



# Dehonians USA

PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART

August 22, 2025

Dear Confreres,

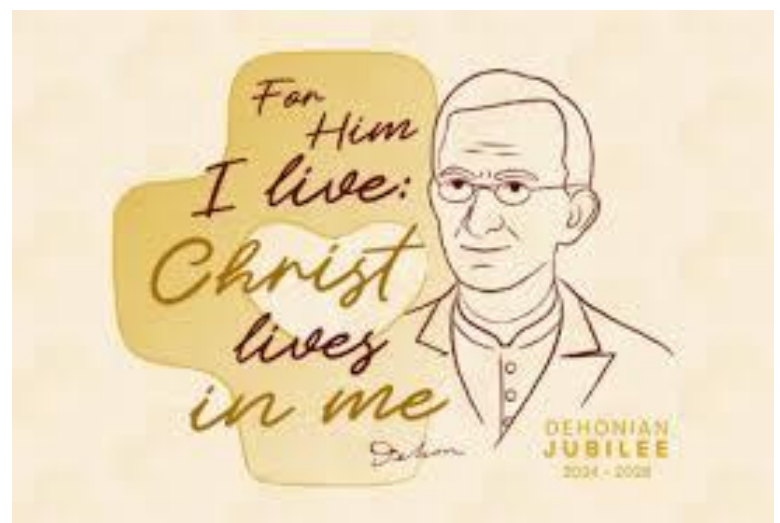
In recent years, the word “woke” has often been used sarcastically or dismissively—especially in politics—to criticize people or movements associated with progressive causes, or with those who advocate for the poor, the marginalized, and the forgotten. Curiosity got the better of me, leading me to search for its meaning.

The term “woke” has roots in African American communities, dating back to the 1940s, to describe an awareness of racial bias and injustice. During the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, activists used it as a rallying cry to encourage Black communities to stay alert to systemic racism and their ongoing fight for justice and equality. In the 2010s, “woke” reemerged, especially with the Black Lives Matter movement, as a reminder to stay alert against racial violence, police brutality, and social injustice.

Over time, however, “woke” has evolved. What started as a call to awareness amid injustice became increasingly politicized and divisive. Though the word has become politicized, the deeper meaning of being awake to suffering and injustice resonates with our charism.

In this truest sense, Fr. Dehon was “woke”: attentive to the struggles and suffering of the people he served, keenly aware of the social and economic inequalities of his time. What he witnessed moved his heart and inspired him to build a “reign of love and justice.”

As Dehonians, our charism calls us to be “woke”: awake to human suffering, sensitive to injustice, and



guided by Christ's compassion. To be "woke" is to see with Christ's eyes those society overlooks, to hear with Christ's ears to the cries that go unheard, and to act with Christ's heart where love and justice are most needed.

May we remain faithful to this awakening of heart.

Fraternally,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name "Vicki". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "V" and a small "i" and "k" following.