



August 2017

# SCJ News

A newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians)

## Even the chapel is in formation!

*New novices,  
new novice master,  
and even a new novitiate*

**O**n August 14th Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, installed Fr. Byron Haaland, SCJ, as the province novice master. Just a few hours later, Fr. Byron received his first novitiate class: Paul Phong Hoang and Henry Nguyen.

Both ceremonies took place in the novitiate house chapel, which is also in the midst of formation. The chapel is being created in what was once a carport on the property.

The two postulants have been candidates in the formation program in Chicago for the past several years. Paul, 25, is originally from Vietnam but has lived with his family in Houston since 2007. He graduated from the University of Houston in 2015, and studied philosophy and religious studies at St. Xavier University during his three semesters of candidacy.

"There is joy, spiritual joy, in our community," he said when speaking of his experience in formation. "My favorite part of the day is Mass in the morning. We are there together in a sense of belonging, leaving each other



PHOTOS: ABOVE - Fr. Ed Kilianski, Henry Nguyen, Paul Phong Hoang, Fr. Byron Haaland and Fr. Andrzej Sudol following the reception of the novices. MIDDLE - Henry, Paul and Fr. Ed bless Fr. Byron during his installation ceremony as novice master. BOTTOM - Dehonians from around the world came together in the novitiate chapel to welcome the new novices. Just as the novices, the chapel was in the midst of formation with unfinished walls and floors. A former carport is being converted into worship space.

with support for our day. We connect at meals; we connect in labor, doing dishes together. In the SCJ community I feel like myself and can actualize who I am; I feel at home, I feel that I belong."



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Henry, 28, was born and raised in Orange County, CA. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology from California State University, Monterey Bay, and during candidacy began his theological studies at Catholic Theological Union and philosophy at St. Xavier University.

"I have a desire to serve others and I was able to do just that at my latest summer ministry, being a part of the ESL residential staff at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology," said Henry. "We had over 40 students from all over the world, which included SCJ seminarians and priests, as well as other religious, seminarians, and priests from different religious orders and dioceses. I got to learn what an impact the SCJ presence has on other communities outside of the United States.

"Previous to the novitiate, I was involved in many parish ministries including the Vietnamese Eucharistic Youth Movement (VEYM) at St. Henry's Parish and Queenship of Mary in the Chicago area as a Youth Leader and Youth Leader Trainer to assist youth and young adults with their journey of faith and helping them to grow closer to God.

"This year, I hope to discover more of myself, discover God's natural beauty (in beautiful Wisconsin!), and to enjoy my time during the novitiate."



## View them all!

View photos from the Entrance to Novitiate ceremony at: [www.scjusa.smugmug.com](http://www.scjusa.smugmug.com)



Fr. Francis with some of this summer's ESL students from Vietnam.

## Vietnam one year later

*"Pray that we, as a congregation, can follow the mission that the Spirit has invited us to fulfill"*

— Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, superior of the District of Vietnam

**T**wo days before the new novices were welcomed in the U.S. Province, the District of Vietnam celebrated the first ordination of an SCJ within the district itself. Until then, all ordinations were done outside of the country, often in the Philippines, where many Vietnamese Dehonians have done their formation and academic training.

"We are growing as a district, and part of that growth means being more fully accepted by the government and the Church in Vietnam," said Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, district superior. He added that such acceptance is what now allows the diaconate ordination to take place in

the country.

August 12th was also a significant day for Fr. Francis; it was the one-year anniversary of his installation as superior. A US citizen originally from Vietnam, Fr. Francis was asked by Fr. Heiner Wilmer, SCJ, superior general, to return to the country of his birth to lend support to the young district. Soon after, he was elected as its second superior, succeeding Fr. Rino Venturin, SCJ, who led the district since its establishment in 2013.

In a year's time much has changed in the district. A philosophy program was initiated in Vietnam which now allows SCJ candidates to do their studies in the district instead of going to the Philippines. This is no



easy task in a country where pre-theology philosophy programs are at capacity. District students are split between four schools because there is not space for all to go to one program. It is a challenge, but Fr. Francis said that the benefit is that “it is a way for us to make the congregation better known to the ecclesiastical community in Vietnam.”

