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SCJ News

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

The Heart of a Priest

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio, main speaker at annual SHSST Dehon Lecture

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, was the main presenter at the Dehon Lecture November 8th at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. His topic: "The Heart of the Priest."

"As the Apostolic Nuncio, the Holy Father's personal representative in this country, I wish to assure you of his spiritual closeness and affection for each of you," he began. "We know that the recent Popes have spoken of the need for a New Evangelization. This requires a profound reconsideration of how we communicate the

Christian experience; this is the core of the new missionary spirit that must take hold of the Church."

He continued, noting that **"Today, the Church needs joyful, missionary disciples – heralds of the Good News, formed after the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was also the desire of the Venerable Leo John Dehon, the founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.** It might seem strange to think of priests as disciples rather than as leaders, but the new *Ratio Fundamentalis*, issued in December 2016, emphasizes just that: It is particularly necessary for the priests today to understand themselves as missionary disciples."

The *Ratio Fundamentalis* is a document that outlines the formation of



Archbishop Christophe Pierre speaking at the October Dehon Lecture at SHSST.

Catholic priests. "This integrated formation prepares the seminarian and priest to make a gift of himself to the Church – to go out of himself, to not be self-referential but to look to the essential needs of the flock," said the archbishop. "Indeed, the Holy Father wishes priests not to be managers or mere functionaries of the sacred, but rather to be priests with inclusive and compassionate hearts, who show forth the tenderness of God."

What does it mean to have a "priestly heart, configured to the heart of Christ?" Archbishop Pierre referred to the homilies given by the pope on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus each year. In 2013, he said, Pope Francis focused on two dimensions of love. "First, love is expressed more clearly in actions than



LEFT: Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec was one of the responders to the archbishop's presentations. ABOVE: Fr. Ed Kilianski thanks the archbishop for his visit to SHSST.



in words, and second, there is greater love in giving than in receiving," he said.

In his 2014 homily Pope Francis emphasized the need to have a steadfast and humble heart. "The emerging image of the priestly heart configured to the heart of Christ is one of fidelity, humility, closeness, and gentleness," he said. "This love binds us but it binds in freedom; it binds while leaving you the space to respond with love."

Archbishop Pierre said that Pope Francis invites priests to contemplate the Heart of Christ. In his 2016 homily for the feast of the Sacred Heart the pope said that "Contemplating the Heart of Christ, we are faced with the fundamental question of our priestly life: Where is my heart directed? It is a question we need to keep asking, daily, weekly... Our ministry is often full of plans, projects and activities: from catechesis to liturgy, to works of charity, to pastoral and administrative commitments. Amid all these, we must still ask ourselves: What is my

heart set on?"

He continued, saying that "The Holy Father expects priests to have a courageous heart that engages the real problems of men and women; this requires being close to the Lord and the people... Today, there are many who do not know Christ or who have left the Church; they are 'homeless'. The Pope wants a Church that goes forth to meet them."

The archbishop concluded by stating that "Today, the Church needs priests to be engaged in the new evangelization, using 'new ardor, new methods, and new expressions' (Pope John Paul II)... The increasing secularization of American society and the growing number of unchurched people are making this country and culture 'missionary territory' once again..."

"The Church needs priests who are close not only to the people but to the Lord. Like the beloved disciple, we too must contemplate again and again the riches of the Heart of Christ, giving the mercy and love of God pri-

macy in our hearts. This is the Church's expectation for its clergy today. The task is daunting, but it is not impossible. Saint John Vianney is reported to have said, 'the priesthood is the love of the Heart of Jesus.' This is certainly true, and His love will never abandon you."

After spending a full day with the SHSST community, including being the main celebrant at the Mass for the Rite of Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders, the archbishop returned to the airport the next day to fly to his next engagement. Fr. Tom Knoebel, SHSST president-rector, was his chauffeur.

