189 SCJ News

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

Bridget Martin, principal of the Dehonians' Sacred Heart School in Southaven, MS, takes part in the Lakota smudging tradition prior to the Opening Mass of Mission Education. Bridget is a member of the Board of Directors of St. Joseph's Indian School, is active with the Dehonian Associates program, and serves on the international Dehonian Education Committee. She is one of many lay employees who embrace the mission of the Priests of the Sacred Heart as her own.

Employees, volunteers and SCJs celebrate the Dehonian commitment

hamberlain might not seem like an obvious place for a national conference. A town of less than 2,500 people in the middle of South Dakota, the closest airport is at least a two-hour drive away. And the whole state is prone to impassable storms, even in the spring and fall.

But 100 years ago, it also did not seem like an obvious spot for a small religious order from Europe to start a new ministry.

Yet that was the backdrop of this year's Mission Education Conference hosted by St. Joseph's Indian School. "Your Kingdom Come ~ Óhiŋniyaŋ (eternally, forever)," celebrating the 100th anniversary of Dehonian ministry in the United States, was the theme of the October 8-9 conference.

On Palm Sunday 1923, Fr. Mathias Fohrman, SCJ, a member of the German Province originally sent to

the US on a fundraising mission, celebrated Mass at St. Mary's Church in Lower Brule. It was the beginning of what was to become a century-plus commitment to the people of the United States. From Lower Brule, Dehonian ministry quickly spread across the Missouri River to Chamberlain, where in 1927, Dehonians purchased the defunct Columbus College to start St. Joseph's Indian School.

"This is holy ground," said Mike Tyrell, speaking to the 110 participants at this year's Mission Education Conference. "There is a Dehonian spirit here that has been present for over 100 years. No one leaves here without feeling that spirit. We are united by that spirit whatever we do, wherever we are."

Mike and his wife, Kim, first started at St. Joseph's as houseparents in 1985; he has been president of the Dehonian school since 2014.

Mission Education

Held approximately every three years, Mission Education brings together SCJs, employees and other Dehonian collaborators to learn about the ministries and spirituality of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians), and to simply spend time together in prayer and fellowship, connecting with others carrying on the dreams of Fr. Leo John Dehon. The conferences have been held in Wisconsin and Mississippi, but most often in South Dakota, the birthplace of the US Province.

This year's gathering opened with a Lakota Mass celebrated with students and staff of St. Joseph's. Be-



Fr. Greg, spiritual director of St. Joseph's Indian School, with student dancers who led the procession at the Mission Education liturgy.

fore walking into Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel, Mission Education participants were invited to take part in a Lakota smudging ceremony of purification. Student dancers, dressed in traditional Lakota attire, led the opening procession. A drum circle provided the heartbeat of the gathering.

A skit featuring Fr. Leo John Dehon has become a staple of Mission Education gatherings. This year, the role of Fr. Dehon was played by Joe Tyrell, Director of Mission Integration at St. Joseph's. He was joined by Dave Meyer, who had the role of Fr. Mathias Fohrman. The storyline was that the two met in heaven and Fr. Mathias had an opportunity to update the founder on the work of the SCJs in South Dakota. In 10 minutes, Mission Education participants got an overview of the challenges of those first years of Dehonian ministry, including stories of SCJs stranded in the snow, fires, illness and financial instability. However, paired alongside these stories - not only during the skit, but throughout the two days of Mission Education - were stories of Dehonians, seemingly against all odds, somehow overcoming the obstacles thrown at them.

Since those earliest days of the SCJ presence, St. Joseph's Indian

School has become a modern educational facility that has expanded its outreach well beyond the classroom, with family counseling, healthcare, social programs, and education in Lakota traditions. During Mission Education, participants visited one of its newest initiatives: the Equine Therapy Program.

"Students have the opportunity to connect with the horses through counseling sessions. Horses are very intune to body language — this is beneficial to the students because horses respond at a sacred level. Students feel connected spiritually and have opportunities to overcome challenges through means other than talk therapy," said Robyn Knecht, Director of Counseling Services.

