# SCJ News

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



From the formula for the Profession of Vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians)

## Welcome!

Amidst COVID-19 precautions, the congregation welcomes four new SCJs

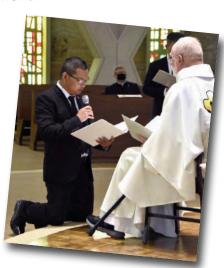
"Why do you want to profess vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart; why do you choose to be a Dehonian?"

This was the question posed to Thien Nguyen, Thuan Nguyen, Hung Pham and Truc Tran a week before they professed their First Vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart. Each spent a year in novitiate trying to answer that question for himself, a year of seminars, prayer, reflection and service. Many hours were spent learning about Fr. Leo John Dehon and Dehonian spirituality, learning about religious life, and in particular, religious life as an SCJ.

"Why do I want to profess vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart?" wrote Frater Thien Nguyen, SCJ. "It is simple. I want to be a prophet of love and a servant of reconciliation based in the spirituality of Fr. Dehon."

Frater Hung Pham, SCJ, said that he made the decision to profess vows because he wanted to be a Dehonian who "lives in the spirit of love with affirmation, understanding and acceptance."

Reflecting on the SCJ Constitutions, Frater Truc Tran, SCJ, said that for him, his decision is based in Constitution No. 27: "This consecration itself already has a real apostolic fruitfulness. Like every charism in the Church, our prophetic charism places us at the service of the saving mission of the people of God in today's world."



Frater Hung makes his first profession before Fr. Ed Kilianski



Our newly professed SCJs: Fraters Truc Tran, Hung Pham, Thuan Nguyen and Thien Nguyen

And for Frater Thuan Nguyen, SCJ, the answer requires few words. Why did he become a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart? "To love as I am loved."

The four novices professed their first vows of poverty, chastity and obedience during a small ceremony at Sacred Heart Monastery. Due to the pandemic, the liturgy was only open to SCJs in the local area; for others, livestreaming was available on Facebook (the video is still available from the Facebook page). Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, provincial superior, received the vows of Frater Hung, who is now a

member of the US Province, as well as those of the three novices for the District of Vietnam (Fraters Thien Nguyen, Thuan Nguyen and Truc Tran). Fr. Joseph Quang Tran, SCJ, associate pastor at St. Martin of Tours in Franklin, WI, was the representative of the district; Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, was unable to be at the ceremony in person because of COVID-19.

The newly professed are now members of the Sacred Heart Monastery community where they will continue their formation and academic studies. They introduce themselves as follows:



The ceremony was livestreamed; view it at: www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart



Fr. Vien Nguyen, Celsus Robert and Jacob Smith were our music ministers

### Frater Thien Nguyen, SCJ

My name is Thien Nguyen and my baptismal name is Paul. I was born and grew up in the countryside in Vung-Tau province in Vietnam. I have many siblings: three older brothers, two older sisters, and two younger brothers. When I was a child, I wanted to be a businessman when I grew up because my family was very poor and lived mainly on rice cultivation.

Fortunately, my family overcame those difficulties. My parents are very religious and they pray every day; they taught me the importance of this when I was a little boy. But when I was young, I really did not understand what prayer was.

For high school, I had to stay far from my home because there was no high school close by. I learned to live independently, to do everything myself. It was then that I realized the importance of prayer. Prayer continues to bring me peace when I am lonely or homesick.

I went to Sai Gon [Saigon or Ho Chi Minh City] to pursue my dream of becoming a businessman but after many jobs – waiter, textile worker, welder and construction worker – that dream faded. Impressed with construction, I decided to study Civil Engineering.

In 2011 I came in contact with the SCJs. I was still at the university, and the community life I found with the SCJs brought me a lot of fun and happiness. When I graduated, I was dis-



Fr. Ed Kilianski was the main celebrant; Fr. Byron Haaland, novice master, is on the right

cerning a vocation to religious life, but decided to experience life, my degree and a new job. I earned good money and had a full life in the material sense but deep in my soul, I felt empty and unhappy. I struggled, but through prayer, I heard the call of God. I returned to the SCJs in 2015 to pursue my vocation. In 2016 I began to study philosophy at St. Joseph Major Seminary of Sai Gon; after I completed my studies in 2018, I came to the United States to study ESL [now ECS] and enter postulancy.

