

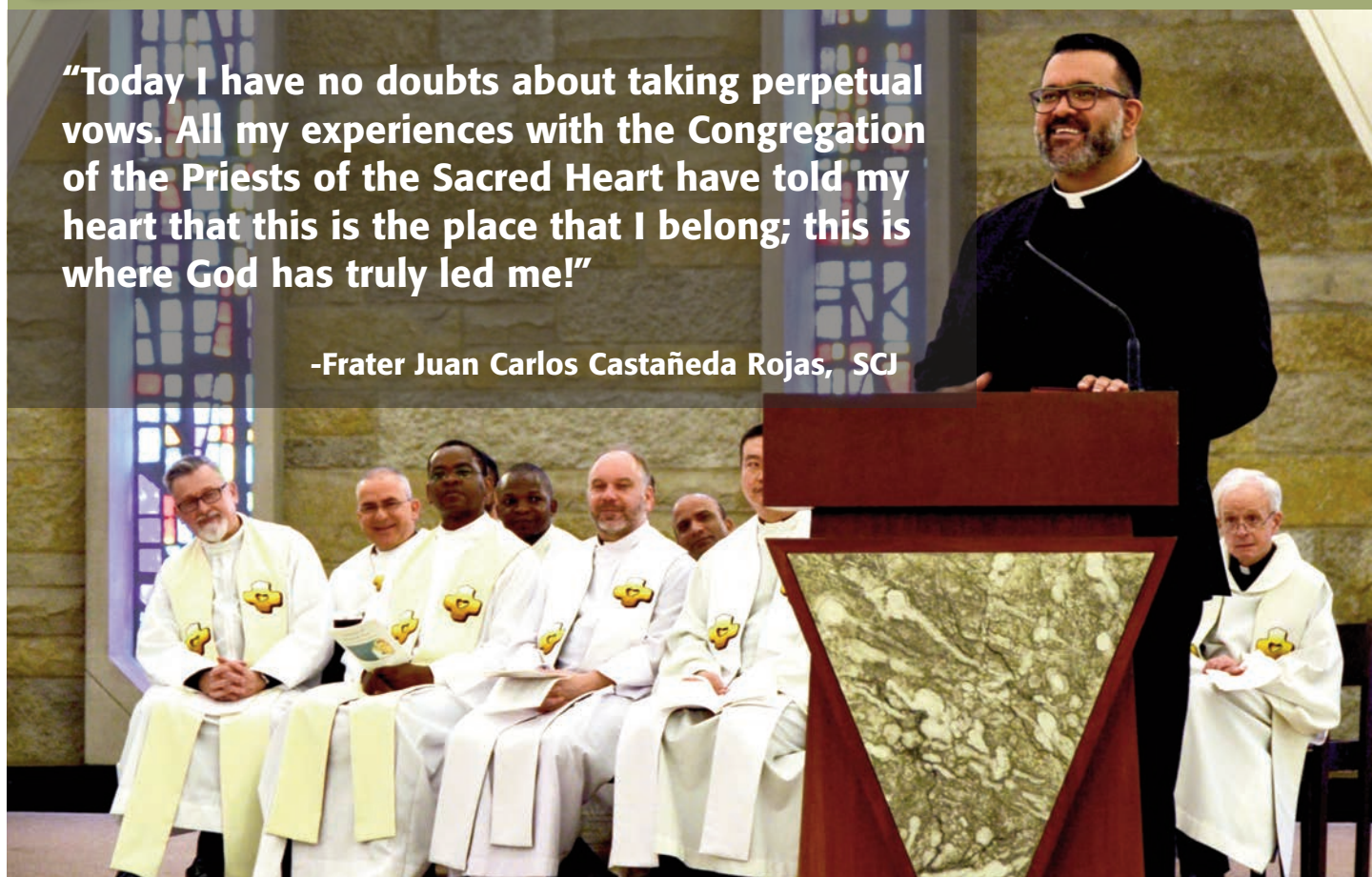


# SCJ News

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

**"Today I have no doubts about taking perpetual vows. All my experiences with the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart have told my heart that this is the place that I belong; this is where God has truly led me!"**

**-Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ**



## The blessings of long-term commitment

**O**n February 3, Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ, made his perpetual commitment to be a Dehonian, a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

His path to final vows was a long one that began in Colombia, where he was born and raised. There, he was

invited to discern his call to priesthood in the United States. Frater Juancho often jokes that "I didn't think that my call would be such a long distance call!"

