



SCJ News

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

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Please pray for me that I have the ear to listen attentively to the different voices in the province, the eye to see clearly the direction for the province, and the heart to be pastoral and compassionate to all.

- Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, speaking to members of the US Province shortly after his election as provincial superior.



Fr. Ed Kilianski, out-going provincial superior, with Fr. Vien Nguyen at his installation

Fr. Vien Nguyen elected 16th provincial superior

The words above were spoken by Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, on January 5, the day after he was elected as provincial superior of the US Province. In his first address to the fellow SCJs, he gave thanks, and then briefly outlined his concerns and priorities for the future. He spoke of the importance of building upon the past, noting the 100th anniversary of the SCJ presence in the United States in 2023. He reflected on the blessings of the present, including the province's diversity of community life and richness in min-



Fr. Vien Nguyen

istry. He ended by looking toward the future, and speaking of the need to prepare people and ministries for that future.

“It is humbling to stand in front of you, to carry on the tradition of the US Province,” said Fr. Vien, after and thanking the many SCJs who served as formators to him during his years as a candidate and as a professed SCJ, including Br. Peter Mankins, Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, Fr. Rick DiLeo, Fr. John Czyzynski, Fr. Michael Burke, Fr. Guy Blair, Br. Ray Kozuch, and Fr. Jan de Jong.

Also among those who had impact on his vocation was Fr. Jack Kurps, SCJ. Fr. Jack was the vocation director who recruited Fr. Vien. He will now serve as his vice provincial superior.

Following in the path of immigrants

The Dehonian presence in the United States was established by immigrants. Initially, the province was led by German SCJs: Fr. Richard Kiefer and Fr. William Noelken were its first provincial superiors.

As were the founding SCJs, Fr. Vien, 48, is also an immigrant.



Participants in the January 3-6 US Province Election Assembly set aside their masks for a few seconds for a group photo.

Originally from Vietnam, he came to the United States when he was 16. Fr. Vien’s family is now based in Houston. Several came to Good Shepherd Chapel at Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake (Franklin, WI) to be present for his February 2 installation.

“This country was founded and built by foreign-born immigrants from every corner of the globe,” wrote Fr. Vien in his reflection for the *North American Dehonian Story of Immigration*, a book produced by the North American Migration Committee in 2015 – the year that Fr. Vien’s predecessor, Fr. Ed

Kilianski, SCJ, was elected to his first term. “They [immigrants] helped lay the railroads, build cities and pioneered cutting-edge technologies and companies. I, and other immigrants, want to help build and strengthen our nation [and province] just as this older generation of immigrants did.”

A background in formation and academics

Prior to his election, Fr. Vien was vice rector and assistant professor of

Scripture Studies at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, WI.

He professed his first vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1997, and was ordained to the priesthood in 2004. Fr. Vien has an M.Div. from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, and a Th.M, S.T.L, and S.T.D. from the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, CA.

Fr. Vien’s first assignments were in parish ministry in Houston, first at Our Lady of Guadalupe (2004-05) and at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (2005-07).

Who was that masked SCJ? Due to the surge in the Omicron variant of COVID, participants in the Election Assembly were asked to remain masked throughout assembly discussions. Pictured below: Fr. Jim Schifano, Fr. Greg Schill (who also came prepared for the brutal cold) and Fr. Frank Wittouck.



He then spent five years as a member of the province formation team, working with young men studying for religious life and the priesthood. In 2018 he joined the SHSST faculty. He has been published in a wide variety of theological and professional publications, including the *Review of Biblical Literature*, *Journal of Biblical Theology*, and *The American Journal of Biblical Theology*.

A new Provincial Council!

Also elected to leadership during the January 3-6 Province Election Assembly was the five-member Provincial Council.

Fr. Jack Kurps, SCJ, was the first to be elected; as noted earlier, Fr. Vien named him as vice provincial superior. Fr. Jack made his first profession in 1972 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1977. He is executive director of Sacred Heart Southern Missions, active with the Dehonian Associates Committee, and has previously served on the Provincial Council.

Fr. Rafael Querobin was the second SCJ elected. He professed his first vows in 2001 and was ordained to the priesthood in 2007. Originally from Brazil, he now serves on the pastoral team of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Houston. Fr. Rafael is not new to administration; he also served on the Provincial Council of his home province (Brazil – Sao Paulo).

