

Dehonian Vocation Day

March 14 – the anniversary of the birth of Fr. Dehon

*«What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light;
what you hear whispered, proclaim on the
housetops» (Mt 10, 27)*

Introduction

The month of March has always been a special month for us, members of the Dehonian Family: we celebrate the feast of the Annunciation, the feast of the Ecce Venio and the Ecce Ancilla, and we joyfully remember the birth of our Founder and his baptism.

It is precisely in this month that we celebrate the Dehonian Vocation Day, an occasion “to remember a man who, through his approach to God and his understanding of the Kingdom of God, generated a movement that continues today” (José Ornelas Carvalho, 2015). This is an opportunity to know better his rich personality and his profound experience of faith. It is a moment to pray to the Master of the harvest to send workers, new vocations religious and lay people, who can carry on the charism that Father Dehon has left us as an inheritance.

This text is intended to help us, together, to thank God for the gift of life of Father Dehon, to deepen our knowledge of his personality and experience of faith, and to pray for Dehonian vocations.

Song

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Moment of Silence

1. Give Thanks

Introduction

A tireless man, helped by a genuine and deep faith: here is the rock on which Father Dehon had built his life and mission.

Love and reparation: these were his great concerns.

Eucharistic reparation, especially through the Adoration, entrusted to the religious as their mission in the Church.

Social reparation through justice and charity as ways for a "civilization of love".

In contemplating the Heart of Christ he also drew on what was considered a constant of his personality: the luminous goodness that surrounded him with a charm and a great affection.

In Father Dehon there was an admirable balance of human virtues, in the simplicity and context of ordinary life which he, in his apostolic zeal and mystical asceticism, made supernatural due to his constant effort in priestly and religious perfection.

He committed himself to spreading the spirituality of the Sacred Heart and the dream of the Reign of God in hearts and in society

Scripture text: Sir, 44, 1-3;10-11; 13-15.

I will now praise the godly,
our ancestors, in their own time,
The abounding glory of the Most High's portion,
his own part, since the days of old.
Subduers of the land in kingly fashion,
renowned for their might,
Counselors in their prudence,
seers of all things in prophecy.
Yet these also were godly;
their virtues have not been forgotten.
Their wealth remains in their families,
their heritage with their descendants.
And for all time their progeny will endure,
their glory will never be blotted out;
Their bodies are buried in peace,
but their name lives on and on.
At gatherings their wisdom is retold,
and the assembly proclaims their praises.

Psalm 113 (112)

Praise, you servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD.

Blessed be the name of the LORD
both now and forever.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
let the name of the LORD be praised.
High above all nations is the LORD;
above the heavens his glory.

Who is like the LORD our God,
enthroned on high,
looking down on heaven and earth?

He raises the needy from the dust,
lifts the poor from the ash heap,
Seats them with princes,
the princes of the people.

Gives the childless wife a home,
the joyful mother of children.

Personal meditation with the words of Father Dehon

“Jesus wants us to live a life of self-denial, of renunciation of our will, of our personal inclinations and the complete abandonment of our whole being. We only need to seek love and God’s goodwill. We must console his heart, offer him reparations through a living and authentic faith, a pure and selfless love, sacrificing everything and forgetting ourselves, with filial confidence. Let us abandon ourselves to his goodness and his mercy, letting him to do everything. We are like a tool in the hands of the artist, letting ourselves be guided according to his approval” (DSP 26).

“This Sacred Heart of Jesus who loved us immeasurably and, we can say, even to madness. Could we remain numb to so much love? We will be able to refuse this

Heart that has loved us so much what the right title asks us: the exchange of love, gratitude, the complete donation of ourselves, consolation and reparation, to compensate for the indifference and ingratitude of so many souls and the chosen people themselves? On Calvary, we can contemplate Mary, Our Mother of Sorrows, John, the faithful and beloved disciple, Magdalene, a model of a deep love, born of the greatest repentance, and other holy women. We learn from these generous souls compassion for the suffering Jesus, faithful and courageous love, the spirit of reparation” (DSP 66).

Moment of Silence

Prayer *(for the beatification of Fr. Dehon)*

Lord, our Father,
we thank you;
through your servant Leo Dehon
you have enriched the Church with a new religious family.
May the beatification of your servant be to the praise
of your glory.

