



# SCJ News

A newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians)



ABOVE: Fr. Quang with students who entered the Church during the Easter Vigil at the University of Houston. BELOW: Fr. Quang baptizes a student in the school chapel.

One of the most significant parts of Fr. Quang's ministry on campus is simply being present.

"Students hunger for someone to walk with them, someone to confide in," he said. "At this time in their lives, they are constantly on the move. Everything is hurry, hurry, HURRY! I have patience. They know I am here. They know that I will listen. They can come here [to the Newman Center] and slow down and be heard."

Besides Fr. Quang, the Newman Center staff includes a lay minister, an administrative assistant, and student interns in liturgy, prayer and music. Volunteers are also vital to the work of the center.

In some ways, the Newman Center is similar to a parish. There is regular Mass (two on Sundays), confessions, Adoration, and about a dozen prayer groups. Fr. Quang celebrated the Triduum services in the center's small chapel, and at the Easter Vigil, welcomed four students into the Catholic faith (Fr. Quang is pictured with the students in the upper left).

"It is like a parish, but one that is

## A ministry of beginnings

"It is a ministry of life, of beginnings, looking toward the future," said Fr. Quang

Nguyen, SCJ, of his new role at the Catholic Newman Center of the University of Houston. "It is a time of possibilities, of planning, blooming."

For nine years, Fr. Quang was the vocation director for the US Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. For several of those years he was also vice provincial superior, and local superior of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML.

In January, he moved to Houston to continue to work with young people in discernment. However, in his new role as a campus minister at the University of Houston's Newman Center, the scope of the discernment

is much broader. The students he sees aren't necessarily discerning a vocation to religious life, but life itself.

"They are always looking forward," he continued. "Their lives are wide open with possibilities. They are full of hope; it makes the ministry very life-giving."

Fr. Quang said that the transition from the province vocation office to campus ministry has been a good one. "Serving in vocations was a solid base for me," he said. "I often interacted with college students, so I had a sense of what their concerns were, what challenges they faced.





ABOVE: Fr. Quang talks to students about the Resurrection. BELOW: Foot washing during the Holy Thursday service at the university.

made up primarily of young adults," he said, though noted that U of H alumni will pop in now and then.

Most of the Newman Center's ministry is with Catholic students, but there are times when ministers of the various faith communities on campus work together to serve the university, such as in recent months in which they have offered spiritual support following two student suicides.

One on one, students come to Fr. Quang to discuss personal challenges. "At first, they just talked about difficulties with their classes," said Fr. Quang. "But now that the students are getting to know me, they are becoming more comfortable in opening up. I am hearing more about family problems, relationship problems, their concerns for the future."

A common concern of many is finances. "What are their job prospects? How will they pay their loans? Will they have enough money to complete their degree? These are the questions

that are on the minds of students," said Fr. Quang. And for some, it is not just their personal finances that keep them up at night, but those of their parents, some of whom have lost jobs in recent years.

"The University of Houston is a public university surrounded by several private institutions," said Fr. Quang. "Our students are often from families who are from a less affluent background than the other universities. One of our students had to drop out this semester because a change in his major meant that he was no longer

eligible for the funds that he was receiving. He hopes to come back, but it is not a given."

Operating on a shoestring budget, the Newman Center itself is mindful of financial concerns. The archdiocese of Galveston Houston partially funds the program,

**Another thing which makes this ministry so special is that our campus ministry students genuinely WANT to be here. They want to attend church. They want to learn more about their faith.**

but the budget never covers the actual cost of doing ministry. Even trash pick-up is an expense in which the center tries to cut corners.

"You have an event, you always have extra trash," said Fr. Quang. "But the Newman Center is only allocated so much for trash removal by the university. Extra pick-ups cost \$180. After we have an event, we ask the students to take a bag of trash to the dumpsters for us." The center has also been helped by students in the ROTC program who occasionally haul a couple of bags of garbage to the university bins.

Trash removal aside, campus ministry has been a good fit for Fr. Quang. "It is really a joy to be here," he said. "For years our province has talked about finding more ways to work with young adults. This is a way we can talk about who we are as Priests of the Sacred Heart, it is a way of sharing our Dehonian Spirituality with young people.

