

A stylized, teal-colored portrait of Father John Leo Dehon, a man with glasses and a clerical collar, is positioned on the right side of the page. The background features light blue watercolor washes with small red and purple dots scattered throughout.

Dehon

**DOMINE, QUID ME VIS  
FACERE?**

LORD, WHAT DO YOU  
WANT ME TO DO?

MARCH 14, 2025

VIGIL ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE BIRTH OF  
FATHER JOHN LEO DEHON



***Domine, quid me vis facere?*<sup>1</sup>**

**Lord, what do you want me to do?**

Vigil on the Anniversary of the Birth of Father Leo  
John Dehon

| March 14, 2025 |

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<sup>1</sup> For this text, Dehon often mentions Acts 9:6 in his quotations. The Clementine Vulgate, which was in force in the Catholic Church at his time and until the beginning of the 20th century, in fact included "*Domine, quid me vis facere?*" in Acts 9:6. Today, this text is identified as an interpolation and has been removed from Acts 9:6. In the second narration of the Damascus experience in Acts 22:10, the text appears in a similar manner

## OPENING

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## INTRODUCTION

As part of our Dehonian Jubilee, we gather to commemorate the anniversary of the birth of our Founder, Father Leo John Dehon. During his 82 years of life, the question of the St. Paul the apostle accompanied and motivated him: "*Domine, quid me vis facere?*" (Acts 22:10), "*Lord, what do you want me to do?*"

From his youth and as a seminarian, Leo Dehon embraced an attitude which he would later pass on to his confreres: "*I will do nothing without embracing this union, with Jesus, through Jesus, and in Jesus. – Cor Jesu, quid me vis facere?*" (NQT 24/65). "*Heart of Jesus, what do you want me to do?*"

Let us also unite ourselves this evening with our Lord Jesus Christ.

## [EXPOSITION of the Blessed Sacrament, if applicable]

## HYMN

## PRAYER:

Lord Jesus Christ, you were born as a man, and now you are present among us. Through your dedication to the Father and to humanity, even to the point of death on the cross, you have opened the way to salvation for us. You are indeed our way, our truth, and our life. We thank you for the life of Leo John Dehon. Today, we make his existential question our own and address it to you, both personally and in community: *Heart of Jesus, what do you want me to do?* To you be praise and glory for all eternity. **Amen.**

## A. The Life Question of Father Dehon

- Reflecting on his own life, Father Dehon writes:

"*'Ipse fecit nos et non ipsi nos.'* God has created us and not we ourselves. He made the earth for us, and humankind for himself. Just as the flower looks toward the sun, human reason must turn toward God, who is its sun. When people see the sensible beauty of creation, they lift their gaze to the sun that illuminates it. In the same way, when they contemplate the work of divine intelligence in creation and providence, they raise their soul toward this sun of spirits." (NHV 14/31).

Father Dehon's thoughts then lead him to a prayer that he has also entrusted to us: "Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is your name throughout the earth! ... May my mouth be filled with praise so that I may sing of your glory and greatness all day long... Lord, what should I do with these abilities, with this life that you have given me? *Quid me vis facere?* What should I do? You have drawn me out of nothingness. I am your servant. Here I am, I come to do your will, O God. What do you want me to do today? And tomorrow? Each day? This very hour? What do you want me to think? What do you want me to say? What do you want me to do? Show me your way. Enlarge my heart. Grant me wisdom. Incline my heart." (cf. NHV 14/31).

**Let us now take a moment of silent prayer**

**HYMN**



## B. The Life and Growth of the Congregation

Leo Dehon asked, "*Lord, what do you want me to do?*" Thirty-five years after his birth, our Congregation was founded. We will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2028. The foundation of the Congregation was Father Dehon's concrete response to his life question. It is the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. The first part of our *Rule of Life*, entitled "*Faithful to the charism of our Founder*", says: "*The Congregation was raised up and sent forth by the Spirit: The Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was founded by Father Leo John Dehon in 1878 in Saint-Quentin. The Founder received the grace and the mission to enrich the Church with an apostolic religious Institute that lived according to his evangelical inspiration. The Congregation is called to make this charism effective by responding to the urgent needs of the Church and the world.*" (Cst. 1).

With awe and gratitude, we profess and contemplate inspired by the words of our *Rule of Life*: "*For each of us, and for our communities, religious life is a story: beginning from the grace of its origins, it develops by nourishing itself on what the Church, enlightened by the Spirit, draws continually from the treasury of its faith.*" (Cst. 15).

So that Father Dehon's charism may continue to bear fruit, we want to follow his guidance entrusted to us in these words: "*Be flexible, docile, ready in God's hands. Actions will advance you more than the speculations of the intellect. May divine pleasure be your only rule, your entire life, your sole concern: Domine, quid me vis facere? Lord, what do you want me to do?*" (VAM 301).

Following what our *Rule of Life* expresses, "as disciples of Father Dehon, we want to make union with Christ in His love for the Father and for all the principle and center of our life. With special love we meditate on these words of the Lord: *Abide in me, as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.* (John 15:4).

