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Minutes of the 930th US Provincial Council Meeting June 27-28, 2023, Hales Corners, WI

PRESENT: Fr. Vien Nguyen, Provincial Superior, Fr. Jack Kurps, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Greg Schill, Br. Duane Lemke and Dn. David Nagel, Councilors; Br. Frank Presto, Provincial Secretary; Mary Gorski, recording secretary. Fr. David Szatkowski (via Zoom) for discussion of the Centennial. Kathleen Dahlgren for discussion of SHSST bylaws.

- I. Check-in — Councilors updated each other on themselves, their ministries, and communities. Items of note:
 - A. There have been a few facilities issues at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake recently, including an overnight power outage and a significant kitchen pipe back-up.
 - B. There was a good turnout at Our Lady of Guadalupe for the celebration of the feast of the Sacred Heart; there seems to be interest in the Enthronement of the Sacred Heart among families. It is hoped that a Dehonian Associates program can be started at the parish.
 - C. Fr. Tim Gray is recovering from eye surgery.
 - D. Fr. Schill recently took part in two donor luncheons in Philadelphia for St. Joseph's Indian School. The luncheons were well attended. Students who traveled with the development staff were able to go to a baseball game and see several sites.
 - E. Fr. Joseph Dean will move to Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake on September 25. Fr. Schill will drive with him.
 - F. Tim Courts is transitioning well into the role of executive director of Sacred Heart Southern Missions.
 - G. Approximately 250 people took part in the Mass at Christ the King church in Southaven, MS, for feast of the Sacred Heart. It was also the local celebration of the Dehonian Centennial. Bishop Joseph Kopacz was the main celebrant and homilist at the mass.
- II. Visioning — The council revisited several topics from their “visioning” sessions at the start of their term in 2022.
 - A. Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — There is a desire for more of an SCJ presence and a greater sense of the Dehonian charism at SHSST. Dn. Nagel, Fr. Ziggy Morawiec and Monica Misey talked about possibilities for more extensively integrating Dehonian Spirituality into the life of the seminary. Mary Gorski will collaborate with SHSST on this.
 - B. Provincial Treasurer, Provincial Secretary — Fr. V. Nguyen extended his gratitude to Dn. David Nagel for his work as province treasurer and welcomes him to remain in the position for as long as he feels appropriate. However, the province also needs to prepare for the future. Councilors discussed the possibility — in the future — of having a lay professional take on more of the day-to-day tasks of the Provincial Treasurer's Office. Perhaps an SCJ could serve as both provincial treasurer and provincial secretary with lay staff doing the tasks of each office under his authority. The SCJ would need some knowledge of each role, especially finance, but a lay professional could offer a much wider breadth of knowledge. Other SCJ entities have employed lay people in these roles. Dn. Nagel was asked to look at possibilities for the future management of the treasurer's office.

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Br. Presto said that most of the work of the provincial secretary's office could be done by a lay person; it is currently a part-time job but that was not always the case. He said that the position requires a person with good communication skills, organizational skills, and the ability to adapt quickly to unexpected challenges. The person needs to be able to work with the provincial superior.

- C. Internal ministries — As they are now configured, approximately 13 people are required for internal ministries. This is a significant portion of those SCJs available for full-time ministry. Reflecting on the previous conversation regarding the provincial treasurer and secretary, councilors said that it is important to be open to new possibilities, including greater collaboration with others.
- D. Justice, Peace and Reconciliation — Fr. V. Nguyen met with the JPR Commission in May; a primary topic of discussion was the open position of JPR director. Members of the commission agreed that the ideal candidate would be an SCJ. However, with other needs in the province, this may not be a possibility at this time. Other options include collaborating with a religious community, hiring a religious of another community to serve in the role, or hiring a lay person. A significant challenge is that someone from outside of the Priests of the Sacred Heart would need the time and educational resources to get a good understanding of the community and the Dehonian charism in order to appropriately represent the province.

Fr. V. Nguyen has been in contact with the Dominican Sisters of Racine about partnering with the SCJs. He will have a preliminary conversation with their provincial superior later this summer.

The JPR Commission suggested open listing the position but at this time, the council would rather enter into conversation with a few people about JPR. Before someone is named to the position, and before collaborative possibilities are pursued, it is important to better define the JPR goals of the province. What does the JPR Commission, and the province in general, expect from a JPR director? Is that person to focus on activism, education, or empowerment? Will the director do much of the work of social justice or is that person to be a resource to help SCJs themselves better address social justice needs? Or, is it best to find a person who has passion for the work and let that person define the role?