In the car, Fr. Tom said that the archbishop "commented at length about how pleased he was with his visit. He was impressed by the spirit of the seminary, pointing out in particular how impressed he was with the way everyone – faculty, staff, seminarians as well as administration – pitched in to help make the day a success. He mentioned that in many other places he visits, this is not the case. People there often do not care what other people in the seminary are doing, and I was happy to say that has never been the case here at Sacred Heart. We all care deeply about the mission and success of the school.

"The Nuncio also mentioned how impressed he was with the faculty. He saw that all of the faculty were engaged in the topic, no matter what their field of specialization, actively seeking to learn more about the subject matter, invested in the *Ratio*, in the kind of priests God is calling and how He is forming us all for ministry. He mentioned how greatly they care about preparing good priestly ministers for God's Church.

"He left Sacred Heart, having observed us for the first time, full of admiration and respect for all of us."



The archbishop teases Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec during the afternoon session; Dr. Patrick Russell, SHSST academic dean, is on the left.



Fr. Ed Kilianski (center) with the formation community in Vietnam

New beginnings found in Vietnam

"This journey has helped me to commit to opening my heart to do whatever it is that I am called to do."

- Novice Henry Nguyen

Novices Henry Nguyen and Paul (Phong) Hoang traveled to Vietnam with Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, during the first two weeks of December. Fr. Ed was going there to give a retreat and to discuss possibilities for future collaboration. He invited the novices to join him so that they could learn more about the congregation outside of the United States.

For Henry, it was an opportunity to visit — for the first time — the country of his family and meet relatives he had never known. He wrote a reflection on the experience:

"We just entered into a new liturgical year as we started Advent last Sunday. At the same time, I had a new beginning as I stepped into a cross-cultural experience, my first trip to Vietnam. It is a country that I only knew through stories by word of mouth and the limited pictures that

my family had. My parents left it over 30 years ago.

"I considered this a cross-cultural experience because I grew up in the United States. At home in California I ate the food and spoke the language of Vietnam, but it was not my culture. Life here is so different from back home.

"Dehon House in Vietnam has been nothing but a gift, one that resembles many other communities that I have been to in the US Province with hospitality and a sense of welcome. I reunited with students who were a part of the ESL program.

"The District of Vietnam held a day of recollection that fell on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. A question that arose out of the recollection for me was 'How do I make myself available to the Spirit with what I have and what I can do?' As I discern this availability, it will allow me to

truly embrace 'Ecce Venio.' This is a call to love, to open my eyes to see, to open my heart to love, so I can open my hands to do.

"The formation communities of Vietnam are very vibrant and alive. Although filled with a packed schedule between school and ministry, they are in the midst of preparing a Christmas gathering filled with an agenda of songs and dances for this weekend. I am truly moved by the dedication of the students here. I pray for them and their Open Hearts.

"While here, I also had an unforgettable moment when I went to Vũng Tàu, the area that my father grew up in. As I was met by my cousin, I had

no nervousness or insecurities about meeting my dad's side of the family for the first time. We headed towards the parish of Phước Lâm and picked up my bà nội (paternal grandmother). It was the first time that our eyes have met, and they were filled with tears of joy. Although my bà nội and I didn't share many words, it was truly the presence which touched my heart, our hearts. Definitely a priceless opportunity.

"This journey has helped me to commit to Opening my Heart to do whatever it is that I am called to do."



Henry

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Priests of the Sacred Heart

“Do something that I cannot: VOTE! Become informed. Have conversations with others. Write and call your representatives. Don’t be silent, don’t assume that you can’t make a difference. Everyone can make a difference.”

- Cendi Trujillo Tena



“Dreamer” speaks to SCJs about DACA

The fate of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) has been in the headlines since September when President Donald Trump announced plans to rescind it. Created in 2012, DACA is a federal program that allows people brought to the United States without documentation as children, the temporary right to live, study and work in the US. After undergoing a rigorous vetting process, those who receive two-year DACA status can become eligible for things that many US citizens take for granted such as a work permit, college enroll-

ment (but not government aid) and a driver’s license. Approximately 788,000 people have such status.

