



Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

December 1, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

When I began studying theology as an undergraduate, I and other students in the Introduction to Spirituality class were asked to define “spirituality.” We gave many definitions, but none satisfied the professor because we did not mention the “Spirit” or “spirit.” But what is spirit?

I like the Old Testament description of spirit in the creation story in Genesis. Spirit, or *rûah* in Hebrew, is described as the breath or wind of God breathing order into chaos as in the depiction of God breathing over cosmic chaos (Genesis 1:2) and life into lifelessness as in the creation of Adam or Humanity out of dust (*adamah* in Hebrew; Genesis 2:7). In the New Testament, we find God breathes life into the frightened disciples in the locked room to give them spiritual life (John 20:22). God also breathes life into the believers at Pentecost to equip them to live the faith and welcome one another from different walks of life into the new church (Acts 2:4).

Prior to his public ministry, Jesus acknowledged the presence of the Spirit in his life and mission: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

I see our ministry as giving *rûah* or breathing life into someone’s life, whether through teaching, maintaining property and buildings, preparing and serving food, ministering to those most in need, serving in administrative positions, or accompanying people in our parishes. We give life because we receive life from God and others!

To give life, we must nurture life. That is, our life must be filled with *rûah*. This is what Sr. Nancy Schreck, OSF, alluded to in her recent spiritual presentation for the Advent Hour of Recollection. She reminded us to stay awake to welcome God into our lives and be attentive to the nudging of the spirit of God happening all around us so that we can be the breath of life for others.

The Provincial Council and I would like to continue to create moments for us to pause, reflect, connect, and breathe in the *rûah* of God. The Advent Hour of Recollection was such a moment. I am grateful to those of you who took part in the recollection. I am also mindful that many of you could not join us due to other commitments.

I hope that you can join us for the Lenten Hour of Recollection by Sr. Dianne Bergant, CSA, a renowned scripture scholar. The time and date of this virtual recollection will be announced soon. The Zoom link will be shared closer to the date.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart in the United States are blessed to have you as our partners. You are a breath of fresh life to us! On behalf of the US Province, I ask you to continue breathing God's spirit into each SCJ and everyone you encounter and serve in your ministry.

Gratefully yours in the Sacred Heart,



Fr. Vien V. Nguyen, SCJ
Provincial Superior of the US Province
Priests of the Sacred Heart