Regardless of how JPR is structured, the importance of local communities responding to issues that are of particular importance to their area was stressed (for example, in Mississippi, healthcare for the working poor is an important social justice issue; in South Dakota, human trafficking is a key concern). The ability to listen is essential for a JPR director. The model of local community visits initiated by Br. Lemke was well received.

It was also noted that there are some issues that certain SCJs cannot easily speak to. For example, international SCJs, all of whom are experiencing increasing challenges to remain in the United States, may be hesitant to speak publicly about immigration in fear that their own status may be affected.

The JPR efforts of the province that are already in place were acknowledged. For example, the province works with an organization that votes the community's proxies at stockholder meetings. Those votes represent the mindset of the Priests of the Sacred Heart and its commitment to social justice. Investments are overseen by an organization that follows similar guidelines. Social justice concerns are interwoven into the local ministries of the province.

A JPR director can enhance the focus on JPR issues, but JPR efforts are a part of the life and ministry of the province regardless if there is a person in the director's office.

The JPR Commission suggested that Fr. Bob Bossie serve as lead of the group until a director is in place.

- E. Formation — Councilors agreed that formation is the most critical area to plan for; it is the future of the province. There is a need for stability in the formation program and good support for formators, including the novitiate.

The council discussed several possibilities. Fr. V. Nguyen will talk to those whose names were surfaced and report back to the council.

- F. Support to those in active ministry — A concern for the future health of the province is to ensure that those in active ministry, especially younger religious, have adequate social and spiritual support.

III. Administration

- A. International SCJs — Fr. Ari Saputra, an SCJ priest from Indonesia, is scheduled to arrive in the United States on July 5. He will begin a two-year preparation program for community and ministry in the US Province. Fr. Vien is in dialogue with several other entities about collaboration in ministry in the US Province.

The international SCJs have been a welcome addition to the US Province; however, more needs to be done to better prepare them for community and ministry in the United States. Could a field experience component be a part of the ECS program? This would allow for an international SCJ to get hands-on experience in a mentored environment as a part of his ECS studies. Since it would be part of ECS, it would continue to fall under the requirements of student visas. It is also essential that all SCJs preparing for ministry in a particular area receive education on the culture of that area, such as knowledge of Native American cultures prior to serving in South Dakota, or the experience of Black Americans in the south if a person is to minister in Mississippi. This is something with which the SCJ administration needs to be in dialogue about with SHSST.

Fr. Querobin spoke about his own experience as an international SCJ. He said that after six months of English studies it is helpful to at least visit a province ministry to help develop both an awareness of the province and enthusiasm for its ministries. He also spoke of the need to recognize that international SCJs are not Americans, they will misunderstand cultural cues. There needs to be patience, including patience of the international SCJ with himself as he learns how to interact in an unfamiliar culture.

- B. Centennial — Fr. David Szatkowski joined the council for updates on Centennial plans.

1. Meals — The meals on both Sunday and Monday will feature speakers who will talk for about two to three minutes. On Sunday, for the celebration with benefactors and alumni, the speakers will be two benefactors (Pam Milczarski will be asked to arrange for this), an SCJ alumnus (Fr. V. Nguyen will make the arrangements), and two SCJs (Fr. V. Nguyen will arrange)

Monday's celebration will be for SCJs, family, friends and co-workers. The speakers at the dinner will be Tim Courts (Mississippi), Kathy Harty (SHSST library), Br. Duane Lemke and Fr. Greg Schill.

The food service director at SHSST will soon need the numbers for those attending the meals. Mary Gorski will work with Pam Milczarski on Sunday's numbers and Fr. V. Nguyen on Monday's.

2. Liturgies — On Sunday, Bishops Donald DeGrood of Sioux Falls and Jeffrey Haines of Milwaukee (auxiliary bishop), will be present. Also present will be the major superiors of several entities. Thought needs to be given in regard to where they are to be seated for the Mass.

Fr. Kurps suggested that a Native American element be incorporated into both Masses if possible since the province's beginnings were in South Dakota. A smudging ceremony was discussed, but it was noted that only a Native American should lead such a ceremony. Fr. V. Nguyen will contact Dn. Steve McLaughlin of the Lower Brule Pastoral Team to see if he would be available.