Following his example,
make us prophets and ministers
of reconciliation in the Heart of your Son.

May worthy disciples follow in his footsteps and
may they bring the joy of your Gospel
to the whole world.

Heavenly Father,
united to Jesus Christ our Lord
and sanctified in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
may our life be an offering that is pleasing
to you for the salvation of the world.
Amen.

Song

2. To go deeper

Introduction

Before his death, Father Dehon, stretching out his hand towards the image of the Sacred Heart, in a clear voice exclaimed: "For him I lived, for him I die. He is my everything, my life, my death, my eternity". To his spiritual children and to all those who see Father Dehon as a father and a guide to live the Gospel in the spirituality of the Heart of Christ, to the Dehonian Family, he has left a written spiritual testament: "I leave you the most wonderful of treasures: the Heart of Jesus".

"The kingdom of the Heart of Jesus in souls and in society": thus Father Dehon summed up his highest aspirations and the mission of the Dehonian Family in the Church. It is the kingdom of the civilization of love! Let's carry on his dream, his ideal, let's proclaim the Kingdom of Love out loud!

Bible text: Mt 10, 26-27

Therefore, do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops.

Psalm 96 (95)

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
Sing to the LORD, bless his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.

Tell his glory among the nations;
among all peoples, his marvelous deeds.

For great is the LORD and highly to be praised,
to be feared above all gods.
For the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

Splendor and power go before him;
power and grandeur are in his holy place.

Give to the LORD, you families of nations,
give to the LORD glory and might;
give to the LORD the glory due his name!

Bring gifts and enter his courts;
bow down to the LORD, splendid in holiness.
Tremble before him, all the earth;
declare among the nations: The LORD is king.

The world will surely stand fast, never to be shaken.
He rules the peoples with fairness.

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice;
let the sea and what fills it resound;
let the plains be joyful and all that is in them.

Then let all the trees of the forest rejoice
before the LORD who comes,
who comes to govern the earth,
To govern the world with justice
and the peoples with faithfulness.

Personal meditation with our Constitutions

Cst. 147: “Assured of God’s unfailing faithfulness, rooted in the love of Christ, we know that the choice of religious life, to stay vital, requires faithful encounter with the Lord in prayer, continuing conversion to the Gospel, availability of heart and attitude to welcome This Day of God”.

Cst. 3: “In this love of Christ who accepts death as the supreme gift of his life for men and as filial obedience to the Father, Father Dehon sees the very source of salvation. From the Heart of Jesus, open on the cross, man is born with a new heart, animated by the Spirit, and united with his brothers in the community of charity which is the Church (cf. *Études sur le Sacré-Coeur*, I, p. 114)”.

Cst. 21: “With Saint John, we see in the open side of the Crucified the sign of a love which, in the total gift of self, recreates man according to God. By contemplating

the Heart of Christ, the privileged symbol of this love, we are strengthened in our vocation. In fact, we are called to insert ourselves in this movement of redemptive love, giving ourselves for our brothers, with Christ and like Christ.

In this we have known love: in the fact that he gave his life for us; therefore we too must lay down our life for our brothers and sisters (1 Jn 3:16)".

Moment of Silence

Prayer

Heavenly Father,
when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ
rose from the dead,
he commissioned his followers
to "go and make disciples of all nations"
and you remind us that through our Baptism
we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit
to be courageous and zealous
in bearing witness to the Gospel,
so that the mission entrusted to the Church,
which is still very far from completion,
may find new and efficacious expressions
that bring life and light to the world.

Help us make it possible for all peoples
to experience the saving love
and mercy of Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
One God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Song

3. Pray

Introduction

March 14 is Dehonian Vocation Day, which helps us to focus on our reality: "Understand that such a beautiful vocation requires great fervor and great generosity" (Father Dehon, *Spiritual Testament*).

In addition to renewing our vocation, we want to intensify our prayers for many holy Dehonian vocations. Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, because we are convinced of the need for prophets of love and servants of reconciliation in the Church and in the world.

Bible Text: Lc 6, 12-16

In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve, whom he also named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called a Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Psalm 139 (138)

LORD, you have probed me, you know me:
you know when I sit and stand;
you understand my thoughts from afar.

