



SUPERIOR GENERAL
CONGREGATION OF THE
PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART
Dehonians

Prot. N. 0178/2026

Rome, June 7, 2026

LET US, THEN, GO TO HIM

*Letter on the occasion of the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
June 12, 2026*

*To the members of the Congregation
To all members of the Dehonian Family*

I.

A few years ago, a bronze sculpture was inaugurated beside the colonnade of Saint Peter's Square in the Vatican. Entitled "Angels Unawares", this work portrays a heterogeneous group of migrants and refugees from different cultures, ethnic groups, and historical periods travelling together on the same boat. At the center of the composition emerge angel wings, an element illustrating the biblical passage: «Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it» (Heb 13:2) ¹.

The work challenges those who stop to contemplate it. From a Dehonian perspective, it may be seen as an invitation to reflect on our capacity for welcome. It is not simply a matter of the goodwill to open the doors of our homes and share with newcomers, but of going deeper: it is a genuine thermometer of the health of our charismatic identity, recognizable in a permanent disposition of personal and communal openness.

*This is how we understand reparation:
as a welcome to the Spirit (cf 1 Thessalonians 4:8),
as a response to Christ's love for us,
as a communion in His love for the Father
and as a collaboration in His work of redemption
in the midst of the world. (Cst 23)*

¹ On the sculpture, see: "Angels Unawares": [<https://angelsunawares.org/the-sculpture>].

From acceptance to cooperation! A journey of spiritual life; a walking «under the guidance of the Spirit» (Cst 16). Father Dehon expressly invites us to do so: «Let us therefore live under the gentle direction of the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of the Sacred Heart»².

Was it not the Spirit who accompanied the journey of Jesus of Nazareth? The Spirit embraced Him throughout His earthly life: He is revealed from the mystery of Mary's womb (cf. Mt 1:20) and in the intimate understanding of Christ's identity (cf. Lk 3:22). He strengthened Him in the aridity of trial (cf. Mt 4:1), urged Him to embrace His mission (cf. Lk 4:18), and gave life to His teaching (cf. Lk 4:14). Likewise, He inspired His commitment to the dignity of the poor and the afflicted (cf. Lk 12:28), and, as the culmination, sustained His total self-offering (cf. Heb 9:14).

II.

Recognizing the Spirit as a gift of the Father, Jesus never sought to appropriate Him for Himself. On the contrary, He promised the Spirit to His own so that He might be their help (cf. Jn 7:39), enabling them to continue learning and to keep His word alive (cf. Jn 14:15ff.). The promise became a reality in His Passover, at the evening of the first day of the week. It was then that the Risen Lord—contemplated by His own in His word, His hands, and His side—dispelled their fears and restored the wounded communion of His disciples. For them, «through the gift of the Spirit» (Cst 59), a new time was beginning (cf. Jn 20:19ff.). The encounter with the Lord, together with the action of the Spirit, transformed their lives; yet this transformation was not meant to lead them into sterile forms of inwardness: «Would it please the heart that so loved us, if we were to bask in a private religious experience while ignoring its implications for the society in which we live?»³.

Indeed, those who witnessed the fulfillment of the promise of His Spirit and contemplated His side were associated with the Master's work of reparation, embodying it first of all within their own community. As heirs of the paschal community, we wish to continue living this mystery among ourselves so as to bear witness to the transforming power of His presence:

*Through fellowship even above and beyond conflicts,
and through mutual forgiveness,
we would like to be a sign that the fraternity
for which people thirst is possible in Jesus Christ
and we would like to be its servants. (Cst 65)*

In harmony with this, Pope Leo XIV has just reminded us that: «(...) In this way, both the proclamation of the Gospel and Christian life, guided by the action of the Holy Spirit, tend to bring about social consequences in the world»⁴. Thus, we understand that Father Dehon's

² Léon Dehon, *L'année avec le Sacré Cœur*: [<https://www.dehondocsoriginals.org/publicati/OSP/ASC/OSP-ASC-0003-0005-8060305?ch=283>].

³ Francis, *Dilexit nos*, 205.

⁴ Leo XIV, *Magnifica Humanitas*, 49.

aspiration to consecrate souls and societies to the cause of the Kingdom of the Sacred Heart presupposes a profound docility to the Spirit.