3. Mausoleum — A commemoration of the deceased is to take place on Sunday afternoon, July 16. Fr. Kurps is considering several possibilities, including having two people alternate in reading the names of the deceased. He noted the challenge of determining which SCJs of the early years of the Dehonian presence should be included; when the North American Province was divided into the US and Canadian entities some of the early SCJs became a part of the Canadian entity. The honorary SCJs will not be included in the listing.
4. Dehonian crosses from Brazil — Fr. Querobin said that these arrived in Houston and he will arrange for them to be sent to Mississippi for Fr. Kurps to bring with him to Hales Corners.

- C. Admissions — Fr. Henry Nguyen spoke to Fr. V. Nguyen about the challenge of doing background checks on applicants from outside of the United States. CMSM has acknowledged that there is a limit on the information that can be obtained from an applicant's home country and that in some cases, such inquiries can cause hardship for an applicant's family. It was suggested that background checks be done on the time that the international applicant has been in the United States. However, if the applicant does not have a Social Security number, conventional means of background checks cannot be utilized. Yet, there are possibilities. Fr. V. Nguyen will check with CMSM for recommendations.

D. Formation

1. Fra. Jonathan Nguyen Vuong — The council voted to approve Fra. Nguyen Vuong for vow renewal.
2. Fra. Hung Pham — Fra. Pham has begun his pastoral year in Houston; his program includes Spanish studies as well as ministry. The council voted to approve Fra. Pham for vow renewal.
3. Fra. Jacob Smith — He completed his undergraduate degree at Marquette University in May and has applied for the M. Div. at SHSST. The council voted to approve Fra. Smith for renewal of vows.
4. Fra. Michael Wodarczyk — The council voted to approve Fra. Wodarczyk for vow renewal.

- E. Provincial Chapter — Fr. Jack Kurps, chairperson of the Chapter Preparatory Committee, reviewed the materials that will soon be sent to delegates in preparation for the Province Chapter. Delegates are reminded to bring all of the preparatory materials with them to the Chapter. The Chapter begins at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 18, in the Provincial Conference Center and runs through noon on Friday, July 21.

Following input from the June pre-chapter meeting, Fr. V. Nguyen is preparing a supplement to the State of the Province report.

The council agreed with the Preparatory Committee's recommendation that "Absolute Majority" will be the threshold for a vote to pass during the Chapter.

There are three ways to participate in the Chapter: 1) as a delegate, 2) as an observer, and 3) as a prayer partner. A simple form will be created for people to sign up to be a prayer partner with the Chapter.

- F. Senior Life Commission — Br. Wayne Fitzpatrick will lead a workshop for retired SCJs at Sacred Heart at SHML from August 29-30. The Senior Life Commission is organizing the workshop. Br. Fitzpatrick led the pre-retirement workshop held in Arizona in April.

There will be an in-person meeting of the commission on August 17. Among the tasks is a review of the survey done last year in regard to senior life and retirement.

- G. Zoom Hours of Recollections — Speakers are being lined up for future Hours of Recollection. They include Sr. Barbara Reid, OP (president of Catholic Theological Union), Wendy Wright, Ph.D (professor emerita, History of Spirituality, Spiritual Theology, Creighton University), and Paul Monson, Ph.D (SHSST VP of Intellectual Formation, associate professor of Church History). Fr. V. Nguyen is the contact for the speakers.
- H. Theresian Missionaries of Mary — One of the Theresian Missionaries of Mary from the Philippines has received approval for her R1 visa; she is expected to arrive in the United States in mid-August; two sisters from the community are preparing to serve in South Dakota. Housing and a car for the sisters has been arranged by St. Joseph's Indian School. The second application is pending.
- I. Bylaws, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology — Kathleen Dahlgren, province attorney, met with the council to review proposed changes to the SHSST bylaws. Some of the bylaw proposals come out of discussions related to the accreditation processes, others are for greater clarity regarding tasks and responsibilities of the seminary's stakeholders. Ms. Dahlgren worked primarily with Frank LoCoco, a Milwaukee attorney and member of the SHSST board, in reviewing the bylaws.'

Among the proposals is an expanded Board of Directors that will include a larger SCJ presence, as well as a distinction that names the entire Provincial Council as Members of the Corporation with certain powers reserved to it.

Recognizing that generally 50% of seminarians in SHSST's academic program are from St. Francis de Sales, the archbishop of Milwaukee and the rector of St. Francis de Sales are to be ex officio board members. Other sponsoring bishops and major superiors can be named to the board but would not have ex officio status. They are also welcome to attend any board meetings regardless if they are board members or not.