One of those with DACA status is Cendi Trujillo Tena. She shared her story with SCJs (Dehonians) during an informal gathering at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake November 28.

Posing as the child of a US citizen (a smuggler paid by her parents to accompany her), she crossed the US-Mexican border when she was two years old.

Cendi said that it was an easier route than what many others have taken. “One of the kids I work with watched four people die in the back of a van as they were smuggled toward the border,” she said.

A youth organizer at Voces de la Frontera, a migrant advocacy organization in Milwaukee, Cendi has heard numerous such stories. But the challenge of crossing the border is just one of many that the undocumented face. Often fleeing violence and extreme poverty, parents make the difficult decision to move their family to the United States without papers in hopes

that their children will have opportunities not possible in their home country.

Of course, at the age of two Cendi had no idea that she was doing something considered illegal, and that once in the country, that she would have limitations which many of her classmates did not.

It wasn’t until she was a pre-teen that she came to understand what being undocumented meant. She wanted to get a job to help pay for her school supplies and learned that she would need a fake Social Security number to do so.

She went to work at 14 and set her sights on college. “I had been on the honor roll since kindergarten,” said Cendi.

But as an undocumented person, she soon learned that she wouldn’t qualify for grants or loans.

“My mother told me that if I worked hard God would help me,” said Cendi. “But without a Social Security number, working hard wasn’t good enough.”

A teacher offered to adopt her to

help her qualify for aid. "It was kind, but not possible," she said. "I have parents and my parents are here." Once she had DACA status, she had more possibilities. It didn't make her eligible for student aid, but she could work legally and get a driver's license. Best of all, "I didn't have to look over my shoulder all the time."

Cendi, like many "Dreamers," as those protected by DACA are called, pays taxes, but she is still not eligible for any government benefits. "We own houses, we serve in the military, we are a part of the community but we still have no real status. DACA is not a path toward citizenship."

Every two years the Dreamers have to pay \$495 to reapply for DACA status. On top of that, many people pay hefty legal fees — sometimes to scammers — to help them sort through the paperwork. "It is money that most undocumented people cannot easily afford," she said.

If DACA is repealed, even this legal "non-status" may no longer be an option, leaving many Dreamers to wonder "What next?"

"What about following the law and applying for citizenship legally?" asked one SCJ, echoing a question that he hears many ask. "Others wait in line and follow the rules to gain citizenship; why is the situation of these people different? Why should they be outside of the law?"

These are questions asked by many trying to get a sense of immigration policies.

"Laws change," said Cendi. "At one point the law said that slavery was legal in the United States. But it was morally wrong and the law was eventually changed."

For most undocumented there is no practical, legal path to US citizenship. The application process timeline can take years, leaving applicants in a non-status limbo while both following the law and hiding from it.

"For me right now there are only three real options for permanent resi-

dency," said Cendi. "I could get married — and that isn't a sure thing. I could be a victim of a serious crime. Or I could cooperate with the government about a significant crime that someone else committed."

With so many challenges to living as an undocumented person in the United States, often with no hope for legal status, "Why did your family come to the country?" asked an SCJ.

"My father had a second grade education," began Cendi. "He had 13 brothers and sisters and stole food from the corner grocery to help feed them. The oldest siblings are smaller than the younger ones because of malnutrition. But it isn't an easy decision to come here."

"I have mixed feelings about the word 'Dreamers,'" she continued. "It makes children seem like victims of the actions of irresponsible parents. But the parents are the original dreamers. They sacrificed so that we could be here."

Some have suggested that DACA be continued but with the caveat that more money be put into border security, including a wall between the US and Mexico.

"But we do not want to be bargaining chips tied to other legislation," said Cendi. She and fellow Dreamers aren't concerned only for

themselves. They are concerned about their families, and others like them who continue to seek legal ways to leave areas of extreme violence and poverty.