"Another thing which makes this ministry so special is that our campus ministry students genuinely WANT to be here. They want to attend church. They want to learn more about their faith. That isn't always the case in a parish, where mom and dad might be pushing them to attend Mass. The students don't have to be here, but they choose to be. That is affirming. That is exciting.

"I am grateful for this ministry personally, and for our province."







Fr. Jack Kurps, Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson, and Fr. Vien Nguyen, lead a prayer service with staff of Sacred Heart Southern Missions.

## A new direction in leadership at Sacred Heart Southern Missions

*After almost 30 years as executive director of SHSM, Fr. Jack Kurps steps back to focus on Spiritual Director's role*

**O**n Friday, April 28, Fr. Jack Kurps, SCJ, announced to the staff of Sacred Heart Southern Missions that he was stepping down as CEO of the organization of which he has been a part since the early 1980s. Fr. Jack was executive director from 1987 to 1993, and then again from 2000 until today.

As of May 1, Tim Courts, Executive Director of Corporate Services for SHSM, became President and Chief Executive Officer of Sacred Heart Southern Missions.

"I have been a priest now for more than 45 years, and more than 36 of them have been here in northern Mississippi," said Fr. Jack. "It has been very good, and I hope to spend many more years here with Sacred Heart Southern Missions. But I have decided that it is time for new leadership. I will continue to serve as the spiritual director, but I am stepping

down as president and chief executive officer of Sacred Heart Southern Missions."

Fr. Gregory Bezy, SCJ, led SHSM until his death in 1982. Fr. Jack had been vice president of SHSM under Fr. Gregory, but the role was primarily to serve as a second signature on legal documents.

It wasn't until after Fr. Gregory's death that Fr. Jack began to learn about the organization from a corporate standpoint. When he was named executive director in 1987, he hired Sr. Maria Brocato, SCN, to serve as assistant executive director. Realizing the need to always plan for succession, Sr. Maria was well prepared to take on the executive director's role when Fr. Jack was named province vocation director.

With this in mind, Fr. Jack informed the SHSM Board of Directors last November of his desire to

step down. The board approved of Fr. Jack's suggestion of appointing Tim Courts as the next CEO and Fr. Jack began to prepare him for the role. "Since the board's approval I have included Tim in every major decision of the organization," said Fr. Jack, adding that informally, "Tim has been preparing for the role for years through his daily work."

"I still have a lot of energy for SHSM and expect to be involved as spiritual director as long as I enjoy good health," he continued. "SHSM is blessed with a dedicated staff. I look forward to continuing to be part of SHSM and I will assist Tim in any way he asks. With Tim, SHSM is in good hands. SHSM is in his blood."

Tim Courts has a long history with SHSM, going back to his primary school days as a student at Sacred Heart School when it was based in Walls, MS. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration, Management Information Systems from the University of Memphis, and held numerous roles at SHSM before leaving for several years to take on positions at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and later Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare while earning an MBA from the Executive MBA program at the University of Memphis. He is a licensed CPA in both Mississippi and Tennessee.

"I am honored and humbled to have been appointed to lead Sacred Heart Southern Missions," said Tim. "I have been affiliated with the organization my whole life and believe in

The SCJ NEWS is published by the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJs). Articles, photos and suggestions are always welcome. Editorial offices: P.O. Box 289, Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289 (414) 427-4266. Email: [comdir@scjcommunications.org](mailto:comdir@scjcommunications.org) Mary Gorski, editor.



Copyright 2023, All rights reserved.  
Priests of the Sacred Heart



Tim Courts



Fr. Jack Kurps

its mission and that of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. I look forward to working with the SHSM team to break the cycle of poverty as we serve the thousands of financially struggling individuals and families across northern Mississippi who depend on us and the tens of thousands of donors across

the United States who support our mission."

Reflecting on his own history with SHSM, Fr. Jack said that "As I look back on 36 years of ministry here in Mississippi, there is much that has been accomplished. Our HIV/AIDS ministry began in the early 1990s when a diagnosis was a death sentence. The program continues to serve a very important need with all the stigma that is often associated with the disease.

"Our Dehon Village and the Dehon Learning Center provides affordable housing and adult life skill development.

"Our food pantry has become a major program and serves a tremendous need. Our volunteer program matches the desire of individuals to give of themselves with people who need help and our volunteer housing makes it possible for groups to come from around the country to assist others.

"Merging Sacred Heart League back into Sacred Heart Southern Missions removed some of the duplication of efforts and made us a stronger organization.