With the help of the U.S. Province, in particular, with a gift from the patrimony of Fr. Michael Burke, SCJ, the district’s first community house is being expanded to create a chapel and more living space for the philosophy students.

The district opened its third community this year, Dehon House III. It is located in the diocese of Phu Cuong. This is a house for young men in college discerning a vocation with the congregation. They live in community while preparing for entrance exams for Philosophy. In general, students are not accepted into formation until after they have earned an undergraduate degree.

Dehon House III is also the base for a new ministry in the district: pastoral work at Bung’s parish, one of the largest parishes in the diocese.

In many ways, the focus of the past year has been on taking the district to its next level, helping it to mature beyond its first years as a small, missionary effort. With three communities, there are now three local leadership teams, three local superiors. No longer is all the authority in the district superior.

In the future, Fr. Francis sees the congregation taking on missionary assignments within the country, going to areas of Vietnam where the presence of the Church is most needed. Already the bishop of Phu Cuong has asked the SCJs to consider staffing two parishes near the Cambodian border.

“It would be good for us to be there, it is difficult to find priests to

minister at the parishes,” said Fr. Francis. “But we need to wait until we have a few more SCJs ready with the experience they need.”

Being such a young district, few of the Vietnamese SCJs have had much pastoral experience. And because formation for many had been done outside of the country, there are even fewer who have pastoral experience in Vietnam.

But as the district matures, so does its formation program. Next year first professions will be done in Vietnam instead of the Philippines; those making final vows will do so in Vietnam as well.

Fr. Francis stresses that the move to bring formation back to Vietnam isn’t out of a desire to become insular. Paired with expanded formative training within the district is Fr. Francis’ desire for Vietnamese religious to experience the congregation beyond Vietnam, beyond Asia. “I want us in the district to really live ‘We the Congregation,’” he said. “We are Dehonians, members of an international religious congregation; we are not just the Priests of the Sacred Heart in Vietnam.”

The Vietnamese District is developing relationships with other entities so that its students and young religious can minister and study throughout the world. This summer six students from the district are in the ESL program at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Fr. Francis spent much of June and July in Hales Corners as a support to the students.

The district is also developing relationships with benefactors as it



Fr. Francis receives Vincent Bat Nguyen’s final vows.

works toward financial autonomy. The district’s first fundraising director has been named; he will begin to establish a development office during the next year. Fundraising in Vietnam finds success in one-on-one relationships. Benefactors have already come forward to help feed the students through donations of fish, vegetables and rice. Even soap for the communities is provided by benefactors.

## A change in direction

“Ecce venio” [I come to do your will] is what Fr. Francis often says when asked about being in Vietnam. “It came as a surprise when Fr. General asked me to consider it,” he

The SCJ NEWS is published by the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJs). Articles, photos and suggestions are always welcome. Editorial offices are located at P.O. Box 289, Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289 (414) 427-4266.

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Priests of the Sacred Heart

said about his return to Vietnam last year. "I was preparing to complete my doctoral thesis, I expected to serve at a seminary, most likely Sacred Heart.

"It turned my life upside down."

But during the past year he has found that an unintended change in direction can be a good thing. He admits that going to Vietnam took him out of his "comfort zone," literally and figuratively. However, it has also opened many opportunities for him. Starting next year he will teach courses in Scripture at both the Catholic University of Saigon and at the Major Seminary of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Much of his time this summer has been in preparation for those courses.

"There are very few theological materials in Vietnam," he said during a summer visit to Sacred Heart Monastery. "I am assembling the resources for my classes while I am here." It is more difficult to prepare for his first teaching assignments in Vietnam than it would have been in the US Province. "But it is forcing me to be creative." And that, he says, is an opportunity. "The challenge is good for me academically."

While in the States Fr. Francis was also working on completing his own studies, which include his doctoral thesis. He is a doctoral candidate in scripture at the Gregorian Pontifical University in Rome. Fr. Francis plans to complete his thesis in 2018 and defend it in 2019.

## Pray for us

When asked for closing comments about Vietnam, and his first year as superior of the district, Fr. Francis' words were simple:

"Pray for us. Pray that we – as a congregation – can follow the mission that the Spirit has invited us to fulfill through the charism of our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon."



