



SUPERIOR GENERAL
CONGREGATION OF THE
PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART
Dehonians

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Alfragide, June 7, 2023.

The uncommon

- Lo poco común -

*Letter for the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
June 16, 2023*

*To the members of the Congregation
To all members of the Dehonian Family*

Last March, coinciding with the anniversary of the birth of Fr. Leo Dehon, the Congregation convoked the ongoing preparation for the celebration of the XXV General Chapter that will begin, God willing, in June 2024. Since that convocation, each Province, Region and District has been preparing their respective chapters. Among the possible topics to be discussed, many agree that identity is one of the most appropriate. The truth is that a topic like this implies answering a question similar to the one Jesus asked his disciples: “*And you, who do you say this Congregation is?*” In a way, it means asking ourselves about the state of health of our reparative vocation, the same one that unites us and calls us to delve into the passionate dynamics of Trinitarian life in favor of the life of all:

*This is how we understand reparation:
as a welcome to the Spirit (cf 1 Thessalonians 4:8),
as a response to Christ’s love for us,
as a communion in His love for the Father
and as a collaboration in His work of redemption
in the midst of the world.
For here, in our time, He frees people from sin
and restores humanity in unity.
Here, too, He calls us to live out our reparative vocation,
as the incentive for our apostolate (cf GS 38). (Cst 23)*

In order to think about our identity and its expression in everyday life, there are abundant guidelines from Fr. Dehon to center the search:

The office of reparator imposes on the members of the Society the obligation to tend to an uncommon holiness. They must, as much as they can with the help of grace, reproduce in their hearts the holiness of the Heart of Jesus. (L. Dehon, LCC June 1903)

From his charismatic intuition, the Founder speaks to us of a process, of a permanent tendency, which is not fed by voluntarism, but by grace. The purpose of a movement like this can be none other than making clear in personal life and in our communities that we form what is most endearing in Jesus: what is in his Heart. Said in a more Dehonian language, more like Fr. Dehon, the question about our identity could be formulated like this: How are we doing in the exercise of “uncommon holiness”? This question, far from seeing ourselves as an isolated group distanced from our realities and contexts, leads us to recognize that our vocation is united to those of so many men and women *-Sint unum!*- who from the Christian faith recognize themselves associated with the project of God for the world to believe and have life:

*With all our fellow Christians
we are drawn to follow closely in the footsteps of Christ
to arrive at holiness (cf 1 Thessalonians 4:7). (CST 13)*

When Fr. Dehon calls us to live the holiness of the Heart of Jesus, he exhorts us to make our own what in Jesus was uncommon in the eyes of so many, even scandalous and sacrilegious. The tendency to which our Founder summons us while he contemplates the Heart of Jesus places us, therefore, on the path to follow. It is the task of our life. But as Pope Francis warns us:

A task moved by anxiety, pride, the need to appear and to dominate, will certainly not be sanctifying. The challenge is to live one's self-giving in such a way that the efforts have an evangelical meaning and identify us more and more with Jesus Christ (Gaudete et Exsultate 28).

Considering it this way, following the path of the uncommon reveals holiness to us as the most radical way of being human and, at the same time, the most humble way of recognizing ourselves as children and collaborators of the good God that Jesus reveals to us. That is where in our next chapters we can help ourselves find answers about our true identity.

Teach us, Jesus, to live the uncommon

- that from a young age you were able to dialogue, knowing how to listen and ask others
- that you call God Father and praise him for his way of revealing himself to the simplest
- that you shared your mission and your power with those with whom you built a community of witnesses
- that you knew how to enter and leave the houses where they welcomed you, leaving behind new life
- that you would rather cultivate friendship than relationships of dependency or servitude
- that you shared what you had and let others manage it

- that you were not indifferent to the suffering or the needs of others
- that you do not grow tired of forgiving
- that you let yourself be challenged by people from other cultures and nations
- that you participate in the life and piety of the people
- that you make your life and your death a gift for all
- that you entrust your Good News to our fragility

In this month in which we want to contemplate the Heart of the Savior more attentively and identify ourselves more with Him, what uncommon thing do you find in Jesus that you need to make more your own, more of your community, more of your family, more of us?

In Him, fraternally

Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, scj,
General Superior
and his Council