The third SCJ to be elected was Fr. Greg Schill. He professed first vows in 2006, and was ordained in 2010. After 10 years in parish ministry in northern Mississippi, Fr. Greg is now chaplain at St. Joseph’s Indian School in South Dakota.

Br. Duane Lemke, SCJ, was the fourth elected. A previous member of the council, Br. Duane has served in formation and in parish ministry. He is currently superior of the Sacred Heart Monastery Community, province director of Justice, Peace and Reconciliation, and works with the ECS program (English and Cultural Studies) at SHSST.

Originally from South Dakota, Br. Duane literally grew up with the SCJs – he was baptized by an SCJ priest and the SCJs ministered for many years at his home parish. He and Fr. Vien also served together for several years on the formation team.

Dn. David Nagel was the fifth and final SCJ to be elected to the council. He was professed in 1972 and ordained to the diaconate in 2003. Currently provincial treasurer, Dn. David previously served as executive director of St. Joseph’s Indian School and in formation. He has also been active with the Dehonian Associates Committee, has served on the General Finance Commission, and has previously been on the Provincial Council.

Fr. Vien and members of the Provincial Council began their three-year term on February 2.

Number 16 follows...

Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, succeeds Fr. Ed Kilianski, SCJ, who was the 15th provincial superior of the US Province. Who came before them?

Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, SCJ, was elected as the 14th provincial superior in 2013; however, his term was cut short in 2015 when he was elected to the General Council. Fr. Steve was re-elected to the council in 2018 in the General Chapter held following the appointment of Fr. Heiner Wilmer, SCJ, as



Before and after - (TOP) Fr. Vien and councilors stand before Fr. Ed Kilianski during the installation ceremony on February 2, and (BELOW) the new administration: Fr. Greg Schill, Fr. Rafael Querobin, Fr. Vien Nguyen (provincial superior), Fr. Jack Kurps (vice provincial superior), Br. Duane Lemke and Dn. David Nagel.

bishop of Hildesheim. Fr. Steve is now vicar general of the congregation.

Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, preceded Fr. Steve. He served as provincial superior from 2007-2013. Prior to his

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Priests of the Sacred Heart



Several former provincial superiors pose for a photo following Fr. Ed Kilianski's election in 2015: Fr. Richard MacDonald, Fr. Tom Cassidy, Fr. Stephen Huffstetter, Fr. John Czyzynski, and Fr. Ed.

election, Fr. Tom was president-rector of Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology and served on the General Council in Rome. Fr. Tom succeeded Fr. Richard MacDonald, SCJ. Originally from Detroit, Fr. Mac has spent most of his years of ministry in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

The 11th provincial superior was Fr. John Czyzynski, SCJ. A Cleveland native, Fr. John has devoted much of his religious life to education and formation. For over 25 years he served at SHSST, and following his two terms as provincial superior, Fr. John was novice master.

Fr. Tom Garvey, SCJ, preceded Fr. John. He was elected to four terms on the Provincial Council before being elected as provincial superior in 1989. As did Fr. Tom Cassidy, Fr. Tom Garvey also served as SHSST rector (1978-86). Following his terms as provincial superior, Fr. Tom became one of the founding members of the SCJs' Indian District. He died in 2002.

Fr. Michael Burke, SCJ, was provincial superior from 1983-1989. Many of his years of religious life

were in administration and education. He was administrator of St. Joseph's Indian School, and after his two terms as provincial superior, Fr. Mike served in vocations and province formation. He died in 2017. Fr. Mike followed Fr. Johnny Klingler, SCJ, who served in the US Army in Pusan, Korea, before pursuing his vocation to

religious life. Following his terms as provincial superior, Fr. Johnny served in South Dakota, South Africa, and for six years on the General Council in Rome. Retired, he is a member of the Sacred Heart Community at SHML, as are Frs. John Czyzynski, Richard MacDonald and Tom Cassidy.

Fr. Justin Guiltane, SCJ, was vice provincial when he unexpectedly succeeded Fr. Michael Noonan, SCJ, in 1970. Fr. Noonan died of a heart attack. After completing Fr. Noonan's term, Fr. Justin was elected to two more. Besides administration, Fr. Justin worked at SHSST and in parish ministry, primarily in southeastern Wisconsin. Fr. Michael Noonan was elected provincial superior in 1966. It was under his adminis-



Fr. Richard Kiefer, 1st US provincial superior

tration that the new building for Sacred Heart Monastery / Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology was completed, replacing the original structure that was on the property that now houses Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake.

