



SCJ News



Remembering Fr. Bob Tucker, SCJ 1952 - 2021

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

“My hope is that we will discover hearts burning within us as Christ speaks to our hearts and that we will come to know him in the breaking of the bread and to know him in the faces of our brothers and sisters. Because, as Number 82 in our Constitutions challenges us: ‘the Eucharist has its effects on all that we are and do... and who unceasingly throws us back onto the streets of the world in the service of the Gospel.’”

-Fr. Bob Tucker, SCJ

Last July, Fr. Robert Tucker, SCJ, had a lung transplant to address an increasingly aggressive respiratory disorder. For seven months he alternated between the hospital and a rehabilitation facility in a constant “two steps forward one step back” recovery process.

On January 23, he died. Fr. Bob was 68, professed in 1975 and ordained in 1982.

Although COVID-19 drastically limited Fr. Bob’s contact with others during the past year, many people accompanied him on his journey, regularly following the roller coaster of good news – bad news updates in the months following his lung transplant.

Accompaniment was something with which Fr. Bob was familiar; he often accompanied others as they navigated their own challenging paths. One of the most difficult paths was the one that he walked with the faith community of St. Rose of Lima parish in Detroit after its church was torn down. The parish would continue, but the building that symbolized it had become too expensive to operate in

the midst of central Detroit.

For Fr. Bob, the demolition of the church was personal. St. Rose of Lima had been his family parish, the parish where he was baptized and confirmed, the parish where his sister and brother each were married. And as it transitioned to being a faith community without a church, Fr. Bob was its co-pastor. It was he who directly accompanied parishioners through a difficult transition with which he also had to struggle.

“To me, it was a real experience of death and resurrection,” said Fr. Bob in a 1985 interview. “We all went through the stages of death and dying — anger, denial, bitterness — it was a painful loss.”

It was one of Fr. Bob’s most challenging moments of accompaniment, and one of his first assignments as a priest. He was ordained in 1982 and was assigned to St. Rose of Lima in 1983.

Most of his years as an SCJ were in parish ministry. He served at St. Cecilia parish in San Antonio (1982-83), St. Catherine the Great in Milwaukee and Queen of Heav-



Fr. Bob with friends of the community from Chicago.

en in West Allis, WI (1988), Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (now St. Martin of Tours) in Franklin, WI (1989-93), St. Matthew's in Houston (1997-2004), St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Houston (2004-2010), and with the Northern Mississippi Pastoral Team (2010-2016).

Fr. Bob's final assignment before medical retirement was as a member of the formation team, helping to prepare students for religious life and the priesthood, accompanying them during the challenges of studies and discernment.

He joined the formation program in Chicago, but soon after, was asked to help move it to Sacred Heart Monastery in Hales Corners. It was another challenging transition in which he provided accompaniment. Before packing the boxes and sending them north to Wisconsin, Fr. Bob organized and led a prayer service that celebrated the SCJs' 47 years in Chicago.

"May our farewell express our

affection for all who were a part of this history, to this place and the other places in Chicago where formation took place," said Fr. Bob at the ceremony. "May our remembering and our prayers enable us to express gratitude, ease any sadness, sustain and strengthen us for the upcoming transition. Let us also be thankful for the gifts of God's grace that flowed in and through the many people who passed through our SCJ formation houses in Chicago."

A privilege

Of his final assignment, Fr. Bob said that it was "a privilege to be with our religious students and candidates in their journey as they discern their calling in life to be a member of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. My hope is that we will discover hearts burning within us as Christ speaks to our hearts and that we will come to know him in the

breaking of the bread and to know him in the faces of our brothers and sisters. Because, as Number 82 in our Constitutions challenges us: 'the Eucharist has its effects on all that we are and do... and who unceasingly throws us back onto the streets of the world in the service of the Gospel.'"

Students made a video tribute to Fr. Bob in which they shared their memories of him. "Fr. Bob was the most humble, kind, emotional and gentle person I had ever seen in my life," said Frater Thuan Nguyen, SCJ. "He embraced the Dehonian charism."

"Fr. Bob always knew when I was feeling sad and knew exactly what to say," said Postulant Jacob Smith. "After our weekly meetings he'd tell me, 'You're a good man Jacob. Be gentle on yourself. Be kind to yourself.'"

"Fr. Bob was not only a father and a teacher, he was my brother," added Frater JB Truc Tran, SCJ.

"He taught me how to be a good religious and a Dehonian," said Frater Hung Pham, SCJ.