Since I have been in the United States I have been very interested in the topic of immigrants and admire the silent sacrifices of those who help them. In the future I hope to also be an extended arm of Jesus, bringing God's love to those in need.

### Frater Thuan Nguyen, SCJ

I was born into a small family in Dong Nai province, Vietnam; there is my mom, my sister and me. My sister is with the community of St. Paul de Chartres.

I studied Chemistry in Sai Gon University from 2011 to 2015. I lived in the dorm of Huyen Si Parish, which is available to students who live and study in Ho Chi Minh city. I liked community life there and I felt called to become a religious. I knew about the Priests of the Sacred Heart in Vietnam through my neighbor, who was student with the community.

I contacted Fr. Thai, the vocation director, and I met him to learn about the SCJs. I was invited to Mass for the feast day of the congregation. After that, I decided to apply to become an SCJ candidate.

My first day as a candidate with the community was August 6, 2015; I had my first holy hour in the community. In that first year, I studied English and Vietnamese in preparation for the entrance exam for philosophy studies. I passed the exam and I entered the Dominican Academy.

After finishing Philosophy, I joined two of my confreres to go to the

US Province to enter postulancy and the novitiate because we did not yet have these programs in Vietnam. I want to become an SCJ to live as Fr. Dehon lived.

## Frater Hung Pham, SCJ

My name is Hung Pham and I was born in Vietnam. I lived in Houston for nine years and graduated in Petroleum Engineering from the University of Houston in 2015. Before entering SCJ candidacy, I worked at the ALS Oil and Gas Company as a total petroleum hydrocarbon (TPH) analyst; I began there in 2015.

I was a member of Dong Hanh group in Houston, also known as a Christian Life Community group (CLC). I taught Vietnamese and Catechism starting in 2013. Before novitiate, I did the same at St. Martin of Tours parish in Franklin, WI.

I am excited about joining the SCJs and want to discover more about the SCJ Rule of Life. I would like to learn to be a prophet of love, a servant of reconciliation, and be attentive to humankind's appeals through Dehonian spirituality.

#### Frater Truc Tran, SCJ

My name is Truc Tran and I'm from the Vietnamese District. My family lives in Nghe An, in the middle of Vietnam, in the Vinh diocese. I graduated with a degree in Construction Engineering about eight years ago and began to learn about the Priest of the Sacred Heart in August, 2015.

When I became a candidate with the community, I learned many things from our superior, our formation directors and my confreres, my religious family. They taught me about Fr. Dehon, who founded the congregation.

After a year with the SCJs, I took the entrance exam for philosophy and began my studies at St. Alphonsus Academy. I graduated last year, and then came to the US Province to continue formation, first studying in the



### **Photos**

View photos from this year's First Vows and other province events at: www.scjusa.smugmug.com

ESL/ECS program at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

There have been challenges in being with a culture different from my own; but it has been good for me to study and learn to adapt to many things. The ECS program helped me a lot with my English, but also with how to study.

I like sports like football, and to read books about history. I come from a family of seven: two sisters and two brothers. I am the second child in the family, I have an older brother, a younger brother and two younger sisters. My parents are farmers.

For many years, my father has taught catechism for young people in our parish. My mother has a great love for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is part of my motivation in pursing my vocation with the Priests of the Sacred Heart. My younger sister is also pursuing a religious vocation.

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:
P.O. Box 289, Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289
(414) 427-4266.
Email: comdir@scjcommunications.org
Mary Gorski, editor.
Postage prepaid.



Copyright 2020, All rights reserved.
Priests of the Sacred Heart



Fr. Amaro shares a smile with children in Angola

## Path to the missions began at Sacred Heart in the US Province

lumni of the ECS program (formerly English as a Second Language) at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology are found throughout the world. They include members of the General Curia, bishops, provincial leadership, formators, teachers, pastors, social service ministers, students, and many Dehonian missionaries.

