

The Mustard Seed

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... spreading love & life





Who are we? The Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ) is a catholic religious community of brothers and priests. In some part of the world we are known as "Dehonians" in reference to our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon. **What** do we do? Inspired by the love of the Sacred Heart SCJ brothers and priests are in Africa, Asia, South and North America. They are missionaries, teachers, pastors, lawyers, social service ministers, chaplains and activists.

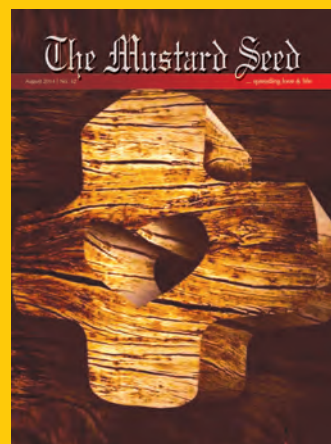
What is our history? The priest of the Sacred Heart was founded in France by Fr. Leo John Dehon, in 1878. The congregation is now found in 40 countries around the world, and is headquartered in Rome. Our Mission locations include the Philippines, Congo, Mozambique, India, and Madagascar. We have been present in India since 1994.

What are you called for? Each of us is called to a vocation. Some are called to be parents, teachers, or caregivers. Some are called to be priests, brothers, sisters, or deacons. Could this be your call? Would you like to learn more about pursuing a call to ministry in the Church as a priest or religious? For information about serving as a priest, brother, sister, or deacon, or for help in discerning a vocation to Church ministry, contact us via address below.



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Editorial Message

HUMAN HEART

The Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *Veritatis Splendor* no. 1 says: "The development of science and technology, this splendid testimony of the human capacity for understanding and for perseverance, does not free humanity from the obligation to ask the ultimate questions. Rather, it spurs us on to face the most painful and decisive of struggles, those of the heart and the moral conscience".

Father Dehon's world and our world today put its emphasis on the rational and the technical. It is a world where problems are solved without recourse to God, who is effectively removed from public consideration. It is in this context of the growing sense of the absence and silence of God that the devotion to the Sacred emerged. It emphasized the inner life, symbolized by the human heart which is understood as the core of the person. It emphasized a way of knowing "by heart", it led to a heart-felt knowledge of affection, feeling and emotion. These are the "reasons of the heart" that Pascal refers to. In a world built by the Head and Hand of technical reason, this devotion points to the Heart as the center of the human being; there we find our identity beyond the accomplishments of Head and Hand, for the Heart is the place of encounter with God.

In *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 54 we read again: "The relationship between man's freedom and God's law is most deeply lived out in the "heart" of the person, in his moral conscience. As the Second Vatican Council observed: "In the depths of his conscience man defects a law which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: "do this, shun that". For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged".

The devotion to the Sacred Heart not only emphasizes the nearness of God, it boldly discloses a God who is intensely, passionately in love with each individual human being. "Behold the heart that has loved men so much". To you and to me.





Love is a command, not a Suggestion

In the Catechism of the catholic church no:1604 says: God who created man out of love also calls him to love- the fundamental and innate vocation of every human being. For a man is created in the image and likeness of God who is himself love..... And this love God which God blesses is intended to be fruitful and to be realized in the common work of watching over creation: "and God blessed them, and God said to them : 'be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it'."

If love is the starting point or source of life there is an underlying need to understand the notion of love. Many of us have a vague understanding of love.

Once a friend of mine was talking to somebody on the mobile phone for a long time. I asked him after he ended the call "who was that?" He replied, "It is the one who I am in love with." Then he asked me do you know, "What it means to be in love with? Then all of a sudden he began to explain to me about love in his own way.

L- Loss of money

O- Out of mind

V-(V) Waste of time

E-End of life

My dear readers look at this person who has missed the point to understand the meaning of love. The phrases like, "loss of money", "waste of money" and "end of life" show that he has very negative and narrow views about love. That is why Pope Benedict XVI went on to say that we have abused and desecrated the word 'love'. This suggests that there is an underlying need to understand the notion of love.