"Being an SCJ definitely influences how I minister. From the SCJs who have been my directors and mentors I have a deep appreciation of the Mass and the Eucharist that I try to pass on to others. I believe that as a priest I must be physically present to the people with whom I minister. That is a mark of religious priests and of the SCJs who have influenced me."

Fr. Charles Yost, SCJ  
1932 - 2017

## Always wanted to be a priest

**F**r. Charles Yost, SCJ, died July 8th at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake in Franklin, WI, just days after he had gone into hospice care. Fr. Yost was 85.

"Since early childhood I wanted to be a priest," he wrote several years ago, reflecting on his vocation. "I was fascinated by stories of missionaries in Africa and wanted to do that kind of ministry... My family was very supportive of my intent and desires. They always were and continue to be a great source of support to me. Also, the nuns who taught me encouraged me.

"Once I knew the difference between a diocesan and a religious priest I consciously chose to join a religious community. That choice was confirmed in the minor seminary after

seeing how a religious community lived together and shared in each other's life. I saw a genuine spirit of fraternity in the men at the school and later.

"Why the SCJs? I kind of grew into that as I learned the SCJs' spirituality and direction in life. While there is a definite thrust to our spirituality, there is also great allowance for personal inclinations and initiative in spiritual matters.

"Being an SCJ definitely influences how I minister. From the SCJs who have been my directors and mentors I have a deep appreciation of the Mass and the Eucharist that I try to pass on to others. I believe that as a priest I must be physically present to the people with whom I minister. That is a mark of religious priests and



of the SCJs who have influenced me.”

Fr. Yost professed his first vows in 1951 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1958. From 1962-63 he was able to fulfill his dream of being a missionary, serving in Indonesia.

When he returned to the States, Fr. Yost became the librarian at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of the Theology (then, Sacred Heart Monastery). He remained in the position until 1980. He was also chaplain to the Ancilla Domini Convent in Milwaukee during this time.

From 1980-83 he served at the Province Development Office before entering parish ministry, first at St. Cecilia in San Antonio (1984) and then St. Joan of Arc in Victorville, CA, from 1984-1987.

For six years (1987-1993) he worked with our retired priests and brothers at the Sacred Heart Residence in Pinellas Park, FL. Fr. Yost then moved to Mississippi where he did parish ministry at Holy Spirit in Hernando (1993-94) and served as spiritual director of the Sacred Heart League (now Sacred Heart Southern Missions) from 1998-2004.

Retired, Fr. Yost was a member of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML. In retirement, he continued to be active, overseeing the production of the American Ordo for many years in collaboration with the Province Development Office.



Fr. Charles was able to celebrate Mass with the community during the June assembly.



Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas and friends at Instituto Meninos de São Judas Tadeu

## Obrigado Brazil!

*Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ, just returned to the Dehon Formation Community following his pastoral year in Brazil. Students are required to do a year of ministry prior to making their final profession of vows. During his time in Brazil, Frater Juancho wrote several blog posts. You can view them at [www.scjusablog.org](http://www.scjusablog.org). The following is his final reflection on the year:*

**“I’ve heard it said  
That people come into our lives  
for a reason  
Bringing something we must learn  
And we are led  
To those who help us most to grow  
If we let them  
And we help them in return  
Well, I don’t know if I believe that’s true  
But I know I’m who I am today  
Because I knew you...”**

**T**he words above are from a song named “For Good” from one of my favorite musicals ever: “Wicked!” I could not find better words than these to describe my entire experience during my pastoral year in Brazil. I have been blessed by the many people I met on this journey, the many places I visited, and the experiences that made me a better person and a better Dehonian. But honestly, these lyrics really apply to my entire life.

When I first decided to ask permission to travel to Brazil for my pastoral year I knew the experience would be more challenging and different than any I had ever had. It would, again, require me to adapt to a new culture, a new language, and a new way of formation. That knowledge helped me to create many expectations for my pastoral year and to develop a clear idea about why I wanted to have this experience in Brazil.

My primary desire was to learn about youth ministry, vocations, community life and Dehonian spirituality from a Brazilian perspective. Those expectations were definitely satisfied and I found more than I ever expected! This was a great experience to learn about ministry, mission, and how to be a Dehonian.

