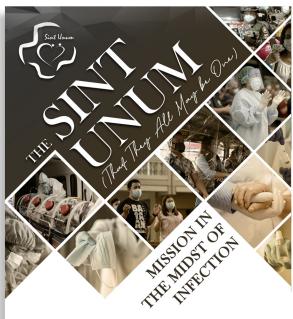


The Official Publication of the Sacred Heart Formation House

Aluba, Macasandig, Cagayan de Oro City

Vol. 1 No. 1 June – December 2020



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Why SINT UNUM?

By: Prince John Samontina, Aspirant

One of the most heart touching events in the Bible was the prayer of Jesus to the Father for all of His disciples. Jesus said in the Gospel of John, "Ut unum sint," which means, "That they all may be one." A meaningful prayer that is believed by the faithful everywhere and all the time that they will be one in their fellowship with Him and one in their lives together—being in unity with Christ, sharing in the love of the same Savior, the power of the same Holy Spirit, and the worshiping of the same Heavenly Father.

"Sint unum!" These two words are among Father Dehon's favorite mottos. He often echoes this account of Saint John on the insistence of Jesus, being one in body, heart, and spirit. This became the future mission of the SCJ congregation that through fidelity and unity with Him and with one another is the source of peace in the soul and of charity. It grew and remained in our identity as Dehonians. Solidarity is possible, the hard work of consensus is attainable, and listening to one another is feasible through the spirit of Sint Unum.

In this time of the pandemic, we can stand up no matter how many times we fall. This is exactly why we initiated this publication: to be united in spreading the Good News to everyone. We named our publication as "Sint Unum" for the reason that we, Dehonians, can make a change in our little ways and can stand with unity through the power of the pen to express our thoughts, ideas, and actions.



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Seminary Amidst COVID-19: Its Bliss and its Misery

The DOH–Center for Health Development regional record shows that Cagayan de Oro City has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in Northern Mindanao as of October 2, 2020 with 820 out of 2,959 and this number continues to spike.

The mandatory wearing of face masks and social distancing are more strictly implemented, with 2,000 pesos fine for violators (MindaNews/ 03 October). The situation might be worsened if the residents continue to disregard health protocols. As the world took a break for a moment, so did most of the churches and seminaries. No one was exempted from initiating lockdowns.

Nevertheless, even if this global health risk phenomenon is destructive in itself, it is still a blessing at the same time, particularly in seminary life. How so? Fr. Patrick Gutib, SCJ, the Sacred Heart Formation House Seminary superior himself said, "In our seminary, there are not many changes with regard to the formation program. In fact, it is easier for us to follow up on the seminarians because they do not go out of the seminary compound." Given the opportunity that everyone is given enough attention in the formation house is indeed great, that even if there would be no pastoral assignment, the community is enough to be the venue of apostolic training. However, he added, "...the greater challenge we face is with regard to the academic – the online classes." It is not only about the inconvenience of possible internet connection failures and limited resources or having no means to education but also about seminarians' behaviors.

The greatest challenge, therefore, is the learner's productivity. Despite the convenience, online learning can be a struggle as well. Since the majority of the task is self-paced learning and there is too much exposure to social media, the learners are always prone to procrastination. Thus, it is better to be on the study routine and organized face-to-face learning. But of course, the table can always be turned around, and we can try to look into the bright side. It is a great avenue for the seminarians to be more mature. Self-dependence and discipline, which everyone must possess, will be practiced.

Another challenge would be financial problems. Though the seminary is supported by the region and benefactors, these people are also affected by the pandemic. Likewise, with the seminarians' families also struggling at home, it is even difficult to provide for their daily needs. Ramon Pilo, a second-year aspirant said in an interview with tears, "It's been 5 months now since I received my last allowance. I envy some of our brothers who can buy anything they want because I can't even buy a detergent powder." Happy are those who have the means to provide whatever they want, but sorrowful are those who have none. Yet, it could also be a good opportunity to save and restrain from buying unnecessary things. We can start living a simple life, for it is supposed to be the life a religious person should attain. No one knows when this pandemic will end along with the sufferings it brings to everyone.

In situations like this, the SCJ founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon would say, "In difficulties, let us turn to the Heart of Jesus, and let us strive at every moment to do the will of God, even in little things, so that we may be able to do it in greater matters and become the instruments of his will" (Daily Notes, January 28, 1868). Thus, even in the very most painful experience, joy can still be found, if only one gives his heart to God.



Despite being hit by the COVID 19 pandemic resulting to community quarantines of different levels, seminarians of the SCJ congregation from different places managed to come back to the formation house here in Cagayan de Oro between June and July 2020.

Eight new recruits from Zamboanga Peninsula, one from Lanao del Norte and two from Leyte were added to the group. Both the old and new aspirants underwent the mandatory 14-day quarantine. These seminarians, courageous enough to answer the call of religious vocation, faced the danger of contacting the disease.

The bond of the new and old seminarians tightened as they went through the period of their quarantine. Solidarity was established and has continued to grow as time passed by.

Quarantine Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic:

A Blessing to the Seminary Prior to the Opening of Academic Year 2020-2021

By: Ramon Pilo Jr., Aspirant



SCJ's seminarians went through Home-Based Learning using online education at the beginning of Academic Year 2020-2021.

Enrolled seminarians started their classes at Xavier University–Ateneo de Cagayan on July 6, 2020. Meanwhile, others are enrolled at St. Mary's School (Grade 12) and Lourdes College (Grade 11).

As the COVID-19 crisis drags on, this online setting reduces learning disruption, following strict adherence to public health and safety measures.

Virtual Classes at Home

By: Mark Ian Catigum, Pre-college



SCJ Community Welcomes Three New Postulants

By: Junas S. Malana, Postulant

The Eucharistic celebration of the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus held at SCJ Formation House is a memorable occasion to the three former aspirants, Joshua John C. Malalis, Junas Malana and Vince Mahinay as they are now welcomed as new postulants of the Priests of the Sacred Heart.

Father Rico O. Lapinig, SCJ presented the three new Postulants after reading the creed and was then accepted by Father Patrick Gutib, SCJ in behalf of the Regional Superior Father Lukas Hadi Siswo Sasmito, SCJ.



Acceptance of New Candidates for Religious and Priestly Vocation:

Precollege, Orientation Year & Aspirancy

By: Allen P. Fornis, Aspirant

The COVID-19 has been metaphorically called a doorway leading to a new rupture in the world. "The seminarians will be the future priests on whose shoulders will be laid the task to lead our flock into that new world," Bp. Villegas said.