There can be no genuine Dehonian social commitment without being in harmony with the Spirit, the community, and the people whom we wish to help, while being careful not to create dependencies or foster personal indispensability. In this regard, it is worth recalling some of the responses gathered in the recent survey conducted by our Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). The results reveal a remarkable and diverse social sensitivity in almost all the places where we are present: from large educational institutions such as St. Joseph Indian School⁵, established to serve the Lakota people in the United States, to small presences in rural settings, such as Lacanche in France⁶. The latter, in particular, understands itself in these terms:

We know that our mission is simply to be there, as benevolent brothers, helping whenever possible and, in any case, sharing the ordinary life, as well as the joys and sorrows, of a simple people. We recognize our limits and our differences. Yet we know that what matters is to be there, beside an entire people of simple folk, often burdened by suffering, abandonment, and loneliness. To be there, as a religious fraternity recognized in the village, is a sign that our Church loves this world of the “little ones” to which we belong (...). Despite our smallness, we journey with an entire population whom we entrust in our personal prayers to the love of Christ «who is identified with the lowly and the poor» (Cst 28)⁷.

Indeed, the Dehonian vocation is born from the desire “to be there,” like the Son before the Father, in order to collaborate passionately in the gift of His Kingdom as servants of all. To this end, we embrace an indispensable requirement so that our communities, apostolates, and works may become a transparent expression of this service to the Gospel:

*Our response to this call presupposes a spiritual life:
a common approach to the mystery of Christ,
under the guidance of the Spirit,
and a particular attention to what,
in the inexhaustible richness of this mystery,
corresponds to the experience of Father Dehon
and of our predecessors. (Cst 16)*

III.

In this “common approach”—inspired by Mary and the beloved disciple at the foot of the Cross—we find the model that enables us to free ourselves from the selfishness and individualism that at times hinder our shared mission. The manner in which they welcomed one another, offering themselves as mother and son, made possible a new community. It is the

⁵ On this school, see: SCJ South Dakota: [<https://www.stjo.org/>].

⁶ On this fraternity, see: SCJ Lacanche: [<https://scj.lu/nos-communautés/lacanche/lacanche>].

⁷ Fraternité de Lacanche, “En vue de l’Assemblée provinciale”, *Inter fratres* 5-8 (2026) 26-27.

community born of listening and of “being there”—wherever that may be—but all «at the service of the Kingdom (Cst 9–39)»⁸.

The solemnity we are about to celebrate is a renewed invitation to participate in that same community nourished by the inexhaustible “Come to me” flowing from the Heart that has loved us so greatly⁹. His call sets us on the way and brings us closer—provided we are travelling in the right direction—to the faces and places where Love beats most intensely: «Let us then go to him outside the camp» (Heb 13:13), as Mary, the other women, and the disciple whom Jesus loved did. Together with them, and with so many others who neither settle down nor surrender before the challenges of our times, we wish to continue responding to the call of our Founder:

*“Let us rise and go”. Let us go to the service of Our Lord; let us go to dedication and sacrifice. Let us come out of ourselves; let us go to the Heart of Jesus, to His love, to His imitation, to His service; constant union with the Heart of Jesus in the spirit of love and immolation*¹⁰.

This is what our confrere Father Martino Capelli did. As we prepare to celebrate his forthcoming beatification, we remember his example of making the cause of the most abandoned his own in a time marked by unleashed hatred. Yet, together with his fellow martyr, the Salesian Fr. Elia Comini, he overcame his enemies armed with love and forgiveness. Perhaps it was in those decisive moments that Martino understood as never before what he himself had written about Father Dehon’s ideal:

*He wanted the Heart of the Savior to be, so to speak, the point of convergence where all people should meet, to make reparation for their own ingratitude and to recognize one another as brothers, embraced by one and the same divine Fatherhood*¹¹.

May we always find ourselves in Him! To all, a blessed Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
Fraternally,

Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, scj
Superior General
and his Council

⁸ Cf. «For Him I live: It is Christ who lives in me» (Gal 2:20). Letter at the beginning of the centenary of the death of Father Dehon and in preparation for the 150th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation, Brussels, August 12, 2024. Prot. No. 0296/2024.

⁹ Cf. Mt 11:25-30.

¹⁰ Léon Dehon, *L’année avec le Sacré Cœur*: [<https://www.dehondocsoriginals.org/publicati/OSP/ASC/OSP-ASC-0003-0004-8060304?ch=171>].

¹¹ Egidio Cabianca (pseudonym of Fr. Martino Capelli), “Sul fronte della fede. Verso il centenario della nascita del P. Dehon”, *Il Regno del Sacro Cuore*, Year XXXII, no. 2 (1943).