

1 **Minutes of the January 31, 2023 Pre-Chapter Meeting**
2 **Via Zoom**
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4 PRESENT: Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Fr. Bob Bossie, Fr. Charles Brown, Fr. John Czyzynski, Fr. Jan de Jong, Fr.
5 Joseph Dean, Fr. Joseph Thien Dinh, Fr. Mark Fortner, Fr. Tim Gray, Fr. Byron Haaland, Fr. Richard Johnston, Fr.
6 Jack Kurps, Br. Duane Lemke, Fr. Richard MacDonald, Fr. Mark Mastin, Fr. Jean Claude Mbassi, Fr. Zbigniew
7 Morawiec, Fr. Jerzy Mordalski, Dn. David Nagel, Fr. Duy Nguyen, Fr. Henry Nguyen, Frater Long Nguyen, Fr.
8 Quang Nguyen, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Tony Russo, Fr. Greg Schill (left early
9 for travels), Fr. Jim Schroeder, Fr. Yvon Sheehy, Fr. Andrzej Sudol, Fr. Vincent Suparman, Fr. David Szatkowski,
10 Br. Brian Tompkins, Fr. Frank Wittouck, and Fr. Ed Zemlik – chapter delegates; Sr. Cathy Bertrand – facilitator; Sr.
11 Kathleen Burns - IT assistance; Mary Gorski – minutes.
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13 I. Welcome and Introduction to Meeting — Sr. Bertrand welcomed participants to the meeting. Fr. V. Nguyen
14 introduced members of the Planning Committee (Fr. Jack Kurps, Br. Frank Presto, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Fr.
15 Henry Nguyen, and Sr. Cathy Bertrand and Fr. V. Nguyen) and thanked them for their work. He also thanked
16 Sr. Kathleen Burns for her technical assistance.
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18 The purpose of this meeting is to take care of short business items and surface topics for the Chapter. This will
19 allow for more time during the Chapter for delegates to engage in conversation, listening for the voice of the
20 Holy Spirit guiding the province as it seeks to define and identify its current realities and future possibilities.
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22 II. Prayer — The Provincial Council led the participants in prayer.
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24 III. Theme — The theme of the 2023 Provincial Chapter is “Welcoming the Spirit; Preparing for the Future.”
25 “What does this theme say to you,” asked Sr. Bertrand. “How do you approach this chapter with new eyes?
26 How do you reflect on the theme as you prepare for the next General Chapter?” Delegates were invited to share
27 their initial thoughts. Comments paraphrased:
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29 A. The chapter is an act of reparation for the entire province.
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31 B. In looking at the future we must be mindful of the impact of climate change and the possibility of ever-
32 increasing war. We cannot look at the future of the religious community in isolation. Climate change and
33 war impact everything.
34

35 C. The province has a growing elderly population. How do we take care of the needs of our Dehonian elders
36 while at the same time nourishing growth in the younger SCJs? We need the guidance of the Spirit.
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38 D. Our theme is “Welcoming the Spirit.” If we welcome the Spirit, the Spirit will move us forward.
39 Welcoming the Spirit means welcoming the future. The Spirit will guide us to that future if we welcome it.
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41 E. As a senior SCJ I am hopeful for the future, and what our younger members envision for that future.
42 However, I still have a role to play now in the present moment. Even though we may be limited, senior
43 members can be engaged in the present moment; we care about the present moment and want to be part of
44 it.
45

46 F. This chapter reminds me of the one that took place when Fr. Johnny Klingler was elected. Major decisions
47 needed to be made about divesting from the province’s seminaries. The Spirit asks us to read the signs of
48 the times and adapt. We have new leadership in the province. What classic ministries in the province
49 should continue — and how?
50

51 G. I think of the journey of Abraham. Where is he going? He had to trust that God would tell him when he got
52 there. In the same way we must trust in God as we keep moving forward.
53