Seminary formation must go on despite this pandemic. The Sacred Heart Formation House Seminary continues to soar in its mission in forming religious priests by warmly welcoming the new candidates on July 27, 2020 in its yearly formation. The acceptance was integrated with the community



Mass presided by Fr. Patrick L. Gutib, SCJ, Master of Postulants, and Community Local Superior.

The candidates are from the Precollege, Orientation year, and Aspirancy.

With the integrity to follow the spirituality of the congregation and its way of life, the two (2) new aspirants and ten (10) pre-college seminarians are happily accepted in the formation house.

They were given the "Dehonian Cross" as a symbol of their identity as seminarians from the Congregation of the Priest of the Sacred Heart. The candidates came from different parts of the Philippines, particularly the Zamboanga Region of Mindanao and the Leyte Province.

Overall, there are 29 candidates present in the seminary, everyone willing to follow the charism of the founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon.

Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of the Philippine Region celebrated the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus With Simplicity

By: Richmon Rey Jundis, Pre-college

On June 19, 2020 the SCJ Philippines' celebration of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was welcomed by active seminarians, priests, and staff members who participated in sports competitions such as basketball, volleyball, soccer, and badminton. The highlight of celebration was the Eucharistic celebration presided by the superior of the community, Fr. Patrick L. Gutib, SCJ. The SCJs renewed their religious commitment.

Sister Ma. Yolly C. Novabos, TMM,

secretary of Fr. Francis Pupkowski, SCJ said: "This year's celebration was not the same last year that we have many visitors. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are not able to invite our benefactors and friends, but over-all the celebration was still nice. The best word to describe it is, "simple", with the mass, the novena and the simple meal, but I can't forget how happy we are that day.

This day is also special to Fr. Francis because he celebrated his 34th anniversary of his priestly ordination.



Fr. Leo John Dehon's Death Anniversary: Sportsfest 2020



By: Justine Lee Soriano, Aspirant

The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ) annually commemorates the death of their great beloved founder, Fr. Leo John Dehon, on August 12.

It is a big celebration in the whole SCJ Congregation around the world in remembering the wondrous works and the great efforts of Fr. Dehon which became the source of inspiration among its members in the continuous love and unconditional service to the people throughout the whole world.

The Congregation, specifically Cagayan de Oro, celebrated the event by having a day-long sports festival that was competed by four teams consisting of seminarians, priests, and the staff of the formation house.

Everyone showed their fullparticipation and excitement as they waited for that very day to be with one another, sharing genuine smiles and laughter, sharing their talents in sports and in different competitions, and most importantly valuing the spirit of Sint Unum, which is one of the Congregation's charisms.

Despite rivalry, constant cheering of everyone was countless, taking full account the paramount importance of brotherhood and community life.

The celebration started with Eucharistic celebration presided by Fr. Francis Pupkowski, SCJ with all SCJ priests and well attended by the entire community. After the Eucharistic Celebration, fellowship followed with a fascinating showcase of talents through song composition witnessed by the community.

The celebration concluded with a community song "O Sacred Heart, O Love Divine." Fr. Rico Lapinig, SCJ, gave the final blessing.





Basketball Never Stops:

A Dehonian
Sports Fest in
Commemoration
of the 95th Death
Anniversary of
Fr. Leo John Dehon

By: Ramon Pilo Jr., Aspirant

Group 3 won 43-38 against Group 1 in the championship game during the Dehonian Sports Fest 2020. The game was held in the court of Sacred Heart Formation House in Aluba, Macasandig, Cagayan de Oro City. Seminarian Kenth Ponghon, the team captain of Group 3, said in an interview that it was an excellent game with very nice players he has ever played with.

In the elimination games, Group 3 won over Group 4, and Group 1 won against Group 2.

The combination passes of seminarian Vince Mahinay and Fr. Patrick made Group 1 lead Group 2, with a score of 23-18 to end the game. The team captain of Group 2, Junas Malana, concedes with a smiling face. Meanwhile, Group 3, with their team captain Kenth, who manifested an excellent teamwork, won with the final score of 45-34 against Group 4 with their captain, Jayson Lague.

Group 2's Team Effort Hammered Down Group 1's Defense in Volleyball Championship Match

By: Vince Hope M. Ediang, Aspirant

The epic matches played between the teams were overcome by Group 1 and Group 2 to sweep Group 3 and Group 4 in the preliminaries.

In the final game, Group 1's strategy left Group 2 scoreless early in the first set. Eventually, Group 2 smashed down the defense of Group 1. The emotions were going wild in the second set. Group 2 maintained its composure and were able to dominate the set favorably, 25-20. In the last set, Allen Fornis, the team captain of Group 2 reminded the players not to give any chance to the other team to get at least a single set.

With the help of their spiking setter, Richmond Jundis, and Mark Catigum, Vince Hope Ediang, had tallied 35 points and the team clinched the title in straight sets, 25-22, 25-17, 25-20.

The Sizzling

Badminton Championship

Game in Men's Double

By: Vince Mahinay, Postulant

Vince Hope Ediang and Allen P. Fornis from Group 2 won a spectacular Men's Double Badminton championship game versus John Luke S. Lorejo and Prince Samontina on August 12, 2020. The games were in celebration of Fr. Leo Dehon's death anniversary in Sacred Heart Formation House in Aluba, Macasandig.

The game gave spectators an outstanding each team was endowed with shock as extraordinary skills and talents giving their counterparts a hard time playing. Every smash leaves an excitement. The match was so intense that the game lasted three sets.

The Earth-Shattering **Badminton Championship** Game in Mix Double

By: Vince Mahinay, Postulant

Mix Double Badminton championship, which was competed by Vince Hope Ediang and Ma'am Marivic Falcutila against John Luke Lorejo and Sr. Mercy Grace Basadre, TMM, gave their audience a nice game where both teams showed great balance and coordination of movements.

The match between the two teams happened on August 12, 2020, from 3:00 to 4:00 PM. The team of Vince Hope and Ma'am Marivic won and was declared champions.

The match was so impressive that the game lasted three sets where both teams unleashed their potential, giving satisfaction to the crowd.



SCJ Kicks-off

Soccer Game in 2020 Sportsfest

By: Lawrence John S. Buenafe, Aspirant

In this year's sports festival in commemoration of Fr Leo John Dehon's death, the SCJ Community included a soccer game in which four teams of seminarians played.

The intense games among the groups left the audience in awe and off their feet.

Group 3 and 1 advanced to the championship game. However, due to injuries, Group 1 took the challenge and won as the over-all winner among the four teams.