Mission Education participants also learned about the many other Dehonian ministries in South Dakota. After taking part in an outdoor prayer ceremony for the start of Native American Day on October 9, participants boarded buses and headed through the rolling hills along the Missouri River to visit the site of the first Dehonian ministry in the United States: St. Mary's Church in Lower Brule.

Actually, they visited the CURRENT site of St. Mary's. The first

church is under the Missouri River, along with the rest of the original town of Lower Brule, following the completion of the Big Bend Dam in 1963. The town was relocated in 1962.

After a brief prayer service that included the singing of a Native Song of Prayer by Sharla Krogman (Native American Studies teacher), the Mission Education group heard from a variety of people, including Larry and Jewel Jandreau. Larry Jandreau is an alumnus of St. Joseph's who now sits on the school's Executive Board of Directors; Jewel Jandreau is a member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council. Larry is also the emergency services director of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe.

"St. Joseph's helped my husband learn how to live in the wider world outside of the reservation," said Jewel. "We now work as a team to help our community."

On Monday afternoon, the conference ended as it began, in Our Lady of the Sioux Chapel. Among the final speakers was Dr. Paul Monson, Vice President of Intellectual Formation & Academic Dean of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. He grew up in North Dakota, just a few hours north of Chamberlain, and has done extensive study on the history of the Catholic Church in South Dakota, a history that Dehonians inherited – in part – from the Benedictines who served in the area before them.

"This is all very interesting," he said about the history of Dehonian ministry in South Dakota, "but why



Dr. Paul Monson of SHSST talks about the history of the Church in Lower Brule. He has done extensive research on the area.

come all the way out here to learn about it? Why not read about the history, or see images of it in a video?

"We come here to embody the realities of it... we are here to encounter what or whom we do not know. The best teachers are learners first. We are here to learn. If we serve, we must learn. We must step out of our comfort zones."

Adveniat Regnum Tuum

Dr. Monson talked about "Adveniat Regnum Tuum," the Latin phrase for the theme of the conference, and one of the pillars of Dehonian spirituality.

"Dehonian service is not about your will, or my will," he said. "It is about God's will."

"Thy Kingdom Come means a trust in God in good times and in bad," he continued. "Our service here is not an individual service. Our service, wherever we are, is one as a Dehonian family."

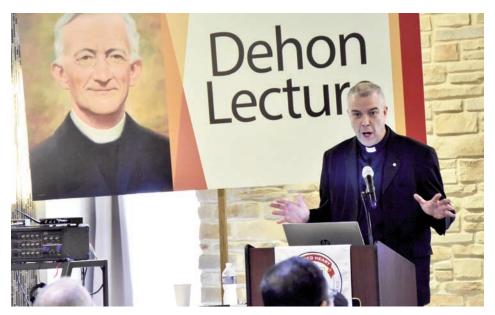
Following the closing session, Mission Ed participants joined students and staff back in the Wisdom Circle in front of the chapel for traditional dances to celebrate Native American Day.

Early the next day, participants were on the road, back to their local ministries. According to KELOLAND Weather, South Dakota's first snowstorm of the year was just days away.

"South Dakota is wonderful," said one participant. "Now time to head home and beat the next storm!"



Fr. Jean Claude Mbassi welcomes fellow SCJ Fr. Ari Saputra to Lower Brule. Fr. JC is a member of the pastoral team that serves the area.



Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, superior general, was this year's Dehon Lecture presenter at SHSST.

Moved by the word

his is a special house," said Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, SCI, as he looked out at those gathered in the lobby of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology for the annual Dehon Lecture on October 4. "This is a special house because it is a place to hear the Word, to study the Word, to discuss the Word, and finally, to live the Word." Fr. Carlos is superior general of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. The topic of his Dehon Lecture was "Moved by the Word." He shared how he has not only been moved by the words found on the pages of the Bible, but by the wisdom and theology shared with him in the words that come from the lived experiences of others.

In the afternoon Q&A session, Fr. Carlos was asked to comment on the Synod on Synodality, which opened in Rome just a few hours earlier. "Does the Dehonian charism have anything to say to this moment in the Church?" asked a member of the audience.