Ms. Dahlgren will implement the revisions to the draft as discussed in the council meeting. The Provincial Council will vote on her adapted text, and the approved revision will be forwarded to Mr. LoCoco.

J. Membership

1. Fr. Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas — His application to return to the United States has been received and is in process with the US government. His next step is to make an appointment with the embassy in Rome.
2. Fr. Anthony Kluckman — A commemoration of Fr. Kluckman will take place during morning prayer on July 21, the one-year anniversary of Fr. Kluckman's disappearance. This is the last day of the Provincial Chapter.
3. Fr. Ed Zemlik — Fr. V. Nguyen was scheduled to meet with Fr. Zemlik regarding Fr. V. Nguyen's request that Fr. Zemlik cover for Fr. Christianus Hendrik's ministries in South Dakota while Fr. Hendrik is on sabbatical in Indonesia.
4. Frater Long Nguyen — Fr. V. Nguyen gave Fra. L. Nguyen permission to apply for a CPE residency program at St. Luke's Hospital in Milwaukee. He will continue to assist the ECS program as time allows.

K. Admissions Board — The council voted to reappoint the following SCJs to two-year terms on the Admissions Board: Fr. Bob Bossie, Br. Ray Kozuch and Fr. Yvon Sheehy. The council also voted to appoint the following SCJs to three-year terms on the board: Br. Duane Lemke and Br. Frank Presto.

IV. Finance

- A. Province Development Office — The office had a good turn-out for its feast day Mass at SHML. Current activities include implementing the new budget and reviewing inventory on hand. A significant estate bequest is in process.
- B. Dehon House — Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology will be renting Dehon House from August 2023 through May 2024 for students taking part in the propaedeutic year. A lease for the ten-month use of the property is being developed; this is separate from the overall Memo of Understanding regarding use of the facilities.
- C. Investments — The Investment Committee met on May 19 and will have a combined meeting with stakeholders in August. CliftonLarsonAllen, LP, completed its procedural audit of the investments held by the US Province. No issues of concern were cited. The rate of return for the first part of the year is 8%.
- D. St. Martin of Tours — The youth program that had approached SMOT about utilizing its property has decided to go in a different direction.
- E. Sodexo — The province is ending its facilities contract with Sodexo. Mark Wenzel, Sodexo's representative, will transition out of the position at the end of the summer. The province will hire an in-house facilities manager.
- F. Woods Road (St. Francis Residence) — The white house at the Woods Road property will be renovated during the next year. During the renovation, Br. Matt Miles will live at the larger house on the property with Frs. Charles Brown and Dominic Peluse.

V. Next meeting — The council will next meet via Zoom on July 6 at 1:30 p.m. (Central).

CALENDAR

2023

July 16:	Province Centennial Celebration with the public, Hales Corners
July 17:	Province Centennial Celebration ("family" celebration with SCJs), Hales Corners
July 17-21:	US Provincial Chapter
July 30:	Lower Brule Centennial Celebration
August 12:	Province Jubilee celebrations
August 15-16:	Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
September 26-27:	Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
October 8-9:	Mission Education, St. Joseph's Indian School
October 24:	North American Councils meeting, Toronto
November 7-8:	Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI
November 30:	Advent Hour of Recollection for employes and collaborators, 10:00 a.m. (central) via Zoom.
December 5:	Advent Hour of Recollection for SCJs, 10:00 a.m. (central) via Zoom (both will be led by Sr. Barbara Reid, OP, president of Catholic Theological Union.
January 9-10:	Provincial Council meeting, Hales Corners, WI

2024

June 14 - July 5: General Chapter, Rome

NECROLOGY

+**Father Zbigniew Letkiewicz**, a member of the Polish Province, died on May 22. He was born in 1935, professed in 1952 and ordained in 1960.

+ **Alexander Sapto Dwi Handoko**, a member of the Indonesian Province, died on May 22. He was born in 1963, professed in 1984 and ordained in 1993. Fr. Sapto served on the General Council from 2018-19, and previously was provincial superior of the Indonesian Province.

+ **Giuse Maria Vũ Văn Công**, a member of the Vietnamese District, died June 9. He was born in 1994 and had just professed his first vows on January 1 of this year.

+ **Fr. Tom Westhoven**, a member of the US Province, died June 28. He was born in 1941, professed in 1959, and ordained in 1966.