

Homily
Closing Mass, 17th US Provincial Chapter
Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, provincial superior

First Reading: Exodus 11:10-12:14

Gospel Reading: Matthew 12:1-8

Theme: Charism

In the past few days we have come to a clear understanding of the future we want to create together. That is, we wanted to be explicit about sharing our Dehonian spirituality with others, and we wanted to be welcoming and inclusive.

Where do we go from here? Or “Now what?” as David Szatkowski posed in one of the sessions. For this, we turn to Scripture for guidance. In the first reading, we are reminded of God’s involvement in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. Aaron and Moses were instructed to institute the Passover so that present and future generations would not forget. Thus, the written word of God, or Scripture, was intended to assist people in remembering God and being faithful to the covenant.

If sharing our spirituality with others is our intention, and interculturality is our direction, then we need to be intentional and accountable to our Founder’s charism, which is the binding force, the foundation, or the deep story of who we are.

As sons of Fr. Leo John Dehon, it is important to internalize and externalize the deep story of our charism. We must live, safeguard, deepen, and constantly develop our charism in harmony with the Body of Christ, as stated in the document on the mutual relations between bishops and religious or *Mutuae Relationes*. Pope John Paul II also reminds us in his Apostolic Exhortation *Vita Consecrata* that the holiness of the person is not based solely on the evangelical counsels, but also on fidelity to the founding charism (cf. 36).

Fidelity to our charism! Fr. Dehon left us a treasure of his spiritual writings to assist us in recognizing God’s involvement in his life and why he was given a charism to address a particular need in the Church and the world. They also give us directions as we discern ways to respond to new social contexts and issues.

As your brother, I encourage you to take on the challenge of incorporating the writings of Fr. Dehon into your daily spiritual reading or exercises. Along with reading and studying the Bible, these writings can help us stay true to the charism of our Founder in the service of the Church.