Fr. Amaro Vieira, SCJ, is one of them. Originally from Portugal, Fr. Amaro, 53, was a student in the ESL program from 2000 to 2001. The intensive language studies were in preparation for his first mission assignment, working in the District of India from 2001-2007. "The program at Sacred Heart was indeed a very good program," said Fr. Amaro. "It prepared me well."

Following his ordination in 1995 (he celebrates his 25th anniversary of

priesthood in November), Fr. Amaro worked in formation at the minor seminary in Portugal. It is a ministry in which he continued to serve first in India, and since 2010, in Angola. Except for a three-year assignment working with a program for at-risk youth in Portugal, most of Fr. Amaro's years as an SCJ have focused on preparing others for religious life and ministry.

"To be honest, when I was asked to go to Angola, I was expecting to do something different, perhaps in social concerns," said Fr. Amaro. "But there was a need to prepare for our future Dehonian presence in the country and I had experience in this area, in formation."

The congregation's presence in Angola began with discussions at the Portuguese Province's 1982 chapter gathering; the province hoped to begin a new Dehonian mission in the former Portuguese colony.

"Unfortunately, the civil war that was tearing Angola apart made such an undertaking impossible," said Fr. Amaro. "But the dream never died."

A peace agreement was reached in 2002, and in 2004, three SCJs (two from Portugal and an Italian SCJ from Mozambique) went to Angola. Responsibility for the mission is shared not only by Portugal and Mozambique, but also Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Italy and Brazil. There are now three SCJ communities in the country, one in Luanda and two in the eastern region of Moxico.

"Our primary responsibility is to participate in the reconstruction of the local church that was ravaged by the civil war," said Fr. Amaro. "Dehonians are found in some of the most challenging areas of the country."

The missionaries' second task is strongly related to the first: to build the Dehonian presence in Angola. "Formation is and will always be a very important responsibility," said Fr. Amaro. The district has two vocation houses, both in the eastern province of Moxico; each has approximately 20 pre-college candidates. "Furthermore, there are 21 candidates in our Philosophy House in Luanda, three SCJs in temporary vows doing theology studies in South Africa along with several other young religious from different African countries, three are in final vows doing pastoral ministry in Angola, and, finally, there is Fr. Bartolomeu, our first Dehonian priest from Angola. He is now studying Psychology at the Catholic University in Luanda."

Novices from Angola are in a joint program with the Mozambique Province.

"I've been working in formation almost all my life and I realize the responsibility that comes with it," said Fr. Amaro. "Formation is key to building our Dehonian presence wherever we are, about laying the foundation for the presence of our charism. Our Dehonian charism calls us to be among the least, to be present in the most difficult places, places that may feel forgotten. This is what formation is about; it is about instilling that call of our founder in the hearts of the next generation."

Besides formation, Dehonians in Angola also run a primary school linked to the SCJs' parish in a remote area of the city of Luena (Moxico). The school is named for St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and was begun by the community. Dehonians, including lay volunteers and seminarians from Europe, also help to run literacy programs in Angola. Smaller projects include library development, safe water supplies, and computer courses. The Dehonians' efforts are aimed at addressing some of the most significant challenges of the country, "especially sustainability."

The Church itself has many challenges in Angola too. It is a Church filled with young people, which offers a strong future, but also the need for significant formation. Throughout the country, training is needed for lay leadership. And after years of a brutal civil war "that has destroyed families and left many hearts filled with hatred, the Church must witness the gospel values of forgiveness and reconciliation," said Fr. Amaro.

"We are currently working on the elaboration of our apostolic project," he continued. "Basically, what impact should we have as Dehonians in this country? Beyond parish ministry and formation, what are we going to do? What social challenge are we called to take on according to our spirituality and Dehonian inheritance?"

The district hopes to have an apostolic plan in place by the end of 2021.

"I look with hope to the future," concluded Fr. Amaro. "I do believe that God is asking me to go further in my availability to fulfill his will. My struggle is to fight my worldly desire of stability. So, my prayer: May God give me the strength and the courage to listen to his call. I do believe He is calling me to always go beyond."