"I will take credit for some ideas – but often my contribution was to green light the ideas and suggestions of others. SHSM is blessed with a dedicated staff."



Frater Paul stands before fellow Dehonians to receive a blessing during the celebration of his perpetual profession of vows.

## Becoming a Dehonian for life

*Frater Paul Phong Hoang makes perpetual profession*

**C**ongratulations to Frater Paul Phong Hoang, SCJ, who made his perpetual profession of vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) on May 11. The ceremony took place at Sacred Heart Monastery / Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, provincial superior, received Frater Paul's vows. Fr. John Czyzynski, SCJ, was Fr. Paul's final vows director.

Fra. Paul, who turned 31 just two days before his perpetual profession, is originally from Ha Tien, Kien Giang, Vietnam. "It is a culturally diverse town of Cambodian, Chinese, and Vietnamese heritage," he said. "Looking back, going from where I was to where I am now is nothing short of a miracle. I believe that God had a plan for me and was involved throughout my journey. I am forever grateful for the SCJs and our culturally diverse community."

His family immigrated to the

United States in 2007 and settled in Houston, Texas. Before following his vocation to religious life, he earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Houston. Fra. Paul learned about the Dehonians through a member of his family and spent time learning about the community through Come and See weekends.

"I was attracted to the SCJs' simplicity, diversity and community life," he said. Fra. Paul professed his first vows in 2018. He did his pastoral year in Lower Brule, SD, and has been involved in a variety of other province ministries. Fra. Paul is scheduled to complete his M.Div. at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in December, 2023.

"My journey of faith is an existential one," said Fra. Paul. "I was haunted by the idea of God and attracted to the love of Christ.

"Psalms 139 says: 'Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence... even there your



hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.”

Fra. Paul continues, saying that he “was closer to Buddhism and ancestor veneration in my youth back in Vietnam. Before seminary, I experimented with a few different Christian denominations. Captivated by philosophy, at some point, I wanted to be the master of my own ethics, God was an obstacle to my false conception of freedom. But in the end, I realize that only Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

“The confession of St. Peter rang loud and clear whenever I thought of leaving the seminary, ‘Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life’ (John 6:68).

“I’ve found my life’s meaning ultimately in Christ, in service, and self-denial. I want to live these principles through the Dehonian charism and way of life. This is why I requested to make final vows.”



TOP: Frater Paul with his parents. BOTTOM: Frater Paul makes his final profession of vows.



Br. Brian Tompkins does a reading during Mass at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

## Inspired by Mary’s availability

*It has been a dozen years since Br. Brian Tompkins, SCJ, made his final profession of vows. For him, it was the inspiration of Mary that encouraged him to make the same commitment that Frater Paul Phong Hoang, SCJ, did just weeks ago. Br. Brian wrote about that commitment, and his vocation as a religious brother, in the May issue of As a Rule:*

**B**y her Ecce Ancilla Mary inspires us to availability in faith; she is the perfect image of our religious life. As a religious brother in perpetual vows, I had the opportunity over a period of years to change my mind before final profession of the vows. Mary did not, it appears, to have had that option. She responded graciously and without query; albeit puzzled that she would be chosen to be the Mother of God.

Mary is an example of that availability and trust that we as religious, and in my case, as a religious brother, must channel throughout our lives in community and to the outside population that also needs us.

Availability is responding to a call that needs one’s presence. And in a community of retired SCJs, where health and communication are impor-

tant, I would like to think that my vocation as a brother fills any void that is experienced by those with whom I share daily life. One cannot do it all, but I try, and I am not without assistance.

The role of the brother is not always understood, and though there is more clarity today than in the past, I still need to on occasion explain my role within the SCJ community. That said, once I put into context what I do, and explain my lifelong affection for being present to our older population, and now as well to the elderly priests and brothers within the community which I live, there is more recognition of my position, of what a brother does and can do. Often when I tell people that I like working with, and being available to our elder religious and others, they encourage me. One feels that the ministry is appreciated.

It took a while, but once I realized that ordained ministry is not where my vocation is, I embraced the role that God intended for me: to serve as a brother. And I am happy and grateful.