In celebration of Fr. Leo Dehon's death anniversary, the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart Formation House at Aluba, Macasandig in Cagayan de Oro organized a sports fest on August 12, 2020.

Among the sports, played not only by the community but including the staff of the formation house, were board games such as Word factory, Game of the Generals, Chess, and Scrabble.

Vince Ediang from Group 2 won the Word factory beating other teams, while Vince Mahinay from Group 4 triumphed in both the Games of the Generals and Chess in a 2-bracket game.

Sister Mercy and Ms. Norelyn's team-up won against other teams in a very intense game of Scrabble.

Boardgames:

A New Trend in SCJ Sportsfest 2020

By: Joshua John Chee Kee Malalis, Postulant



Interview with

Rev. Fr. Patrick L. Gutib, SCJ

By: The Sint Unum Staff

What is the face of the seminary formation program in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic? In an interview, Rev. Fr. Patrick Gutib, SCI, the local superior of the Sacred Heart Formation House, discussed with the Sint Unum staff the challenges that the SCJ congregation is facing due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the possible innovations the seminary must initiate in order to effectively respond to the current situation.

Sint Unum: What are the major challenges our congregation and the Church as a whole is facing in this time of the pandemic?

Fr. Patrick: The Church has been challenged by any means for generations. Apparently, at present, we found ourselves wrestling with this pandemic, which proves the Church's resiliency against predicaments. This is not basically an ecclesiastical crisis, but it has a pressing effect on the Church. The Church has to limit its religious activities. One of these is the administering of the sacraments. Masses in the chapels have been suspended. Our brethren are following live streaming Masses, but many of them commented that physical and personal encounter is very different than virtual. Besides worship and sacramental needs, religious gatherings, meetings, catechesis, and formations have been limited to minimize risks. Personal contact with the parishioners, home visitations, especially to the sick, outreach programs also pose a challenge. Due to a longer period of lockdown, some of our parishioners lost their livelihood; thus, the Church also has to address this need.

Perhaps, the other challenge that the Church might deal with is the aftermath of this pandemic – the fear that people might get fixated to the present guidelines of the Church - which eventually leads to complacency.

Sint Unum: How is our congregation responding to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue our pastoral mission?

Fr. Patrick: Taking precautionary measure is a must but we need to do our ministry. Our Congregation continues to do our pastoral work, maybe not as much as in the "normal" but we have to respond to the needs of the times. This is the time our people need us the most. In the seminary, together with the Dehonian Youth, we also did food distribution to some families. In our SCJ region, I appreciate very much the effort and brilliant initiatives of our confreres, especially those working in the parishes. They really live out our spirituality of "availability" to their flock. As much as they could, they try to provide the needs of their parishioners in collaboration with the local government and private organizations, of course, with the support of our benefactors. They cater the spiritual needs of the faithful so as the economic. The feeding and outreach program for kids and the aged is on-going. There are food relief distributions to those in dire needs. There are also some initiatives for formation and catechesis. More so, spiritual needs and strengthening of our faith are never left behind.

Sint Unum: In your opinion, do you think our churches should reopen during this time or should we stay in a place where we are doing mostly online with a limited capacity?

Fr. Patrick: We need to adapt to the present circumstances. Practically, we are not closing the doors of our churches. However, we have to follow certain protocols. Even how much we desire to bring people physically to the Church, we also have to consider the greater risk that it might cause them. We have to be prudent, but not complacent. If there are possibilities to do religious services physically with proper precautions, why not? The point is, we have to prioritize the safety of the people and to adhere to the regulations of the government, without jeopardizing our faith. For now, we just do what is available, and doable, without endangering the well-being of our brethren.

Sint Unum: In the local context, are there any changes being initiated in the formation program of the seminary to cope up with the pandemic? And how do they influence the growth of the formandi?

Fr. Patrick: In our seminary, there are not much changes with regard to the formation program. In fact, it is easier for us to follow up the seminarians because they do not go out of the seminary compound. The greater challenge we face is with regard to the academic – the online classes. Many of the seminarians are not really into virtual lessons or instructions. They rather prefer the physical classes where they have a personal interaction with their teachers and perhaps do personal consultations. Besides the lack of computers, there is also an interruption of internet signal.

Another evident adjustment is on pastoral formation. In the scholasticate, our scholastics help in the parish works and outreach program of our confreres. But, in our seminary in Cagayan de Oro, there is no pastoral work on weekends. Many of the seminarians are below 20 years old, still under the prohibitions from going out. However, we still teach about the pastoral matter "ad extra" (pastoral in general) but the experience will be "ad intra". Our own community becomes the venue of apostolic training. Kindness, availability, service to our brothers, sensitivity in taking care of our facilities are sort of behaviors that seminarians need to learn. We also do some practicum on skills that are useful to pastoral work. One important apostolate for them during this time of pandemic is the apostolate of prayer. They may not be present in the field, yet they are in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in prayer. They pray for the remedy of this virus, for the safety of the frontliners, for the Covid patients, for those who are in terrible situations, and for the universal Church.

The Church has been seasoned with different images of challenges and crisis throughout the centuries. But it has never collapsed. The reason for this resiliency is beautifully explained by Fr. Gutib's final words:

"Everyone is affected by this pandemic, but we hold on to our faith whatever it takes. The words of St. Paul inspire us: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Romans 8:31-34, 37-39)."

"Memento mori" is a Latin word which could be translated as "remember that you must die" or "remember that you will die".

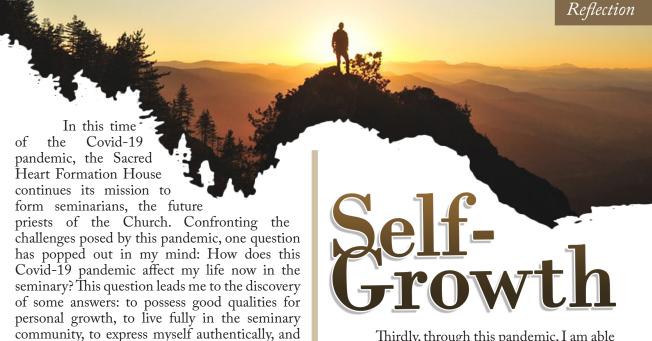
To think of death is not bad at all if we gain conscience on life and prepare ourselves to eternal life. Since early Christianity, death was a constant presence by the threat of martyrdom or by praying in the catacombs with the dead Christians. These situations made the early Christians always prepared for the definite encounter with Jesus Christ, the source of life, and Eternal Life. Moreover, this habit of thinking in death gained a stronger spiritual significance with the monks, particularly in the middle ages, with the hermits of Saint Paul who greeted each other with this motto, having death as a constant reminder to praise and live fully their lives following the path of the merciful Judge, Jesus Christ. In addition, we keep death in mind in the Mass praying for the dead and in our Liturgy of the Hours, where the final blessing of the night is asking the Lord "a restful night and a peaceful death". Furthermore, even our Venerable Founder Fr. Dehon had a small representation of a human skull over his desk table to remind him of death. So, death makes us think that life is short and death is certain and we need to be ready to embrace it.

