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U.S. Province Priests of the Sacred Heart

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Minutes of the 927th US Provincial Council Meeting February 7-8, 2023, Hales Corners, WI

PRESENT: Fr. Vien Nguyen, Provincial Superior, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Greg Schill, Br. Duane Lemke and Dn. David Nagel, Councilors; Br. Frank Presto, Provincial Secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary. Andrea Vincent (SHSM Executive Director of Programs), Tim Courts (SHSM Executive Director of Operations), and Jeff Kortz (SHSM Executive Director of Development) joined the council via Zoom for updates and dialogue regarding Sacred Heart Southern Missions. Fr. Joseph Thien Dinh and Fr. Duy Nguyen joined the council for updates on the formation program.

- I. Check-in — Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries, and communities. Items of note:
 - A. This year the Priests of the Sacred Heart celebrate 50 years of ministry at OLG, and the parish celebrates the 100th anniversary of the church's dedication (the parish itself was established in 1912). OLG is exploring the possibility of establishing a Dehonian Associates program as a part of its anniversary celebrations. Fr. Quang Nguyen has joined the Houston community and is now a chaplain at the University of Houston (the community will soon have a meeting to talk about its schedule to ensure that Fr. Q. Nguyen can take part in community functions; the schedule at the university is different than that of the parish). Fr. Fabio dos Santos was to return from his home visit to Brazil later in the week; he was able to renew his visa.
 - B. Northern Mississippi shut down several times recently due to poor weather. Ice storms forced schools to remain closed for several days during Catholic Schools Week. Br. Andy Gancarczyk joined the Nesbit community and has begun preparing videos for Sacred Heart Southern Missions; he recently completed one for Sacred Heart School. Fr. Hendrik Ardianto is in Indonesia for a home visit; during his absence Fr. Kurps has been meeting with the group preparing for World Youth Day.
 - C. Fr. Querobin and Fr. V. Nguyen took part in the CMSM Winter Leadership Conference in January; Fr. V. Nguyen was a presenter. Both spoke well of the gathering, noting that there was good dialogue about issues common to religious in leadership. The setting was very retreat-like.
 - D. The current administration recently marked its first full year in office.
- II. Administration
 - A. Minutes of the 926th Provincial Council meeting — The council voted to approve the minutes of the 926th meeting with minor corrections.
 - B. 2024 General Chapter — During a recent phone call, Fr. Stephen Huffstetter informed Fr. V. Nguyen that the Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter would soon be sending documents regarding the chapter.
 - C. Sacred Heart Southern Missions — Andrea Vincent (Executive Director of Programs), Tim Courts (Executive Director of Operations), and Jeff Kortz (Executive Director of Development) joined the council via Zoom for updates and dialogue regarding SHSM. Fr. Jack Kurps introduced the conversation by giving a summary of the history of Dehonian ministry in northern Mississippi. The first SCJ in Mississippi was Fr. John Flanagan in 1942. The bishop asked Dehonians to establish the Church in northern Mississippi and to address

the needs of the poor. The SCJs realized that one of the best ways to assist the poor was through education; schools were established in Walls and Holly Springs. Partnership with the School Sisters of St. Francis was vital to the establishment of the schools.

Sacred Heart Southern Missions has since grown to become a multi-faceted social service agency (there are six social service offices), along with a development program that funds Dehonian ministries in northern Mississippi. Current challenges include finding ways to offer more tuition assistance to students at both schools, as well as ensuring that each student has access to a computer or tablet during the school year, and internet access. Many SHSM clients are having difficulty covering housing costs since federal COVID relief funds ended.

Work is expected to soon start on a major remodel of the Flanagan Center. The window for receiving bids on the project ends on February 21; as in all areas of the country, it is difficult to find an available contractor and supplies.

Jeff Kortz noted that SHSM continues to seek ways in which to promote the Dehonian charism among donors and staff. Employees begin each day with 10 minutes of prayer, and there are regular in-services at which Dehonian themes are often presented as well as education about SCJ ministries outside of Mississippi. The Advent Hour of Reflection was well-received, and the staff find the Fridge Notes to be a helpful way of staying connected with the wider congregation. Regarding development, SHSM is experiencing many of the same concerns as other fundraising offices, including supply and shipping problems, and rapidly increasing costs. Fundraising is done via direct mail and online marketing. SHSM continues to seek new ways of sharing its story with the public.

There are many long-term staff at SHSM. This is a strong testament to the programs and work atmosphere; however, it also means that in the next few years there will be several people retiring. Finding appropriate staff will be a challenge in the future, as it is for many organizations in recent years.