Remembering a classmate and a friend

"Wherever Fr. Bob was assigned, as quiet as he often was, he was known as 'the little man with the BIG voice,' said Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, in his funeral homily. He and Fr. Bob were novitiate classmates. "Wherever he was assigned he left an impact on the people he was called to serve and SERVE he did!

"He was one of the best listeners



Fr. Ed was the homilist at Fr. Bob's funeral

I've ever known, and his insights and counsel were profound. 'Be gentle with yourself' was a phrase he used often with many people [as Jacob Smith experienced]... He was profoundly aware of his mission and committed his whole life to it: to lead others intimately to the Heart of Christ and by helping to restore Christ's Reign in individuals and in society."

In his own words

In 2017, Fr. Bob wrote a reflection on his vocation: "My call to religious life was nourished by the Priests of the Sacred Heart who came to my home parish in the inner city of Detroit. It was then that my love for liturgy began to grow. [During his homily, Fr. Ed noted that it was Fr. Bob's love of liturgy that compelled him to plan his own Funeral Mass.]

"I often reflect on the Gospel passage proclaimed when I took my first vows with the congregation 1975: 'While Jesus was with them at table, he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him... They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:31-32)

"Throughout my 42 years as a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart I have recalled and reflected on this passage often. I see in this passage what our baptism and our life as SCJs calls us to do; that is to listen and to reflect on God's Word speaking to our hearts in order that we may come to know Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Recognizing Jesus in the breaking of the bread sends us forth to be prophets of love and servants of reconciliation."

Links to several videos about Fr. Bob, including the Funeral Mass and Wake, are available on the US Province website at:

www.dehoniansusa.info/Tucker



Fr. Bernie during the defense of the master's thesis that led to the deacon conferences.

Putting that degree to work!

In May, 2015, at the age of 81, Fr. Bernie Rosinski, SCJ, completed a master's degree in Sacred Scripture at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology. Many people congratulated him on the effort, but often added "What are you going to do with it?"

Fr. Bernie admits that for a while, the question bothered him. "I had been brought up under the SCJ liberal arts mantra: new knowledge is self-justifying," he said. "Just knowing more about anything is reason enough to undertake the effort."

Beginning with the simple desire of wanting to know more about sacred scripture, Fr. Bernie said that he soon found himself "drawn into a thoroughly American utilitarian educational premise: What use is it? What are you going to use it for?"

So, he decided that he would see if he could find a specific use for the degree. Fr. Bernie's first thought was to contact local pastors to inform them that he was an available resource for evening bible classes. "Local" for him is the area in and around Chamberlain, SD; he lives with the SCJ community at St. Joseph's Indian School. But after being reminded that

ranchers and farmers in rural South Dakota worked from sun up to sun down he came to the realization that their free time was at a premium and most likely they wouldn't spend it in an evening bible class.

Still mulling over the idea of finding some use for the degree, Fr. Bernie had a conversation with a local permanent deacon while the two of them traveled to a diocesan function. Fr. Bernie asked the deacon about his training and was told that much of his coursework was introductory and that he sometimes felt that he lacked the appropriate background to prepare

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his homilies on the Sunday scriptures.

A light bulb went on and Fr. Bernie asked the deacon if he thought that he and other deacons might be interested in scripture study somewhere other than the diocesan center (which was a 150+ mile one-way drive for most of the deacons). He quickly said "yes," as did several other deacons in the area.

Fr. Bernie sent his curriculum vitae to the local bishop and told him about his plan. The bishop sent a letter indicating his appreciation. The courses would fulfill the continuing education requirements for deacons in the diocese of Sioux Falls.

He held the first in a series of two-hour monthly courses for permanent deacons in the Chamberlain area in September, 2016. The focus was the Gospel of Mark, which was featured in that year's liturgical cycle.

Participants included a deacon and a deacon-candidate from Chamberlain, a deacon from Ft. Thompson and one from Platte, more than 70 miles away. The course ran through May, 2017. The next series, from September 2017 – May 2019, covered ancient Israel: its history, its worship, its government, its culture, the various influences in the composition of its scriptures, the temple and temple worship, coinage and weight-measurement systems and the social life, taboos and expectations of Israelite people.

"I felt that a two-year general course might suffice as a timely sub-

stitute for detailed study of each of the books of the Old Testament," said Fr. Bernie. "It would help when a deacon preached on the first readings of the various Sunday cycles." Since September 2019, the focus has been on the Gospel of John.