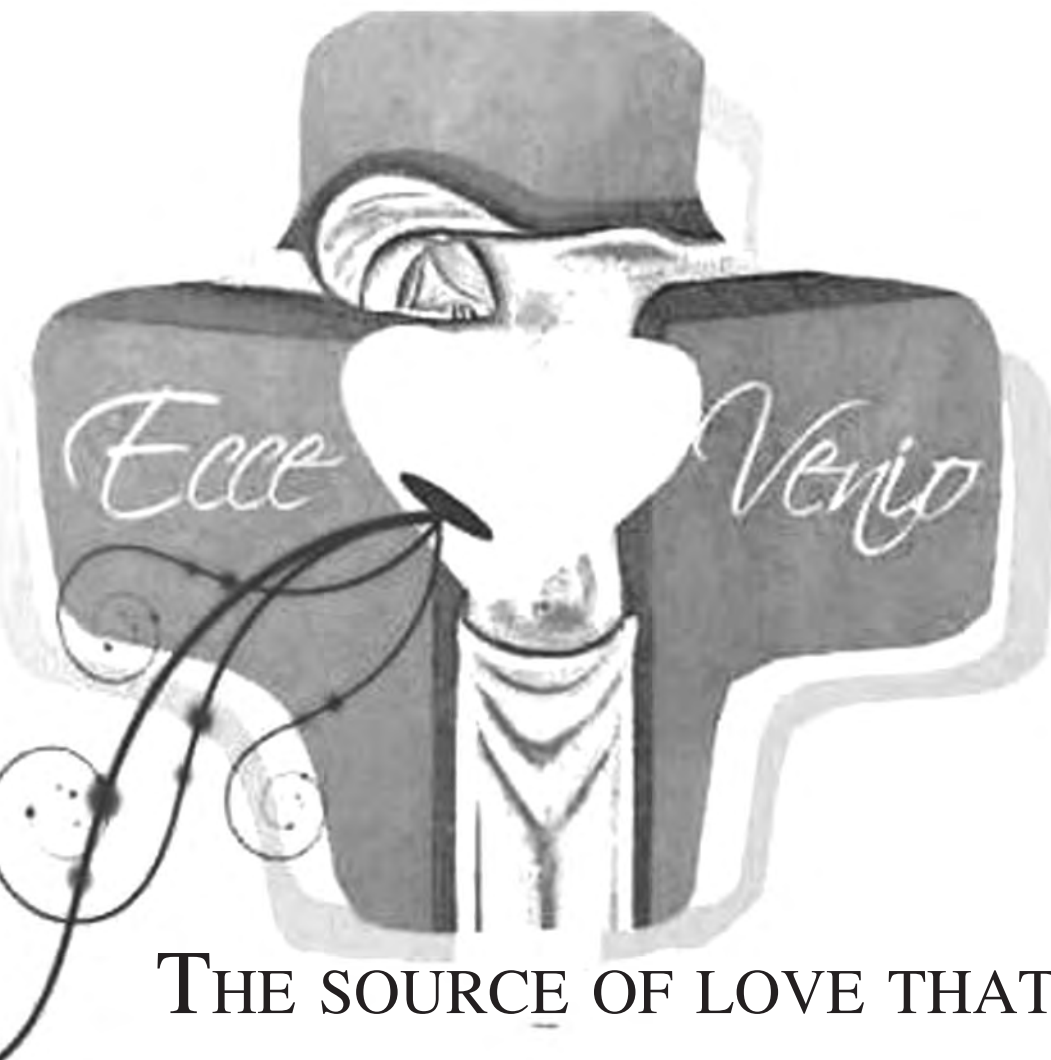
Love is an experience. We love our mother, our friends, our country, etc. but we perceive a difference, for instance, between loving our father and loving a friend. This suggests "loving others" can have different forms. To understand the different forms of love we may turn to the Greek language which is very rich in synonyms; its words often have shades of meaning which English does not possess. In Greek there are four different words for love. First, there is the noun storge with its accompanying verb stergein. These words describe the family love or affection. Secondly there is a noun eros and its accompanying verb eran. These words describe the love of a man for a maid; it is also called sensual love. Thirdly, there is philia with its accompanying verb philein. These are the warmest and the best greek word for love. They describe the real love or real affection. Finally, there is agape with its accompanying verb agapan. If we regard a