54 H. The chapter will be a journey in being aware of and listening to God and listening to each other.
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- 56 IV. Appointments — The following were presented to the delegates to serve the Provincial Chapter:
57
58 A. Sr. Cathy Bertrand – facilitator
59 B. Mary Gorski – recording secretary
60 C. Br. Frank Presto – chapter secretary
61 D. Chapter Preparatory Committee (Fr. Jack Kurps – chairperson, Fr. Vien Nguyen, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, Br.
62 Frank Presto, Fr. Henry Nguyen, Sr. Cathy Bertrand)
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64 Previous to the January 31 meeting, the following were elected to the Chapter Finance Committee: Fr. Quang
65 Nguyen, Fr. Duy Nguyen and Br. Duane Lemke.
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- 67 V. Orientation to Chapter process — Sr. Bertrand gave an overview of the process of the Chapter; it is similar to
68 the processes used at previous provincial chapters. Main points:
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70 A. A provincial chapter is designed to be a spiritual experience with the potential of being both contemplative
71 and transformative; it holds the possibility of being a graced, freeing, and healing experience for both
72 individuals and the province.
73
74 B. Chapter delegates should come to the Chapter with the following dispositions: 1) See with an Open Mind
75 (commitment to truth; openness to seeing with fresh eyes), 2) Love with an Open Heart (commitment to
76 love; willing to envision walking in the shoes of another), and 3) Act with an Open Will (commitment to
77 courage; letting go of fear to allow the “new” to come forward).
78
79 C. A chapter is a time of communal discernment. It implies an openness to hearing what others have to say to
80 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
81 group comes to know together, and it is about more than just the immediate group (the Priests of the Sacred
82 Heart).
83
84 D. Chapter participants must be open to being transformed in contemplative dialogue.
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86 E. Heart to Heart conversations are vital to such transformation; they are vital for hearing the movement of the
87 Spirit.
88
89 F. Big Picture Conversations are also a necessary piece of the Chapter. Such conversations help the delegates
90 tap into their deepest sense of vision and mission as a community and point direction toward the future.
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92 G. The goals of the Provincial Chapter include 1) Identify next steps toward defining what it means to be
93 Dehonian in the US, and 2) Carrying out the mandatory tasks of the Chapter such as the election of
94 delegates and alternates to the 2024 General Chapter, reviewing and accepting the State of the Province
95 Report, and reviewing and accepting the Chapter Finance Committee report.
96
97 H. Throughout the Chapter, it is essential to keep in mind the mission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in the
98 United States.
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- 100 VI. Concluding comments before the break — Fr. V. Nguyen reminded delegates that during the Chapter they are
101 each responsible for taking part in all moments of the Chapter, including meetings (large and small group
102 gatherings) and prayer. A delegate asked if there would be topics from the General Administration to be
103 addressed at the Provincial Chapter. No such topics have yet been received.
104
- 105 VII. Small group discussions — Delegates were divided into six small groups to surface two to three topics for the
106 Chapter to address. The small group discussion was given 30 minutes. Topics from the groups (listed as
107 reported, not necessarily in group order):
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109 A. Succession plans need to be implemented to prepare people to serve in key roles such as archivist,
110 treasurer, liturgist, and novice master. How can these key positions be readied for the future?
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- 112 B. How do we best instill the Dehonian charism into province ministries, especially as the laity take a greater
113 role in leading them? Could retired SCJs spend time in our entities sharing our charism?
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- 115 C. In light of our charism and our unique experience of discussing our intercultural and international reality
116 we suggest a discussion of our ministries and institutions. With the number of SCJs decreasing, how do we
117 strengthen our charism in ministries?
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119 There needs to be a strong discussion of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, its strengths and
120 concerns, as well as our expectations as Dehonians. How can we strengthen our presence as Dehonians at
121 SHSST?
122
- 123 D. We should reassess who are we and how we share our identity with the entire Church. How is our charism
124 represented and communicated within our local communities, our ministries and institutions? How does our
125 charism influence the formation of candidates for ordained ministry at Sacred Heart Seminary and School
126 of Theology? How do we create a new vision for SHSST?
127
- 128 E. We should revisit youth ministry, particularly campus ministry. Priorities in youth ministry have shifted.
129 We should look at what other provinces are doing in regard to youth ministry.
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- 131 F. Enhance the use of communication technologies to reach people, especially youth.
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- 133 G. Bring in professionals to evaluate our current care and long-term care of our elder SCJs throughout the
134 province.
135
- 136 H. Enhance multicultural training in formation; it is important that SCJs be bilingual. Spanish will increasingly
137 be needed in Church ministry. What are we doing well in province formation? What needs improvement?
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- 139 I. We are multicultural and multigenerational. We need more contact between the generations in the province.
140 Among the young there is a sense that the elderly are not passing things on. How can the process of elders
141 passing on information to the younger generations be enhanced?
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- 143 J. If the province is going to have retirement guidelines they need to be followed.
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- 145 K. The formation program needs more emphasis on multiculturalism. The province as a whole needs to be
146 more welcoming of a variety of cultures.
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- 148 L. The climate crisis and the threat of nuclear war. It was suggested that the Chapter call for a conference on
149 these topics as a way of educating SCJs, and to also call for a General Conference on the same topics.
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- 151 M. There needs to be a conscious transfer of the identity and ownership of the province to the younger
152 generation of SCJs.
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- 154 N. Collaboration with the laity.
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- 156 O. Have a professional group review how the province cares for its elders.
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- 158 P. We must address the global concerns of climate change and social justice; this requires educating ourselves
159 (SCJs) and sharing our Dehonian charism with others as it relates to global concerns.
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- 161 Q. Multiculturalism is important, but it has been a topic of several previous gatherings. Perhaps a different
162 topic should take precedence.
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- 164 R. We should discuss how spirituality and the charism are integrated with social justice issues.
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- 166 S. There needs to be a unified corporate identity for the Priests of the Sacred Heart. This includes the names
167 by which the congregation is known by and its logo.

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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.

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

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

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

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237 XI. Closing Prayer