He entered the ESL program at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in 2006. Seven years later, he professed his first vows as a Dehonian.

Comparing his first profession to the decision to make his perpetual vows, Frater Juancho said that he feels much more confident in taking the next step in his vocation. At a

time when long-term commitments are challenging for many, we asked him to reflect on his decision:

**QUESTION:** Compare how you felt when you made your first profession of vows as opposed to your perpetual commitment.

**FRATER JUANCHO:** I think it was more difficult to make the decision to take my first vows than it is making my perpetual profession. Even though I was sure that I wanted to become an SCJ, a Dehonian, by professing my first vows, I was a bit un-



Frater Juancho with his adoptive “American parents” Mike and Barb, Fr. John van den Hengel (regional superior of Canada) and Fr. Ed Kilianski (US provincial superior)

sure about it because of the question in my mind of where God really wanted me to be. That became a bigger question after I saw some of my classmates leave the congregation for different reasons. So, I also had to ask myself if this was the place God wanted me to be.

But today I have no doubts about taking perpetual vows. All my experiences with the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart have told my heart that this is the place that I belong; this is where God has truly led me!

**QUESTION:** What are the challenges of perpetual vows?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** The challenge for me is to continue to grow in my spirituality and to give all of my energy to the service of God in this congregation. I have heard and begun to understand that formation does not end after finishing theology or initial formation but is instead a continuous and ongoing process during our entire lives. So, the real challenge for me is to continue giving my best for the good and growth of our mission as SCJs.

**QUESTION:** What are the blessings of such a commitment?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** The blessing is in giving myself with love and receiving the love and support not just of my brother SCJs around the world but also the support of my family and friends. This reveals to me with certainty that I am not alone in this journey.

**QUESTION:** If a person is already living the Dehonian charism, what difference does it make if he makes perpetual vows? Is it just a step on the path to ordination?

**QUESTION:** It is more than a path to ordination because we have great religious brothers who are members of our congregation who also have made the commitment of professing perpetual vows. It is celebrating not just with the Congregation but also with our families and friends our desire and willingness to give our entire lives to responding to God’s call by continually living our vows.

**QUESTION:** Did you have hesitations about making a perpetual commitment? If so, what helped you in your discernment?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** As I said, I did have hesitations when I took my first vows. But I think that all of my experiences during my time in formation have helped me in my discernment to know that making this perpetual commitment is the right thing for me to do. I must say also that my pastoral experience in Brazil was a very important opportunity for me to strengthen and affirm my desire to make my perpetual vows. [Frater Juancho recently did his pastoral year — a requirement prior to final vows — in Brazil, working in youth ministry.]

**QUESTION:** Are your friends and family supportive of your decision to make your final profession? Do you think that many people outside of religious life understand what it means?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** One thousand percent of my family and my friends support my decision to make my final vows! They have all been incredible companions on my journey to this decision. Yes, there were times I had to explain the details of religious life to some of my friends who had questions about it. But at no time did any of them do so with the intention to discourage me from the path I had chosen for my life.

**QUESTION:** Do you find that young people, or people in general, have difficulty in making long-term commitments today? If so, why? What do you think might help people in discerning a long-term commitment?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** I will say that young people in general have a problem with long-term commitment. It is not necessarily their young age, but the maturity of the individual person



that makes it difficult to make a long-term commitment. I think that the society we live in plays a very important role in making such a decision because of the challenges of materialism, individualism, and the high expectations they leave us with.

**QUESTION:** Is there anything else that you would like to say or share in regard to your perpetual profession, or about the Dehonians?

**FRATER JUANCHO:** Today, more than ever, I remember the words that my father said to me many times: he told me that nothing we want to achieve is impossible, although some things we want to achieve are very difficult. But with hard work and dedication everything is possible.

