



A Year with Venerable Father Leo John Dehon

The fifth in a series of monthly biographical sketches as we prepare to commemorate the centenary of his death on August 12, 2025

Fr. Leo John Dehon: The People's Priest As we read earlier, many priests of Fr. Dehon's time saw religious life as a withdrawal from the world, but Fr. Dehon saw his newly formed Congregation as an apostolic community supporting each other in the midst of the world. Together, he and his collaborators went out to the streets and listened to the people, ministering in many different capacities but always in a spirit of love and oblation (as an offering to God). They brought open hearts and open minds to the people they encountered. Fr. Dehon organized many gatherings and conferences to promote dialogue around the social issues of his day. People were attracted by his kindness, wisdom and vision. People at many levels of society trusted him.



“Sint Unum” was an important concept to Fr. Dehon. Translated from Latin, it means “that they may be one.” He yearned for unity among his congregation and among the people of God. For Fr. Dehon, unity begins with our union with Christ, and then impelled by God’s great love for us, we go out to the world to foster unity among people. His Congregation was characterized by the greatest care for people, particularly the most deprived.

Quote: “The simplest way of serving God is to serve by love. It is, indeed, the gentlest way. Fear intimidates; hope is not without a certain uneasiness, but love knows neither the torments of fear nor the alarm of hope.”

Reflection Question: *How can we serve others through love?*

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