Most importantly, I learned and discovered many new things about myself including what is for me one



Retreat participants

## Open Hearts Cœurs Ouverts

*A retreat based in Dehonian spirituality*

**F**rom August 14-18, 25 members of the Canadian Region and US Province came together at Queen of Apostles Renewal Centre in suburban Toronto for "Open Hearts – Cœurs Ouverts" a retreat centered on five themes from Dehonian spirituality: God's love, union with Christ, oblation, reparation and social spirituality.

The retreat was led by Fr. Jim Schroeder, SCJ, Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, and David Schimmel. Reflection was done in small groups, in one-on-one settings and individually. It was a time to reenter Dehonian spirituality "with new perspectives decades after Vatican II, and decades too after the chapters of renewal in 1973 and 1979 which gave us our current Rule of Life," said Fr. John.

"It feels as if I am now finally able to understand and enter into what we were given in the Rule of Life," said one participant. "Why has it taken me 50 years to appreciate and grasp what some saw way back then?"

"The retreat truly was Spirit-led beyond my wildest expectations," added Fr. Peter McKenna, SCJ.

The second retreat will be May 6-12, 2018, at the Siena Center in Racine, WI. A third retreat for those in formation and their directors will be August 5-12, also at the Siena Center.



*Frater Juancho continued from p. 5*

of the hardest parts of religious life: going to a place and getting to know people, work with them, share time with them, create a connection with them, and then, suddenly, move someplace else — another mission or even another country.

It is sad to leave behind people who have become an important part of our lives. However, in a beautiful way I was reminded that it is not just hard or sad for the one who is leaving but also for those whom we leave. As I said my good-byes to members of the group of men with whom I had gathered to pray the Rosary in the Institute Saint Jude, they told me how sad it was for them to see me leave since they felt that I had become a part of their community.

So once again those lyrics take on a special meaning in my life. In this never-ending journey when people come and go, the most important thing is to keep them always in our hearts as well as all the experiences that help us to grow and become better people.

As I was thinking about this journey I could not stop thinking about words from the actor Jim Carrey. In his reflection "I needed color," Jim Carrey spoke of his need for color in his life and about his experience exploring painting and how paintings can tell us a lot about ourselves, how the colors that we use, and all the different shapes can tell us something about what is going on with us.

Well, I relate a lot to Jim Carrey's experience. During the past three years in formation, and thanks to the motivation of my formator and director of the house at that time (Br. Duane Lemke, SCJ) I had the opportunity to explore painting as another form of art that was incredible for relieving the stress of school and other situations.

Like Jim Carrey I can also say that "I needed color." Besides that, I discovered that I was good at painting and that creating and mixing colors



helped me reach a place of tranquility.

Jim Carrey says: "What you do in life chooses you, you can choose not to do it. You can choose to try and do something safer. Your vocation chooses you."

As I continue reflecting on my vocation and my response to God's call, I cannot stop thinking about my time in Brazil. I could have chosen another place to do my pastoral year, maybe someplace safer – not in regards to security but less challenging. I am happy today because I had this incredible experience. Of course there is some sadness of leaving this beautiful place, but I will be glad to get back to see so many people waiting for me at home. I have many expectations about my return to the United States. I will be going back for my last year of theology at Catholic Theological Union, the last year of the formation house in Chicago; I will meet new members of the congregation and feel sadness for those who have died.

The expectation and greatest desire of a painter is to find that particular color, that ultimate color that will make his or her painting an incredible one. Painters mix colors until finding that one perfect color that should be added to the painting. In a very real way I think that just happened to me in Brazil. I found that ultimate color in the many people, the beautiful culture, and the delicious food of Brazil. I found a new palette of colors that have inspired me to be a better person, a better artist.

My motivation, my desire and vocation to give my life completely to my congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, has been renewed and become stronger. I have also experienced our call to get out of the sacristy to be among the people we serve. I have experienced in a completely different way the meaning of *Ecce Venio*.

I experienced a sense of the internationality of the congregation. I learned that it does not matter what language we communicate with, the people we serve, the places we go,

and the missions in which we are involved. We are all Dehonians, living that dream of Fr. Dehon by being among the poor, by serving those who most need us, by serving the marginalized, and by being a positive presence for young people. Today I see that Fr. Dehon's dream is alive in all the countries we serve. It is painted with many beautiful colors and each one of us puts our own colors in this beautiful mission, in this beautiful call from God that we call our vocation. We are many hands working together, but just one heart which has united us as one congregation, the heart of that man who wanted to dedicate his life to God as a servant of love and reconciliation. Thus, we are united in the heart of Fr. Dehon to find our vocation in the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

There are not enough words to express my gratitude to the United States Province for all these years of formation and brotherhood, gratitude for allowing me to have this experience, and trust in me to do good work here in Brazil.

