



A Year with Venerable Father Leo John Dehon

Preparing for the centenary of the founder's death in 2025

The sixth 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 Priest with a Pen



Last month, we learned how beloved Fr. Dehon was for his many good works among the people. Fr. Dehon knew the importance of the apostolic work his community was busy with, and he also knew that this required a deep spiritual grounding to sustain it. The source of the community's strength must come from the Gospel, so Fr. Dehon wrote numerous meditation books applying the Gospel to daily life. A central theme is love: believing in God's great love for us, wanting to return that love, and sharing that love with others.

The Crowns of Love to the Sacred Heart contains 93 meditations centered on love. The first meditation opens with Scripture and then a reflection on God's Gift of Himself:

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

"In this retreat we wish to lay the foundation of our love for the Sacred Heart. But we must first consider how God has loved us, how He gave Himself to us. Before contemplating the Heart of Jesus it will be well to stop a moment to consider the Heart of God Himself. Before God gave us the Heart of His Son, the Blessed Trinity gave us its Heart from the very moment of creation. "Let us do a great and important work," said the Holy Trinity. "Let us make humankind in our image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). A human is the image of God by reason of the natural and supernatural gifts that God has communicated to him. He is, above all, the object of goodness of the Heart of God by virtue of his divine adoption."

This great gift, the gift of God's love for us, is visible throughout creation. We are the "object(s) of goodness of the Heart of God." This meditation opens our hearts to knowing we are beloved children of God.

Believing in this great gift of love, how can we not want to respond to God with love, and share that love with others? We are called to do this, uniting prayer and ministry, making our lives into what Fr. Dehon calls a “never-ending Mass.”

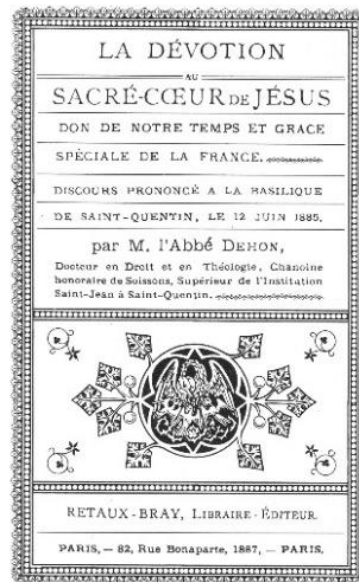
You can find links to more of Fr. Dehon’s spiritual writings on the Provincial website: <https://dehoniansusa.org/dehonian-spirituality>.

Next month, we will read about how he also became known as “The Pope’s Preacher.”

Quote:

“Every person has inalienable dignity, duties, and rights. Whatever social class one belongs to, every person is endowed not only with a living body, but also with an intelligent, free, and immortal soul which God created. Having come from God, this soul should serve God and return to God.”

- Fr. Leo John Dehon, *Christian Social Manual*, Chapter One



Reflection Question:

How do we share God’s love with others?

**Learn more about the
Priests of the Sacred Heart
(Dehonians/SCJ) at:
www.dehoniansusa.org**