Brothers have been the presence and strength of many communities of religious. Brothers accomplish and do



many things to support and to nourish a community (as Mary supported and nourished Jesus). It is not always easy; it could not have been easy for Mary to take on the role of the Mother of God. She did it and with her example a brother can be willing, even at the most difficult times, to answer God's call within community and outside of it.

As I close, I must conclude with a short phrase that I use to help me and inspire me each day. Even though its author, Ram Dass (1931-2019) was an Eastern mystic, the words are very Christian:

"I would like my life to be a statement of love and compassion — and where it isn't, that's where my work lies."

Ultimately the Ecce Ancilla and love and compassion work together. I think it is the only way.

Originally from Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, Br. Brian is 66 and first professed vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 2007. Although he initially thought about a vocation to the priesthood when he was a child, it wasn't until he was 42 that he began to answer that call. Br. Brian earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the Benedictines' Christ the King Seminary in British Columbia. Seeking a diocese or community in which to live his vocation, he learned of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. After spending a week at the SCJs' house in Toronto he felt at home, and as they say, the rest is history. As Br. Brian notes in his reflection, he is an assistant to our senior brothers and priests at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

As a Rule is a monthly electronic publication produced by the US Province. Each month includes reflections on a topic, with a passage from the SCJ Rule of Life as a starting point. Scan the QR code below to subscribe.



Fra. Hung, Fra. Truc, Fr. Vien, Fra. Thuan and Fra. Michael

## From the formation community...

**B**esides Frater Paul Phong Hoang's profession of final vows (see page 4), there were a variety of other milestones and honors among our Dehonian students this spring.

On March 21, SCJ Fraters Michael Wodarczyk, Thuan Nguyen and Truc Tran received the Ministry of Lector and Frater Hung Pham received the Ministry of Acolyte. All four are seminarians at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

On May 19, Frater Jacob Smith, SCJ received his undergraduate degree from Marquette University. Just a month earlier Fra. Jacob was honored with Marquette's Contemplative in Action Leadership Award.

"My time working with them [MU Campus Ministry team] has been filled with laughter, jokes, intense de-

bate, personal vulnerability, shared hardship, and lots and lots of discernment," said Fra. Jacob. "I've felt my

own soul be nourished and my person cared for." During the summer break Fra. Jacob will join Fra. Jonathan in summer ministry in the Milwaukee area and in August, they take part in World Youth Day. Fra. Michael will be ministering in Mississippi, and Fraters Truc and Thuan will spend the summer on

home visits in Vietnam. Fra. Paul will be in a Spanish immersion program in Ecuador.

Also, Frater Hung begins his pastoral year in Houston. Seminarians spend a full year in ministry before completing their theological studies.

Would you like to learn more about our formation program with the Priests of the Sacred Heart? Contact us at:

<https://dehoniansusa.org/vocations>



Fra. Jacob Smith

# SCJ NEWS

## Groundbreaking for rec center renovation

On April 13, St. Joseph's Indian School held a ground-breaking ceremony to mark the start of the renovation of the school's Recreation Center. Board members, including Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, and Fr. Greg Schill, SCJ, were among those wielding shovels.

Renovation plans include updates to make the facility more current, and improvements to enhance future use: more storage space and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; a second gym allowing for more activities; and a layout that accommodates gymnastics, wrestling, archery and cheer. The current gym will be dedicated to basketball and volleyball. The new addition will include a second basketball court. There will be individual offices, more restrooms, a multi-purpose room and exercise spaces for students and staff.

"Today is not only about the future possibilities for this building but also the tremendous possibilities in

your future," said Mike Tyrell, school president, to students. "As you watch this new construction, you will see the time it takes to build a strong foundation. Use this Rec Center, your campus homes, your counselor's office and all of the good things at St. Joe's to build a solid foundation for yourselves."



## Congratulations!

On May 6, during the evening Mass at Queen of Peace Church in Olive Branch, MS, Fr. Hendrik Ardianto, SCJ, was presented with the "Clergy of the Year Award" by the Knights of Columbus Mississippi District. Fr. Ardi is pictured above with Leonard Temple, District Marshal, who presented the award. Congratulations Fr. Ardi!

## Happy anniversary!

The Priests of the Sacred Heart aren't the only ones celebrating a centennial this year. On Sunday, May 21, the Poor Handmaids of Jesus Christ hosted a centennial celebration, be-

ginning with an anniversary Mass at Ancilla Domini Chapel in Donaldson, IN. Among those in attendance was Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, representing the Dehonians. The Poor Handmaids were practically next door neighbors to the SCJs for many years when the province operated Divine Heart Seminary. Members of the community, as well as SCJ alumni and former DHS students, have maintained close contacts with the sisters.