Cendi advocates for more than just a continuance of DACA, but for the implementation of the "Clean DREAM Act," known formally as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act. The bill's aim is to give undocumented young adults a path to citizenship. A version of the legislation was first introduced in 2001 but has yet to be passed. DACA was considered a temporary fix while the bill was debated.

What can people do? What can Dehonians do?

"You helped us to realize that as Dehonians we are called to know the people on the street, to know people where they are, especially to be aware of the suffering migrants in our area and around the world," said Fr. Richard MacDonald, SCJ.

"The most important thing you can do is be involved," said Cendi. "Do something that I cannot: Vote! Become informed. Have conversations with others. Write and call your representatives. Don't be silent, don't assume that you can't make a difference."

"Everyone can make a difference."



SCJs listen to Cendi Trujillo Tena talk about her experience of receiving DACA status.

SCJ successfully defends doctoral dissertation

Congratulations to Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, who successfully defended his doctoral dissertation in Sacred Theology on November 14th! This is the last step in his doctoral program at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in Berkeley, Calif.

The title of the dissertation is "Extending the Boundaries of Gender and Ethnicity in the Wilderness: a Spatial Reading of the Ethiopian Eunuch Narrative in Acts 8:26-40."

What does that mean? The following is the abstract that Fr. Vien wrote to describe his work:

"Given the prominence of the temple and Jerusalem narrative settings in Luke-Acts, the author situates the encounter between Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch intriguingly not in the temple or Jerusalem setting but in the wilderness space, ἔρημος. To better understand the significance of the wilderness space in the narrative, I explore the issues of gender and ethnicity which the Ethiopian eunuch embodies. In both the Greco-Roman world and Judaism, the Ethiopian eunuch was a liminal, marginalized figure. Sexually, he was 'unmanly' due to his lack of procreative power and his 'effeminate' tendencies. Moreover, his eunuchism blurred the socially constructed binaries of male and female in which men were supposed to be masculine, active, and superior, while women were supposed to be feminine, passive, and inferior. Ethnically, he was an

'outsider' who did not share with the Jews or the Greco-Romans a common shared ancestry, history, or religious practices. Among the many outcomes of cross-cultural experiences, encounters with the 'ethnic others' could trigger anxieties and clashes, resulting in stereotyping, marginalization, and the establishment of boundaries to keep the 'other' out.

"Using Edward W. Soja's spatial concept of thirdspace, the space of struggles and possibilities, the wilderness space is not simply a backdrop to the narrative but is key to the narrative's meaning. In this symbolic wilderness space, Luke's audiences were challenged to reckon with socio-religious issues, as well as questions of identities as the mission of the church expanded into the wider Mediterranean world. In addition, the wilderness

space functions as the discursive field or the alternative space to the Jerusalem Temple where strict religious rules and regulations precluded many from having access to God. Seen in this perspective, God is not confined only to the temple and does not belong only to the people of Israel. Rather, God is present wherever the gospel is preached, and access to God is available to all."

In the months ahead Fr. Vien will prepare his dissertation for publication as a book, and on other writing projects such as book reviews and articles.

"A special thanks to Fr. John Czyzynski, SCJ, for proofreading my writing!" said Fr. Vien.



Fr. Vien Nguyen

SCJ NEWS

Congratulations!

Bishop Joseph Potocnak, SCJ, was honored by the Veterans Administration with a "Certificate of Appreciation" on October 26, 2017, for "volunteering and giving our organization the most precious thing you will ever own – your time and talent!" wrote the chief of chaplain services to Bishop Joe in presenting him with the certificate. Thank you for your service, Bishop!



Bishop Joe

Fr. John E. Young Center dedicated in Mississippi

In October Bishop Joseph Kopacz of Jackson blessed the new Fr. John E. Young Center at Queen of Peace parish in Olive Branch, Miss. Joining parishioners at the blessing were representatives from the SCJ community, including Fr. Thi Pham, Fr. Leonard Elder, Fr. Jack Kurps and Fr. David Szatkowski.