I truly believe that God calls us in mysterious ways and always has a plan for us. I have also learned that we do not receive all the things we want or desire when we want them, but that God always gives them to us in the proper time. As I continue my vocational journey, I want to thank all the people in my life who have always been there to support me and lead me. They include other people in formation with me and my fellow classmates, even those who are no longer with us in the congregation, my family and all my friends, and of course, the Priests of the Sacred Heart and others who have always believed in me.

## Online photo albums



View more photos of Frater Juancho's final vows ceremony, as well as other province events at:

[www.scjusa.smugmug.com](http://www.scjusa.smugmug.com)



Participants in the US Provincial Conference: "Our Future: Together in Community and Ministry"

# Internationality is the future of the United States Province

**O**ur Future: Together in Community and Ministry" was the theme of the 2018 US Provincial Conference, held Jan. 30 – Feb. 1 at the Provincial Conference Center in Hales Corners, WI.

Every SCJ working in or preparing for full-time ministry in the US Province, as well as the novices, were invited. Called for only three months earlier, the conference had a 100% attendance rate. In the midst of busy ministry and school schedules, each SCJ in full-time, active ministry, was present.

"This is a critical time for our province," said Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, in his opening comments. During his two-plus years as provincial superior he has seen tremendous change in the US Province, and he anticipates much more.

As each man stood up and introduced himself, one of the most significant changes was quickly evident: the province's growing internationality. Those in active ministry, especially

younger SCJs, are increasingly from entities outside of the United States. Joining native-born Americans at the tables were men from Indonesia, Vietnam, Poland, Cameroon, Argentina, Colombia, and Canada.

"Local communities and ministries are becoming more multicultural; this will increase in the future," said Fr. Ed. "What can the province do to better facilitate this?"

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Priests of the Sacred Heart



TOP: Fr. Quang Tran and Br. Diego Diaz lead music during the closing Mass. BOTTOM: Fr. Christianus Hendrik talks about ministry in South Dakota.

How can SCJs from other cultures be better prepared for community life and ministry in the US Province, and how can current members better welcome their international confreres?"

Although multiculturalism emerged as a significant focus of the conference, it was not forefront in the minds of provincial councilors when they called for the gathering at their November, 2017, meeting. Then, the primary issue was the well-being of those in full-time ministry. With fewer personnel and increasing ministerial possibilities, councilors were concerned about burn-out among the membership. "In some cases, a person can become so overwhelmed that it can lead to the loss of his vocation," said Fr. Ed.

Councilors also expressed the need to ensure that personnel are appropriately prepared for internal and external ministries.

"How do we flourish in ministry and community?" said Fr. Duy Nguyen, SCJ, provincial councilor.

Following the conference's opening prayer, he and other members of the council shared their vision for the gathering. "Can we find ways to flourish together? How do we live well together? How do we work well together?"

As the conference evolved it became clear that the first step in living and working well together is for SCJs to simply know one another and the province better. Doing so builds a better community experience, a better Dehonian experience.

And that's when "internationality" took center stage.

### The challenge to understand one another

"There is a challenge in understanding each other that does not have to do with language itself, but instead, by what is meant by the words spoken," said one participant. "Culturally, we have different ways of looking at things and understanding words. How do we ensure that we are on the same page?"

Most agreed that the US Province offers an excellent ESL program. But there is no significant introduction to American culture or the culture of the province itself. "Even our individual ministries and local communities have their own cultures," said an SCJ. "We expect that people will just 'learn on the job' and then get frustrated when that doesn't happen; this is the case for our international brothers, but also for long-time members of the province."



### Personal stories

Three international members of the province shared their stories of coming to and eventually joining the US Province.

Fr. Christianus Hendrik, SCJ, first came to the United States in 2008 on a three-month visa for ESL studies. He was preparing to be a missionary in the Philippines. But then "I was kidnapped by Fr. Tom Cassidy," he joked. Fr. Tom, provincial superior at the time, asked him to consider serving in South Dakota.

He joined the Lower Brule Pastoral Team in 2010. "When I got there, I didn't know what to do, what to expect," he said. "But now, I am committed to this province; I am willing to die for this province."