Obrigado [thanks] to the Brazilian Province of São Paulo for its welcome, support, and for making this an incredible experience for me. Obrigado to all the incredible people I met in this journey! I thank my Dehonian brothers for their support because I have become a better person for having met all of you.

My last words are to those in formation, those who are falling in love with this incredible congregation. My brothers, do not take the safe way, take the path that will challenge you in many different ways to help you learn things that you never thought that you were capable of doing. You will never be alone because you have so many people who are also walking Fr. Dehon's dream with you.

Do not be afraid of putting different colors in your painting. And if some day you find yourself in a place where you may need a helping hand or new color, I will be always be there for you.

Obrigado Brazil, ate mais. Thank you Brazil, until we meet again...



## Summer ministries

Each summer, students in the province formation programs spend several weeks serving in province ministries. Recently, candidate Luis Alonso Barrantes wrote about his experience at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston:

"I met some amazing families, employees of the parish and school. To name a few places I've worked in: Martha's Kitchen (food kitchen for the poor), Loaves and Fishes (Magnificat House), the Help Center for Immigrants (Catholic Charities), Juan Diego's House (a refugee center), and The Big Blue Bus – a mobile clinic for expectant mothers.

"I've assisted in various duties such as preparing and serving food, cleaning and stocking, greeting and meeting so many people of all walks of life; however, the most rewarding was having the opportunity to share the love of God through our SCJ mission statement. I am blessed and grateful to have had this opportunity



Alonso with fellow volunteers in Houston.

of serving God's people. This experience has been about giving back to the local communities, but most importantly, about restoring dignity in people's lives in the simplest ways. It truly is for me an infinite reminder that we are called to love one another. These experiences only reinforce my vocation to continue strong in my faith and in my vocation journey."

### First Friday in India

Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, spends several months of the year in the District of India where he assists with the formation program. While there he maintains a daily journal. Periodically excerpts from it are shared on the province blog. The following is a snippet from one of Fr. Tom's recent entries:

"Last night we all went to Sacred Heart parish Vempadu for the first Friday evening service that our students conducted. The service is done in a manner similar to a revival in the Pentecostal style.

"There is, of course, a Catholic twist to it all. The service began at 7:30 pm with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament followed by a praise and worship service. I call it the warm-up act. Last evening it was led by Br. Jesu Prasad Siddela, SCJ. This portion of the service ran about 45 minutes and

is designed to prepare the congregation for the sermon. Last evening it was delivered by Br. Chitti Babu Nandipamu, SCJ, who spoke for 45 minutes. While this was going on Fr. Michael Augustine, SCJ, heard confessions underneath the bell tower.

"The service ended with benediction but very different from what Americans experience. In this service the priest goes around to each person and blesses him or her with the monstrance. When the Blessed Sacrament is returned to the tabernacle and the priest leaves the altar there is no closing hymn. The people simply get up and leave the church."

Go to [www.scjusablog.org](http://www.scjusablog.org) to read this entry in full as well as other blog posts.

### Record number in summer ESL

The 2017 summer session of the ESL program (English as a Second Language) at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology had its biggest class ever. Among the countries represented were Angola, Argentina, Brazil,



Summer session ESL students at SHSST

Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Congo, India, Indonesia, Madagascar, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Poland, Rwanda, Togo, Venezuela and Vietnam.

Fr. Yvon Sheehy, SCJ, is residential coordinator of ESL; he is assisted by Br. Duane Lemke, SCJ.

### Bishop Bressanelli retires

Pope Francis accepted Bishop Virgilio Bressanelli's resignation from the pastoral care of the diocese of Neuquén, Argentina. The former superior general turned 75 on May 1. An alumnus of the ESL program at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, he served as SCJ superior general from 1991-2003.

**SCJ NEWS**

Priests of the Sacred Heart

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Vol. 38, No. 4, August 2017

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