Deacon attendance has varied over the years; currently there are four deacons, three from the local area and one from the Sisseton Reservation (295 miles away).

At the start it was understood that all of the deacons might have commitments that would affect class attendance. Funerals, COVID issues, and "day jobs" sometimes got in the way (the deacons currently include a pharmacist, an electrical contractor, the director of a diocesan office and a full-time member of the SCJ pastoral team that serves the Lower Brule and Crow Creek reservations). Audio files of each class are placed in a Dropbox for the deacons if they miss a class, or simply to review. There are no exams; Fr. Bernie selectively recommends books as supplemental texts to the courses.

Fr. Bernie has found the deacons to be eager and interested students. Several shared comments about their experience:

"My name is Dn. Jim Bregel, and I was ordained to the permanent diaconate on May 28, 2015. For the previous four-plus years I engaged in intensive classroom and on-line learning sessions to become a permanent deacon. I knew that I lacked a lot in the scriptural side of things so when Fr.

Bernie presented the opportunity for some in-person learning focused on sacred scripture, I jumped at the chance. Fr. Bernie is very thorough in his teaching techniques, but in a relaxed atmosphere. During our first class he presented us with a questionnaire to ascertain some of the courses we had in formation, especially related to sacred scripture. I consider myself truly blessed to have this quality educational opportunity presented to me only minutes from my home. My sincere thanks to Fr. Bernie for all the time and effort he puts in to prepare for and deliver our classes."

Dn. Mo Barrett wrote that "Fr. Bernie's class provides the means to cultivate and include influences from ancient Israel and perspectives from 1st century Palestine within the homily that enhance the context of the original scriptural narrative."

Dn. Chet Cordell added that "I am really honored to be a part of this class. I live the farthest away, so there are classes that I miss due to distance, weather, and additionally this year, the COVID-19 pandemic. The audio files for each class that Fr. Bernie records allow me the opportunity to stay connected with the rest of the class and the materials being presented.

"In addition to helping my fellow deacons and myself to bring the study of scripture alive for ourselves and for the parishioners, Fr. Bernie has such a sense of inclusion for the role of the deacon and our ministry in the life of the Church in today's world. Fr. Bernie embraces us as partners in the role of ordained clergy. We thank him for his kindness, his attention to our needs as deacons, and for the knowledge of holy scripture he so diligently prepares for us each month."

In an era of Zoom and Skype, Fr. Bernie continues to hold the classes in-person at St. Joseph's Indian School. The small class size allows the deacons to socially distance in around a large conference table.

"I'm glad that I could translate my liberal arts eagerness for scriptural learning into a benefit for others," said Fr. Bernie.



Dns. Jim Bregel, Mo Barrett and Steve McLaughlin get ready for their next session with Fr. Bernie



Next stop: Novitiate!

Three candidates enter postulancy; four prepare for novitiate

During Adoration with the community at Sacred Heart Monastery on January 21, Jonathan Nguyen-Vuong, Jacob Smith and Michael Wodarczyk entered postulancy. They join Celsus Robert, who became a postulant last year, in preparation for the novitiate. Fr. Andrzej Sudol, SCJ, is the postulancy director. Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, received the postulants.

"It's a joy for me to welcome the three of you into postulancy," said Fr. Ed to the candidates. "In the prayer of reparation we heard these words: 'Leo Dehon taught us to see in the rejections of your love, the source of injustice and cruelty in our world.'

"No truer words are more real today than when this prayer was written and when Fr. Dehon walked in our world," said Fr. Ed. He continued to quote from the prayer of reparation: "Touch and illumine our

hearts, O God, so that we might love as Jesus taught us. May we identify with our brothers and sisters, value the differences among us, and collaborate with them in healing the wounds that divides us."

"May each of you, Michael, Jacob and Jonathan, may you spend your time in postulancy learning how to help heal a broken world," concluded Fr. Ed. "This is what we are called to do as Dehonians, to be not only prophets of love but especially, servants of reconciliation."

Jonathan is an undergraduate student at Cardinal Stritch University, Celsus is an M.Div student at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Jacob is a junior at Marquette University, and Michael is also a theology student at SHSST.

Links to a livestream of the ceremony, as well as to the online photo album are available at:

www.dehoniansusa.info/postulants

ABOVE: Fr. Ed talks to the students about postulancy. MIDDLE: Michael, Jacob and Jonathan lead the Psalm reading. The Postulancy Ceremony took place in the community chapel. Due to the pandemic, it was closed to the public. However, it was livestreamed; the link to it can be found at the bottom of the page. BOTTOM: The new postulants with Celsus Robert.