## **20 Questions with Dehonians**

Do you have a favorite color? What makes you happy? What are you good at? What is your greatest fear? Favorite book, movie? Where were you born and raised... "Twenty Questions" is a regular feature in which SCJs and those with whom they minister and collaborate share a bit about themselves in an informal Q&A. Participants are given the same list of questions and are invited to answer as many as they would like. The following are excerpts from a few



of the responses. Links to all of them can be found by clicking on "Meet Our Members" midway down the homepage on the US Province website, or go directly to the following link: <a href="https://www.dehoniansusa.org/members/20-questions">www.dehoniansusa.org/members/20-questions</a>

#### FR. WOJCIECK ADAMCZYK, SCJ

- I was born on March 23, 1976, in Lublin, Poland. I was raised by both of my parents. I am the youngest child; I have two siblings and my brother is



Fr. Wojcieck

also a priest. If I could go anywhere I would travel to Italy because there are a lot of places to see and good food and wine. My favorite color is blue. I like to watch live sports of any kind, especially motorcycle racing. My favorite food is steak. Cleaning is my least favorite chore. As a child, I wanted to be a firefighter. My greatest fear is sickness. The trait that I dislike in myself is judging others; the trait that I dislike in others is being judged. Three words that describe me? Outgoing, enthusiastic, caring. How has the pandemic affected me? It reminds me that everything in our lives depends on God, and secondly, that every moment of our lives is a great gift from God. I think we often forget that.

**FR. JOSEPH MUKUNA, SCJ -** I joined the SCJs when I was turning 19. When I look back, I can honestly say that I grew up with the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians). I was educated (and continue to be) and guided by this family. On August 12, 2020, I

celebrated 21 years in vows with the Dehonians. I always consider the Dehonians as my second family. To be a Dehonian for me is to struggle to live the "Dehonian dream" which is to be a "prophet of love and servant of reconciliation". This is a kind of everyday call and challenge. It is also the sense that I give to my training in New Testament studies, to become more aware of the love of God for humanity made manifest in the open heart of Jesus, and to learn how to talk about this love. Being a Dehonian today is to make relevant the "Dehonian dream" in our world in bringing joy and hope to people, and to work

for peace and reconciliation. When I was a kid, my big dream was to become a medical doctor because my auntie, who is a religious in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Charity of Jesus and Mary (Belgium), is a



Fr. Joseph

medical doctor. I was impressed by the work she was doing with the poor and sick people in my region.

**FR. RALPH INTRANUOVO, SCJ -** I was born in Brooklyn, NY, and raised there. My parents were Italian immigrants who came here when they were young; my mother was seven



Fr. Ralph

and my father was 16. I had five sisters and four brothers. Myself and two sisters survive today. My favorite movie is *Silence of the Lambs* and my favorite book

is Awareness by Anthony DeMello. If I could travel anywhere I would go to Japan. I'm fascinated by their culture, especially their hospitality and ancestor worship. I would also like to go to Egypt. I used to be very good at racquetball and so-so at tennis. I am good at history trivia and word games. My favorite color is cobalt blue and my favorite food is Pasta e Fagiole (beans and macaroni), an Italian peasant dish. When I was a child I wrote in my grade school graduation book that I wanted to be a radio announcer: that amuses me now. What makes me happy? Listening to really good conversation (not necessarily my own), listening to favorite music, seeing a good movie I have not seen before. The last good movie I saw was Fargo. I like reading a thriller murder mystery.

**BR. DUANE LEMKE, SCJ -** I love the stars. My favorite color is the deep indigo blue of a star-dusted cloudless sky just before it turns black. One of my favorite moments was sharing this to an assembly of children during Catholic Schools week and hearing them collectively inhale, "ooooh," and "ahhh." If I did nothing that day but inspire some of them to look up that night in Wonder and Awe at what God creates it was worth it. As a child, I wanted to be an astronaut. I devoured stories of the moon landings and space shuttle, and especially technical articles and manuals about HOW the machines worked and how the astronauts and engineers made them fly. The relationship be-



Br. Duane

tween the electrical system and the life-support system on the International Space Station is amazingly practical and almost poetic in its design and construction. A Priest of the Sa-

cred Heart – Fr. Joe Ford – baptized me as an infant, and they served at my home parish for decades. I was interested in them because their common life and interest in the ordinary lives of people reflected God's own loving kindness in some way. As I got/get to know them better, I discover their concern that people and social structures reflect the Love of Christ to both smooth my rough edges and challenge me to act each day.