What he asks in return is patience and trust. "I have been in South Dakota eight years and sometimes I feel like I am only an eight-year-old boy in how I express myself. It is still not always easy to speak in English. Have patience with me."

Fr. Hendrik is now a member of the Provincial Council.

Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ, spoke of his experience of coming from Colombia as an ESL student in 2006. "That is how I fell in love with Priests of the Sacred Heart," he said. "I learned about the charism. I grew in my love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I came from a different culture but always found support."

He professed his first vows in



LEFT: Sr. Cathy Bertrand, facilitator. ABOVE: Fr. Duy Nguyen, a member of the Provincial Council, shares his vision for the conference.



2013 and made his perpetual profession on February 3.

"It is important for us all to be open to our differences — multicultural, generational — differences make us great as a province," he said. "We are better for our differences and our many cultures.

"But it can only work if we have an open heart and mind," he concluded, making reference to the congregation's Mission Statement.

"We are heading toward the reality of becoming an international province," added Fr. Zbigniew "Ziggy" Morawiec, SCJ. "I am one of those who came from outside. The province is based in the wisdom and experience of our American brothers; you are the engine of this province. But slowly we must incorporate the energy of new entities, new cultures. This is good. The US Province is something important to our congregation."

Fr. Ziggy is vice rector of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology; he previously served in Texas and Mississippi.

## Our Future: Together in Community and Ministry

Who does the "Our" refer to in the theme of the Provincial Conference? By the closing Mass on February 1, it was clear that "Our" represents a wide variety of backgrounds, languages and cultures. "Our" includes many differences.

But most importantly, "Our" means devotion to a single charism, the Dehonian charism.

"Living that charism, we want to continue to make this province INTERCULTURAL not just MULTICULTURAL," said one participant. It's not that the province simply wants to welcome Dehonians of other cultures, but that it allows itself to be changed and enhanced by SCJs from around the world."

In the months ahead, leadership will seek ways to ensure that the work of the conference doesn't remain in the meeting room.

# Province says farewell to Br. Ben and Fr. Steve

*The US Province recently mourned the loss of two of its long-time members: Br. Ben Humpfer, SCJ, and Fr Steve Wiese, SCJ. They are each remembered below:*



Br. Ben speaking at a province assembly

## Br. Ben Humpfer, SCJ

**B**r. Ben Humpfer died December 3 of brain cancer. He was 73 and had been a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) for 51 years.

Born in Hammond, IN, Br. Ben initially pursued a vocation to the priesthood but left the seminary after what he said was "a miserable performance in Latin."

Soon after, he landed a good job in a department store "but I still thought of the priesthood; I wanted to serve," he said.

He didn't recall how, but he was put in contact with an SCJ vocation director who talked to him about being a brother. "I saw the material about the brother's vocation," he said. "It seemed so interesting; brothers could do so many things. I wasn't sure why, but I felt that it was where God was calling me."

He started at the brothers' novitiate where he was told that he would not only learn about Dehonian religious life, but would also receive technical training for a specific job as a brother.

The job?

"A tailor," said Br. Ben. "I had never sewn a stitch in my life but Fr. Michael told me that the community needed a tailor to make vestments and chasubles." Br. Ben enrolled in a correspondence course in sewing.

During the summer break brothers in formation were given jobs at the seminary. Br. Ben was told by his superior to go to town "and find a job where you can learn your trade," he said.

He sought work as a tailor but when asked about his prior experience he had only his correspondence course to refer to. Doors quickly closed in his face. Eventually he found what he thought would be a sympathetic teacher: a tailor who made cassocks for the Jesuits. But the door closed again when the tailor told him that sewing is an art, something "that one is born with," said Br. Ben. "He told me that I could never learn."

Eventually he ended up at the Singer Sewing Center where spent the summer learning to "make cassocks alongside women learning to make dresses," he remembered.

At the end of the summer the brothers were given their first full-time assignments. Br. Ben expected to put his newly developed sewing skills to work. But instead, he was assigned to the novitiate in Ste. Marie, IL, where he would be a cook.

"I told Fr. Mike that I didn't know how to cook but he said that was ok, Br. Jim [Willis, SCJ] would teach me," he said.

