

SCJ NEWS

a newsletter of the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart

December 2009

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A new chapter in story of historical site

Sacred Heart Monastery was not the first apostolate of the Priests of the Sacred Heart in the United States. It was not even the site of the first formation community. Yet it is often thought of as a “motherhouse” for the U.S. Province with a history going back well before the province was even established.

In January, 1929, the SCJs purchased an unused convent from

The original Sacred Heart Monastery with the roof addition.

the Dominican sisters on the site of what is now Villa Maria, a retirement community for SCJ priests and brothers. The abandoned convent sold for \$30,000. A real “fixer-upper,” another \$12,000 in repairs were needed to make it habitable. However, within just a few months the renovated convent was ready to accept the province’s first postulants.

Five years later, Sacred Heart Monastery was designated as the major seminary for the newly created North American Province.

The original building underwent a number of changes, including the addition of a fourth floor. In 1959, a convent was built next to the monastery for use by the Benedictine sisters of Yankton, S.D., who tended to many of the domestic needs of the monastery. The Benedictines remained until 1968. Not long after

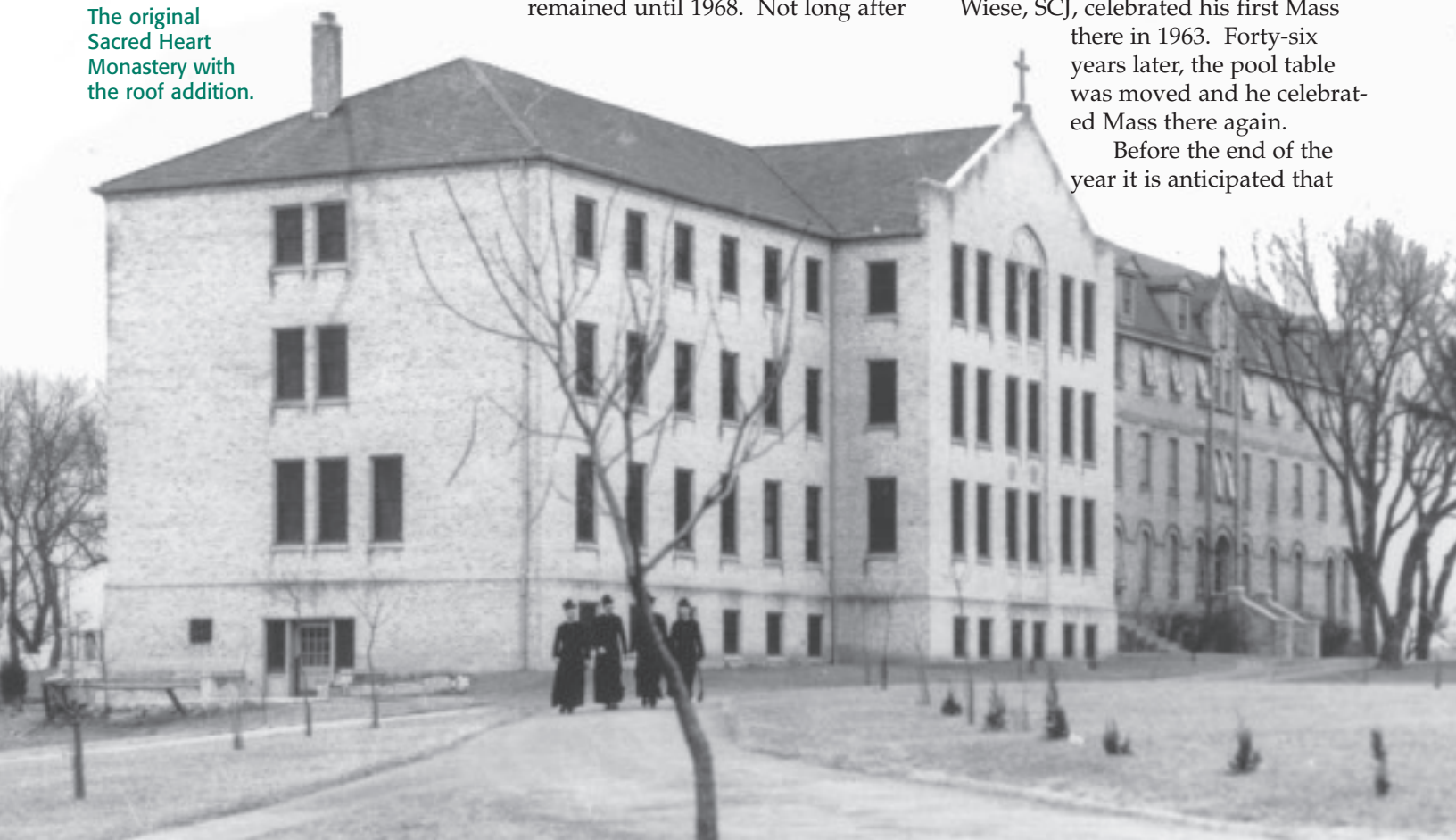
their departure, Sacred Heart Monastery moved to its current structure across the street and Sacred Heart School of Theology was established as a seminary specializing in second-career vocations.