"We are called to be one," said Fr. Carlos, reflecting on "Sint Unum," one of the pillars of Dehonian Spirituality.

"To be one, to recognize that we

are one, this is very important to us as Dehonians. This is very important for us as a Church, and in this moment."

Prior to the lecture, Fr. Carlos was the main celebrant of an intercultural liturgy hosted by SHSST's English and Culture Program.

Video interview

While he was in Hales Corners for the Dehon Lecture, Fr. Carlos sat down for a brief interview with Fr. Henry Nguyen, SCJ. Br. Andy Gancarczyk, SCJ was the videographer. View it on our YouTube Channel:

youtube.com/dehoniansusa

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
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Priests of the Sacred Heart



Our formation community at Sacred Heart Monastery: Michael (candidate), Frater Thuan, Frater Jacob, Frater Michael, Fr. Frank, Frater (Paul) Phong, Frater Truc and Fr. Joseph. Frater Jonathan and Frater Hung are in pastoral assignments off-campus.

Favorite scripture passage?

At the start of each academic year, we ask our students in formation to write a few words to introduce themselves. This year, we also asked them to share a favorite scripture passage.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"

Philippians 4:13

This is the Scripture citation in which **Frater Jonathan Tu Nguyen-Vuong, SCJ**, finds strength. At 22, he is our youngest professed member of the US Province. Originally from California, Fra. Jonathan grew up in Broussard, LA, where he met a visiting SCJ priest who challenged him to consider religious life. Last year he professed his first vows and this year he is doing field education with the SCJ community in northern Mississippi.

"I want to be a Dehonian – an SCJ – because I want to spread the Love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus to all those I have met and will meet," said Fra. Jonathan. "I seek 'Sint Unum' in my life, the lives of others, and for the world."

"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love"

John 15:9

Frater Hung Pham, SCJ, is also in pastoral ministry this year, serving at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston. "I've been involved in marriage preparation, quinceañeras, and baptism preparation, plus I have worked with altar servers, lectors, and our faith formation groups," said Fra. Hung. "This experience is helping me to apply what I have learned in the seminary to real life situations."

Born in Vietnam, Fra. Hung moved to Houston in 2008 and graduated with a degree in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Houston in 2015. He worked as a Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (TPH) analyst. He is 36 and professed his first vows in 2020.

"I am happy to be a Dehonian, and it is my desire to continue to develop a deeper understanding and relationship with God as a Dehonian," he said. "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

John 6:68

Frater (Paul) Phong Hoang, SCJ,

31, is in the final months of formation. He completes his M.Div. at the end of the fall semester, and will be ordained to the diaconate on December 9. Originally from Vietnam, he grew up in Houston and earned a bachelor's degree in Biology before pursuing his religious vocation.

"What resonates with me in our Dehonian Spirituality is the focus on love, as well as the image of the Sacred Heart," he said. "It seems generic yet profoundly universal and necessary in our world. Love is what ultimately captivates and converts the heart."

Fra. Paul professed first vows in 2018. Following his diaconate ordination, he will be assigned to pastoral ministry in northern Mississippi .

"For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?"

1 Corinthians 4:7

Our newest candidate is **Michael Ugochukwu lwuchukwu**. He is 31, and entered candidacy this year. Originally from Nigeria, he was pursuing a master's degree at Drew University in New Jersey when he learned about the Priests of the Sacred Heart during a retreat. He graduated from Drew in May, and entered formation soon after.

"What particularly resonates with me about Dehonian spirituality is the congregation's vision, which beckons us to approach life with open hearts and minds. This vision encapsulates the essence of bearing witness to the transformative power of God's love in the world."

"Do not forget the works of the Lord"

Psalms 78: 7b

"Being with the SCJs for over eight years, the most important thing for me about Dehonian Spirituality – which I embrace to grow and discern my vocation – is living with God in a life of oblation," said **Frater Thuan Nguyen, SCJ**. "Living oblation and renewing my commitment to it frequently throughout the day helps remind me of the good deeds the Lord has poured upon me in my life, therefore one of my favorites biblical quotes is 'Do not forget the works of the Lord'" (Psalms 78: 7b).