Particularly, in the historical moment that we are living now, death is happening worldwide to thousands of people. Perhaps, every day because of the Covid-19 and even in our towns, barangays, small communities, and even to our very own families, there is a possibility that we can be contaminated. Consequently, it makes us realize the value of life. To think about our own death and not to live as life here on earth is forever, this situation can bring us closer to God the source of eternal life which brings us hope and security in this time of instability and chaos. Thus, the only certainty we have is that we will die. Death is inevitable. Hence, we will encounter the Just Judge and Merciful Father. So let's live today as if it were the last here on earth and let us be closer to Jesus through prayers and acts of charity because He is the One who brought us life and can bring us to Eternal Life. If "Memento Mori" is a constant reminder in this time of Covid-19, let us live under other motto: "Vivat Cor Iesu per Cor Mariae". Let us live our lives glorifying the Heart of Jesus through the Heart of Mary, Gate of Heaven, and one day live with them forever.

"Memento Mori"

By: Fr. Sergio Shoiti Matumoto, SCJ





Firstly, this pandemic helps me to develop the good qualities in my life by focusing on my priestly formation, and detaching myself from unnecessary desires. Upon undergoing a good discernment process, I realize that the formation house is, indeed, a fertile ground for a holistic growth. Here in the seminary, to possess good characters necessary for growth is not easy, since I have to go through the painful process of letting go of my unbecoming attitudes and worldly desires. But, I take it as a challenge because I have already decided to follow God and to embrace priestly life, the kind of life that God

wants me to live in the future.

to build a deeper relationship with God. These

insights have become my motivation in this

challenging time of the seminary formation.

Secondly, this pandemic makes me realize the importance of living in the seminary community. Thus, I make sure that my stay in the community is filled with joy. Although there are a lot of distractions because of the diverse personalities, I am continuously learning how to improve my relationships with my companions in the community. By submitting myself fully to the community, I am able to share my Godgiven talents and gifts, such as playing the guitar, basketball, singing, etc. I also participate actively in community activities, like house and ground cleaning, adoration and other liturgical activities. Being present in the community schedules and activities helps me build a great relationship with my brother seminarians and formators.

Thirdly, through this pandemic, I am able to express myself authentically to others. Truly, this formation house helps me to discover more about my personality, including my strengths, and even my weaknesses. All that I have possessed both the lights and shadows, I express them to the community, hoping that by being true to myself and to others, I will grow maturely.

Lastly, facing with the challenges of the pandemic, I need to build an intimate relationship with God. The difficulties of life brought about by the Covid-19 brings me closer to God. While waiting for the cure of this virus, I have become more prayerful, and I offer my prayers to those who need it the most.

Indeed, despite difficulties we are facing right now, this pandemic calls each one of us to continue forming ourselves to become better persons in the society. Covid-19 reminds us only that life is not always a smooth-sailing journey. Along the way of our walk, we also encounter waves of challenges. But instead of giving up, we must transform these hardships into opportunities for self-growth and development. This is possible since we are not alone in our journey: We walk together with the guidance of the Almighty Father, with the help of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Vivat Cor Jesu! Per Cor Mariae!

By: Joseph Flores, Pre-college

"I leave you the most wonderful treasure of all: the Heart of Jesus." This quotation comes from the spiritual life of Fr. Leo John Dehon, the founder of the SCJ congregation. Fr. Dehon said this because he believes that Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God's love. Because God is love, and He loves his people unconditionally, it is no wonder that Fr. Dehon committed himself to the devotion of the Heart of Jesus.

Like Fr. Dehon, the most precious treasure that I have found in my life is the Heart of Jesus. But finding this treasure, I have to undergo the long process of decision-making, sacrifice, and exploration.

The journey of searching and eventually the finding of the Heart of Jesus comes only after I have made a firm decision to answer God's call to the priestly vocation. As I recall, I was actually hesitant to submit myself to priestly formation. It was just out of curiosity that I thought: what if I would answer the call to become a priest? But deep inside me, I know that I am unworthy and unfitting, because I made a lot of mistakes in life. However, after engaging into serious prayers, such a curiosity has been transformed into a decision: to offer myself to the seminary formation. Now, having lived for almost two years in the seminary, I have been enlightened and found the true meaning of my life.

Corollary to this decision, I have to face some sacrifices. One of them is the Covid-19, and the other is the longing for the family. Because of the lockdown due to Covid-19 last March, we, the seminarians were asked to go home. Although going home is an opportunity to reconnect once more with my family, we were informed to come back to the seminary a few months later. I had no choice but to leave again my family and hometown. However, despite the threat of the Covid-19 infection and longing for the family, I have to strengthen my commitment to the seminary formation even if it entails a great sacrifice.

Wonderful Treasure: Heart of Desus

These decision and sacrifices, nevertheless, are occasions for exploration on the meaning of the priestly vocation amid the Covid-19 pandemic. In this exploration, I realize that I need to help the victims of the pandemic, even in my own little way. I believe that answering Jesus's call and to grow in his love is already a great help in these challenging times. For those who already lost the meaning and purpose of their lives, I can invite them to come to the Heart of Jesus, hoping that through the experience of God's love, they will gain back their worth and purpose. For those who lost their loved ones, I pray that they will remember that there is still one Lover who is never gone: Jesus. For those who died and those brutally affected by the pandemic, I offer their souls and struggles to the merciful God in my prayers. In a limited way, I also feel the need to be a helping hand to my brother seminarians in the community by being sensitive to their needs, so I will not become a burden to them.

Indeed, searching for the treasure—the Heart of Jesus—demands firm decision, strong sacrifice, and exploration. But once found, the overwhelming love of God, which overflows in the very Heart of Jesus, transforms the heart of the searcher. In Fr. Dehon's own words: "For anyone who becomes convinced and comes to know the love that God has for us, life itself is changed."



By: Jayson O. Lague, Aspirant



SCARED HEART?