Faithful to hearing the Word and sharing the Bread, we are invited to discover the person of Christ and the mystery of His Heart ever more deeply, and to proclaim His love which surpasses all understanding.

*...and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fulness of God. (Ephesians 3:17-19).*" (Cst. 17).

**Let us now take a moment of silent prayer**

**HYMN**



## C. Pilgrims of Hope

We want to journey into the future with Father Dehon; to draw inspiration from him for our present and future. Therefore, let us give voice to the young students of our Congregation:

"For me, Father Dehon is above all a person who persevered, who did not give up. There were enough difficult situations to say: enough is enough. But he continued. Because he was not alone. Not only did he have the company of confreres and friends, but God was with him. Whoever says 'persevere' can also say 'hope'. In this sense, Dehon is truly a pilgrim of hope."

"Above all, in my spirituality, Father Dehon has taught me to continually ask myself, particularly in difficult situations: what would Jesus have done out of love? Yes, it is about becoming like Jesus, and that means especially living out of love. This attitude grants also to our reparation, to our reparative oblation, a very particular note, our note."

"Faced with the many crises and injustices of today, Dehon would certainly start by preaching. And in his sermons, he would speak the truth out loud, including about social injustices. He would probably be more courageous than we are today. And he would likely write articles so as not to be superficial, to observe more deeply, and to propose solutions."

"What do I wish for the 2024-2028 Jubilee? That we celebrate! I would like us to celebrate all the good accomplished in and by the Congregation; good that continues today. We are often too serious when

we see so many difficulties. But in our history, there are so many good accomplishments to tell. And we must truly celebrate them!"

Let us be encouraged and inspired by the youth of our congregation. Let us remain in prayer, also asking ourselves what it means for us to be pilgrims of hope today as sons and daughters of Father Dehon.

### **Prayer:**

Merciful God, we thank you for the life story and vocation of each of us and of our community. We thank you for the grace of our beginnings and for all fruitful developments. We thank you for calling Father Dehon on a path that continues to this day and will not end with us. Even today, you make us understand how Father Dehon can motivate and inspire us.

To the question "*Quid me vis facere?*", he found the answer in the life of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ – a life of loving surrender. We unite ourselves to the surrender of your beloved Son. We desire to do everything in union with Jesus, through Jesus, and in Jesus. We gaze upon him and, in turn, we cry out: "*Lord, what do you want us to do?*" As a sign of his cross, we wish to embrace the world from where you have placed us. We wish to strengthen the hope that springs forth from his pierced side on the cross as an indelible expression of the love of your Son. We ask this through Christ, our Brother and Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

**Amen.**

**Let us now take a moment of silent prayer**

### **HYMN**





## PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Lord Jesus Christ, during this jubilee year, as we are gathered in prayer on the occasion of the anniversary of the birth of our Founder, Father Dehon, we present to you our intentions:

- ▶ We thank you for your servant, Father Leo John Dehon. May his life and work inspire and strengthen us in our spiritual identity and personal vocation. Christ, hear us...

**R. Christ, graciously hear us.**

- ▶ We thank you for our Congregation and for the entire Dehonian family. May your prayer to the Father, that we may be one, make us grow and mature all the more in our love and communion with you and among ourselves. Christ, hear us...

**R. Christ, graciously hear us.**

- ▶ We thank you for the mission you have entrusted to us. We pray that you never cease to ask what you want us to do. Make us prophets of love, servants of reconciliation and pilgrims of hope in this world. Christ, hear us...

**R. Christ, graciously hear us.**

- ▶ We thank you for this world in which we live, for all our brothers and sisters and for all your beloved creation. Make us attentive to the promotion of a new unity marked by justice and peace, which cares for the preservation of our common home and bears witness that the fraternity for which people thirst is possible in you (cf. Cst. 65). Christ, hear us...

**R. Christ, graciously hear us.**

► We thank you for the life and witness of our brothers and sisters who have gone before us and who have sought your will. Let them rest in your heart and grant them fulfillment in your love. Christ, hear us...

**R. *Christ, graciously hear us.***

Lord Jesus Christ, for you we live, and you live in us (cf. Gal 2:20). You show us the way to fulness of life. To you be praise and glory for all eternity. **Amen.**

"*Adveniat Regnum tuum*". May your kingdom come. Let us pray as the Lord has taught us.

**Our Father...**

**[DIVINE PRAISES to the Blessed Sacrament, if applicable]**

**BENEDICTION**



## PRAYER FOR THE DEHONIAN JUBILEE (2024-2028)

Jesus,  
your heart, opened on the cross,  
is the great sacrament of God's love for the world.

Grounded in the faith experience of your servant,  
Leo John Dehon,  
we celebrate this joyous time of jubilee.  
We recall his devotion to your heart  
and his commitment to social action.

Merciful Savior,  
as the Dehonian family,  
we wish to join in your oblation to the Father  
so may you always live in us.

With the intercession of Mary,  
your blessed mother,  
we ask for the grace to bring  
our Founder's devotion and action  
into new times and places.

Lord Jesus,  
hear our prayer:  
make our time of jubilee  
an ever-new sign of God's infinite love  
in the heart of the world.

**Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

