



SCJ News

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

Participation in WYD confirms SCJ's vocation

This summer four SCJs in the US Province renewed their temporary vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart: Fraters James Nguyen (July 29), Juan Carlos ("Juancho") Castañeda Rojas (Aug. 9), Joseph Vu (Aug. 10) and Justin Krenke (Aug. 12).

Just before their renewals Fraters Justin and Juancho traveled to Poland for World Youth Day. They joined a group from Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston that also included Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, Fr. Mark Mastin, SCJ and Br. Andy Gancarczyk, SCJ (Br. Andy organized the OLG group).

Frater Juancho wrote about his experience, saying that being a part of WYD solidified his commitment to religious life as an SCJ.

"During our pilgrimage, I was able to better understand the world-wide presence of the Priests of the Sacred Heart by seeing how our spirituality lives in the hearts



Dehonian youth from around the world gathered together in Kraków, Poland, prior to World Youth Day in July. Below, Fraters Juancho (second from left) and Justin enjoy a little photo fun. Photos by Br. Andy Gancarczyk, SCJ

of so many young people," wrote Frater Juancho. "It gave me a new, powerful feeling to see the impact that we, as Dehonians, have.

"It also confirmed for me, just before my renewal of vows, that when I said YES to God as a member of the congregation it was the best decision that I ever made.

"Father Dehon told us to get out of the sacristy and not just to proclaim the good news, but be an active example of it. In his message to young people Pope Francis invited all of us to get out of our comfort zones and to work to make positive changes in the world. I carry with me Pope Francis' message and desire to make change

by offering my gifts to the world and to be a Dehonian who shows love and mercy to the world.

"This pilgrimage experience was life-changing for me. I will keep all these memories in my heart as a reminder that saying yes to God is worthy, that saying yes to God is incredibly rewarding, and that saying yes to God and living my vocation as Priest of the Sacred Heart is an incredible experience that gives joy to my life.

"Finally, I take with me the message that Mercy is an action, Mercy is our invitation to be present for our brothers and sisters. Mercy does not recognize language or culture, Mercy does not have barriers; Mercy comes from deep within our hearts; Mercy is a call to change."

Frater Juancho is now in Brazil doing his pastoral year of ministry.





Fr. Peter Mastrobuono with a parishioner at Our Lady of Guadalupe, Houston, on the OLG feast.

Texas SCJ well remembered by many

*Fr. Peter Mastrobuono, SCJ
1939 - 2016*

“Fr. Peter was someone who was always available to people,” said Fr. Tony Russo, SCJ. “He never said no in ministry; he was very generous in the service to people. He was a prayerful man. How gentle he was with people. He impacted the lives of so many.”

Fr. Tony was speaking about his classmate, Fr. Peter Mastrobuono, SCJ. The two studied in Rome during the mid-1960s. After a lengthy illness, Fr. Peter died on July 27 at the age of 76.

Fr. Tony was the main celebrant at his Mass of Christian Burial.

Originally from Cleveland, OH, Fr. Peter entered the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1959. On December 17 he would have celebrated his 50th anniversary of priesthood.

Fr. Peter studied philosophy at the SCJs’ Kilroe Seminary in Honesdale, PA, and earned an S.T.B. at the Gregorian University in Rome. On summer break from his studies in Rome he went to Spain to learn Spanish, which

proved to be instrumental in his future ministry.

In 1968, after a year at St. Joseph’s Indian School in South Dakota, Fr. Peter was assigned to Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Raymondville, Texas (Diocese of Brownsville).

“Brownsville is a small city which borders Matamoros, Mexico,” said Fr. Peter about his first assignment in Texas. “There I noticed how many people crossed the border from Mexico to work on the American side. Some came with papers, some without. But we treated them all with love and respect.”

He continued to minister in Texas for the next 48 years. Besides Our Lady of Guadalupe in Raymondville, Fr. Peter also served at OLG in Brownsville, OLG in Houston, Our Lady of Fatima in Galena Park, St. Philip of Jesus in Houston, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Houston, and at St. Elizabeth Ann

Seton, also in Houston.

Fr. Peter said that he especially enjoyed serving the working poor. “They are a group that is often overlooked,” he said. “They are employed but are far from being out of poverty. With low wages, they work long hours, often at night and still have barely enough to keep up with the bills. But they are trying; doing the best that they can.”