In one of my online classes, one seminarian raised this question: "Should we continue to give the sacraments to the Covid-19 patients if it means our exposure to the virus or possible death?" Such a question points to one reality: fear of death; forget the Covid-19 victims.

I answered the said question with another question: "So what if we die while serving the Covid-19 patients?" To my mind, to die because we take care of the Covid-19 victims is more meaningful than dying without doing something good for the victims of this pandemic.

But, I think, Fr. Leo John Dehon has a more beautiful answer. Expressing his unquestionable commitment to God, Fr. Dehon, before he died, said: "I live for you. I die for you. You are my everything, my life, my death and my eternity."

Fr. Dehon's words capture the entirety of his heart: the willingness to die for the sake of the victims in this world. And so, in his desire to die with Jesus, Fr. Dehon has become not only an apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, but he has also become the living heart of Jesus.

Kindled in the hearts of Jesus and Fr. Dehon, we must confront, not avoid, the many faces of the Covid-19 victims: Those who are infected whose names are lost because they had already become numbers or statistics. Those severely sick who fight for life in the absence of their loved ones. Those who died deprived of a

decent wake or burial. Those who have mental illnesses whose experience of depression, anxiety, fear, and panic attack are aggravated. Those who want to continue schooling but cannot afford to go to school. Those who lose their jobs and suffer extreme poverty but do not give up working in order to sustain their basic needs, and even those who have no choice but to work hard just to earn a living despite the threat of infections.

While others hide their faces to these victims, not a few modern heroes and martyrs have stood up in courage: the medical frontliners who get sick or die while saving the lives of the many; the breadwinners in every family who risk their health for a kilo or two of rice; the generous individuals who still think of sharing their resources instead of hoarding; and the many other unrecognized "warriors" in the battle against this invisible enemy.

It is a disgrace for us, devotees of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to just hide in fear. It is an anomaly to neglect the Covid-19 victims, just to save our own lives. For the failure of our devotion is not our failure to pray, but our failure to convert our devotion into mission.

We have been into the greatest crisis in life but never had this fear shattered our humanity. Maybe our human strength fades away but not our heroism and martyrdom. Our human wisdom may be lost but not our hope. For we have God who shapes our courageous hearts — hearts that will never fall down amid the smell of death.

By: Fr. Belstar O. Ediang, Diocesan Priest of Pagadian



Faith

By: Mark Angelo G. Pastor, Aspirant



Creator: ORLANDO SIERRA | Credit: AFP Copyright: AFP or licensors

As experienced by the frontliners today, in the face of the current Covid-19 outbreak around the world, they pray with their unfailing faith and entrust everything to our Lord that sooner or later, this pandemic will come to an end.



Captured by: M.A. Pastor

As seminarians, all that we can offer as a helping hand, not only for the frontliners but also to all people in the entire world, is our ardent prayers and our endless faith to our Creator that the pandemic will end soon.



Noli I. Yamsuan. "Responsorial Psalm guy talks about seminary life" 2015 Retrieved from http://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2015/04/0

We are called to help and serve others and God in whatever way we can. We show kindness to everyone to proclaim God's grace and mercy.



PONGHON, KENTH SCJ SEMINARIAN. " SACRED HEART FORMATION HOUSE, CAGAYAM DE ORO CITY, ONLINE MASS." 2020. IPEG FILE

... to give HOPE and LIGHT to the people in the midst of this pandemic. We preach the name of the Lord as true HEALING and SALVATION. the world needs PRAYERS right now. Some of us no longer visit him in his home but we encourage ourselves to let him enter into our hearts,

as he knocks into our humble abode.

LET US ALL SHELTER IN HIS LOVE.

We Are Chosen

By: Kenth Ponghon, Aspitrant

New Normal

By: Jayco Sinilong, Pre-college



Credits: John Luke S. Lorejo

Before the pandemic, the seminarians went to school to attend their classes. The seminarians can also participate in their school activities physically.



Credits: Jayco L. Sinilong

Now, during the pandemic, everything has changed: from physical classes to online classes. This is now the "new normal".



Source:https://godtv.com/hope-for-our-frontliners/

"We have to survive this. We have to be together. Everybody's life is important."

-By: AC Nicholls

Fear, anxiety, and sadness can be overwhelming to people and communities. In our time today, we can truly say that our situation is very dangerous, especially to our front liners. They risk their lives for our health and protection. Prayer is the best thing to do in this time of the pandemic to survive and to remain unified with each other.



Source: https://thecentralminnesotacatholic.org/seminarian-snapshots/

"All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" - by: Rev. Fr. Charles fernandez, SCJ

As we look back in our previous lives, we realize the numerous sacrifices of our parents. We appreciate them more this time that we are away from them in order to respond to our call. We have chosen to leave their side even though the situation is very dangerous. We respond to this calling to serve God and pray for the safety and protection of all people, especially our frontliners.



Him With Us

By: Mark Ian Catigum, Pre-college

God is with us Remove this thought Because we can't make it I will never believe that Together, we can heal the world There is no hope. Don't be tempted, thinking, Everything will be alright! Put in mind that This pandemic will soon end us all. It is foolish to presume that God will help us. We are misguided by this belief Prayers can do nothing So, stop saying We can do this as one.

My friend, it is not too late to REVERSE our thinking. Now read this backward.

With God Is Hope

A Monosyllabic Reverse Poetry

By: Prince John Samontina, Aspirant

Is this what you call hope? With Christ the Lord I will dwell No more, I bring hitch So vast! My faith to God is So frail! Glitch at all times.

I see the light!
But still
I lock my room,
close the pane and
Clasp my grime and clothe,
Hold my breath yet,
Dash my mind
Some clear plan,
Think of
What if I
Burn my soul?

I continue to walk
Yet
My feet faint,
Rise me to reach my dreams
Too low!
Not same with my grief
I see it so high!
Now I know,
Is this what you call hope?

A Season of Growth

By: Ms. Mary Lalainne Q. Pacto, Teacher

When we gaze through life's daily haps, we have come to realize something, and it will always paint a picture to us, yet its mystery will always be, as soon as we can find it.

When we seek for growth, we become fragile When it becomes too much, we tend to be hopeless.

We build within ourselves doubts.

We create thoughts in our minds that poison our whole being.

In order for us to grow: we need to experience a series of tests,

to balance one's career path from our personal aspirations,

to give time and pay attention to things we have already taken for granted,

to pause for a while to examine oneself.

We hope that we can endure the pain, We visualize if we still want to commit knowing the certainties,

and to deepen our faith by praying to God of the uncertainties.