Fr. Peter Miller, SCJ, was the fifth provincial superior. He served in pastoral ministry and education, including St. Joseph's Indian School and Divine Heart Seminary. He was named provincial superior after the then current provincial – Fr. Joseph DePalma, SCJ – was elected superior general in 1959. Fr. DePalma was provincial superior from 1955-1959. As general superior, he took part in Vatican II. In 1967, he was named bishop of the newly created diocese of De Aar, South Africa. Bishop DePalma died in 2005.

Fr. Damase Caron, SCJ, was the third provincial superior. A French Canadian, he was teaching at SHSST when he was named provincial superior in 1948. Poor health prevented him from serving more than a year. He retired to Montréal, where he had previously been local superior. Fr. Damase died in 1994.

Fr. William Noelken, SCJ, a German immigrant, was provincial superior from 1941-47. He came to the United States during WWII to serve as novice master, and remained to help build the young province in the United States. During his seminary studies he was drafted into the German army, wounded, and spent time as a prisoner of war before ordination. He died in 1986.

Fr. Richard Kiefer, SCJ, was the first SCJ appointed as provincial superior. Originally from the German Province, he was sent to the United States just eight years after his first profession. He was named superior of the newly created American Province (predecessor of the US Province) in 1934. Fr. Kiefer served until 1941, and was reappointed in 1947 when he was asked to fulfill Fr. Damase Caron's term. Fr. Kiefer stepped down for the final time in 1955. He died in 1971.



SCJ captures in paintings the humanity of the homeless

“I do what I can because I could not call myself a follower of Christ and turn my face away from so many suffering people.”

-Fr. Guy Blair, SCJ

“I had an encounter with an elderly homeless woman several years ago which changed my life,” said Fr. Guy Blair, SCJ. “As a result, I could no longer ‘step over’ the homeless as I entered stores or walked on the streets. I could no longer speak about Jesus Christ if I did not give of myself, do something for them.”

That “something” was the start of an informal ministry to the homeless that began two years ago in San Antonio. “At first it was a few people that I daily made meals for

and provided basic necessities,” said Fr. Guy. “Now I have capped it at 20 meals every day and have accepted the help of people from several Bible reflection groups that I lead; they provide cash to buy groceries and tents, blankets and clothing. Some people have been very faithful in making meals and bringing them to me for the homeless; a few have accompanied me to help and meet the homeless people of whom I so frequently speak.

“I understand how difficult it is to enter into the lives of homeless people. It is an experience which takes great humility and courage. It is also embarrassing because one realizes that the complaints we have simply fly away in the face of people eating out of garbage cans. There is so much to speak of, so much suffering.”

He wanted to get to know the homeless he encountered, get to know them as individuals, and started offering them \$10 to sit with him and be interviewed. “I ask them about how they ended up in the situation they are in, and what keeps them alive,” said Fr. Guy. “There are some brave stories, but most are distressing and heartrending. At least one man I know committed suicide, his memory haunts me.”

During the interview Fr. Guy asks the person if he can paint his/her portrait. “I tell them that I want to do a portrait of them but not one in which they might easily recognize themselves,” he said. “I generally try to do more of a psychological portrait, focusing on something that reveals their personality. Thus far I am surprised that I’ve been able to capture the likenesses of these folks.”

His initial plan was to use the paintings to “stir public interest in the wretchedness of their lives,” said Fr. Guy. But now that he has completed eight of them



Fr. Guy Blair

he isn't sure how he wants to share the paintings. "They are so personal."

However, he has shared two of his paintings here (top of page 5, from right to left). They are titled "Homeless and clearly near the end of his life" and "Jesus fell the first time."

"I had spoken to the two men, asking their permission to take pictures after explaining why I wanted to do so and they were amenable," said Fr. Guy. "The man in the orange shirt spoke with me as he lay in the dirt and said 'I'm getting the hell away from here tonight.' The other man lives under the tree; I managed to capture him trying to rise.

"I must admit that my heart breaks for these people, especially after I hear their stories."