Fr. V. Nguyen thanked Fr. Kurps and the three representatives from SHSM for their collaboration in promoting the Dehonian mission in northern Mississippi. He would like to meet in a similar fashion each year.

- D. Vietnam — Fr. V. Nguyen reported that he had a conversation with the District Superior of Vietnam. The two Vietnamese students — Fraters Truc Tran and Thuan Nguyen — will go to Vietnam this summer for a home visit. It will be their first in five years. This may pose a challenge regarding their visas. They are to make an appointment at the embassy in Vietnam during their visit to renew their visas. If the renewal is delayed and they are unable to return for the start of the fall semester, they will do their pastoral year in Vietnam.
- E. Boarding schools — The council reviewed a resource guide regarding Native American boarding schools which was prepared by the Archivists for the Congregations of Women Religious and the Catholic Native Boarding School Accountability and Healing Project. The US Department of the Interior announced an investigation into such schools. CSM and LCWR have sought guidance from the archivists' association as to how religious orders can best contribute to this process. Councilors noted that the province and St. Joseph's Indian School have been transparent and proactive regarding concerns brought to school administration. Over 20 years ago the school established a hotline for reporting allegations of abuse. St. Joseph's is unique among residential Native American schools in that it is not located on a reservation and only receives students through family placement (not placement by the state). And while the school continues as a residential program, many years ago it moved away from the dorm-style model to the current family homes.

Some of St. Joseph's archival materials are in the Marquette University Archives; copies of information at MU are in the Province Archives.

Councilors noted the importance of defining what is meant when the word "abuse" is used. For some, this refers to physical abuse. Others define outdated methods of teaching and childcare as abuse (such as cutting a child's hair, or not respecting Native American cultural traditions). When discussions take place about "abuse" at residential schools, it is important to know what the word is in reference to.

- F. Provincial Chapter — The council clarified that the appointments named at the January 31 Pre-Chapter meeting were not intended to be approved by the delegates (chapter facilitator, chapter recording secretary, chapter secretary, members of the Chapter Preparatory Committee). These were appointments that the Provincial Council made; the delegates were informed of the appointments at the January 31 meeting.

Councilors heard positive comments about the Pre-Chapter meeting from participants. The break-out groups went well. It is anticipated that there will be another Pre-Chapter Zoom meeting in spring. The minutes of the January 31 Pre-Chapter meeting will be included in the next Cor Unum.

The Chapter Preparatory Committee will next meet on February 16; Mary Gorski was asked to take minutes at the meeting.

- G. Centennial — The council reviewed several logo ideas for the Province Centennial; it is hoped that the logo can soon be released and used in province communications throughout the year. At first, the council asked that a design submitted by Ruth Markworth be slightly modified. After reviewing the modified design the next day, councilors decided that they preferred a logo with more of a focus on a graphic and less on words. Several examples from other entities were reviewed. Mary Gorski was asked to share these with Ruth Markworth and see if she would be able to refocus her design. The council liked the design submitted for the South Dakota celebration but noted that “Eagle Butte” should be added to the list of locations since the province continues to fund the Sacred Heart Center.

Plans are in process for the large Centennial celebration on July 16, which will be open to alumni and former SCJs, employees, families, friends of the community and benefactors. Dn. Nagel and Fr. V. Nguyen are working with Pam Milczarski of the Province Development Office regarding plans to invite benefactors. Mary Gorski has the Esprit de Coeur mailing list for alumni. The desire is to hold the July 16 celebration at Sacred Heart Monastery. However, if attendance looks like it might be too large for Sacred Heart there is the possibility of using St. Martin of Tours. There is to be a reception and meal after, perhaps a catered BBQ. This would allow kitchen staff at SHSST to be guests at the celebration. Invitations will go out shortly after Easter. Fr. Kurps scheduled music ministers.

A smaller “family” celebration with SCJs will be held on July 17. The Lower Brule celebration will be on July 30.

- H. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — A Memo of Understanding between the Priests of the Sacred Heart and SHSST regarding expectations in regard to formation is in process. Such a document is in place for seminarians from St. Francis; other sponsoring communities are requesting the same. The purpose is to clarify tasks and expectations of both SHSST and the sponsoring community/diocese. It is also an opportunity for the sponsoring community to help the seminary understand the community’s formation process. Monica Misy (SHSST Vice President of the Institutional Advancement Department) has been very helpful in creating the memo for the Priests of the Sacred Heart; she expects to finalize it within the next two weeks.