We need to believe in his will and power for us to grow in times of debacle.

Like a plant, it blossoms when it learns how to jive with the warmth and bleakness. We rectify situations for us to attain peace. We need to endure our plights for us to survive. We need to combat our own battles bravely.

At this point in time, God is our refuge and source of light,

For us to spring up in faith, hope, and love. Let us not stop praying, let it be the one to cultivate and to develop maturity in us Because the seed can break through if one is patient to grow in Christ.

patient to grow in Christ.

"DEVOTION AND PASSION"

(Winner of Song Composition on the Ocassion of the Death Anniversary of Fr. Leo John Dehon) by: Joshua John C. Malalis, Postulant

Your love and your dedication Are the source of your determination, you represent as an oblation, for the people to be saved from condemnation

PRE-CHORUS:

Leaving us what you believe as: The greatest treasure, The Heart of Jesus

CHORUS:

Apostle of the Sacred Heart are you, Help us to grow just as you too And to follow just as what you do, To see the heart of Jesus, real and true

For you, the Sacred Heart is wounded, In pain and is always been rejected It's an act of compensation, To the wounds, you thought of immolation

PRE-CHORUS:

Leaving us what you believe as: The greatest treasure; The Heart of Jesus

CHORUS:

Apostle of the Sacred Heart are you, Help us to grow just as you too And to follow just as what you do; To see the heart of Jesus, real and true

INTERLUDE:

PRE-CHORUS:

Leaving us what you believe as: The greatest treasure; The Heart of Jesus

CHORUS:

Apostle of the Sacred Heart are you, Help us to grow just as you too And to follow just as what you do; To see the heart of Jesus, real and true

CODA:

Father Leo John Dehon, we love you



In this time of pandemic, we live a life filled with uncertainties. We are all weak and vulnerable. Only in our merciful God, we do find our strength and hope.

And so we beg: "Lord, please help us."

We suffer from Covid-19. Let us be strong like Jesus. We are anxious, but with faith, we trust that the Lord turns our anxiety into tranquility. Soon, the healing hands of Jesus will bring us total recovery.

Many members of our families and friends have died already. Their souls now rest in God's peaceful embrace. May we never lose our memory for our loved ones who have gone ahead of us.

We have frontliners who have contributed their expertise and sacrificed their lives for the victims. May they be persistent in their mission. May they endure in their hardships and stay calm in the midst of troubles. May they be optimistic that their labor will bear abundant fruits in the

near future. May they have a God who never leaves orphans and widows. May our loving Lord bless them in return with good health and safety.

Many of us have sadly lost our jobs. In the midst of poverty, now, we have doubled our effort just to buy basic needs and bring food to the table. We salute ourselves for choosing the means to live that is morally upright despite extreme difficulty. Amid the scarcity of food, we continue to be a good neighbor because we never stop to show our generosity and kindness to others. Our generous Lord will bless our effort a hundredfold.

Truly, we are in a dire need for an immediate solution to this uncertain battle. But we are too powerless. And so, again on our bended knees, we call upon God: "Lord, please hear us."

To the researchers, we beg the Lord to enlighten their minds and give them the gift of wisdom so that the wait for the discovery of the vaccine will not be prolonged. And while the cure is not yet in sight, may the Lord help them to find strategies in containing the spread of the disease with speed and accuracy.

To the workers in the different fields who continue to show outstanding dedication and hard work despite fears of contamination, we pray for the Lord's shield and his protection. May the Lord remove anxiety from your minds and may they realize that God is bigger than this virus.

To our government authorities, Lord, enlighten them so that they can make the right decisions and create appropriate steps, guidelines, and solutions for the good of the people.

To our youth, Lord, may their hearts remain grateful not bored, contented not disappointed in spending more time with their families. May they learn to value what life has offered them right now.

To those who long for their beloved, those who do not have someone to listen to their pain, those who do not have someone to tell their stories, Lord, encourage their hearts, and strengthen their minds and bodies. Give them, Lord, companions who are genuine enough to ease their loneliness while they are away from their loved ones.

To those in religious communities, may they never cease to pray for healing, especially for those who need their utmost prayer. May Jesus always bless them and keep them safe from all harm.

Lastly, Lord, we fervently ask for your mercy to heal our suffering world, especially that aside from the current pandemic, we also experience natural calamities. Please heal any form of pain in us especially to those who are affected by the recent earthquakes and typhoons. Continue to protect us with your might. We offer our distress to you for we believe in your unending love. Whatever tomorrow may bring, we will always praise your name. Grant us the perseverance and faith to believe that we can rebuild the new world together with your love and mercy. We hope that you hear this sincere prayer. Amen.

PANDEMIC AFFECTING LIVES and VOCATION

By: Ramon Pilo Jr., Aspirant

Amidst the rise of COVID-19, though the mobility is limited, the response to the call of vocation is incessant. In relation to the matter of impact or effect of the pandemic to the life of the seminary priests, religious brothers and sisters, we conducted a survey as to how the pandemic has affected their lives as well as their vocation.

How does COVID 19 pandemic affect your life and your vocation?



Peddy R. Serencio, Orientation Year

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected my study. I am used to having physical classes but this global crisis has required everyone to have online classes. In addition, I am frightened to be infected. However, the situation has helped me in molding myself. I learned how to reflect better on my everyday life.



Jay-ar H. Tuburan, Orientation Year

It has affected me and my plans in life. It has also made me know myself more due to quarantine and has made my bond with the community inseparable.



Vince Aldrin J. Geralla, Pre-college

The disruptive effects of the COVID-19 outbreak have impacted almost all of us. Honestly, I never thought that one day people will be required to stay at home. Although, I am here in the seminary, I still have a fear of what will happen tomorrow, especially to my family, knowing the risk of this current situation. However, this pandemic has brought me closer to a life of prayer. In this time of uncertainty, let us build hope together that we can overcome this with the help of the One above us all.

John Luke S. Lorejo, Pre-college



This pandemic has affected thousands of people and I am one of them. My day-to-day life has been affected in a way that I cannot go out in the seminary to have my pastoral work and I cannot go to school and attend face to face class which is very important for me as a student. Since I cannot go out in the seminary, I'm currently suffering in adjusting in this new system of classes which is online learning. For me, it is difficult because it is new, but I am trying my best to cope up in my studies. I hope this pandemic will end soon, so that we can go back to the normal way of life especially in our education that needs real interaction with our teachers.