The needs of migrants

Last year Fr. Peter was asked to reflect on his experience of migration for a North American Immigration Committee project. “Because I have been in South Texas for so long I probably have worked with more undocumented workers than anyone else in the province,” he said.

“One very notable experience was in 1986. In that year President Ronald Reagan declared a year of amnesty for all undocumented people who could prove that they had arrived in the United States before 1982. At the time I was pastor of St. Philip of Jesus, a primarily Hispanic parish in East Houston. A person who had a paper signed by a pastor of a church saying that he or she came before 1982 could stay in the United States. Since I had arrived in South Texas in 1968, and in Houston in 1975, I was able to write many papers for people to stay in this country.”

Although officially retired in 2009, Fr. Peter continued to assist at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston until earlier this year when declining health necessitated that he move to nursing care.

Besides the Mass of Christian Burial at Sacred Heart Monastery, a Memorial Mass was also held at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston. Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, was the main celebrant.

Photo links from the Mass of Christian Burial at Sacred Heart Monastery and the Memorial Mass in Houston are at:
www.sacredheartusa.org/feature-stories/fr-peter-mastrobuono-a-life-dedicated-to-service



SCJs in solidarity with the people of Ecuador

In July, Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, SCJ, general councilor, visited the SCJ community in Ecuador. The district consists of two communities in Quito and one on the coast at Bahía de Caráquez. Those who serve there come from Spain, Venezuela, Brazil and now Ecuador itself.

The following is Fr. Steve's journal entry from his visit to in Bahía de Caráquez. It was one of the areas hardest hit by a devastating earthquake on April 26. Fr. Steve writes:

A one-hour plane trip from Quito landed us in Manta, the airport nearest Bahía de Caráquez. On April 26, an earthquake of 7.8 on the Richter Scale heavily damaged the entire region. It is fortunate that the earthquake hit on a Saturday evening when many people were out, and not home sleeping or at school or work.

The airport's control tower collapsed and a temporary mobile military tower is in its place. The waiting area was a series of four large tents. A camcorder on a tripod served as the security camera. Porters delivered our baggage by hand because the conveyor belts were not yet rebuilt.

Fr. Bruno Roque dos Santos, SCJ, originally from Brazil, and Fr. Ramón Soriano Gil, SCJ, one of the three founders of our SCJ presence in Ecuador, met us and drove us north along the coast, past palm and mangrove trees to the area where SCJ missionaries first landed in 1897.

[Ecuador was the congregation's first mission, but for various reasons, it did not initially succeed. One hundred years later the Spanish Province returned.]

Because Ecuador was the first nation consecrated to the Sacred Heart it had special significance for Fr. Dehon. The SCJs now serve three parishes with an additional nine chapels.

Fr. Bruno has three roles: parish pastor, superior of the religious community, and dean of the vicariate for the diocese. Normally he thrives on lots of activity, but the earthquake relief work has at times left him feeling drained. The Church has been a reliable institution in which relief groups can turn to in order to put food and relief supplies directly into the hands of those who need it most. Fr. Ramón is in his late 70s and after almost 20 years of walking barrios and visiting the sick, he is well known and loved throughout the town.

The Sacred Heart church parking lot was partially occupied by tent canopies. A dozen children were taking part in their Saturday catechism classes. The high school students

were preparing for confirmation, and the younger students learned about the Trinity. Their normal classrooms were still under repair. Cracks in the church were visible, and it cannot be used for liturgies until structural damage is repaired and the roof replaced with lighter materials.

In the meantime, the church has become a staging area for relief sup-



Fr. Bruno and Fr. Jose Luis pack a truck of supplies.

plies. Inside I found cement bags and diapers, coloring books and cooking oil, beds and mattresses, blankets and bottled water.

We drove through town exploring the earthquake damage. Some entire blocks have been leveled. The worst hit seem to be the wealthier high-rises near the ocean, which are uninhabitable, and the poorer cement and brick homes built high on the hills which buckled and collapsed entirely when the earthquake and aftershocks hit.

Ironically, many of the poorer homes in the country made of wood and cane survived because they are not rigid, and swayed and bent rather than broke. Roads buckled, and a major task has been repaving long



Churches have become secure warehouses for relief supplies.

