



Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

July 20, 2022

Dear Brothers,

Spirituality is the word often used within our religious circle to describe our Congregation, ourselves, and others. But what is spirituality? And what does it mean to be spiritual? If asked to define or describe it, I will say that spirituality is an inbreathing of God's spirit, a heightened awareness of God's indwelling, an inward-looking path to better understand one's inner life and to become more sensitive to the human condition and the surrounding environments, and a conscious effort to live out the baptismal promise intensely and wisely.

How would you define spirituality?

For Fr. Dehon, his deep spiritual life sustained him through many trials and shaped his passion for social commitment to the neglected in society. In a journal entry, Fr. Dehon wrote: "The Heart of Jesus is open to receive us. May he be our refuge in times of danger. It is there we will rediscover the advice and consolation that he has given us in prayer" (NQT I/1868, 6 March). Fr. Dehon's spirituality was rooted in the awareness that God is love and the belief that God loves us.

At the 2022 Election Assembly, many of us asked that the new administration offer spiritual renewal programs to deepen our SCJ spiritual wholeness and nurture communal and missional living. Fr. Joe Dean recently told me what Bishop Virginio Bresenelli thinks about the interrelatedness between our Constitutions and our spirituality: To understand our Constitutions is to understand our spirituality. Mindful of this, we will restart the *As a Rule* reflection series. Mary Gorski will assist us in putting this together. You will be asked to share your reflection on a specific citing from the Constitutions. Moreover, we have an abundance of resources on SCJ spirituality. I encourage you to incorporate them into your daily reading.

As you are aware, spirituality is one of the three pillars of visioning of the administration. In response to our desire for spiritual renewal — besides the centennial celebrations — we plan to have province-wide retreats in 2024 and 2025. Also, I have reached out to spiritual speakers and writers in the country to lead days of recollection and spiritually focused presentations. Here is a glimpse of the upcoming spiritually-related events in the province. More details are forthcoming. The council and I encourage and appreciate your participation.

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1. **August 2022:** Province Assembly (led by the JPR team; in-person).
2. **September 2022:** Meeting of SCJs in Pastoral Ministry (provincial council; Zoom); Meeting of Local Superiors (provincial council; in-person)
3. **October 2022:** Dialogue on Social Justice (tentative Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana; in-person and livestream).
4. **November 2022:** Advent Recollection (tentative Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI; Zoom)
5. **March 2023:** Lenten Recollection (Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA; in-person and livestream).
6. **April 2023:** Retirement Workshop (Br. Wayne Fitzpatrick, MM; in-person).
7. **July 2023:** Centennial Celebrations (Centennial Planning Committee; in-person)

Spirituality is the foundation of who we are and what we do. To invigorate spiritual life at the province and local community levels, local superiors are expected to play a critical role. They are not only administrators of their respective communities but also spiritual leaders. The spiritual role of local superiors will be one of the topics discussed at the meeting of superiors in September 2022.

The council and I will continue to seek ways to animate our SCJ spirituality and charism. We welcome your suggestions. Please keep us and one another in your prayers as I do you.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. [unclear]". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial letter.