#### FR. RICHARD WOODBURY, SCJ - I

was born in Grenville, Québec, on July 19, 1944. I am the tenth of 16 children, one of whom died after three days. Both my mother, a Catholic, and my father, an Anglican, were born in



Fr. Richard

Grenville. We were raised in a climate of faith and love, and great respect for each other and for all people around us. As far as I can remember, I always wanted to become a priest, influenced that I

was by the parish priest we had in Grenville who was a very holy person, very dedicated and especially attentive to the poor people of the area. Our family was among them. I did what we called "messes en blanc" with some of my friends, and, of course, I was the presider. There are many persons whom I admire, but I certainly have a special admiration for someone who has inspired me for

years now, that is Mgr. Oscar Romero. He has helped me to understand that the Gospel cannot simply be a book that you read and then put aside, but it has to become a way of life that calls you to deep conversion which leads you to live like Christ did. Mgr. Romero made that choice and lived up to it. Honestly, in my heart, I had "canonized" Mgr. Romero way before he was officially recognized as a saint.

**FR. CHARLES WONCH, SCJ** - I call the mountains around Colville, WA, my home. It is a small town in the northeast corner of Washington and has always been centered around the logging, farming and ranching industries. I would love to go to In-

donesia; I have been in contact with so many people from Indonesia through Facebook and through the SCJs whom I have met through meetings or through their studying here. I



Fr. Chuck

would like to go there and get to know each of them, gather them all together and have a wonderful meal together. I love to read and study; I have been an avid reader and collector of books since I was very young. I love to grow plants all year round, always have fun seeing a seed that I have gotten from the dining room grow into a beautiful plant. What would people be surprised to learn about me? Probably that I am a "second career" priest with two grown children and five grandchildren, and that I graduated with a degree in Industrial Engineering focusing on production and labor efficacy from Jackson State University. Also, I worked for 15 years in the Electric Transformer industry and 15 years at a nuclear power plant.

**FR. JAMES CASPER, SCJ** - I was born in Leamington, a small town of approximately 8,000 people, situated on the shore of Lake Erie, south of the Windsor/Detroit border. I came to know the community in our minor seminary. Members of the community taught the whole secondary school curriculum – some talented and natu-



Fr. Jim

ral teachers, others not so capable, but all doing their best. I was very much attracted by their approachability, and the camaraderie among them. I grew to love the lifestyle, the way

they shared their faith, not only by including us in much of their prayer life, but also by the informal statements which revealed their relationship with God. I think I am a Dehonian. I know that our community has an identity among the parishioners of the parishes in which we minister, but I find it difficult, as they do, to put that into words; whatever it is, I am convinced that I am a part of it. As I age, I have the sense that our Dehonian identity has much to do with an attitude of loving surrender in the encounter with all that life brings us. I think being a Dehonian means accepting the life we are given, with the understanding that it is a gift from a God who, as the founder said with Paul, "... loved me and gave himself for me." The meaning of being a Dehonian is an ongoing search woven into our lives.

**BR. FRANK SNIDER, SCJ** - I was born in Zanesville, raised in Somerset, Ohio. Two brothers and two sisters, all are older than me. My oldest brother and the younger of my sisters are deceased. My favorite movie is whatever I happen to be watching at the moment, usually. I really enjoyed the comedy *Victor /Victoria* and *Mrs. Doubtfire*. I like historical and biblio-



Br. Frank Snider

graphic movies, but I am not sure that I always believe their facts. I will see any musical. I like all colors. I am especially dispirited by the fact that all the new cars come out in grey,

black, white, blue, and sometimes red. It makes for a pretty boring parking lot. I cannot figure out what happened to the other exciting colors for cars! I learned about the Priests of the Sacred Heart from an advertisement in *Catholic Boy* magazine. What interested me at first was the fact that they were interested in me. I did not know anything about their spirituality or their work until I spent time with them. I enjoyed learning about them through the seminaries and contact with the individuals in the order.