Fr. John was a well-loved pastor of Queen of Peace from 1993 until 2004, when he had to leave ministry due to illness. He had been diagnosed with a brain tumor; Fr. John died in 2005. The center is a tribute to an SCJ



Bishop Kopacz cuts the ribbon at the new center with assistance from Fr. Thi and friends.

who impacted many in northern Mississippi.

"My family and I came to Queen of Peace in early 1995 and were very impressed that the pastor was so moved by his faith that he performed his homilies without notes," wrote Leonard Temple on a tribute page to Fr. John. "He just walked around the front of the church speaking WITH us – not AT us — from his heart. His passion bellowed from his soft spoken words and we were hooked. The building on Sandidge road was no cathedral in design, but the unity and fellowship that grew from that little building was greater than the fanciest cathedral you could ever find. We were very proud of our church and most importantly the strong bond that Fr. John helped us all to achieve... We were always impressed by his openness. He was not an 'uppity' or 'holier than thou' person. He was someone who was always approachable and no matter what the issue, always had the right thing to say to make the situation easier to understand."

Former missionary leads Toronto retreat

From November 17-19, Fr. Mark Fortner, SCJ, gave a retreat to the Indonesian Catholic community in Toronto with the theme: "Living the

Resurrected Life in Christ in Daily Life – The Path to Fulfillment in all our Relationships."

"I was touched not only by their joy and enthusiasm but even more so by their desire to delve more deeply into their faith," said Fr. Mark of the retreatants.

He, and Fr. Johannes Yuliwan Maslim, SCJ, pastor of the Toronto Indonesian community, are pictured below with retreatants. Fr. Mark, now retired, served in the Indonesian Province for many years.



Superior General takes part in Reformation commemoration

"What matters is my bond with the Son of God," emphasized Fr. Heiner Wilmer, SCJ, superior general of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, in his homily during an ecumenical commemoration of the fifth centenary of the Reformation, which took place at the Lutheran "Christuskirche" in Rome on October 29.

Noting that God's love is for all people Fr. Heiner said that "God is not captured. No picture can depict him. He is and remains the greatest mystery of our lives."

Refugee family celebrates first year in Canada

Last year Dehonians (Priests of the Sacred Heart) in Ottawa, in partnership with those who join the com-



The Bouland family with some of the many people who helped them in their first year in Canada.

munity in worship on Sundays, welcomed a refugee family from Syria: Nada Sabha and her adult children Riwa and Andre Bouland. The Dehonians joined Canadians across the country in a national project to welcome, sponsor and resettle Syrians who had fled their country as it plunged deeper into a violent civil war.

In October, the family celebrated its first year in Canada. They did so with a meal of thanks, featuring Syrian dishes, for those who had helped them. The meal took place at the SCJ community house in Ottawa.

"It was a wonderful evening with lots of laughter," said Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, regional superior.

"On behalf of the family, Riwa Boulad thanked the sponsors and all the new friends of the family for their support. It was an emotional moment for them. They have come to love their new country and have come a long way in becoming part of the mosaic that is Canada."

Although the official year of sponsorship has come to an end, the Sunday worship group and the SCJs will continue to serve as a resource to the family.

Find regular news updates on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart



“Today, the Church needs joyful, missionary disciples – heralds of the Good News, formed after the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This was also the desire of the Venerable Leo John Dehon, the founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.”

- Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, speaking at the SHSST Dehon Lecture (see page one)

What about you?

Do you feel called to serve as a “missionary disciple,” a herald of the Good News based in the love of the Sacred Heart? The Dehonians, or Priests of the Sacred Heart as we are known in the United States, is an international order of Catholic priests and brothers. Inspired by the love of the Sacred Heart, our ministries are as diverse as the areas in which we are located.

Do you feel called to a life of community, prayer and service?
Learn about a vocation as a priest or brother with us.
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