Sr. Mercy Grace S. Basadre, TMM, House Manager



In this time of COVID Pandemic, many aspects of my life have been affected. First, I find it uncomfortable to wear face mask and face shield as mandated by the government as one of the protocols to prevent from acquiring the virus. Second, I am in anxiety every time I go outside because it means I have the possibility to be in contact with different people. I must be sober and be alert for virus protection. Thinking and knowing that this virus infects and kills many lives for it cannot be seen, so I must be careful and stay safe as the saying goes "prevention is better than cure." Third, during the reign of the virus, I felt compassion for people who cannot attend the mass as a core of our being, the cravings of receiving the Holy Communion. They even missed the celebration of the Holy Week and Eastern Sunday.

Sr. Chrysler Jean P. Behonio, TMM Novice

For me, COVID doesn't affect my life especially this moment of my apostolic year but rather it is an eye opener for me to see the greater importance of my life: my spiritual growth. The COVID protocols offered to us must also be done in our spiritual life. Wearing of face mask represents to wear FAITH is a must; using of alcohol represents to examine our conscience; always washing our hands represents that every day we must ask God's forgiveness for all our mistakes and failures; stepping on footbath means to go to confession. For me, COVID is a beautiful thing that happened because it has reminded me that God's presence is always in the midst of hardships we are facing today. There is always beauty at the back of every crisis if we only recognize that everything that God has allowed is for the good of all.

Seminary Formation in the Time of Pandemic

The seminary has been affected by the pandemic in terms of the formation. It has both positive and negative effects to the community formation. The seminary is following a Formation Program which includes the five dimensions of formation: Spiritual, Human, Community, Intellectual, and Apostolic aspects. Spiritual formation is to develop the love for the Eucharist, to nurture deeper knowledge, and to live the Word of God. Moreover, it strengthens the spiritual journey through prayer life. Human formation develops emotional maturity, trust, and interdependence. It teaches to accept one's vigor and frailty to be able to accomplish the tasks entrusted to the formandi. Community Formation centers on the experience community life in the spirit of brotherhood and Dehonian Sint Unum, to develop oblation, stewardship, and co-responsibility. Intellectual formation fosters one's intellectual capacity in Christian Education and Basic Education. Lastly, Apostolic formation teaches to familiarize and to experience initiation into the apostolic life of the SCJ, a pastoral involvement imitating Jesus.

Since we, the seminarians, cannot go out because of the current situation, and we are having our classes online, we have time to spend in the seminary. For spiritual formation, we practice a more prayerful life to offer it to the people who need it the most. The Pre-College/ Orientation year seminarians have their thirty minutes Lectio Divina every day after breakfast. For human formation, it helps the seminarian to be sensitive and discernful as a member of the community. This is also one way to show and reveal their true capabilities, attitudes, and feelings. Community formation has also changed. Before the pandemic, the seminarians can go out to the city for their studies, and some come home late, or cannot even join the sports time, cleaning time, and other activities, because of their class schedules. At present, they have no problem and

no excuse in joining these activities. Intellectual formation has been taken into focus with the pandemic, especially because the seminarians have been taking their classes in universities and schools online. The seminary is being attentive to the seminarians to make sure that they focus on their studies by putting CCTVs to see their progress and to make sure they don't get tempted to do unnecessary things. Aside from having their regular classes, seminarians also have a separate English class from another teacher every Saturday to help us improve our English skills. In addition, college students have a class with the teacherin-charge in the seminary every Wednesday. Apostolic formation has been totally affected as the government does not allow mass gatherings. These gatherings include pastoral activities and summer youth missions. However, in this way we are able to focus on our community life, to improve our relationship with our brothers and to other members of the community, to be a better steward to our community by being sensitive to the needs of others and to the environment as well, and to continue to grow holistically despite the current situation.

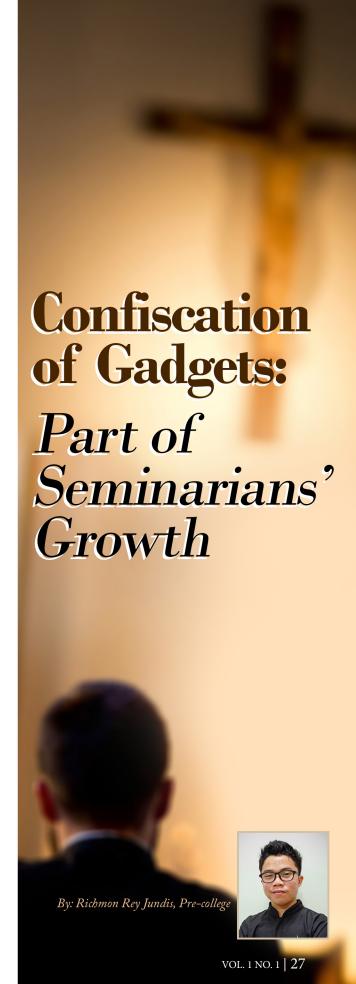
Despite the pandemic, the seminary formation still continues to function and develop, as it helps to strengthen and to develop the human aspect of the seminarians. It somehow became helpful in strengthening the seminarians in their vocation. In conclusion, the pandemic, though having negative effects, has more positive effects to develop the seminary formation. These dimensions are essential to aid, facilitate, and develop the capacity of the seminarians to grow, to mature, and to understand the nature of their vocation, and to discern in responding to God's call.

By: Lloyd Christian Yabo, Pre-college



A discussion resonated around the world due to the rapid development of technology. The world is innovating fast, and so is technology. The approach of seminaries towards technology, specifically with gadgets, also changed as time passed by. The use of gadgets for students is unavoidable especially that they belong to this modern world and that the world is facing a crisis due to the pandemic which means that social distancing is highly required. Thus, gadgets are the primary means of learning, communication, and entertainment, but the negative effects are the most concern of the priests in charge of seminarians around the world.