BR. FRANK PRESTO, SCJ - I was born in Pittsburgh, PA. All of my grandparents emigrated from southern Italy and settled there to raise their families. Victor and Rita were my parents; Tina is my sister. I strive to be Dehonian. Some days it is easier than others. For me, being Dehonian is integrating the core values in my life and living accordingly. The Sacred Heart becomes, hopefully, the cornerstone of my being as I interact with others. It's a hard act to follow sometimes. There is a line in the movie *Metropolis* that partially sums up the endeavor. I probably will not quote it accurately but one

of the key characters says "The Heart is the mediator between the Head and the Hands." That is the context I use when trying to integrate our charism into my life.



Br. Frank Presto

## SCJ NEWS



Fr. Carlos Luis Suarez Codorniú, superior general, speaks to participants during the online theological conference in July.

## **Conference moves from Cameroon to the internet**

"Sint Unum: Challenges and Perspectives Today" was originally scheduled to take place for a week starting July 11, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. COVID-19 turned the international Dehonian gathering into an online conference.

The seminar included representatives from the five continents in which Dehonians are located. Members of the North American Theological Commission who took part: Fr. Gustave Lulendo, SCJ (Canada), Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, (Canada), Fr. Ziggy Morawiec, SCJ (USA), and Fr. Charles Brown, SCJ (USA).

"Connected together, all of us met, each in our own room or office," said Fr. John, chairperson of the North American commission. "Fr. General opened the seminar with a brief consideration of why he suggested the topic of 'Sint Unum'. Fall 2020, Vol. 41, No. 3 SCJ NEWS

He wanted the seminar to throw some light on these 'worrying nationalisms, racial and religious issues, tribalism, ethnicism, racism, caste systems, etc., that affect (and hurt) our communities and new generations.'"

Could virtual conferences be the "new normal?"

"In this moment, nobody knows what is the 'new normal,'" said Fr. Stefan Tertünte, SCJ, director of the Centro Studi Dehoniani in Rome. "It is possible to gather people around the world and work together via streaming, but surely there are limits. There was no time to pray together, to take coffee and discuss the topics with each other... it does not fully replace the many benefits of being physically present with others."

Information from the seminar can be found on the general website



Fr. Francis (right) goes over paperwork with Fr. Paul Dong Pham, pastor of St. Paul Parish, which operates Huong Tam School.

(**www.dehoniani.org**) under the "Spirituality" section midway down the homepage.

#### **Vow renewals**

Congratulations to Fraters Henry Nguyen, SCJ, and Hubert Liassidji, SCJ, who renewed their vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) during the feast of the Sacred Heart celebration at Christ the King church in Southaven, MS, and to Frater Phong (Paul) Hoang, SCJ, who renewed his vows at Sacred Heart Monastery in August.

## SCJs enter into partnership with school

On July 18, the District of Vietnam entered into a partnership with Huong Tam School, a ministry in which Dehonians have been involved since the district's beginnings. Being recognized as an official partner will allow the district to be a part of the planning process for the future of the school and its outreach.

Huong Tam focuses on educating the children of migrant factory workers; each year the school welcomes approximately 300 students who would otherwise have no school to go to. Fr. Francis Vu Tran, SCJ, district superior, is originally from the US Province.



## DEHONIANS Priests of the Sacred Heart

Our ministries are diverse, as are our members. Yet our goal is the same: to work with a common heart in service to God's people, reflecting the love of Christ as experienced by our founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon

Learn how to join us in community and ministry

800-609-5559

vocationcentral@wi.twcbc.com www.DehoniansUSA.org www.facebook.com/ PriestsoftheSacredHeart @DehoniansUSA

Vol. 41, No. 3, Fall 2020

Instagram: @DehoniansUSA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PriestsoftheSacredHeart

Visit us on the web: www.dehoniansusa.org

Change service requested

Priests of the Sacred Heart P.O. Box 289 Hales Corners, WI 53130-0289

SCI NEMS

Non Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Hales Corners, WI Permit No. 71