I. International partnerships

1. Theresian Missionaries of Mary — One of the religious sisters from the Philippines who is to serve in South Dakota was granted an F1 visa (student), the other has been denied. The province will work with the sister who is without a visa to apply for an R1 visa (religious worker). It is hoped that both sisters can come to Hales Corners in the near future to begin their preparation for ministry in South Dakota.

The sisters will initially live at Dehon House; in South Dakota there are several options. The SCJ community house has significant mold and is to be rebuilt this year. In the meantime, the SCJs are using the trailer that had been the sisters’ house in Lower Brule. It was suggested that the TMM sisters stay with Sr. Debra in Fort Thompson while new permanent housing is being developed in Lower Brule. Other residential options are also available in Lower Brule and Fort Thompson. Fr. Schill will speak with Mike Tyrell at St. Joseph’s Indian School about possibilities.

2. Fr. Floribert Dhelo Bulu — Fr. Bulu, a member of the Congolese Province, will arrive in the United States on February 22. He will initially be with the Sacred Heart Monastery Community while studying in the ECS program; Fr. Bulu will later audit courses to prepare him for ministry in the US Province.

- J. Senior Life Commission — Fr. V. Nguyen invited two lay professionals experienced in healthcare and eldercare to serve on the Senior Life Commission: Lydia LoCoco is Director of Community Relations for the Archdiocese of Milwaukee and a member of the Order of St. Camillus Foundation Board, and Lee Anne Young is Administrator of Home Health & Hospice Services for St. Camillus. Other members of the Senior Life Commission include Fr. Frank Wittouck, Fr. Greg Speck, Fr. Vincent Suparman, Fr. Joe Dean, Br. Duane Lemke, Br. Ray Kozuch, Fr. Greg Schill (chairperson), Fr. Yvon Sheehy and Mary Balistreri.

- K. Pre-Retirement Workshop — Approximately a dozen SCJs (including several council members) have committed to going to the Pre-Retirement Workshop in Tucson, AZ, April 25-26. The list includes Fr. Vincent Suparman, Fr. Dominic Peluse, Fr.

Guy Blair, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Fr. Jack Kurps, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Ed Zemlik, Fr. Mark Mastin, Fr. Greg Schill, Fr. Rafael Querobin, and Br. Duane Lemke. The registration deadline is March 31.

- L. Indonesia — Fr. V. Nguyen will be in Indonesia from February 22 through March 5.
- M. Pro-family employee benefits — The council discussed ways in which the province could offer more pro-family benefits to its employees. This might include assistance with childcare costs, tuition grants, and/or a sliding scale for family plan health insurance policies. Dn. David will work with the province HR managers to discuss possibilities.
- N. North American Theological Commission — The commission was meeting in Hales Corners during the same days that the Provincial Council met. Fr. V. Nguyen took the opportunity to briefly visit with the commission and get a sense of its work. The council had hoped that the commission could partner with the North American Dehon Study Center to reflect on Dehonian-themed topics; such reflections could then be adapted for use in SCJ ministries in the US and Canada. Fr. V. Nguyen's impression is that the North American Commission reflects on topics that are then presented at the general level (there will be a General Theological Conference in Madrid in May).

Members of the commission include Fr. John van den Hengel (chairperson), Fr. Gustave Lulendo, Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec, Fr. Joseph Mukuna, Fr. Francis Vu Tran, Fr. Guy Bertrand Wabo, and Frater Paul Phong Hoang (associate member).

- O. Formation — Frs. Joseph Thien Dinh and Duy Nguyen, province formation directors, joined the council for updates and dialogue on the formation program. As noted earlier, Fraters Truc Tran and Thuan Nguyen will return to Vietnam for a visit home. Frater Paul Phong Hoang is graduating from SHSST in December; he will spend two months with the Dehonian community in Ecuador this summer studying Spanish. Frater Jacob Smith is graduating from Marquette University in May; he will begin theological studies in the fall. Fraters Michael Wodarczyk, Thuan Nguyen and Truc Tran will receive the Ministry of Lector on March 21.

III. Membership

- A. Fr. Anthony Kluckman — Fr. V. Nguyen has been in regular contact with Fr. Anthony Kluckman's family; a meeting with the family, representatives from the province and the Franklin Police is anticipated to take place soon. The family was pleased to see the extensive news coverage about Fr. Kluckman at the six-month anniversary of his disappearance.
- B. Frater Hung Pham — The council voted to approve Fra. Hung's request to receive the Ministry of Acolyte. It will take place on March 21.
- C. Fr. Richard MacDonald — Fr. MacDonald is recovering slowly from knee surgery; however, doctors consider his progress to be appropriate. His primary pain is related to the surgery itself, not knee pain.
- D. Fr. Mark Fortner — Fr. Fortner had a heart catheterization. The procedure went well and took place shortly after his return to the United States from Indonesia.
- E. Fr. Steve Pujdak — Fr. Pujdak was hospitalized with pneumonia.