He arrived in Ste. Marie and learned that he would be cooking for one of the largest novitiate classes in the history of the province, plus the professed SCJs in the community. Br. Jim was there as promised, but only long enough to show Br. Ben where

the pots and pans were before he left on vacation.

"I was so nervous," said Br. Ben. "I'd get up early to cook breakfast and as soon as that was done, I'd start working on lunch. It took me so long because I didn't know what I was doing."

His cooking secret? "If it looks good people will eat it," he said. "I garnished EVERYTHING!"

After a few weeks Br. Ben settled into his job and grew to enjoy it. Five years later, he was assigned to Divine Heart Seminary, where he managed the kitchen (with a staff from a sisters' religious community) and took on several other roles, such as teaching freshman religion and ceramics, as well as serving as assistant dean of students.

The minor seminary closed and Fr. Michael Burke, SCJ, then personnel director, suggested that Br. Ben go to Mississippi where there were several teaching opportunities. He agreed and was assigned as a religion teacher at Sacred Heart School (then in Walls).

"That first year was awful!" said Br. Ben. "I had never worked in a co-ed school; I had never taught children younger than teens and I soon found out that there is a lot about teaching that can only be learned on the job."

But as with his other assignments, Br. Ben soon came to love his ministry in Mississippi. He taught six to seven classes a day and was also active at nearby parishes, serving as director of religious education at Sacred Heart parish in Walls and at Queen of Peace in Olive Branch. For two years he was on the Diocesan Board for Religious Education (Jackson, MS).

Br. Ben remained in Mississippi until 1995, when he moved to Wisconsin. He was the local superior of Villa Maria (the province retirement community that eventually became a part of Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake) and served in the province vocation office. After a year as chaplain at St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamber-

lain, Br. Ben returned to senior ministry, serving as superior of the Sacred Heart Community in Pinellas Park, FL from 2009-15.

For the past three years he was a member of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML.

## Fr. Steve Wiese, SCJ

**F**r. Steve died on January 13. He was 83. Originally from New Brunswick, NJ, he did his philosophy studies at the community's Kilroe Seminary in Honesdale, PA, and theology at Sacred Heart Monastery (now Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, WI). He professed first vows in 1955 and was ordained in 1963.

Fr. Steve learned about the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) through his parish pastor. In the 1950s at the age of 19, he was considered a "delayed" vocation. The SCJs had a program for candidates who needed to catch up to their counterparts who had been in the minor seminary. In one year he said that he "crammed in four years' worth of Latin, Greek and theology."

His first assignments were in education and vocations, serving as a teacher at Dehon Seminary in Great Barrington, MA, Trinity College in Redlands, CA, and Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in Lenox, MA.

Fr. Steve's first parish assignment was at St. Mary's Co-Cathedral in Natchez, MS from 1967-68. He then served five years at

All Saints parish in Eagle Butte, SD and three years at St. Mathew's parish in Corona, CA, before pursuing a call to the missions.

In 1976, he began a two-year assignment at St. Therese Mission in Lesotho (Africa). "That was like going in a time warp," he said of the experience.

When he got back to the States he took a five-year assignment at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. He then returned to parish ministry, including six years at Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary parish in Franklin, WI (now, St. Martin of Tours).

Fr. Steve also served at St. Matthew's in Houston and with the retirement community at Villa Maria (now the Sacred Heart Community at SHML in Franklin) before retiring in 2004.

A member of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML, he had been in assisted living and nursing care for the past several years.



Fr. Steve



Fr. Steve Wiese (front, right) being congratulated on his 60th jubilee of vows in 2015.





Dn. Greg Kandra speaking at SHSST's January Preaching Conference.

## Preaching with a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other

**T**here is a frequently cited image of Fr. Leo John Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, holding a Bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other.

The founder's call to make the gospel relevant to the events of the day was echoed by Dn. Greg Kandra in his keynote address at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology's Preaching Conference on January 9.

"Take the news of the week and make it real," said Dn. Kandra. "Connect it to the gospel. Every story is a Catholic story. Everything has a relationship to the Gospel, to our faith. Look for connections whenever you can. Make preaching real."