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Priests of the Sacred Heart

stretches of highway, and in some cases, rerouting the roads. Tents and tarps abound. Three months after the earthquake people still live in temporary basic structures. Many residents have moved to other parts of the country away from the destruction. The economy is struggling in Ecuador as a whole, and the destruction here has only compounded the problem. For workers whose average salary is about \$325 per month, home insurance was never possible.

On a hill overlooking the city a large cross stands as a sign of faith and hope. The panoramic view was both beautiful and sad, because it gave a perspective of all the damage. In Bella Vista the chapel totally collapsed and has been demolished. There we visited a feeding program and saw many pre-school children eating lunch. The cooks also boxed up meals to be taken to the home bound elderly.

We passed a high school, totally unusable. An empty lot stood where another school has already been leveled.

The plaza in front of Our Lady of Mercy Church holds a tent city. We also passed rows of tents on the outskirts of town.

The Priests of the Sacred Heart have tried to help with housing. At Albergue Sagrado Corazón, one such temporary housing site, metal structures about the size of a backyard tool shed serve as shelter. Blankets draped over the metal add warmth and protection from the wind. People cooked and socialized outside. An elderly woman had her bed brought outside the house so she could be part of the crowd until it was time to go in for the night. While life is hard, people are grateful for the help with meeting basic needs for the moment.

The town resounds with the sounds of both hammers and wreck-

ing balls. We visited two housing construction sites. The SCJs have helped build 17 homes, which rise above cement pads on stilts, and are connected to water and sewer. They cost \$3,000 each. At another site we watched workers cutting wire in preparation for prefabricated walls to be brought in. Those homes cost \$8,000. In the aftermath of past earthquakes in Chile and Perú, builders have learned what can be quickly and inexpensively built that will work in the area.

At St. Rose of Lima Church in neighboring San Vicente, we were invited to join a prayer circle of high school volunteers preparing for a service project in a badly damaged part of the region. As we formed a circle, arms draped over each other's shoulders, I heard many heart-felt petitions as they recalled the needs of their community.

Fr. Jónathan Martínez Gragera is from Spain and has served Bahía for the past six years. The earthquake followed the pre-

vious year's drought, a double hardship for the people. The biggest pastoral challenge is to be a listening ear and support people who get discouraged and tempted to lose hope. After three months, so much yet remains to be done. As pastor, social worker, counselor and listening ear for so many traumatized people, it is a challenge.

Despite disaster, life goes on

I celebrated weekend Masses in San Jorge parish. The SCJs invited me to preside, while they preached. I did say a few words about how our prayers and thoughts have been with them since the earthquake. My hope and prayer is that times of trouble and disaster can also be times of charity and solidarity with one another. The



Despite the disaster, Fr. Steve emphasized that "life goes on in the Church." Here, a baptism is celebrated.

liturgies had lively music and participation. One Mass included two baptisms. At the children's liturgy, we encountered enthusiastic singing and hand clapping. Ecuadoran culture is very affectionate, with lots of hugs and greetings. Many people line up after Mass for an extra, individual blessing and a few words of encouragement from their pastors.

I observed catechism class La Virgen de Merced parish. The parish has an active Caritas group that reaches out to those in need with social projects, and they have been incredibly busy this year. Fr. Bruno honored the parish secretary for 21 years (and counting) for her service at Merced. An ongoing project are the parish soup kitchens – "comedores." In one near Sagrado Corazón women prepare daily meals for area children. While absolute hunger is not an issue in this agricultural region, good nutrition is, and they are able to provide nutritious meals to supplement what is lacking.

Talitha Kum, (from the biblical stand and walk) provides classes and care for children with physical or mental developmental disabilities. We talked to youth confined to wheelchairs, and others with Down's Syndrome or Autism. The tiny metal sheds serving as classrooms didn't seem like a lot, but the love and care inside was noticeable, and that makes all the difference.

José Luis Ángel, who teaches finance at the SCJs' ESIC school in



Tent city in a church plaza.

Madrid, was in town to meet with those who have received one-year, no interest, microcredit loans. While the 60 people who benefit from the program in Quito were mostly women running start-up cottage industries, here in Bahía the loans go to 90 farmers who need upfront money for basics like seed and fertilizer, or even to pay rent on land they can farm. The program hopes to help them establish credit with regular banks.

