



March 13, 2015

Dear Confrere,

On February 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> SCJs from North America met at the Dehon Formation House in Chicago. We are members of the sub-committee on immigration which is part of the follow up to the North American Continental Conference. Members include: Claude Bedard, John Czyzynski, Duane Lemke, Dick MacDonald, Peter McKenna, Elie Muzungu Kasongo-Ngoy, Zbigniew Morawiec and invited member Mark Peters, Director of Justice and Reconciliation for the US Province whose presence enriched our meeting. (Claude Bedard was not present for reasons of health.) You, the North American SCJs, mandated that we meet on immigration and develop a CALL TO ACTION as North American Dehonians. We are responding to that mandate and so you are receiving this letter with some information and a request from us.

In our meeting we began by telling and listening to stories of how immigration has touched our lives, whether that meant us personally, our family members or people whose story we know because we minister to them and with them. We realized that immigration is not abstract, but personal, more so than we realized. We are immigrants ourselves or come from immigrant families. As we shared our own story and the stories of those we invited to be with us, we experienced a call to conversion. We felt angry, sad, powerless. These feelings gave and continue to give us energy to do something, to take action in response to what people are experiencing with immigration policies. The story-telling put a human face on immigration and called us to do what we can to have our brothers and sisters who suffer because of their experiences to at least be treated with the dignity that is theirs as children of God. Perhaps, we, as a committee, could draft a response, but then it would be a limited response. That is why we are inviting you, (challenging you) to help to make this the response of all SCJs in North America.

We ask you to meet and, in the context of the prayer service provided with this letter, share your story and listen to the stories of your confreres of how immigration touches our lives. Listen and speak with one another and invite those in your circle whose lives are even more painfully affected by immigration policies to share their stories with you. These stories will then be shared with all SCJs of North America. So gather in prayer and send us your stories, in written format or in the medium of a symbol, a song, an image, a scripture passage that will best capture your experience of immigration.

Please have this experience during the Lenten season. We ask that you send your story by March 30 to Mary Gorski at [scjcommunications@gmail.com](mailto:scjcommunications@gmail.com) who will serve as a gatherer of this material for our committee. If for some reason you are not able to send your story before March 30, a member of the committee will contact you to arrange to receive your story so that it can be placed beside your name in the book we are creating to hold all of our North American Dehonian stories of immigration. Sometime after Easter you will be able to read the stories from other SCJ confreres in North America.

Let the stories you share touch your hearts and maybe even break them so that from that place of compassion and conversion we will know what we want to do as our Dehonian response to what immigrants and refugees are experiencing. We look forward to sharing your experience with all your brother SCJs in North America. Thank you.

Sincerely in our loving God,

*Claude Bedard, John Czyzynski, Duane Lemke, Dick MacDonald,  
Peter McKenna, Elie Muzungu Kasongo-Ngoy, Zbigniew Morawiec, Mark Peters*