A member of the Vietnamese District studying in the US Province, Frater Thuan is a second-year theology student at SHSST. Prior to coming to the US Province, he did undergraduate studies in Philosophy. He is 30 years old and professed his first vows in 2020.

"So the Jews said,'See how he loved him"

John 11:36

When asked for a favorite scripture passage, **Frater Jacob Smith**, **SCJ**, actually cited a longer passage from John 11, beginning with 11:32:

"When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Sir, come and see.' And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him'"

Originally from Houston, Frater Jacob, is 23 and in his second year of vows. A first-year seminarian at SHSST, he graduated from Marquette University in May with a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and minors in Theology and History. He has often

served as a cantor at community liturgies.

"Since becoming a candidate, it has been the witness of so many priests and brothers in our congregation that has kept me here," said Fra. Jacob. "The impact of wonderful men like Fr. Bob Tucker, Fr. Ed Killianski, Fr. Ed Griesemer, and Fr. John Czyzynski show me what religious life is."

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matthew 6:14-15

Like his novitiate classmate Frater Thuan Nguyen, **Frater Truc Tran, SCJ**, is also a member of the Vietnamese District who came to the US Province for postulancy, novitiate and seminary studies. He is 37, and professed his first vows in 2020. Prior to beginning his Philosophy studies, Fra. Truc earned a degree in Construction Engineering.

In his eighth year of formation, Fra. Truc is currently an M.Div. student at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Among his volunteer activities is helping with Friedens Food Pantries in Milwaukee. He has also been a part of our province video team, often behind the scenes at livestream events.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Romans 8:28

Frater Michael Wodarczyk, SCJ,

grew up within a 30-minute drive of Sacred Heart Monastery in suburban Milwaukee. He is 34, and earned a

bachelor's degree in Business Administration from St. Norbert College before pursuing his religious vocation. He was active in his home parish, serving as a lector, Eucharistic minister and with the RCIA program.

He professed his first vows with the SCJs in 2022 and is now a secondyear seminarian at SHSST.

"I wanted to profess vows with the SCJs because of community life, daily Eucharistic Adoration and prayer," said Michael. "I have grown in my faith, and it is the structure of religious life that has made that growth possible."

Our formators

Our formation program is based at Sacred Heart Monastery, located on the campus of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Directing the program this year are Frs. Joseph Thien Dinh, SCJ and Fr. Frank Wittouck, SCJ. Between them, Frs. Joseph and Frank represent almost 100 years of religious life. Before taking part in the international formators program at our Generalate in Rome, Fr. Joseph earned a Doctorate in Ministry from the Houston Graduate School of Theology. He has served in parish ministry in Wisconsin and Texas, and was a member of the Provincial Council.

Looking at Fr. Frank's curriculum vitae, it seems like he has done just about everything! He has been a teacher, spiritual director, school administrator, a military chaplain, a prison chaplain, as well as a parish pastor. A lifelong student, he has certificates and degrees from SHSST, Kilroe Seminary, the Catholic University of America, the University of Detroit, the Austin-Presbyterian Seminary, the University of San Francisco and Loyola University New Orleans. **READ**MORE about our students:





Fr. Mark, Fr. Jim, Dn. Chuck (deacon at St. Martin of Tours), Fr. Vien, Dn. David, Fr. Francis and Fr. Guy

165 years of religious vows

n August 12, Dehonians celebrated the Jubilees of four members of the US Province: Fr. Jim Schroeder (60 years of vows), Fr. Guy Blair (50 years), Fr. Francis Vu Tran (25 years) and Fr. Mark Mastin (20 years). Also remembered during the jubilee was Fr. Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, who celebrates his 10th anniversary. He professed vows in the US Province but is currently ministering in Ecuador.

165 years of religious vows

FR. JIM SCHROEDER, SCJ – Fr. Jim, 79, is from southern Illinois and spent many years of ministry not too far from where he grew up. A licensed psychologist, he worked in St. Louis, focusing on the treatment of priests, religious and other Church ministers through individual and group therapy. His doctorate in clinical psychology is from Loyola University, Chicago. He also did sabbatical studies in France and Spain.