Dn. Kandra is the multimedia editor for the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA), a pontifical society founded by Pope Pius XI in 1926. Before joining CNEWA, Dn. Kandra spent nearly three decades in broadcast journalism working at programs such as 48 Hours, 60 Minutes, Sunday Morning and The CBS

Evening News.

"Preaching the Good News in Times of Bad News and Fake News," was the title of Dn. Kandra's presentation. He began by reflecting on something that Don Hewitt, creator of 60 Minutes, said when asked about the success of the television show:

"Tell me a story."

Storytelling, said Dn. Kandra, was the key to 60 Minutes' success. It is also the key to giving a homily.

"We are a storytelling people," he said. "It is in our DNA. It started in a cave and continues today on laptops at Starbucks. We want to pass on what we believe, what we have heard.

"And for over 2,000 years we have been telling the greatest story ever told. The question is, how can we do that more effectively in the 21st century?"

Regular Sunday Mass attendance is declining in the United States. "Yet 4,000 people came for Ash Wednesday at my parish in Queens," he said. "People were lined up out to the street..."

"Where are these people on Sunday? I don't know, but it is obvious that they want to be a part of the story, our story. How do we keep them around the campfire? How do we help them to speak the story to others?"

In a time of "fake news" Dn. Kandra urged the priests and deacons to be witnesses of the truth. "Ask what the story is, what is happening and why it matters," he said, telling the participants to look beyond the obvious and be reporters.

"As a preacher you must ask questions, work hard and think deeply about how the gospel is unfolding in the world."

Most importantly, Dn. Kandra urged his listeners to share the most important story of all: the story of God's love.

"We live in a fallen world and we are a fallen people," he said. "Each of us has a story. People wonder if God is there with them in their stories. How can our Catholic faith respond to this? It's easy to offer feel-good bromides. But what people want to know is that they aren't alone, that God is with them, that the Church is with them, and that the person at the pulpit is with them..."

"We must practice what we preach, we must convey God's love to a broken world. We must love one another and assure people that God loves us too.

"Let us go out and tell our story!"

Following Dn. Kandra's keynote address was a day of break-out sessions on topics such as "Preaching and Technology," "Preaching Amid Controversy," "Preaching in a mixed Anglo/Hispanic Parish," "Avoiding Accidental Racism/Anti-Semitism from the Pulpit," and "Preaching Hope through the Funeral Rites."

Approximately 60 priests and deacons took part in the conference at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, an apostolate of the US Province.

# SCJ NEWS

## “In a fragmented world we believe unity to be possible”

While he is in India assisting with the formation program, Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, maintains a daily journal. Periodically, excerpts from it are published on the US Province blog.

“It is only in recent years that we’ve begun to draw candidates from the north,” Fr. Tom recently wrote. “For example, at present in our community we have two brothers from Odisha with three or four more joining the community following their first profession of vows on May 1, 2018. It will be couple of years more before we will see Assam brothers in the community.

“With the different languages, cultures and castes of each state you have a true melting pot in our Dehonian Indian District, but one that needs

constant tending so as to build a sense of common identity.

“This is well stated in our new congregational Mission Statement which concludes with the line: ‘We live in community, are inspired by daily Eucharistic adoration and in a fragmented world we believe unity to be possible.’ Under any circumstances that is not an easy task given the diversity and character of human nature, but it is possible if attention, nurturing and care is given to create a common vision.”

Read the rest of this and other blog posts at [www.scjusablog.org](http://www.scjusablog.org)

## Congratulations!

During the Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 Provincial Conference, Dehonian Fraters Long Nguyen and Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas received the Ministry of Lector. They are pictured above, right, making an image of the [Sacred] Heart.

## Recently named

Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec, SCJ, has been named interim Vice President for Spiritual Formation for the 2018 spring semester at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. This is in addition to his regular duties as Vice Rector. Fr. Paul Kelly, SCJ, previously held the position.



*“This is the place that I belong; this is where God has truly led me!”*

Frater Juan Carlos Castañeda Rojas, SCJ, talking about his commitment as a Dehonian, a Priest of the Sacred Heart (see page 1)

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