person with agape it means that no matter what that person does to us, no matter how he treats us, no matter if he insults or injures us we will never allow any bitterness against him but regard him with unconquerable benevolence and good will. These are not four kinds of love but four stages of love. It begins in the family but it breaks the walls of family and reaches to the enemies. Love is not merely a feeling as some people would describe it. Some people would say it is an emotional bond. But love transcends feelings and emotions. Stephen Covey, the Author of "The Seven Habits of The Highly Effective People" speaks of a man who understood love as mere feeling. This man came to Covey to seek some help as his marriage was getting flat. He said to Covey, 'Stephen, look at my marriage. I'm really worried. My wife and I just don't have the same feelings for each other we used to have. I guess I just do don't love her anymore and she doesn't love me too. What I can do?' "Love her", Covey replied. Then the man said to him, "I told you, the feeling just isn't there anymore." Again Covey replied to him, "Love her." Then the man with frustration said to him, "you don't understand. The feeling of love just isn't there. Covey told him "that's a good reason to love her." Then the man said "how do you love when you don't love?" "My friend, love is a verb. Love- the feeling is a fruit of Love- the verb. So love her. Sacrifice, listen to her. Empathize. Appreciate. Care and respect her. Affirm her. Are you willing to do that", replied Covey.

This man understood love as a mere feeling. But love is verb that we do. It is an attitude and act of will to do even if there is no feeling and emotion. Moreover, love is a gospel value that we need to practice. Jesus said, "Love your enemies (Mt 5:44)." It would be impossible to love our enemies with all our feelings and emotions. Then what does Jesus mean by "love your enemies." Jesus means that it is something which we have to will ourselves into doing. It is in fact a victory over that which comes instinctively to the natural man.

Love is not only a value but a command given to each one of us by Jesus. Jesus said to his disciples, "this is my commandment that you should love one another (Jn15:12)." It is important to note what is the nature of a commandment? In the Old Testament we see Ten Commandments were given to Moses at the holy Mt.Sinai and they were written by the finger of God on the two tablets of stone which were carried in the Sacred Ark of the Covenants as the children towards the Promised Land. The Ten Commandments were not set down as wise advice or social regulation or a consensus of opinion. They are unconditional, declared to be divine, not to be adapted, modified or argued about, but to be obeyed. In the New Testament Jesus is replacing the Old Mosaic Commandments with his New Commandment of Love. And Jesus means the same as we have the nature of the Mosaic Commandments. The commandment of Jesus is to be obeyed unconditionally and it is not a suggestion. Because Jesus did not say, "it would be nice if you love one another." If we are to be true Christians and followers of Jesus the demand or qualification for discipleship is love for one another. Jesus asked Peter three times, "Do you love me (Jn 21:15, 16, 17)?" Then he said to him, "Follow me (Jn 21:19)." Jesus put a condition for Peter before he followed him that was to love him. But our love of Jesus is to be actualized in the love of neighbour for he says, "Feed my lambs (Jn 21:15)." So let us love one another to be faithful Christians and disciples of Jesus.

Br. Manish Nayak 



SACRED HEART

THE SOURCE OF LOVE THAT REKINDLES OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE

**A HEART WE CALL IT, THE CENTRE OF OUR BEING,
A HEART WE CALL IT, AS THE ORGAN THAT
PUMPS AND PURIFIES BLOOD IN OUR BODY,
A HEART, WE CALL IT, A SYMBOL OF LOVE.**

Yes, a heart can mean many things for us and its functions vary. But have you experienced a heart that is always the same and knows only to love truly, give freely and sacrifice simply?

