

February 15, 2023

Dear Brothers,

Recruiting international priests and religious from abroad for ministry in the United States is not new. From its beginning, the US Church recruited in European countries with burgeoning vocations, most notably Ireland. This practice continues today but more so with priests and religious from the Southern Hemisphere.

At the 2022 Election Assembly, you expressed the desire for more international collaborations. The Provincial Council and I take to heart your wish and have reached out to several entities in the Congregation. Recently, the Congolese Province agreed to send Fr. Floribert Dhelo Bulu, SCJ. He is 36 years old and recently served as provincial secretary. Fr. Floribert is scheduled to arrive on February 22 and will begin a two-year ministry preparation program at SHSST. An SCJ mentor will be assigned to accompany him in his orientation to the US Church and American culture. This will be Fr. Floribert's second time at Sacred Heart; last year he spent several months in the ECS program.



What are we expecting of SCJs joining or serving in the US Province? We expect our brothers to embody the Dehonian spirit of availability and embrace and respect the culture of the communities they serve. Gradually with time, we hope they'll fall in love with the US Province and give their all without reservations.

What do we expect of ourselves? I hope that we can see in each of our international SCJs a fellow Dehonian, a person who is not just a welcome visitor to our province but a member of the same religious congregation as ourselves. A fellow son of Fr. Dehon.

Fostering a trusting relationship and open line of communication with entity superiors is crucial to knowing and helping the brothers we welcome. In conversations with superiors open to sending SCJs to the US Province, I ask that they send SCJs who best represent their entity. It should be mentioned that I only deal with entity superiors, not with individual SCJs who want to come to the United States.

From February 22 to March 5, I will be in Indonesia to strengthen the partnership between our two provinces. I ask for your prayers as the Provincial Council and I seek partnerships with other SCJ entities and religious communities to strengthen our Dehonian presence in the United States.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'V. de'.