You sift through my travels and my rest;
with all my ways you are familiar.
Even before a word is on my tongue,
LORD, you know it all.

Behind and before you encircle me
and rest your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
far too lofty for me to reach.

Where can I go from your spirit?
From your presence, where can I flee?
If I ascend to the heavens, you are there;
if I lie down in Sheol, there you are.

If I take the wings of dawn
and dwell beyond the sea,
Even there your hand guides me,
your right hand holds me fast.

If I say, "Surely darkness shall hide me,
and night shall be my light"
Darkness is not dark for you,
and night shines as the day.

Darkness and light are but one.
You formed my inmost being;
you knit me in my mother's womb.

I praise you, because I am wonderfully made;
wonderful are your works!
My very self you know.

My bones are not hidden from you,
When I was being made in secret,
fashioned in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw me unformed;
in your book all is written down;
my days were shaped, before one came to be.

How precious to me are your designs, O God;
how vast the sum of them!
Were I to count them, they would outnumber the sands;
when I complete them, still you are with me.

When you would destroy the wicked, O God,
the bloodthirsty depart from me!
Your foes who conspire a plot against you
are exalted in vain.

Do I not hate, LORD, those who hate you?
Those who rise against you, do I not loathe?
With fierce hatred I hate them,
enemies I count as my own.

Probe me, God, know my heart;
try me, know my thoughts.
See if there is a wicked path in me;
lead me along an ancient path.

Personal Meditation: Fr. Dehon – *The Mystery of Love* 1, 97-98. 100. [en] (CAM 1/191-193. 199).

The Choosing of the Apostles

Our Lord chose His own apostles. In this fact lies their strength and the source of their confidence. Such a great favor obligates them to gratitude and love.

Every vocation comes directly from the Sacred Heart.

Before choosing His apostles, Our Lord passes the night in prayer. Apostolic vocations are born in the Heart of Jesus, in His agonies over the salvation of souls, in the ardor of His zeal, in His prayer.

All who are apostles of the Sacred Heart are so in virtue of the predilection and special call of the Sacred Heart. There never was and never can be any religious, priestly, or apostolic vocation that is not supernatural. You must receive a particular grace for the apostolate to which you are destined. Do you not realize

that this grace flows from that nocturnal prayer, from that prolonged vigil that our Lord made on the mountain before choosing His apostles? Do you think that He thought then only of the twelve whom He was about to call? No. He asked His Father for the grace of the apostolate for all those who would contribute to the spread of His reign, and in particular for the apostles of His Heart. Let us open our hearts to the influence of this prayer. Ask to respond to this call wholeheartedly, to understand everything to which we are called.

Besides being a source of grace, this prayer is also an example for us. If we cooperate in the formation of the clergy either in apostolic schools or in seminaries, we shall often have to choose apostles, to discern vocations. Let us remember the prayer of our Lord. At His feet kneel and pray perseveringly to obtain the necessary light that our choice be made calmly, that in meditation and solitude may we hear the voice of God.

He who receives the divine call ought to live in continual union with the Sacred Heart, otherwise he risks losing his vocation. A vocation born in the Sacred Heart can be

preserved only there. It lives, is sustained, and developed in the Sacred Heart, as fish live in water and birds in the air.

Resolution: Jesus has loved me and has chosen me; my apostolic vocation was born in His Heart. It is there, too, that it should be preserved and developed. There is where I must seek light, strength, and direction.

Silence

Prayer

Father of mercy,
who gave your Son for our salvation
and who strengthens us always
with the gifts of your Spirit,
grant us Christian communities which are alive,
fervent and joyous, which are fountains of fraternal life,
and which nurture in the young
the desire to consecrate themselves to you
and to the work of evangelization.

Sustain these communities in their commitment
to offer appropriate vocational catechesis
and ways of proceeding towards
each one's particular consecration.

Grant the wisdom needed for vocational discernment,
so that in all things the greatness
of your merciful love may shine forth.

May Mary, Mother and guide of Jesus,
intercede for each Christian community,
so that, made fruitful by the Holy Spirit,
it may be a source of true vocations for
the service of the holy People of God. Amen.

Song

The blessing of the Sacrament

Final song to Mary