which one finds in the Army

but also in prison. I never realized it till just this very moment, but I was the stockade chaplain both in Korea and in Ft. Hood, so I guess my prison ministry experience started even earlier than I thought. Working with inmates has helped me be more patient, more tolerant, more positive. I don't lecture them or anything – but I also don't feed into their complaining, which there is, understandably, a lot of. I smile a lot. I have a habit of greeting the inmates with a smile and 'Good morning.' Prison ministry helped me get out of myself."

Fr. Frank is retired and is a member of the Sacred Heart Monastery community.

Multilingual student population grows

When Sacred Heart School in Southaven, MS, opened its doors to students in August, it welcomed children from an ever-increasing cultural diversity. This year, 64 students speak a language other than English at home. Among them: Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Tagalog and Portuguese, as well as a family from Eritrea whose members speak several languages from their homeland. With 25% of the students speaking more than one language, Sacred Heart has one of the highest percentages of multilingual students in DeSoto County. Because this represents a substantial increase, Sacred Heart now has a full time Title III teacher to assist those who do not speak English as a first language.

The entire teaching staff at Sacred Heart is also participating in a year-long professional



Sacred Heart principal Bridget Martin

development/continuing education program hosted by the University of Notre Dame. The program, "English as a New Language," will help the educators implement new learning strategies in the classroom for the ESL (English second language) students.

Sacred Heart is one of two schools operated by the SCJs' Sacred Heart Southern Missions in northern Mississippi.

Canadian SCJ featured in *Catholic Register*

When Fr. Herman Falke, SCJ, turned 80, he published *Sculpted Swan Songs*. It was the Dehonian artist's eighth book, and he expected that it would be his last. But the publishing has continued and at 93, Fr. Herman is working with editor Michael Walsh of Mosaic Press to complete his autobiography, *Celebrating a Life in Art*. It is set for release this fall. In an article about Fr. Herman published in the *Catholic Register*, Michael notes that while Fr.



Fr. Herman Falke

Herman's art is very contemporary, his communication tools are rooted in the pre-laptop era. Fr. Herman submitted the first eight chapters of his draft on handwritten pages with pictures glued in place, indicating where he thought that they might best fit.

"[His draft] was letter perfect and grammatically perfect," said Michael in the *Catholic Register* article. "You name it. It was a clean curative text. He even [later] corrected me where he said I forgot to put a comma in some paragraph."

A member of the Dehonian community in Ottawa, Canada, Fr. Herman is originally from the Netherlands, but has been a part of the Canadian Region since 1950, where he completed his studies and was ordained in 1954. From 1966-1974 he was a missionary in Uganda. He said that it was a time that transformed him as an artist.

"African life is so much at the surface and so open," said Fr. Herman in the article. "You see life which you never see in western Europe and North America. It's right there on the street level. You see how they take care of their children, the kind of discipline and their contentment with very simple things. It was a life that was really beautiful. Their customs, their dances, life was right in front of you."



DEHONIANS Priests of the Sacred Heart

Our ministries are diverse, as are our members. Yet our goal is the same: to work with a common heart in service to God's people, reflecting the love of Christ as experienced by our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon

Find out how you can join us!

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