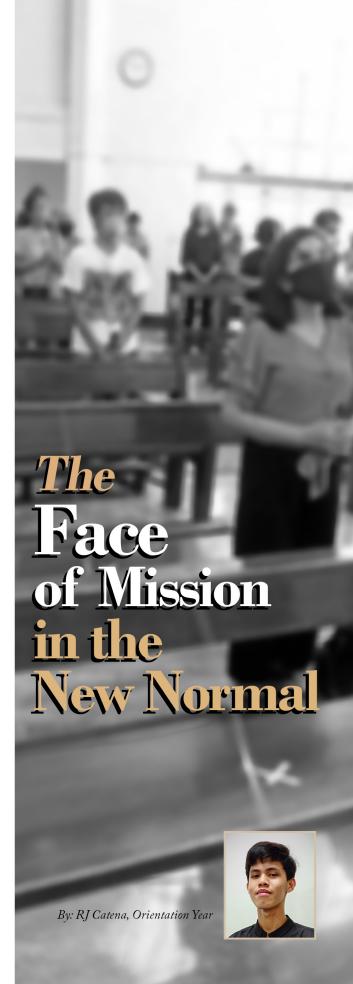
Many young individuals are using gadgets without knowing the impact of these things to them. An adequate number of teenagers reasoned out that gadgets help them avoid boredom by downloading online applications. According to Agrojaya 2018, these applications are only distractions and will lead the students to be out-of-focus in their academic performances. In the context of seminarians' life, before a seminarian becomes a priest, he is obliged to finish degrees such as Philosophy and Theology. Thus every student, especially a seminarian, is obliged to study well to prepare for their future works. Though gadgets make it easier for everyone to connect to their family and peers, oftentimes gadgets become the reason why many are suffering from emotional and psychological problems. According to Healthline 2019, gadgets' impact on emotional and psychological aspects prevail, because they become so attached to what is absent on their parameters and forget the real presence of everyone surrounding them. According to Fr. Francis Pupkowski, SCJ, separation from family might help everyone to discover their own capabilities and to help them to grow.



COVID-19 emerged on a global scale, and it is normal to feel helpless. Generally speaking, we know that helping amidst pandemic is very challenging and laborious. Almost several months have passed and the new normal way of living is now being adopted by the Filipino culture. We have experienced an unprecedented shift in the way of life because of this pandemic. In this generation, who would have thought that ethyl alcohol would become as precious as gold? The way of life in the new normal is different from the life we used to have. Even buying groceries is now difficult and risky. So how about helping others? We know that helping in the time of crisis is difficult and risky but still some people choose to do acts of kindness towards others.

The total number of COVID cases in Cagayan de Oro City continues to rise. With this increase in the number of cases, it is very crucial to risk our lives just to help others. But as Filipinos, we are already culture oriented to help others whenever one needs help. In Cagayan de Oro City, people tried different kinds of help. Especially in our neighborhoods, as a collectivist culture, we are already prone to help our neighbors as our family in terms of needs. Despite jobless days, people still value the word "bayanihan." In the Local Government Unit of Cagayan de Oro City, Mayor Oscar S. Moreno is doing his best accompanied by his officials who are doing their best to help others in this time of the pandemic. As many people are jobless, the government is always mindful of distributing relief goods to the people. The economy here in Cagayan is slowly operating but the government is still on track to prevent the spread of the virus. Peace Process Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., the government's chief implementer of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Covid-19, cited Cagayan de Oro's "balanced approach" to manage the infections while keeping the economy open. This is a very big help, especially for the daily wage earners.

It is really difficult to adjust to the new normal situation. We are experiencing a way of life that we have not experienced before. The best way to help the community and the people is to stay at home, follow the guidelines of the government, and always stay healthy. It must be in the mind-set of an idealist to have the desire to help and support others. We must help each other even in the smallest way. As Saint Theresa said, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love".





Cultivator of the Seeds of Gads Lave (Winner of the Essay Writing Contest on the Ocassion of the Death Anniversary of Fr. Leo John Dehon)

A man's heart longing for the love of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is like a mustard seed thirsting for water for it to germinate in the middle of the desert. A brave man of prayer and action sprouted the seed of holiness in his heart through the reparation, gratefulness, devotion, and his confidence for showing his fate in the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. Despite the unimaginable obstacles that he experienced that seems to be a wide desert of suffering. His oblation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is one of the remarkable highlights of his life for it led this man to scatter the seed of faith.

He was born on March 14, 1843, in La Capelle, France. He grew intelligent, loving, obedient, and God-fearing. He even talked about the great love of the Almighty Father for us and that He sent His only Son our Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit for our salvation. He emphasized repentance as a sign of love that we need to meditate on Christ's suffering on the cross. He compared his life's passion for Christ and said that it is nothing compared to the agony that Jesus endured for us. His positive attitude and faith towards God was the result of his pursuit of holiness. With his passion to follow Christ's footsteps; practicing daily reparation and oblation, he transformed his desert of suffering into a Greenfield of salvation.

He showed his gratitude to God through daily prayers and works of charity. He said that prayer and charity sustain the joy of his heart. Prayers and charitable works are proof that he lived accordingly to the will of the Sacred Heart. He was a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and as part of their mission, he visited the poor and elderly. Because of this, his dream of becoming a priest grew deeper. He became so grateful for what he has and made him become truly rich in the heart. He turned small blessings that he had into extraordinary graces, because of being grateful and charitable.

This brave man was from a well-known family but he renounced his own glory to live only for the glory of God. He suffered much just to show his great love for the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. He imitated Christ who has a meek and humble heart through remaining

silent and obedient despite the oppositions that he encountered, especially from his own parents. Through his confidence to suffer and devotion for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he was able to harvest the fruit of his great love and devotion despite the dryness of support from the people around him.

Who is this man of prayer and action who suffered many trials for the love of Jesus? He is the beloved founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (SCJ), Venerable Father Leo John Dehon. This congregation is his way of showing his great love for the Heart of Jesus. Fr. Dehon died in Brussels on August 12, 1925. In his last days, he was reported to have stretched out his hand toward a portrait of the Sacred Heart and uttered his last words: "For Him I live; for Him I die. He is my everything, my life, my death, and my eternity."

Before his death, he fulfilled his dream to become a missionary though he was a priest, through scattering the seed of faith which is the congregation of SCJ in the different countries. Many people were moved by Fr. Dehon's dedication in offering his life to the Sacred Heart of Jesus that led them to imitate him and made them enter the Congregation. Now there are over 2200 priests and brothers living and working in more than 40 countries the whole wide world, preaching God's words, making acts of kindness and charity, offering their whole lives for the Heart of Jesus. Fr. Dehon's happiness was immeasurable even until death, for he knew that the SCJ family was getting bigger. He was a remarkable apostle of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, for he scattered and cultivated the seed of God's love and made it grow.

A man of prayers and actions who suffered for Jesus, Venerable Father Leo John Dehon, germinated the seed of love for Christ and surmounted all the obstacles in his way to holiness through reparation, gratefulness, confidence, and devotion for the sacred heart of Jesus. Fr. Dehon is not just any disciple of Christ for he is a great apostle of the Sacred Heart.

By: Richmon Rey Jundis, Pre-college