When we see a person we judge him or her according to what that person does. Thus the expressions, 'kind hearted', 'has a good heart', 'big hearted', 'no heart at all'. Even though we use them we do not know the exact meaning. But knowingly or unknowingly we use these expressions. It is true that what prompts a person

to do good or bad comes from the heart. The holy word from the Bible makes it clear – 'it is not what goes inside that defiles a person, but what comes out from the heart' (cf. Mt 15:16-20).

We pray often: Lord; give us clean hands and pure heart. This phrase appears in many places in the Bible too (cf. Ps 24:4a; 51:10a; 73:13a, 16; Mt 5:8; 1 Tim 1:5; Jms 4:8). Yes, we need a pure heart to see the one who has a pure heart. Though we call a person 'kind hearted', 'big hearted' we don't call him or her a "sacred heart."

This is because sacredness is the culmination of everything — perfection, holiness, values, virtues etc. only one person's heart has this sacredness:

A heart that has no discrimination

A heart that has no differences

A heart that has no distinctions

A heart that knows only to love

A heart that knows only to give

A heart that knows only to sacrifice and more over

A heart that knows only to do the will of Him who sent him and lay down his life to save others from their sins.

That's why we say "Sacred Heart" of Jesus. Sacred Heart points out to the person of Jesus. The Sacred Heart recalls Jesus in all his affective and moral life, the intimate depth of Jesus, the all-loving and lovable Jesus, the Jesus who is the model of all virtues. In this way the entire life of our Lord can be concentrated in his heart. In the same sense the statue of the Sacred Heart is a statue where Jesus, showing us his Heart, is trying to direct our eyes toward his interior life, especially his love and his kindness. We too are called to strive after this holiness. Therefore hereafter, we, each one, should pray constantly and unceasingly: "Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like your heart."

But we who have been saved are unable to acknowledge and recognize this love. That's why we still live in misery and death failing to recognize that there is one who died once for all (cf. Heb 10).

That's where our founder, venerable Fr. Leo John Dehon, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to found a religious congregation purely devoted to extend our Lord's reign by spreading the devotion to his Sacred Heart and by offering to this divine heart the reparation he requested in a vision from his servant Margaret Mary (Letter of Fr. Dehon to bishop Thibaudier after consumatum est, 20 December 1883).

Fr. Dehon wanted the members of his community to develop an interior life and union with the Sacred Heart, for the Heart of Jesus promised a special care for those who promoted this devotion. In order to spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart one must know the values and weight of the Sacred Heart.

It is the Sacred Heart that loved without expecting in return.

It is the Sacred Heart that went about doing good (cf. Acts 10:38b).

It is the Sacred Heart that left all glory and became poor.

It is the Sacred Heart that relieved the suffering, consoled those who were in pain, helped and strengthened the weak.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is going to the real and living heart of Jesus. Hence the devotion to the Sacred Heart is no longer only devotion to the love of the Heart of Jesus; it becomes the devotion to all that is deeply personal in the saviour.

What, exactly, Jesus is asking us to do is to honour his love and respond to it by giving him love for love. We are all called to be instruments and messengers of his love to our neighbours; in other words, to become the servants and propagators of the Sacred Heart.

What the heart is for the human physical body, the Sacred Heart is for the human spiritual body. Let us put in a logical way. We say God is love (1 Jn 4:7-8) and that the heart is the symbol of love. If this is so, then we can call God "heart." It's not a mere physical heart, but a Sacred Heart. Only from it can come a selfless love, redeeming love, moreover eternal love. This love is transformed to all the things through the heart of the saviour at the time of Incarnation. Therefore, we need to turn to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who is the real presence of God among us.