IV. Finance

- A. Province Development Office — Monthly renewal mailings are down from last year; however, returns continue to be stronger than before COVID. The annuity program is reviewing the rate of return for charitable gift annuities, following the increased rates set by the national council.
- B. Properties — Dehon House is being maintained so that it can be available for province needs, or for possibilities for SHSST, in particular, the propaedeutic year. Mark Wenzel is drawing up a list of needed repairs.

The white house on the Woods Road property needs extensive maintenance; this will be reviewed in the future. The State of Wisconsin recently purchased frontage property from the province to widen a road.

- C. Investment Committee — The Investment Committee and the Stakeholders will meet on February 22.
- D. Space needs at SHSST/SHM — There has been discussion regarding the possibility of finding a space outside of the SHM/SHSST building for the formation program to give it more autonomy. No changes are planned for the next academic year.

- E. Capital project — Dn. Nagel shared St. Joseph’s Indian School’s proposal for FY24 and 25 regarding the rebuild of the school rec center; it will be presented with its FY24 budget. It is one of the most used buildings on campus and the council is in favor of the work. Due to the expense of the capital project (\$7 million in FY24 and \$2.1 million in FY25) it will need to go to the Generalate for final approval.

- V. Next Meeting — The council will next meet via Zoom on Wednesday, February 15, at 11:00 a.m. (central).

Minutes of the 926th US Provincial Council Meeting January 3, 2023, via Zoom

PRESENT: Fr. Vien Nguyen, Provincial Superior, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Greg Schill, Br. Duane Lemke and Dn. David Nagel, Councilors; Br. Frank Presto, Provincial Secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary.

- I. Minutes — Councilors voted to approve the minutes of the 925th Provincial Council meeting (with minor corrections).
- II. Provincial Chapter
 - A. Rules and Procedures — The council reviewed and voted to approve the Rules and Procedures of the XVII US Provincial Chapter (with slight corrections). Fr. Kurps prepared the document based on the 2014 Rules and Procedures. He was to make the corrections noted and forward the finalized copy to Br. Presto.
 - B. Chapter theme — The theme of the 2023 Provincial Chapter: “Welcoming the Spirit; Preparing for Our Future.”
 - C. Chapter goals — The goals of the XVII Provincial Chapter:
 1. That celebrating our past, delegates leave the chapter hopeful for our future having identified next steps toward defining what it means to be Dehonian in the United States at this time and outlined ways to:
 - Become more intercultural as individuals, local communities and as a province;
 - Increase collaboration with the laity;
 - Intentionally share the Dehonian charism with others.
 2. Recognizing the divisions that exist within society and the Church in the United States, we strive, as Dehonians, to build the reign of the Sacred Heart in souls and in societies.
 - D. Chapter Preparatory Committee — The council voted to approve the addition of Fr. Henry Nguyen to the Chapter Preparatory Committee. Other members of the committee: Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Fr. Jack Kurps and Sr. Cathy Bertrand. Fr. V. Nguyen appointed Fr. Jack Kurps as chairperson of the committee.
 - E. January 31 Pre-Chapter Meeting via Zoom — The council endorsed the agenda for the January 31st meeting as proposed by the Chapter Preparatory Committee.
- III. Fr. Anthony Kluckman — Fr. V. Nguyen will meet with members of the Kluckman family in early January. The six-month anniversary of Fr. Kluckman’s disappearance is on January 21; Fr. V. Nguyen was to offer to hold a prayer service to honor Fr. Kluckman on that day.
- IV. Archdiocese of Galveston Houston — Fr. V. Nguyen met with a representative of the Galveston Houston Archdiocese to finalize a contract for Fr. Quang Nguyen’s ministry as chaplain at the University of Houston. Dn. Nagel has reviewed it. The archdiocese looks forward to this collaborative relationship with the province regarding campus ministry.
- V. North American Theological Commission — The commission learned of the Provincial Council’s desire to find more ways of expanding knowledge of the spiritual writings of Fr. Leo John Dehon. The commission wrote to Fr. V. Nguyen to explore possibilities with which the commission can be involved. This will be an agenda item at the joint North American council’s meeting in March.