Fr. Guy describes himself as a self-taught artist; he has been painting for about six years. The images of the homeless were done in pastels.

"This is about the homeless people, not about me and not even about the ministry," said Fr. Guy. "It is scandalous that in the world's greatest country we have no plan on a national basis to help our own citizens. It is also a disgrace how little our church is doing. One would assume that we would be marshaling more outreach to people suffering all around us, but we do not seem to be moved by their outrageous poverty and need.

"I do what I can because I could not call myself a follower of Christ and turn my face away from so many suffering people."

Look for us online at:



www.youtube.com/dehoniansusa



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General Conference participants in the main meeting hall in Rome.

General Conference focuses on Dehonian call to social commitments

Postponed for several years by the pandemic, the IX General Conference took place February 13-18 in Rome. In-person participation was limited primarily to entity superiors (again, due to the pandemic), but many others took part via Zoom and livestream events.

The theme of the conference was "Dehonians in Social Commitment."

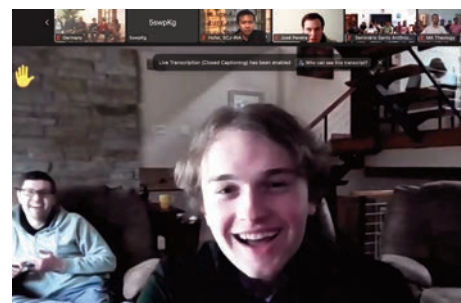
"When our founder, Venerable Fr. Dehon, faced the society of his time, in communion with the Church he loved, in the face of what he saw as a departure from God's will, he did not let himself be carried away by a discouraging catastrophism," said Fr. Carlos Luis Suarez Codorniú, SCJ superior general, in his opening remarks to the conference. "By the gift of his faith, by his careful intimacy with the Lord and his passion for his Kingdom, by his nonconformity and his perennial restlessness, he remained certain that the world before him was not outside the Heart of God."

These opening lines kicked off a week-long exploration into the roots of the Dehonian idea of social commitment, and how the congregation can continue to live that commitment today.

Fr. Vien Nguyen, SCJ, representing the US Province as provincial superior, summarized the week:

"The IX General Conference, "Dehonians in Social Commitments,"

brought together in Rome more than 40 participants from various parts of the Congregation. The six days together allowed us to: 1) Reflect on the rich legacy of Fr. Dehon; 2) Appreciate how different entities live and share our Dehonian charism; 3) Reaffirm our social commitment to the people at the margins; and 4) Stress the importance of handing Fr. Dehon's charism to the future generation of SCJs and laity."



Jacob Smith, a novice from the US, asks a question during the student Zoom gathering with Fr. General during the conference.

The congregation's future

During the conference, Fr. Carlos Luis Suarez Codorniú hosted a Zoom gathering of Dehonians in formation. Approximately 130 students, representing Africa, Asia, Europe and North and South America (including the US novitiate), came together to discuss the General Conference theme.

“Social commitment is a gift,” said Fr. Carlos, adding that Fr. Dehon knew that “our life is to be with others, to try to do our best for the dignity of all human beings.”

“You need to be creative and have courage and go to the people,” he continued. “We need to collaborate with others. Our way is to build bridges, to collaborate with sisters, other priests, civil organizations and other people who work for the same purpose: human dignity.”

Fr. Carlos ended by giving thanks. “It is wonderful to see you all, you are a gift from heaven, from your families and cultures,” he said. “Thank you for being SCJs, for being Dehonians.”

A quick detour to Sacred Heart

On the way back to South Africa from a conference, Archbishop Zolile Mpambani, SCJ, made a short detour to the Milwaukee area on February 3.

“I wanted to make sure that I visited the community in Hales Corners, even if just for a few days,” he said. “I love the SCJs and I know that they love me too, as ‘love’ is our motto.”

Before being named archbishop of Bloemfontein (South Africa) in 2020, he served as bishop of the diocese of Kokstad. He was appointed as bishop after only two months as provincial superior of the Dehonians’ South African Province.

Born in 1957, Archbishop Zolile professed first vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart in 1982 and was ordained in 1987. After serving in parish ministry, he was appointed to the General Council in 1998 to fulfill the term vacated by Bishop Tomé Makhwéliha, SCJ, when he was named as a bishop in Mozambique. Archbishop Zolile served on the General Council until 2003.