Fr. Dehon said in his Lenten sermon in 1885, delivered at basilica of Saint Quentin: "prior to the Incarnation there was the reign of the Heart of God; after the Incarnation there is the reign

of the Heart of Jesus” (companion texts, pg.31). Again he speaks of the importance of holding on to the Sacred Heart, using the explanation of the function of the human heart by Dr. William Harvey. Dr. Harvey has shown: “after the blood has gone to the various parts of the body, it cools, coagulates and becomes inactive. Then it returns to its source, the heart, and there it retrieves its purity. It finds its natural warmth and power there. In this way the heart is the source of life, because it is the heart that moves the blood and gives it life. When this (divine) organ nourishes, warms and reanimates the blood it serves the entire body. Therefore it becomes the basis of life and source of everything. As doctor Harvey said: ‘the heart is the king of the human organisms’”.

In the same way my friends, the spiritual life of the people, like the circulation of blood, tended to become cold, inactive, and one could say rotten under the harmful influence of media, moral corruption, rape, murder, betrayal and theft. Our spiritual life needs to return to the source of love, to rekindle itself, just as the blood returns and is rewarmed by the heart. The devotion to the Sacred Heart will bring about this wonderful effect. It acts like the heart in the body: warming and reviving the spirits of those who understand it. (A companion to Charism and Mission: Dehonian texts, pp.41-42).

Why are your hearts so hardened? Jesus asks each one of us. What answer shall we give? For that he says, “Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart” (Mt 11:29). His heart was so compassionate, loving, contrasting, questioning, pitying, sacrificing, caring, helping etc. so, let us not be like the Pharisees whose hearts were hardened (cf. Mk 3:5) and closed to see what the heart of Jesus was doing.

Hence the question is, are we living a commissioned or compromised life? Why don't we find martyrdom and active faith now a days? Is it because we started to live as the life goes, compromising with everything, becoming mere spectators rather than doing what we are

commissioned to do – to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, where love, joy, peace, righteousness and justice prevail? It is said that when we love, we obey. Because when we obey, it is not necessary that we love. That's why Jesus says, “if you love me, you will keep my commandments and do what I tell you” (cf. Jn 14:15). Therefore, if we love, we end up as a result in obedience, doing the will (of God).

We see the image of the heart of Jesus with flames of fire, a crown of thorns around and a cross above the flames. What an imagery! It is a heart that is always burning with love to inflame other hearts. The cross shows that from this love flows both suffering and salvation. The crown of thorns around the heart reminds us of our actions. Each time we deny love to others, do not lend a helping hand, do not do good, we poke the heart of Jesus (cf. Mt 25:31f).

The Church gives the faithful a valuable time to reflect on their lives in the form of the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Each one of us should ask ourselves if we are a help or a hindrance to spreading the love of the Sacred Heart to others.

Let the Love of the Sacred Heart become a reminder for us,

Let the Mercy of the Sacred Heart become a blessing for us,

Let the Spirit of the Sacred Heart become an opportunity for us to be human with a pure heart that is able to love without discrimination, able to give without difference, and able to sacrifice without any distinction.

Let us take the resolution to live a true human life by loving, giving, and living to the fullness of the Spirit that we have received at our baptism and strengthened at our confirmation.

Hence, let us all pray: Jesus meek and humble of heart; make our hearts like your heart.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus reign in our hearts and in our society. Amen.

Br. T.J. Kishore Babu.M, SCJ 



FATHER DEHON: A SPIRITUALITY OF THE HEART

How was Father Dehon's understanding of the Devotion to the Sacred Heart? Where did he find the source of his thought? According to our s.c.j father Paul J. McGuire "the Paray-le-Monial devotion to the Sacred Heart caused a great influence in Father Dehon. This devotion brought about a shift in the accent or emphasis of Christian piety. In an increasingly secularized world, where the Christian religion was losing its objective standing, this devotion pointed inward toward the heart as the seat of our identity, the place of encounter with the heart of Jesus, who is known properly only when he is known "by heart". It is within our own heart that we can be touched and changed by the heart of Christ which moves us to take on his virtues and attitudes in a world where the love of God has grown cold.

So, Father Dehon appropriated as his own three positive aspects of the Paray-le-Monial devotion to the Sacred Heart:

a) the primacy of the love of God, b) the meaning of the practice of reparation, and c) the apostolic thrust of the devotion.