20 Questions X2



“Twenty Questions” is a regular feature in which SCJs and those with whom they minister share a bit about themselves in an informal Q&A. Participants are given the same list of questions and invited to answer as many as they would like. In this issue of the *SCJ News* we share responses from two of our international SCJs ministering in the US Province. Originally from the District of India, Fr. Praveen Kumar Richard, SCJ, is a member of the Dehonian community at St. Joseph’s Indian School in Chamberlain, SD. Fr. Vincent Suparman, SCJ, is from the Indonesian Province, but has been a member of the US Province for many years, serving first in South Dakota and now as local superior of the Sacred Heart Community in Pinellas Park, FL.

We’ll begin with Fr. Praveen Richard. Note that this is just an excerpt; you can read the full responses of Fr. Praveen and Fr. Vincent, as well as others, at:

www.dehoniansusa.info/20Q

Q: Where were you born and raised? Describe your family.

FR. PRAVEEN: I was born in Tamil Nadu, one of the states in India. I am the second child among the six. My parents are very simple. My father is a fisherman and my mother is a housewife. Both of them worked hard to raise us and give us a good education so that we could have more options than being fishermen. However, two of my brothers decided to become fishermen to support my father’s



Fr. Praveen

hardships. I am always proud to say that “I am the son of the Fisherman” because Jesus had fishermen as his disciples.

Q: What is your favorite book or movie?

FR. PRAVEEN: “The Life of Pi” is one of my favorite movies because it makes me think and feel that “even in the mist of hopelessness, don’t lose faith on the future.” My favorite book is called *Man’s Search for Meaning*, written by Viktor E. Frankl, because it taught me how to patiently maintain hope with positivity.

Q: If you could travel anywhere in the world post-pandemic – without concern about the expense – where would you go and why?

FR. PRAVEEN: This seems to be a simple question but it makes me think a lot, for there is no place beyond what my eyes see that is not marvelous. But for the sake answering, I would like to go to Niagara Falls to see its immense beauty. I learned about Niagara Falls in movies and tourist books when I was a child. This sparked a curiosity that makes me want to visit them.

Q: Who – living or deceased – do you most admire and why?

FR. PRAVEEN: I always admired my grandfather and grandmother who had good reputations among the people of our village. Both of them passed away but their legacy remains in my thoughts and actions. They were very simple and gentle in their approach; very pious, loving and caring to the poor. My grandfather was a medicine man who treated the sick

with Ayurveda medicine. He was highly respected among the people. He loved me so much and taught me to help others when they sought my assistance. Even at his death bed he was calling my name but I wasn’t there for I was in the seminary at that time in another state.

Q: What trait or habit do you dislike in others?

FR. PRAVEEN: Arrogance, gossiping and being judgmental without knowing the truth.

Q: What is your favorite food?

FR. PRAVEEN: Any dish that is made out of fish is my favorite food. I love to eat the combination of fish curry with more spices in it, along with rice. I miss a lot from home, but I have learned to eat anything that is set on the table.

Q: How did you come to know of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) and what interested you about them?

FR. PRAVEEN: After the year-end sophomore exam, I was playing cricket with my friends during vacation. While we were playing, a former SCJ missionary, Fr. Jose Guilherme Gouveia from Portugal, came to us along with one of the local priests and called us to the parochial house. He spoke to us about religious life and priesthood with the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I never had any intention of becoming a religious. But because of my friends, we four of us decided to go for a “Come and See” at the minor seminary. I was just 14 at that time. During those three days, I got to know more about our congregation and its mission. Love, service, hope and charity were the things that stuck out the most for me during those days. However, at the end of the discernment process I said that, “I do not want to be a priest”.

Yet, the spirit of the Lord was hunting me. I eventually called the seminary and said that I was interested in becoming a priest. By the divine revelation of God's mercy and kindness to the fathers, they accepted me with 20 others for initial formation. Now, it is only me; 20 left the seminary during formation.

Q: Do you consider yourself a Dehonian? If so, what does that mean to you?

FR. PRAVEEN: Dehonians focus on the "love that overflows from the Heart of Jesus" as an "act of reparatory love." Hence, every individual member of the congregation should explicitly carry and witness himself as a son of reparatory love. In Eucharistic Adoration we bring forth the sins of the world as an act of reparation, and also draw from Jesus the sufficient strength to go to people as ministers of God's love. I believe that I am a Dehonian because love is the foundation of everything and my life is rooted in the love of God and love of neighbor; often this invites me to endure pain and suffering for the sake of others. The reparatory love of Jesus in me directs my life in joy, happiness and peace. And, I live by the Dehonian spirit of availability and charity in establishing social justice in me and in others.