Although Bloemfontein itself is a large city, Archbishop Zolile describes his archdiocese as “basically a rural archdiocese surrounded by farms and some small farm towns where our parishes are. The number of Catholics is very low as the whole area is dominated by the Dutch Reformed Church, Episcopalians, Methodists and many Evangelical churches.”

As in many other areas, COVID-19 has had a significant impact. Archbishop Zolile was named to his position in Bloemfontein just as the pandemic was taking the world hostage. Church closures and attendance limits have been a challenge. “We are still struggling to get people back to church, but we will do the best we can,” he said, noting that lower attendance has also meant lower financial resources.

Even his installation ceremony was limited by the pandemic; only 50 people were allowed to be present. “But it was very solemn and intimate,” said Archbishop Zolile. “It was too good for words.”

When he was bishop of Kokstad, Archbishop Zolile was able to regularly visit the SCJs’ formation community in Pietermaritzburg where he had served for several years. “I visited and celebrated Mass with them at least once a quarter,” he said. Now, he is closer to Aliwal North, the seat of the province (and closer to his family) so he attends provincial assemblies and other gatherings. “I like to keep in touch with my confreres as much as I can.”

If meetings take him close to Johannesburg, he often stays with the community there.

Being a Dehonian is at the root of Archbishop Zolile’s identity. “The motto on my coat of arms says, ‘As I



Archbishop Zolile celebrates Mass at Sacred Heart Monastery

have loved you, love one another,” he said. “Being a Prophet of Love and Servant of Reconciliation has always been my strong point; it is a God-given strength and I make use of it whenever and wherever I can.”

He finds joy in his ministry as bishop. “What gives me joy as a bishop is the knowledge that the grace of the Holy Spirit is truly at work,” he said. “I often say that as a priest, I knew that the Holy Spirit worked, but now as a bishop she is excelling.”

Archbishop Zolile came to the United States to take part in the Alpha Conference in Phoenix. He and other conference participants were to visit St. Clement parish in Chicago to see the Alpha program in action, though a Midwestern snowstorm got in the way of some of their plans.

And just as when meetings in South Africa bring him close to an SCJ community, Archbishop Zolile wanted to take advantage of Chicago’s proximity to Hales Corners to stop by for a short visit.

“To the Dehonians in the US Province, I thank you for welcoming me,” said Archbishop Zolile. “Thank you for your generosity, care and support, especially when I was struggling in Kokstad for the first three years of my episcopacy. Thank you also for supporting me with Mass Stipends. May the good Lord bless all of the confreres in the US Province.”



Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ

Follow the science

“Follow the science,” is a line often used when speaking of things such as masking, social distancing and vaccines in the fight against COVID-19. “What I worry about is that a person of faith can hear ‘Follow the science as a challenge to the invitation of Jesus to ‘follow me,’” said Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ, at the February 9th Dehon Lecture at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology.

Br. Guy is the Director of the Vatican Observatory and President of the Vatican Observatory Foundation. He has undergraduate and masters’ degrees from MIT, a Ph.D. from the University of Arizona; and he was a post-doctoral research fellow at Harvard and MIT. He knows science. And he also knows that science can often be

wrong, because that is what science is about: testing and learning.

However, “the very uncertainty and error that medical science has been criticized for in the pandemic is actually a strength,” said Br. Guy. “The reason that we do trust it is that by correcting what we learn from what is wrong we come constantly closer to the truth...”

“The only certain thing in life is God’s love and God’s mercy and our need for both.”

Congratulations Henry!

Congratulations to Frater Henry Nguyen, SCJ, who made his Final Profession of Vows with the Priests of the Sacred Heart on Saturday, January 8.

“For six months I was in the Final Vows program with Fr. Jan de Jong, SCJ,” wrote Frater Henry. “He asked me why I wanted to commit myself to being an SCJ for life. I took a deep look at the SCJs’ Rule of Life – our Constitutions – and it renewed my love for our Dehonian spirituality, of living our life as ‘one never-ending Mass’ (Cst 5). Not only are SCJs called to be centered in the Eucharist but they are also called to go out into ministry with the poor, the lowly, and the outcast, just as Jesus did (Cst 18).” Henry is scheduled to be ordained to the diaconate on May 7 at SHSST by Bishop Joseph Potocnak, SCJ.



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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