"Many sisters and lay people shared great stories with me of the SCJs in Donaldson," said Fr. Vien, who is pictured below with several of the sisters.

## Superior General visits SCJs in Ukraine

From March 8-12, 2023, Fr. Carlos Luis Suarez Codorniú, SCJ, superior general, and Fr. Artur Sanecki, SCJ, general councilor, visited the Dehonian community in Ukraine. There are currently eight SCJs serving in Ukraine, divided between Irpin (near Kiev) and Zhytomyr (about 125 miles west of Kiev). Fr. Carlos met with SCJs and expressed his gratitude to them for their generous commitment to be with the people of Ukraine in the midst of war. During the visit, Fr. Carlos Luis also visited with Fr. Piotr Chmielecki, SCJ, of the Polish Province and Fr. Gerd Hemken, SCJ, of Germany who were delivering humanitarian aid. Dehonians have been bringing aid to the people of Ukraine throughout the war.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart have been in Ukraine for approximately 25 years.

## An Economy for All

"Towards an Economy for All; Inclusive, Sustainable, Just" was the theme of the May 7-11 international Dehonian theological conference at ESIC University in Madrid. ESIC, an apostolate of the Spanish Province, is a university dedicated to marketing,



Groundbreaking at St. Joseph's



Fr. Vien at the PHJCs' anniversary



the economy and finance. Representing the North American Dehonian Theological Commission were Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ and Fr. Gustave Lulendo, SCJ, from Canada and Fr. Ziggy Morawiec, SCJ and Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ from the US Province.

Following the week's presentations and discussions, participants released a final message in which they asked:

"Is an inclusive economic model possible?"

"This is perhaps one of the greatest challenges... It is possible to soothe consciences through aid and, at the same time, build walls to defend our own against possible threats from outside. It is common to talk about human rights and, at the same time, to tribalize citizenship and residence permits to people coming from poorer countries. Inclusion is not an easy task. Tribalism is a great temptation to defend our goods. This is a great challenge: to recognize, know, love, and work on behalf of those who are different. It is an epochal challenge, which goes against the current, and requires leaving the tribal space, de-absolutizing private property, and betting on the Commons open to the different other, who must cease to be a stranger to become a brother and sister."

The full message, as well as

reports, photos and video from the conference are on the general website:

[www.dehoniani.org](http://www.dehoniani.org)

## Scholasticate attacked in Congolese Province

As Dehonians around the world prepared to celebrate the birth of the founder, the Dehon Scholasticate in Kisangani (Congolese Province) was attacked by a group of armed intruders the night of March 12.

Fr. Jean-Paul Bungamane, SCJ, writes: "They looted and tortured the two fathers (Jonas and myself) as well as the scholastics, injuring two of them. The intervention of the police was very late due to the length of the operation. They systematically looted different rooms of the confreres as you will see in the picture."

Please keep our Congolese SCJs in prayer.



One of the rooms looted during the attack in Kisangani.



## DEHONIANS Priests of the Sacred Heart

Our ministries are diverse, as are our members. Yet our goal is the same: to work with a common heart in service to God's people, reflecting the love of Christ as experienced by our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon

**Find out how  
you can join us!**

**800-609-5559**

[vocations@dehoniansusa.org](mailto:vocations@dehoniansusa.org)

[www.DehoniansUSA.org](http://www.DehoniansUSA.org)

[@DehoniansUSA](https://www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart)

[www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart](https://www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart)

[@DehoniansUSA](https://www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart)

[www.youtube.com/DehoniansUSA](https://www.youtube.com/DehoniansUSA)

[www.youtube.com/DehoniansUSA](https://www.youtube.com/DehoniansUSA)

YouTube:

[@DehoniansUSA](https://www.instagram.com/DehoniansUSA)

Instagram:

[www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart](https://www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart)

Facebook:

[www.dehoniansusa.org](http://www.dehoniansusa.org)

Visit us on the web:

Change service requested

Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289

P.O. Box 289

Priests of the Sacred Heart

**SCJ NEWS**

Non Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Hales Corners, WI  
Permit No. 71