Fr. Jim was ordained to the priest-

hood in 1970.

He is now retired and a member of the Sacred Heart Community at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake. Fr. Jim continues to be active, including teaching classes at the province novitiate.

FR. GUY BLAIR, SCJ – Originally from Connecticut, Fr. Guy is 72 was ordained to the priesthood in 1982. Many of his years of ministry have been with the deaf, a ministry sparked by an encounter that he had with a deaf woman when he was 12.

"One day, back in Connecticut, I was talking to an elderly deaf woman who asked me what the word 'resurrection' meant," said Fr. Guy. "Here she was 75 years old, brought up a Catholic, and had no idea what the word meant. No one had ever explained it to her."

Fr. Guy has served in parish ministry in Canada and the United States. Often, that ministry is paired with service to the deaf community. Fr. Guy is also passionate about ministering to the homeless. In Green Bay, he was instrumental in creating a shelter

tied to St. John the Evangelist parish.

During his years of ministry in San Antonio, he not only ministered to the homeless, but used his skills as a painter to capture them in art. Fr. Guy emphasizes that he received permission from each of his subjects to both paint and share their images. There have been several public showings of his art.

Fr. Guy is now a member of the Dehonian's community in northern Mississippi. He assists with parish ministry, and with liturgy at the two schools operated by Sacred Heart Southern Missions.

FR. FRANCIS VU TRAN, SCJ – Born in Vietnam, Fr. Francis, 47, was raised in California. He joined the SCJs' formation program as an undergraduate, first studying at the University of the Incarnate Word in San Antonio, and later, earned his M.Div. at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

His first assignment after priest-hood ordination in 2005 was at St. Martin of Tours parish. There, he served the parish community at large, but in particular, the Vietnamese Catholic community in the archdiocese of Milwaukee, which has been based at SMOT for many years.

It was a ministry that Fr. Francis loved, but one that he set aside to go to Rome for advanced studies in Scripture. Last year, Fr. Francis received his doctorate from the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome. He completed his doctoral studies, and defended his dissertation, while also serving as district superior of Vietnam.

Fr. Francis completed his second three-year term as district superior last year, and now teaches at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. He is also local superior of the St. Joseph Community at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

FR. MARK MASTIN – Fr. Mark entered the SCJs' Divine Heart Seminary in Donaldson, IN, as a high school freshman. He had planned to continue with the SCJs and discern a vocation to the priesthood and

religious life as a Dehonian. But that was postponed until he was 50 years old. Fr. Mark's father died when he was 21, which quickly changed his education plans to business. Following his graduation from DePaul University in Chicago, Fr. Mark got a job in manufacturing so that he could help with the financial needs of his mother and younger brothers and sisters.

But, he continued to feel called to the priesthood. Almost 20 years after he left the SCJ formation program he once again applied to be a candidate. In 2007, he was ordained to the priesthood.

Fr. Mark has been in parish ministry, as well as on the province vocation team. For four years, Fr. Mark also served as a chaplain with the US Army, which included a tour in Afghanistan. He is now a part of the formation team at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology while doing doctoral studies through the Catholic University of America.

FR. JUAN CARLOS CASTEÑADA ROJAS, SCJ – Originally from Colombia, Fr. "Juancho" pursued his vocation to the priesthood and religious life in the United States.

On January 11, 2006, he entered the English as a Second Language program at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology (It is now known as "English and Culture Studies"). "There, I learned not just the English language but also the culture and the Dehonian charism that taught me how to be a prophet of love and a servant of reconciliation," said Fr. Juancho.

He became a candidate with the Priests of the Sacred Heart and earned his M.Div. from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. On February 16, 2019, he returned to his home country of Colombia to be ordained to the priesthood, celebrating his First Mass at his home parish, surrounded by his family.

His first assignment was at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in Houston. For the past several years Fr. Juancho has been a part of the international Dehonian community that serves Ecuador.

SCJ devoted his life to serving those on the peripheries

r. Leonard Zaworski, SCJ, died at home on September 6. A member of the Dehonian community at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake, he was 80 years old.