Minutes of the January 31, 2023 Pre-Chapter Meeting Via Zoom

PRESENT: Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Fr. Bob Bossie, Fr. Charles Brown, Fr. John Czyzynski, Fr. Jan de Jong, Fr. Joseph Dean, Fr. Joseph Thien Dinh, Fr. Mark Fortner, Fr. Tim Gray, Fr. Byron Haaland, Fr. Richard Johnston, Fr. Jack Kurps, Br. Duane Lemke, Fr. Richard MacDonald, Fr. Mark Mastin, Fr. Jean Claude Mbassi, Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec, Fr. Jerzy Mordalski, Dn. David Nagel, Fr. Duy Nguyen, Fr. Henry Nguyen, Frater Long Nguyen, Fr. Quang Nguyen, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Tony Russo, Fr. Greg Schill (left early for travels), Fr. Jim Schroeder, Fr. Yvon Sheehy, Fr. Andrzej Sudol, Fr. Vincent Suparman, Fr. David Szatkowski, Br. Brian Tompkins, Fr. Frank Wittouck, and Fr. Ed Zemlik – chapter delegates; Sr. Cathy Bertrand – facilitator; Sr. Kathleen Burns - IT assistance; Mary Gorski – minutes.

- I. Welcome and Introduction to Meeting — Sr. Bertrand welcomed participants to the meeting. Fr. V. Nguyen introduced members of the Planning Committee (Fr. Jack Kurps, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Fr. Henry Nguyen, and Sr. Cathy Bertrand and Fr. V. Nguyen) and thanked them for their work. He also thanked Sr. Kathleen Burns for her technical assistance.

The purpose of this meeting is to take care of short business items and surface topics for the Chapter. This will allow for more time during the Chapter for delegates to engage in conversation, listening for the voice of the Holy Spirit guiding the province as it seeks to define and identify its current realities and future possibilities.

- II. Prayer — The Provincial Council led the participants in prayer.

- III. Theme — The theme of the 2023 Provincial Chapter is “Welcoming the Spirit; Preparing for the Future.” “What does this theme say to you,” asked Sr. Bertrand. “How do you approach this chapter with new eyes? How do you reflect on the theme as you prepare for the next General Chapter?” Delegates were invited to share their initial thoughts. Comments paraphrased:

- A. The chapter is an act of reparation for the entire province.
- B. In looking at the future we must be mindful of the impact of climate change and the possibility of ever-increasing war. We cannot look at the future of the religious community in isolation. Climate change and war impact everything.
- C. The province has a growing elderly population. How do we take care of the needs of our Dehonian elders while at the same time nourishing growth in the younger SCJs? We need the guidance of the Spirit.
- E. Our theme is “Welcoming the Spirit.” If we welcome the Spirit, the Spirit will move us forward. Welcoming the Spirit means welcoming the future. The Spirit will guide us to that future if we welcome it.
- F. As a senior SCJ I am hopeful for the future, and what our younger members envision for that future. However, I still have a role to play now in the present moment. Even though we may be limited, senior members can be engaged in the present moment; we care about the present moment and want to be part of it.
- G. This chapter reminds me of the one that took place when Fr. Johnny Klingler was elected. Major decisions needed to be made about divesting from the province’s seminaries. The Spirit asks us to read the signs of the times and adapt. We have new leadership in the province. What classic ministries in the province should continue — and how?
- H. I think of the journey of Abraham. Where is he going? He had to trust that God would tell him when he got there. In the same way we must trust in God as we keep moving forward.
- I. The chapter will be a journey in being aware of and listening to God and listening to each other.

- IV. Appointments — The following were presented to the delegates to serve the Provincial Chapter:

- A. Sr. Cathy Bertrand – facilitator
- B. Mary Gorski – recording secretary
- C. Br. Frank Presto – chapter secretary
- D. Chapter Preparatory Committee (Fr. Jack Kurps – chairperson, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Henry Nguyen, Sr. Cathy Bertrand)

Previous to the January 31 meeting, the following were elected to the Chapter Finance Committee: Fr. Quang Nguyen, Fr. Duy Nguyen and Br. Duane Lemke.

