



Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

October 4, 2023

Dear Brothers,

Last month, many of us attended workshops focused on retirement and safeguarding. Something that Br. Wayne Fitzpatrick, MM, said during the retirement workshop has stayed with me. He emphasized that how we live in community and minister to each other is directly tied to our spiritual life. A healthy spiritual life is essential to a healthy communal and ministerial life.



SCJ Formation Class of 2023-2024. Not pictured: Hung Pham and Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong. Both are in their pastoral year.

As religious, we are in the ministry of spiritual growth and enrichment for ourselves and for others. We are reminded that we can't give what we don't have, which is why we are called to go deeper in our personal relationship with God. It is evident in our Constitutions that our apostolic life and communal life must be grounded in a strong spiritual foundation. Only by deepening our spiritual life can we truly discover the person of Christ and the mystery of His Heart more deeply and become united with Christ in His love for the Father. Our union with Christ is expressed through our availability and love (Cst. 16-18). I believe that Fr. Dehon's strong faith and profound

spiritual life played a significant role in his ability to overcome obstacles during the early days of establishing the young congregation.

But how do we know that we have a deep, intimate, and personal union with Christ? Is it about how frequently we go to Mass or spend reflective time either alone or with community? Is it measured by how regularly we see our spiritual director, how we have developed our sense of purpose and meaning in religious life, how we discover the sacred or transcendence in everyday life, or how we live our lives in conformity with Christ in community life and ministry? Do we actually know what it is to be a deeply spiritual person?

I believe that a fulfilling and spiritual life is one that encompasses every dimension of our being – our body, mind, and spirit. It is important to take care of all facets of our well-being, which includes our physical health, emotional health, and mental health. It is only when these aspects of ourselves are in harmony that we can truly experience living a life of peace, joy, and purpose.

Fraternally,

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HEALTHY LIFE CHECKLIST FOR CONSECRATED MEN

- ☐ Do I have a sustainable and enriching daily prayer routine?
- ☐ Do I seek ways to keep my personal practice of liturgy fresh and alive?
- ☐ Do I have a practice of spiritual reading that gives me hope and new insights?
- ☐ Do I seek to have a daily interaction with the members of my religious community or missionary society?
- ☐ Do I seek to have daily interaction with others with whom I live, including occasions of fun?
- ☐ Do I foster on-going relationships with my family members and friends?
- ☐ Do I communicate regularly with my spiritual director and/or confessor?
- ☐ Do I maintain appointments with counselors, therapists, and doctors when needed? Am I open and honest with them?
- ☐ Do I communicate regularly with a mentor, coach, or accountability partner?
- ☐ Do I serve as a mentor, coach, or accountability partner for others?
- ☐ Do I serve as a volunteer in my local community?
- ☐ Do I seek to meet new people from time to time, both in ministry and outside of ministry?
- ☐ Do I exercise daily, including stretching?
- ☐ Do I go for a walk, run, bike ride, or swim?
- ☐ Am I eating healthy foods, including vegetables and fruits?
- ☐ Is there sufficient healthy protein in my diet?
- ☐ Do I drink multiple glasses of water each day?
- ☐ Am I mindful of my consumption of sugar and soda?
- ☐ Am I mindful about my daily intake of caffeine?
- ☐ If I am able to consume alcohol, do I drink responsibly?
- ☐ Do I have a healthy approach to media, consuming enough to be informed but knowing when to limit exposure?
- ☐ Do I have a smart approach to the use of social media, using it to share the Good News of Jesus but maintaining healthy boundaries?
- ☐ Do I get a good night's sleep?