One night we enjoyed supper with the Visitation Sisters, who have moved into the SCJs' Dormus Cordi house after their convent walls crumbled. Dormus Cordi normally serves as a center for youth ministry.

Fr. Bruno loaded up a truck of supplies for the countryside (campo) communities. We traveled dirt and gravel roads, as rugged as any I knew from my rural South Dakota reservation days. We dropped off tables and tiny chairs to help a pre-school program. We delivered a bed and mattress to a 95-year-old elder in the community. His home was made of traditional wood on stilts to keep cool air flowing underneath and to minimize the critters that can get in. Newspapers glued over the cracks kept the wind down. They had no running water. The hospitality was great as we were greeted with a quarter of a watermelon a piece, warm hugs and a huge smile.

In Santa María the small chapel that serves the 50 families in the area was next to a one-room school house, in session. There were 19 children studying. One girl was late because she has to walk four miles each way to school every day.

How you can help

Our province development office is collecting funds for earthquake relief in Ecuador. You can find a donation link at:

www.poshusa.org



"What happens after this life?" A question that began a vocation journey

“What happens after this life?” That’s what Fr. Nick Brown asked himself when he was at the top of an electrical pole in Sundance, Wyoming. It was a beautiful spot; from his perch Fr. Nick could see the Devil’s Tower natural monument. But instead of enjoying the gorgeous view, he started to ask himself “What if...?”

“I started thinking about how one of my climbing hooks could come out of the pole and I could fall into a hot wire, or what if I accidentally touched one of the wires?”

“I put my tools back in my belt and looked at Devil’s Tower for a long time thinking about that question: ‘What happens after this life?’ and finally decided that either something happens or nothing happens. I wanted to find out more about that ‘something’ that I believed in.”

He started talking to a priest about his questions, and read articles about vocations to the religious life and priesthood. Fr. Nick wrote to several communities “but the Priests of the Sacred Heart were the only ones who answered,” he said.

In 1964 he entered the seminary,

continued to question and learn about that “something” he believed, and eventually professed his vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1967. Fr. Nick was ordained in 1976; he celebrates his 40th anniversary of priesthood on October 30.

His first assignment was at St. Lawrence parish in San Antonio where he ministered for four years. It was while he was there that he learned of the need for a “street minister.” The minister was a part of a downtown outreach program.

After training with a person who did such ministry in Chicago, Fr. Nick headed out the door to his new “street church.” That was in September, 1981. It was a ministry of presence, sometimes simply offering a listening ear to those who needed it, and letting people on the fringes of society know that someone cared about them.

It felt like the right thing to do, the ministry to which he was called, but it wasn’t easy. A few weeks after he began Fr. Nick remembers sitting in his office and hearing gunshots.

“I went out and there was a man stretched out, face down,” said Fr. Nick. “I could see the bullet holes in

his back. When the EMS [Emergency Medical Services] came and turned the body over I saw a hole about the size of a 50 cent piece, with his heart pumping out blood about three or four inches until slowly, his heart stopped."

More than once Fr. Nick has had a knife drawn on him. He calmly talks about pushing a potential assailant's arm away from him, knife still clenched in his hand, and then simply walking away.

"I liked to talk with the street kids whenever I got the chance," said Fr. Nick. "Sometimes I would buy them something to eat. And several times they saved me. One time two men were giving me a rough time and I was wondering why they weren't beating me up until I looked behind me and saw that the kids were standing in a semi-circle around me. The men who were hassling me stopped."

After a few years the organization with which Fr. Nick was affiliated re-focused its work. Basically, Fr. Nick was out of a job as a street minister.

"But I continued to walk downtown on my own for about another 20 years, helping as I could, just being present to people," he said.

His "day job" was as a chaplain, first at the San Antonio State Hospital, then the Fort Sam Army Hospital and the Audie Murphy VA. Since 1993 he has served at the San Antonio University Hospital and at St. Luke's Baptist.

In 2001 he stopped doing street ministry. "So much had changed; I still miss the early days, the people who I would see," said Fr. Nick. Just as a pastor talking about the families he has come to know from his years in a parish Fr. Nick remembers those he has spent time with on the street.