Originally from Baltimore, Br. Lenny professed his first vows in 1968 and his perpetual vows in 1975. Much of his life was devoted to social justice and serving those who were often found on the peripheries of society.

For many years he was a community activist in the Rio Grande Valley, helping to give voice to the poor. "We tried to empower people who never felt that they could make a difference," he said. "We helped them to find the courage to participate in the system, to seek change."

In Texas he ministered at St. Lawrence parish in San Antonio, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Raymondville and with Valley Interfaith in McAllen. Prior to discerning his religious vocation he served six years in the US Coast Guard.

He earned his bachelor's and master's degrees (theology) from Marquette University in Milwaukee.

In January, 1998, Br. Lenny went to India for a sabbatical, during which he studied Indian spirituality. At the time the Dehonian presence in India was just beginning and he spent time in one of the district formation communities. At the end of the sabbatical he sought permission to remain in India. He also assisted in Vietnam.

New ministry, and a new language

In retirement, Br. Lenny sought a new ministry: Braille translation. "When I retired I wanted to find a

meaningful ministry," wrote Br. Lenny. "Entering into retirement was easy at first. After spending 12 years in India, I enjoyed being back in the United States. But I knew that as I grew in age I would become more limited, so I wanted something that I would be able to continue as I got older.

"A few years before I retired, I spent a year in Baltimore when my mother's health began to deteriorate

and I took a year-long course in Digital Media at Johns Hopkins University. One of the things that stuck with me from the course was the constant concern about how to include elements in



SCJ NEWS

Br. Leonard

whatever projects we worked on that would serve the needs of people who are sightless."

Br. Lenny learned that the Milwaukee Public Library had a service for the blind called "ABLE" (Audio and Braille Literacy Enhancement). Through ABLE, people trained in Braille to transcribe books, sheet music and other materials for the blind.

"When I discovered ABLE online and learned that it was possible to do Braille transcriptions on a computer, I called the Braille office and was invited to visit," said Br. Lenny. "It was very challenging, but I found that I am good at it. I am very happy to have had the opportunity to work and learn alongside people who are blind, who witness to me their courage, patience, and strength of character."



Anniversary celebrations at Our Lady of Guadalupe

On September 2, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, celebrated three jubilees: 1) 100 years of the church's dedication, 2) 100 years of Dehonian ministry in the United States, and 3) 50 years of ministry of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) at OLG.

"We remember how this church was established for immigrants," said Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, in his homily. "Our Lady of Guadalupe Church has become the spiritual home and the place associated with the Hispanic culture and identity for many generations.

"The Priests of the Sacred Heart – or Dehonians – are proud to be a part of this history. In the 1980s, the Vietnamese community also made this place their spiritual home. Vietnamese

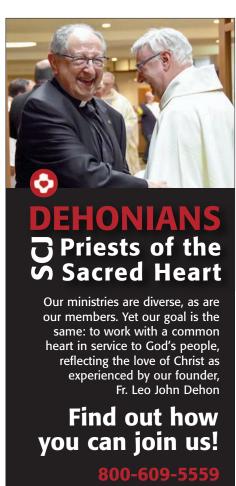
Mass was celebrated here. And here in this place, I was ordained to the diaconate in 2004. You truly live the spirit of 'Nuestra case es su casa.'"

What is a Dehonian parish?

What does it mean to be a Dehonian parish? Is it simply a church that has an SCJ as its pastor, or is there something more, something tangibly "Dehonian?" That was one of the questions discussed during the Dehonian Parish Ministers meeting held via Zoom on October 17.

"Our homilies are a vehicle to share our Dehonian spirituality," said one participant. "Our values regarding social justice and reconciliation can be found in our religious education," said another. "We share our spirituality in how we treat people," said a third.

Discussion topics included youth outreach (in particular, how to use this year's World Youth Day as a stepping stone toward the development of Dehonian youth groups), the expansion of the Dehonian Associates program, vocation promotion, the preparation and welcoming of international SCJs for ministry in the US Province, and Dehonian "branding" (making the Dehonian logo and other items visible in parishes).



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Vol. 44, No. 4, WINTER 2023

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