- The Primacy of the love of God

Our founder was never infected by the notion of a God who stood outside human history, unconcerned about the personal story of each human life. The first truth that impressed him in this devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was the fact that God is love and that God loves us. He said, "I can say that our Lord filled me with his graces and treated me with a tenderness that reminded me of his kindness to the children of Palestine".

For our Father Dehon the love of God was not something abstract or theoretical, it was not an impersonal benevolence or a Deistic Providence which governed the world by remote control. Rather, the love of God was passionate and personal and experiential, affecting both God and us. The love of God is the fundamental,

primordial fact of life, and for anyone who becomes convinced of that, for anyone who comes to know the love of that God has for us, life itself is changed.

- The meaning of the Practice of Reparation

Once our hearts have been touched and transformed by the love of God, then, we need to ask, what is our role, our part now? The one-word answer, of course, is “reparation”, but what does this word mean? How we should understand its meaning? We should understand it in the same sense that the Fathers of the Church used the word “redamatio”, the return of love for love. Our Constitutions (n.23) gives us a wonderful definition about what reparation is: “this is how we understand reparation: as a welcome to the Spirit, as a response to Christ’s love for us, a communion in His love for the Father, and a cooperation in His work of redemption in the midst of the world”. These are successive stages of development because we cannot cooperate in the work of redemption, unless we have first welcomed the Spirit and responded to Christ’s love and shared in his union with the Father. Let’s do a brief look at each step.

Welcome to the Spirit, because before we can love God in return and work in the building of God’s Kingdom, we must first accept and welcome God’s love in ourselves. To acknowledge the presence of God’s love in our lives, without giving our assent to the loving will of God, would be a presence without union. It is a matter of being genuinely and personally affected by God’s gift of love. It is about to be “grasped” in the depths of our heart by the ever-present, insistent love of God. Remember that when the heart is deeply

impressed, all the other faculties either fall silent or cooperate with it. We becoming loving only after and as a consequence of being loved. We must allow ourselves to be loved and changed by the One who loves me. It is a dual movement, a *quid pro quo*. First, there is the ability to be affected by the movement of grace and love of God. Second, we have the ability to respond with love to the love of God, but this capacity depends on being affected by the other.

Response to Christ’s love: we really can love God in return because he is affected by our love or the lack of it. The quality of his love is such that led him to take flesh and become one like us and to give his life for us: like a good Shepherd, like a Master, like a friend... He is as intimately united to his people, the Church, as the Head is to the Body; if one member suffers, the entire body suffers. God has laid aside his self-sufficiency and has made himself vulnerable to our personal response. When we love God we do not do good for God, we affectively unite ourselves with him. Love is not an act of the will, nor are faith and hope acts of the will; they are affective responses to a value that encounters us. We will or decide to do good because we love.

Communion in his love for the Father: on the level of human experience, it is our discovery and response to his love for us that brings us to the reality of his prior love for the Father. When we respond by love to Christ’s love, we are united to him and therefore share in his love for the father. We do not lose ourselves or our identity, but we are changed by what we love. In our return of love to Christ, we become united to him and begin to share his dominant concern, which is to love his Father and do his will.



By

Br.T.J.Kishore Babu.M, SCJ

We are priests of the Sacred Heart
We gather together: to share
The love of Jesus
Poor, chaste and obedient

We belong to the SCJs
Our home away from home
Where we learn to love, give and live
In the word and deed of the Sacred Heart

We raise our hearts in praise
For he loved us first: and saved
All humanity
To love, in turn and sacrifice

Fr. Leo John Dehon... “Daily Diary”, 27 August 1886 – resolution after the retreat

“My resolution is to live and to die as a true victim of the Heart of Jesus. To do this I will maintain complete abandonment of my entire self to the Heart of Jesus. I will have a filial confidence in him, giving myself over to his will and his good pleasure in all things. I will do everything by love, in the spirit of reparation. I renounce every disordered or purely natural affection. I will apply myself to directing the Congregation of the Sacred Heart towards its goal and in the spirit which is proper to it.”