"One of the girls down on the street was about 15 when I met her and she is a grandmother now," said Fr. Nick. "She has four children. I baptized her children and married her and her husband in the cathedral. I

have had funeral services for her husband, his brother and their mother. I consider them close friends."

Knowing that he has made a positive impact on the lives of others, whether it be in the streets, in a hospital room, in a jail cell or in a church, is what makes Fr. Nick glad that he decided to find out more about that "something I believe in."

"I'm an extremely happy priest," he said. "San Antonio has given me many memories. My work is something I like doing; I've done it for many years. It is good to walk into a room and have a patient say to me, 'I know you, or someone who looks like you. There used to be someone who walked down on the streets for many years. I used to see him over here and then over there.'"

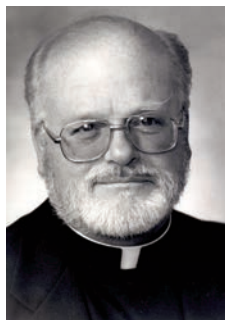
"I tell the person,

'That was probably me; I used to do that.' I see people whom I've known through the years. Not long ago I had Mass down at the jail and afterwards I heard confession and one of the guys who came in for confession said to me: 'You saw me when I was a patient at the hospital you work at.' There are so many connections."

One of the most difficult things that Fr. Nick has faced in ministry is seeing children suffering. "I told the guys at the jail — prisoners — that one time I had to go into the children's area and there was a little two-year-old boy with a big bandage behind his head covered with blood; he had apparently been thrown to the ground or hit behind the head with something very hard. He died. I told the men that I wish people who have done such things could see the grief they have caused."

But once again Fr. Nick spoke about his vocation, how happy he has been as a priest, how he has been grateful for his almost 40 years of ministry in San Antonio.

"It's a long way from that tower in Wyoming," he concluded.



Fr. Nick Brown



With map in hand, Fr. Tom talks about where the SCJs are located in India.

Former provincial superior has a foot in two worlds

For the past two years Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, has had two homes, one in the US Province and one in the District of India.

Fr. Tom was a member of the General Council when the decision was made in 1994 to begin an SCJ presence in India. However, it wasn't until 2011 that he visited the country. By then he was provincial superior of the US Province and in that capacity was invited to attend the district ordinations.

"The US Province was — and still is — the primary financial support of the district's formation programs," said Fr. Tom. "Because of this I thought that it was important to be present for the ordinations." Plus, the ordaining bishop would be Bishop Virginio Bressanelli, SCJ, the superior general under whom Fr. Tom served as a general councilor and thus instrumental in the congregation's decision to go to India.

"I looked forward to the opportunity to reconnect with him," he said.

Fr. Tom said that he had heard stories about India, heard that it would be challenging for a person from North America. "People said it

was too hot, the food wouldn't agree with me."

It was hot, and there were cultural differences, just as one would expect to find when visiting any country different than one's own. "But I enjoyed it; I enjoy travel, learning about new cultures," he said. "I was glad that I went."

A year later Fr. Tom was at the SCJs' major superiors' meeting in Neustadt, Germany, where Fr. Thomas Vinod, SCJ, district superior of India, made a plea. Due to government regulations, long-term foreign missionaries were not allowed to minister in the country. The district had many vocations but little experience.

"I am 32 years old and I am the superior," said Fr. Thomas. "We invite older SCJs to come and spend time with us, to share your wisdom, to help us get on our feet."

When Fr. Tom Cassidy's term as provincial superior concluded in 2013 he decided to take Fr. Thomas up on his invitation. He spent the first three months of 2014 in India and has been going back and forth ever since.

Most of the time Fr. Tom is based in Eluru, where the theology program is located. Fr. Tom assists there, as well as with administrative concerns, often sitting in on the district council meetings.

Yes, it is still hot, but being the "elder" in the district, Fr. Tom's room has an air conditioner. "Which is wonderful when we have electricity," he said, noting that power outages are

just about a daily occurrence in the areas where the SCJs are located.

And while he enjoys eating foods that are local to the area, he always has a little bit of home with him: peanut butter. "I have it every morning for breakfast," he said.