- V. Orientation to Chapter process — Sr. Bertrand gave an overview of the process of the Chapter; it is similar to the processes used at previous provincial chapters. Main points:
- A. A provincial chapter is designed to be a spiritual experience with the potential of being both contemplative and transformative; it holds the possibility of being a graced, freeing, and healing experience for both individuals and the province.
 - B. Chapter delegates should come to the Chapter with the following dispositions: 1) See with an Open Mind (commitment to truth; openness to seeing with fresh eyes), 2) Love with an Open Heart (commitment to love; willing to envision walking in the shoes of another), and 3) Act with an Open Will (commitment to courage; letting go of fear to allow the “new” to come forward).
 - C. A chapter is a time of communal discernment. It implies an openness to hearing what others have to say to me, or what I feel drawn to saying to another. It invites a high level of “letting go.” It is a sharing of what a group comes to know together, and it is about more than just the immediate group (the Priests of the Sacred Heart).
 - D. Chapter participants must be open to being transformed in contemplative dialogue.
 - E. Heart to Heart conversations are vital to such transformation; they are vital for hearing the movement of the Spirit.
 - F. Big Picture Conversations are also a necessary piece of the Chapter. Such conversations help the delegates tap into their deepest sense of vision and mission as a community and point direction toward the future.
 - G. The goals of the Provincial Chapter include 1) Identify next steps toward defining what it means to be Dehonian in the US, and 2) Carrying out the mandatory tasks of the Chapter such as the election of delegates and alternates to the 2024 General Chapter, reviewing and accepting the State of the Province Report, and reviewing and accepting the Chapter Finance Committee report.
 - H. Throughout the Chapter, it is essential to keep in mind the mission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in the United States.
- VI. Concluding comments before the break — Fr. V. Nguyen reminded delegates that during the Chapter they are each responsible for taking part in all moments of the Chapter, including meetings (large and small group gatherings) and prayer. A delegate asked if there would be topics from the General Administration to be addressed at the Provincial Chapter. No such topics have yet been received.
- VII. Small group discussions — Delegates were divided into six small groups to surface two to three topics for the Chapter to address. The small group discussion was given 30 minutes. Topics from the groups (listed as reported, not necessarily in group order):
- A. Succession plans need to be implemented to prepare people to serve in key roles such as archivist, treasurer, liturgist, and novice master. How can these key positions be readied for the future?
 - B. How do we best instill the Dehonian charism into province ministries, especially as the laity take a greater role in leading them? Could retired SCJs spend time in our entities sharing our charism?
 - C. In light of our charism and our unique experience of discussing our intercultural and international reality we suggest a discussion of our ministries and institutions. With the number of SCJs decreasing, how do we strengthen our charism in ministries?

There needs to be a strong discussion of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, its strengths and concerns, as well as our expectations as Dehonians. How can we strengthen our presence as Dehonians at SHSST?
 - D. We should reassess who are we and how we share our identity with the entire Church. How is our charism represented and communicated within our local communities, our ministries and institutions? How does our charism influence the formation of candidates for ordained ministry at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology? How do we create a new vision for SHSST?

- E. We should revisit youth ministry, particularly campus ministry. Priorities in youth ministry have shifted. We should look at what other provinces are doing in regard to youth ministry.
- F. Enhance the use of communication technologies to reach people, especially youth.
- G. Bring in professionals to evaluate our current care and long-term care of our elder SCJs throughout the province.
- H. Enhance multicultural training in formation; it is important that SCJs be bilingual. Spanish will increasingly be needed in Church ministry. What are we doing well in province formation? What needs improvement?
- I. We are multicultural and multigenerational. We need more contact between the generations in the province. Among the young there is a sense that the elderly are not passing things on. How can the process of elders passing on information to the younger generations be enhanced?
- J. If the province is going to have retirement guidelines they need to be followed.
- K. The formation program needs more emphasis on multiculturalism. The province as a whole needs to be more welcoming of a variety of cultures.
- L. The climate crisis and the threat of nuclear war. It was suggested that the Chapter call for a conference on these topics as a way of educating SCJs, and to also call for a General Conference on the same topics.
- M. There needs to be a conscious transfer of the identity and ownership of the province to the younger generation of SCJs.
- N. Collaboration with the laity.
- O. Have a professional group review how the province cares for its elders.
- P. We must address the global concerns of climate change and social justice; this requires educating ourselves (SCJs) and sharing our Dehonian charism with others as it relates to global concerns.
- Q. Multiculturalism is important, but it has been a topic of several previous gatherings. Perhaps a different topic should take precedence.
- R. We should discuss how spirituality and the charism are integrated with social justice issues.
- S. There needs to be a unified corporate identity for the Priests of the Sacred Heart. This includes the names by which the congregation is known by and its logo.