**And now,
Fr. Vincent Superman...**

Q: Where were you born and raised? Describe your family.

FR. VINCENT: I was born in Batanghari, a little town thirty miles East of Teluk Betung, the capital of Lampung Province, Sumatra, Indonesia. At age 26 my father was married to my mother who was only 16. My father was an ordinary farmer who owned less than ten acres in the 1960s. My mother ran a mini grocery store until

she reached the age of 70. That was six years ago. I am the oldest child in the family. We are nine, four boys and five girls. Instead of having siesta after school hours, all the boys would work in the field until 5:00 p.m. The girls would take care of the household jobs. The boys in the family worked at least three hours in the field six days a week. On Sundays I would help my mother in her grocery store (no church; I was not baptized until I was 17). After working on the farm I would join the village boys to play soccer. That was fun!



Fr. Vincent

Q: If you could travel anywhere in the world post-pandemic – without concern about the expense – where would you go and why?

FR. VINCENT: If I could, I would travel to the Holy Land, because I have learned about the biblical stories but I have never been there.

Q: Do you have any hobbies or pastimes? If so, what are they and how did you get interested in them?

FR. VINCENT: My hobby is fishing. My father used to purchase any swamp land in the village where he would build a little dam if needed to create a body of water in which he scattered small fish (minnows) to catch larger fish.

Q: What is your favorite food?

FR. VINCENT: My favorite meal is corn and pork ribs.

Q: What is your least favorite chore?

FR. VINCENT: My least favorite chore is cleaning the ceiling, especially when I find spiderwebs!

Q: Who – living or deceased – do you most admire and why?

FR. VINCENT: I admired my father and paternal grandmother who paved the way for many of us to have a better education and to make many things possible for our extended family.

Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

FR. VINCENT: I wanted to become a truck driver to help my father haul the crops from the field to the market.

Q: What makes you happy?

FR. VINCENT: I do not feel useless. No matter how little I have, no matter what my position, I always feel that I can make a change for better.

Q: How did you come to know of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (Dehonians) and what interested you about them?

FR. VINCENT: I knew the Priests of the Sacred Heart in my home province (Indonesia). Then, they were mostly Dutch SCJs.

Q: Do you consider yourself a Dehonian? If so, what does that mean to you?

FR. VINCENT: Yes, I consider myself a Dehonian. Since my first assignment in 1989 as a scholastic and then again in 1995 as a newly ordained priest, I accepted assignments in some of the most challenging places, places that are at times forgotten by others. That means to me that God has his own plan for me and I just make myself available. There is no need to be afraid of an assignment when it fulfills the need of the congregation. This is just a little piece of my personal reflection on the spirituality of the Sacred Heart.



Thomas and Prem

Two more SCJs earn degrees in multicultural theology program

Before remote learning became an almost universal response to pandemic safety, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology already had a hybrid master's program in place. "Adveniat Regnum Tuum Pathway: a Master of Arts Initiative," is an MA program designed in partnership with the District of India and SHSST. Seminarians in India do much of their coursework online, supplemented by onsite courses taught by a visiting instructor (Fr. Charles Brown, SCJ, has gone to India to teach several courses), and locally at Vijnananilayam, an institute of philosophy and theology operated by the Capuchins. Plans also called for one to two semesters of study at SHSST.

In 2019, the first Indian student

– Meghanand Bandanadham, SCJ – arrived in Hales Corners for the on-site SHSST portion. However, COVID-19 ceased travel before future students could come to the United States. Adaptations were made, and in January, two more Indian SCJs — Thomas Raju and Prem Kaleel Raguman — were able to complete their written and oral comprehensive exams for the MA degree.

Both are seminarians in temporary vows. They hope to make their final vows in December, and pursue ordination in 2022.

Renovation is underway!

Phase III of the renovation of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology is now well underway. The first weeks were focused on asbestos abatement and demolition work. Rebuilding (remodeling) was expected to begin by March. The project was originally to have taken place last year but was delayed due to the pandemic. It involves updating classrooms (including infrastructure for new technology), renovation of several offices, and remodeling rooms on the third and fourth floors to allow for three faculty suites and 34 student rooms with private baths. The projected completion date is early to mid-August.



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

Find out how you can join us!

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