There are currently 84 members of the Indian District, just two less than in the US Province. Begun as an international mission of the congregation, Indian SCJs are now serving throughout the world in places such as Cameroon, Brazil, Venezuela and Italy. Funds raised by the Province Development Office are instrumental not only in building the SCJ presence in India, but in service to the Church around the world.

"Our SCJs in India pray for our benefactors every day," said Fr. Tom.

The district has many dreams for the future, big and small. Some of the immediate needs are basic ones: replacing windows that have been damaged beyond repair by insects, getting a new vehicle (there are few cars in the district; SCJs primarily use public transportation), and attending to other necessary maintenance. Larger projects that are still on the "hope list" include establishing an orphanage for abandoned children and building a community house near Mumbai where the SCJs have a parish.

While he is in India Fr. Tom maintains a daily journal. Excerpts from it are posted on the province blog.

View Fr. Tom's posts and others at: www.scjusa.wordpress.com

SCJ NEWS



Fr. Anthony Kluckman with the star quilt.

School chaplain honored

During staff orientation before the start of the new school year at St. Joseph's Indian School in South Dakota, staff presented Fr. Anthony Kluckman, SCJ, a star quilt to commemorate his 50 years of religious life. Fr. Anthony is chaplain at the school. In an interview with Allyssa Hoffer of St. Joe's Fr. Anthony talked about what he enjoys most about his ministry at the school:

"The kids," he said. "I am able to see the students in church on Sundays but also go into the homes for prayer. I am a referee at the games and participate in a wide variety of activities that take place here. I can show the students that I too am human and make individual connections for those who may need to talk about things. St. Joseph's also has a great staff who go the extra mile, which in return, makes me go the extra mile."

Native Hope featured

The SCJs' "Native Hope" based in Chamberlain, SD, was featured in an



Fr. Tom during a presentation on India with Province Development Office staff.

article published in the August 4 *Mitchell Daily Republic*. As the title suggests, Native Hope works to inspire hope in Native Americans.

"Online and social media-focused, Native Hope employs five people who administer programs, monitor the website and speak at events to spread the organization's message across South Dakota," writes the *Daily Republic's* Caitlynn Peetz. "Eventually, Native Hope hopes to work with all nine reservations in South Dakota to some extent, Director Julie Muldoon said..."

"There's something almost unexplainable about this generation that is so empowered... that they want to change the stereotypes and be who they are," Native Hope Ambassador Andrea Hearting added. "I would say Native Hope would really be that opportunity for them to be heard."

Visit the Native Hope website at: www.nativehope.com

Fr. Francis installed as new district superior in Vietnam

On August 12, the anniversary of the death of Fr. Leo John Dehon, Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, was installed as the new District Superior of Vietnam. He succeeds Fr. Rino Venturin, SCJ. Originally a member of the US Province, Fr. Francis transferred to the Vietnamese District earlier this year.



Fr. Francis during his installation as the new superior of the District of Vietnam.

Also during the ceremony the district accepted seven new students to the formation program. "We had about 150 guests at the Mass," said Fr. Francis. "It was a very beautiful moment for the Vietnam District. Fr. Suginio [general councilor] shared a wonderful homily regarding leadership and the call to serve one another with love and care."

The ministry of education

For many, September brings to mind the start of a new school year. In the September 2 issue of *Dehonian Spirituality*, Bridget Martin, principal and alumna of Sacred Heart School in Southaven, MS, reflected on the ministry of education.

"When I began my calling to

teach, I knew I wanted to help young people achieve their greatest potential inside and outside of the classroom," she wrote. "The opportunities I was given as a student, raised in a parish and school served by the SCJ community, empowered me with the knowledge I needed to change lives. I have been blessed to return to lead the school I grew up attending. This has given me a unique perspective of both a child and an adult into the ministry of education provide by the SCJs..."

"Our Dehonian charism is strengthened when our students not only perform service-learning projects to assist the needy and lonely, but also when they begin to understand the true meaning of the projects. As a principal, I see the effects of our education ministry on a daily basis. I am privileged to guide and watch students grow in their understanding of serving others."

Read this and other reflections in previous issues of *Dehonian Spirituality* on the province website. Go to www.sacredheartusa.org and click on the "Dehonian Spirituality" link at the top of the page.



Bridget Martin

SCJ NEWS

Priests of the Sacred Heart

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