VIII. General comments —Sr. Bertrand said that all of the topics raised call for discussion and review by the province, but not all need to be or should be topics for the Provincial Chapter. Following the group reports, Sr. Bertrand invited delegates to share personal comments on what they heard, focused on what most needs to be addressed at Chapter. Comments paraphrased:

- A. Something struck when we talked about sharing our charism. We are called not just to share the charism with the laity, but with the wider Church. At SHSST we are preparing clerics, not laity, but still sharing our charism with them. Also, the word “laity” creates a distinction that is not necessarily healthy. The charism isn’t just for us to give to the laity, but the whole Church.
- B. One of the things that came up in our group is that we have a lot of employees. Our founder was concerned about the workers. In his time, there were groups of workers that got together. When we talk about collaboration, how do we find ways of showing that we can be an institution that shows a different way of operating in the future?
- C. I was puzzled by the comment about what to call ourselves. In response, the group that raised the topic spoke about the challenge of having many names: Priests of the Sacred Heart, Dehonians, SCJs, etc. How do we show a single corporate brand when we use multiple names?

- D. I like what was said regarding planning for the future, succession plans for crucial positions in the province. We need the courage to voice this topic. How do we staff our positions; how do we continue to staff key roles?
 - E. I endorse what was said about a common name. I like “Dehonians,” but in using that, we must ensure that our sense of social justice is in that name.
 - F. What has been said about succession plans for key positions is very important. However, is this a topic or function for the Chapter? It is the role of leadership to prepare for succession.
- IX. Second small group discussions — In light of what was reported and said, each small group was asked to again identify two to three topics to propose for the Provincial Chapter. These can be the same topics as were raised in the first discussion, or they might be different or adjusted in light of what was heard. The secretary of each group was asked to send a report with the group’s topics to Mary Gorski soon after the meeting.

The reports, as written by the group secretaries, are attached as Addendum A.

X. Concluding comments

A. Delegates were invited to make final comments. Paraphrased:

1. The Chapter is not a moment in which to make policy or personnel decisions. The Chapter is a time to state our charism; who we are. That will show us how to deal with all the other situations.
2. It is not the job of the Chapter to deal with succession plans, or to study the elderly. The Chapter could mandate that province leadership address topics such as succession plans and a professional review of the care of elders.
3. There was nothing in our founder’s writing about an Apostolate to the Sea, yet the Dutch Province came up with one and they were known for it for decades. Nothing was in St. Ignatius Loyola’s writings about university education, but now the Jesuits are known for it. Point: whatever we decide as a Chapter, we need to allow enough flexibility for communities to see a need unmet by a local church and run with it if they have the energy and local resources.

B. Fr. Vien Nguyen — Fr. V. Nguyen shared a few final comments. He noted that the current Provincial Council is in the process of developing succession plans for key roles; it has been a part of the council’s on-going visioning.

He also reminded delegates of the three primary Centennial celebrations of the US Province. On July 16, there will be a Mass at SHSST that will include alumni, former SCJs, laity and benefactors. On July 17, there will be an evening celebration just with the SCJs, something akin to a family celebration. On July 30 there will be a celebration in Lower Brule, the site of the first official Dehonian ministry. Fr. V. Nguyen said that several entity superiors are planning to come for the centennial, including representatives of Germany, Poland, DR Congo and Vietnam.

He thanked the delegates for their participation. Committee members will determine whether a second preparatory meeting is needed.

Fr. V. Nguyen reminded committee secretaries to get their reports to Mary Gorski as soon as possible after the meeting.

XI. Closing Prayer

Group reports

“What two to three topics should be discussed at the 2023 US Provincial Chapter?”

GROUP 1

1. Interculturality

- a. We want to revisit the topic of interculturality. As pointed out by one member of the group, there are different layers of interculturality—the relationship of the one coming from outside the US Province with the dominant culture and the relationship with the other coming from other cultures (e.g., Congolese relating to Indonesian). Also, within the dominant culture, there are different cultures.
- b. We want our students in formation to be well prepared for a more intercultural US Province. Thus, exposure to interculturality, plurality, and diversity early in formation is crucial.

2. Spirituality

- a. Here we talk about the openness to the Spirit leading us to new possibilities (e.g., new ministries) (Cst. 23)
- b. Our spirituality is to be lived and interpreted through the lens of social justice.
- c. But what does social justice mean to us? How do we define “the poor” and “the neglected”?

GROUP 2

Our reality is that the province has become more multicultural and multigenerational. We don't always have the skills to navigate community living in this context. The priorities and concerns of the older members of the province are not necessarily the priorities and concerns of the younger members of the province. How do we bridge this gap? This affects all areas of the province - community life, formation, spirituality, ministry. Further conversation on the topic of interculturality and multigenerational living would be helpful.

Second, that the chapter propose to provincial leadership that the next provincial assembly be used to educate ourselves on climate change and nuclear proliferation with the hope that we could agree on actionable next steps - and that, perhaps in conjunction with the Region of Canada, that we request the general chapter to request a general conference on the same topic.

