



Prot. N. P0344/2015

Rome, June 10, 2015

Et misericordia motus est

Letter on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

June 12, 2015

To all SCJs

To all members of the Dehonian Family

June 12 1896 also fell on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. For Fr. Dehon that was a day of disappointment rather than a day of rejoicing. The first mission to Ecuador came to an end as our missionaries were expelled from the country. But from failure can come success, and death can give birth to new life. After leaving Ecuador, Msgr. Grison and Fr. Lux began the mission in Congo. From this humble beginning the Dehonian family has taken root in all corners of the globe.

On this Feast of the Sacred Heart we write to you with great joy. We have experienced the fruits of many missionary efforts as Dehonians from 40 countries gathered for the 23rd General Chapter, just concluded in Rome. We are pleased to present the works of this chapter, which are attached as an addenda, for your reflection.

Chapter members spent three weeks in prayer, discussion and activity. They lived in a very international and fraternal community to discern the issues and projects on which the General Administration must focus over the next six years. They did so keeping in mind the importance of going out in mission that people might know and feel the love of God through Dehonian witness.

Chapter members addressed many challenges. Some areas of the Congregation are growing in age and declining in numbers. Yet those entities still continue to find new ways to incarnate Dehonian charism. Other entities attract many vocations and are full of ideas and energy. They often face having limited resources to pursue their projects. Still they do what is possible and press forward with hope.

The Chapter also considered the Congregation's strengths. Inspired by God's love, we are in turn inspired to reach out in service to others. Reports from the continents described how so many people benefit from our mission. Dehonians give great witness to the service of *Misericordia* through creative and inspiring social projects, education and pastoral works.

God' love is also lived out in the way we care for one another in community. The Feast of the Sacred Heart inspires us to care more deeply for our brothers, striving to know what each other has at heart.

When Pope Francis met with Chapter members he observed that the world is wounded and needs the caresses of God. "I pray to the Lord that as religious you give witness to mercy, which ultimately leads to the discovery of Jesus, being healed by Jesus, pardoned by Jesus." In return, God asks of Dehonians caresses of mercy.

We would like to express our warmhearted gratitude to former Superior General Fr. José Ornelas Carvalho, his council and treasurer: Fr. John Van den Hengel, Fr. Paulus Sugino; Fr. Cláudio Weber, Fr. Albert Lingwengwe and Fr. Aquilino Mielgo Domínguez. They hand us over a Congregation enriched with openness and new opportunities. We thank God because our predecessors took care of the Congregation by leading it in a creative way. We are delighted to continue this heritage.

Thanking God for the trust you have placed in us as the new Superior General and Council, we strive to say *ecce venio* to the call to lead and serve. We draw inspiration from your faithful witness to consecrated life. You are in our prayers and we ask for you to keep us and the work of the Congregation in your prayers as well.

In the Heart of Christ,

Fr. Heinrich Wilmer SCJ

Fr. Léopold Mfouakouet SCJ

Fr. Paulus Sugino SCJ

Fr. Artur Sanecki SCJ

Fr. Carlos Enrique Caamaño Martín SCJ

Fr. Stephen Huffstetter SCJ