



# Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

May 18, 2023

“Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” These are the questions Jesus asks in the story of the healing of ten men with leprosy in Luke 17. The story—and Jesus’ questions—draw attention to faithful recognition and gratitude to God.

How do we express gratitude to God for our blessings? For the Church, the Eucharist is the quintessential expression of thanksgiving to God. Fr. Dehon was a man of the Eucharist. He saw the Eucharist as one of the three manners in which God communicates Divine Love. The other two manners include creation and redemption. For Fr. Dehon, the Eucharist was the source that animated his interior life and action. In *Spiritual Directory*, he wrote:

In the Holy Eucharist, there is the Heart of Jesus living, loving and wounded.... It is there like the immolated Lamb on the altar to be offered to His Father and, at the same time, to receive our homage and our love... There is no doubt that it is this which must be the life of our houses and also the very sun, the hearth, the food and the remedy for our souls (V:5).



With the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian life, our love for and gratitude to God can be expressed through our oblatinal and reparative life.

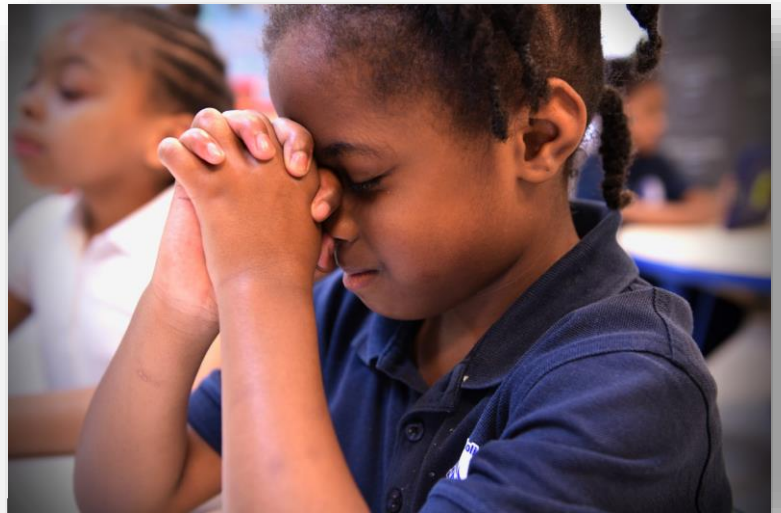
Gratitude is the foundation of our Centennial Celebrations; each of them will center on the Eucharist. With deep gratitude, we give thanks and praise to God for 100 years of grace. We are indebted to our brother SCJs, who through thick and thin, strived to live the SCJ charism and built the US Province. We are grateful to our partners and collaborators for trusting us in our mission of continuing Christ’s work of rebuilding our world into God’s kingdom of justice and love.

We have touched lives and souls. People notice and are grateful. Recently, I received a note from Bishop Robert M. Coerver of the Diocese of Lubbock. He serves

on the Board of Directors of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Upon receipt of the invitation to the Centennial Anniversary, he wrote a congratulatory note with words of gratitude. Below is an excerpt:

Congratulations on the celebration of a century of service in the United States by the Dehonians (Priests of the Sacred Heart). In addition to my fine collaboration with your congregation through my multifaceted affiliation with Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, the congregation also ministered to members of my extended family in the Houston area for several years, including at the time of the tragic death of a nephew of mine in 1982. I know firsthand the fine ministry of the Dehonians on behalf of the Church in the United States.

In my subsequent email exchanges with Bishop Coerver, I learned that the SCJ who ministered to his extended family was Fr. Terry Langley, SCJ, who was at St. Matthew at the time. Fr. Terry, with his natural gift, can still vividly recall the events 41 years ago with great accuracy. I relayed what I heard to the bishop; he was impressed and touched!



Photos by Br. Andy Gancarczyk, SCJ

I believe that there are many other touching stories—stories that are part of God’s overarching story—waiting to be told about interactions with SCJs. I hope that our interactions in ministry and our conversations at the centennial celebrations are opportunities to tell and hear such stories.

Our vocation to religious life is a call and a gift. We are grateful to God for gifting us with a call to respond to Christ’s love for us and to collaborate in Christ’s work of redemption in the world (Cst. 23).

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.