

EDITORIAL

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According to Andrea Tessarolo, the lamented and unforgettable researcher of the Founder and Director of the Dehonian Centre of Studies, expressions such as “the Social Kingdom of the Sacred Heart” or “the Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus in souls and in societies” denote “an absolutely specific and characteristic choice of Father Dehon”. In fact, they “express very well what can be defined as the profound intuition and, therefore, the original and innovative line he gave us in the interpretation of the spirituality of the Heart of Jesus”. In other words, Tessarolo concludes, “the mystical life, animated by charity, for Father Dehon, is like the prior basis and soul of his social commitment”. As we know, the relationship between these two dimensions, the spiritual and the social, is not always linear in Dehon. Often, indeed, as more generally in the very understanding of the believing conscience, it appears rather problematic. However, the correlation between these two aspects is absolutely inescapable. Pope Francis himself, in *Evangelii gaudium*, recalls that Jesus’ project consists in establishing the Kingdom of his Father and specifies: “it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society” (n. 180).

This correlation between spirituality and social commitment is undoubtedly a major feature of Dehon’s charismatic experience and heritage. The *Dossier* of this issue of *Dehoniana* deals precisely with the social dimension of our charism, taking up the texts of the ongoing formation that the members of the Dehonian Centre of Studies have proposed to the community of the Generalate in the academic year 2021/2022, in line with the theme of the General Conference of 2022. Starting from the historical reality of the social commitment of the Founder and the first Dehonian Fathers, the contributions reflect on some essential and foundational elements of Dehon’s social thought and on the spiritual sources from which his social apostolate was motivated and constantly nourished. Finally, some articles reflect on how the social dimension has been incorporated into the Constitutions and how it can be interpreted in the light of the recent Magisterium of the Church. In addition to the *Dossier*, the social dimension of Dehon’s thought and action and of the Dehonian charism can also be linked to two of the other contributions in this issue: Stefan Tertünte’s article recalling the 150th anniversary of the Saint-Joseph Work of St. Quentin, a social project passionately carried out by Dehon for workers, and Stefano Zamboni’s reflection on the vow of poverty in our western context and on the role Dehonian bursars, in fidelity to our charism, have with respect to the actual practice

of it. Other articles delve into aspects of our history and spirituality. Aimone Gelardi offers us an interesting first-person account of the emergence of the idea of a critical biography of the Founder, with the difficulties encountered and its concretisation in the publication of David Neuhold's work. Eduardo Emilio Agüero reflects exegetically on the text of Jn 19:30-37, which constitutes the biblical foundation of the spirituality of the Sacred Heart. Finally, Daniel Kouobou offers us a meditation on the risk of fraternity, which is both a gift to be received with gratitude and a treasure to be preserved with care, in the family, social and ecclesial spheres. The issue concludes, after the eighth part of the usual recollections of Mgr Joseph Philippe on the origin and development of the Congregation, with two reports, respectively by Javier López on the Congress *Reparation and Reconciliation* held in Avila in October 2022 and by Pablo Miñambres Barbero on the Dehonian Theological Seminar *Towards an Economy for All: Inclusive, Sustainable and Just* in May this year in Madrid.

The contributions in this issue – offering different perspectives on Dehon, his legacy, the charismatic heritage of our Institute, and the challenges before us – can help us prepare for two events we will celebrate in the coming years: the General Chapter in 2024 and the 100th anniversary of the Founder's death in 2025. Study and reflection are undoubtedly privileged ways of non-superficial preparation for them.