GROUP 3

1. Fulltime University/College Campus youth ministry: The members of the chapter should revisit having our men involved in fulltime University/College Campus youth ministry. This in no way is to dismiss what we are currently doing in our present parishes. As part of this review process, we should seek out programs that other fellow Dehonian entities are successfully using. There are several advantages to doing this:
 - a. A source of potential vocations. Our current parishes are not providing us any vocations.
 - b. A source of spreading our charism.
 - c. Visibility, name recognition.

As a subset to this topic, our congregation needs to invest in the use of technology to include: developing videos, catechetical programs unique with the Dehonian charism, podcasts, radio, etc. The use of varying technology would help spread our name and charism more broadly throughout the U.S.

2. Elderly Care: The members of the chapter should discuss the topic of Elderly Care. Specifically, we need

to have the Province propose and mandate that a study be initiated by a professional health care institution to evaluate what level of care we currently have, both good and bad, and then determine what is the best type of care we should have. This expert appraisal should examine our current policy as well. Additionally, the review needs to examine why men are living alone. This study needs to include the stress placed on SCJs who are placed as superiors in our facilities and the deep psychological problems of individual residents that make it difficult for a superior to manage the health and well-being of our men. Overall, the study needs to account for the lifestyle of religious life.

3. Formation

- a. The members of the chapter should discuss the need to prepare our men for bilingual ministry, particularly with the Hispanic community. What is our current Spanish program for education and immersion? Is it a volunteer or mandatory program?
- b. The members of the chapter should review our overall formation program. We know that there is a committee that was recently formed to evaluate and develop new unique SCJ procedures and guidelines, similar but yet different from what the PPF6 has presented to Diocesan seminaries. Are we accompanying our men with affective care and support? Are our men in formation being treated in a way they feel encouraged and are progressively developing in a positive direction?

As a side note: Group #3 fully supports the other groups that spoke of collaboration with the laity and creating lay Dehonians. Bringing the Dehonian charism to the broader church is so needed. And this effort is for all ages, especially for any youth program.

GROUP 4

First, as we approach the future, it is a good opportunity to reassess our charism, particularly who are we and how do we share this identity with the entire church?

Second, using that discussion as a foundation, how is our charism represented and communicated within our local communities, our ministries and institutions? In terms of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, how does our charism influence the “definition/formation” of candidates for ordained ministry?

GROUP 5

1. Items to be referred to Provincial administration:
 - a. Have a professional group study the policies and practice of the care of the elderly in our community.
 - b. Continue to ensure the succession of members to significant roles such as novice master, province treasurer, etc.
2. Collaboration between elderly and youth of the province in consciously transferring ownership and identity of the province to the younger members of the province. There is an awareness of the great need for mutual trust for this to be able to happen
3. Conversation about charism and identity:
 - a. The emphasis of our founder on social justice
 - b. Collaboration with others (laity, other religious communities, especially women’s groups) in addressing the issue of climate change.
 - c. Working with our own employees in modeling that collaboration between management and employees that Fr. Dehon was involved in.

GROUP 6

1. To continue or to make a priority succession planning for the Province's key positions. (Question: Do we need to or should we recruit SCJs from other countries?)
2. To promote the sharing of the SCJ charism with the broader Church including laity, priests, religious, etc. (Can we utilize retired SCJs to promote the charism and provide service to our entities?)
3. To prioritize province ministries to provide a future for these entities.

CALENDAR

2023

- March 13: Lenten Hour of Recollection **for SCJs**, via Zoom, 10:00 a.m. (Central)
March 21: Fraters Michael Wodarczyk, Thuan Nguyen and Truc Tran will receive the Ministry of Lector
March 21: Frater Hung Pham will receive the Ministry of Acolyte
March 23: Lenten Hour of Recollection **for Staff and Collaborators**, via Zoom, 10:00 a.m. (Central)
March 28-29: Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
April 25-26: Pre-retirement workshop, Redemptorist Retreat Center, Tuscon
May 9-10: Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
June 27-28: Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
July 16: Province Centennial Celebration with the public, Hales Corners
July 17: Province Centennial Celebration ("family" celebration with SCJs), Hales Corners
July 17-21: US Provincial Chapter
July 30: Lower Brule Centennial Celebration

2024

- June 14 - July 5: General Chapter, Rome

NECROLOGY

+**Br. Harry Theo Schurgers**, a member of the Dutch Region, died February 6. He was born in 1933, made his first profession in 1956, and his final profession in 1960.

+**Fr. André Eluti Epale**, a member of the Cameroon Province, died on January 20. He was born in 1952, professed in 1980 and ordained in 1984.

UPDATES

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