The original monastery was torn down but the convent remained. The building was used as a provincial residence and as a residence for faculty at Sacred Heart School of Theology.

When Villa Maria was built in 1988, the convent was attached to it. Its last residents were SCJ Frs. Jim Brackin, Paul Casper and Michael van der Peet.

During its days as a part of the Villa Maria structure, the old convent section also housed a well-used billiard room. The room’s original use before the pool table moved in? It was the convent chapel. Fr. Steve Wiese, SCJ, celebrated his first Mass there in 1963. Forty-six years later, the pool table was moved and he celebrated Mass there again.

Before the end of the year it is anticipated that





Fr. Frank Hudson and a fellow SCJ canoe across Monastery Lake years ago.

the convent will be razed to make room for the building of "Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake," a retirement community for both SCJs and the general public that will sit on the land that once hosted the original monastery.

Fr. Steve celebrated Mass at the site of the old chapel as part of a day dedicated to remembering the many people who had passed through the convent doors. The Villa Maria community welcomed local SCJs — many of whom had lived at the original monastery — in a final good-bye to the convent, one of the last physical links to the original monastery.

"We celebrated many happy memories, but also had a bit of sadness as we said good-bye to this chapter of our province history," said Fr. Tom Westhoven, SCJ, a member of the Villa Maria community.

In preparing for the celebration, Fr. Tom put together a history of the original monastery property. In it he notes a significant event that seems to have escaped the eyes of many in the province until recently: the North American Province was established on June 30, 1934.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of what is now the U.S. Province of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. At the time that it was established there were only 11 priests, five brothers and seven students.

"As we look toward our future as Priests of the Sacred Heart in the United States I think it is important to remember what an impact these few men had not only on what was to be-

come the U.S. Province, but also on the Church in the United States," said Fr. Tom Cassidy, SCJ, provincial superior.

80 years on Monastery Lake

Our thanks to Fr. Tom Westhoven for doing the research that went into the following chronology of the original Sacred Heart Monastery site, the site on which Villa Maria now sits.

A pleasant problem: too many students and not enough room

The SCJs' first formation house in the United States was in Ste. Marie, Ill. However, the "Mission House," as it was called, soon ran out of room and a hunt was on to find another property.

In January, 1929, the Priests of the Sacred Heart purchased the Dominican Convent in Hales Corners, Wis., for \$30,000 to be paid in two installments. Fr. Bernard Rotermann, SCJ, visited the convent and made arrangements for its purchase. The convent was abandoned in 1924, having been built in 1896. It needed repairs totaling \$12,000.

Work on the building, done without any heat or water, began in March, 1929. Repairs were completed by May 28.

The State of Wisconsin certified "Sacred Heart Monastery" as a corporation for educational and charitable purposes just days before repairs were completed.

First postulants

On June 5, 1929, three candidates arrived at Sacred Heart Monastery from Ste. Marie. They were the first SCJ postulants in the United States. The next day, on feast of the Sacred Heart, the first Mass was offered in the monastery. On September 1, 1929, those first postulants were received as novices. A year later, the three were professed: Fraters William Holmes,

Francis Mattingly, and Patrick O'Neill (from Ireland). The novitiate remained at Sacred Heart Monastery until 1934. Fr. Matthias Fohrman, SCJ, the first member of the community to serve in the United States, was novice master from 1929-1934. He spent his last year at the Mission House in Ste. Marie and died on June 24, 1935.

On April 3, 1932, Frs. Holmes and Mattingly became the first American priests to be ordained for the Priests of the Sacred Heart. They completed their theological studies at Kenrick Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

Again, more space is needed

In 1934, the roof was raised on Sacred Heart Monastery. All of the novices and professors were called out of class to help local farmers literally lift the roof — with the help of jacks — six feet. Masons quickly laid the bricks for the outside walls. All were praying that winds would not take the roof down. The roof was tied with long ropes to trees and anchors in the ground, while the masonry work continued.

Fr. George Pinger, SCJ, noted in his brief autobiography that this was the day that Fr. Thomas Simcox, SCJ, arrived as a postulant. Thereafter, wrote Fr. Pinger, "No one let Fr. Simcox forget that when he came, he raised the roof!"

While the roof was being raised, the novitiate moved back to Ste.



Early seminarians take a break during a hockey game on Monastery Lake.

Marie and Sacred Heart Monastery was designated as the major seminary for the newly created North American Province. Years later, separate SCJ entities were established for the United States and Canada.

In 1935, the province purchased property in Indiana to establish a minor seminary (Divine Heart in Donaldson). To pay for the purchase, Sacred Heart Monastery was mortgaged. The loans were not paid until after World War II.

At about the same time that the Donaldson property was purchased, the province decided to have students do both their theological and philosophical studies at Sacred Heart Monastery. Until then the young religious went to Kenrick Seminary in St. Louis for their theology. Fr. George Pinger was one of the first SCJs to complete all of his philosophical and theological studies at Sacred Heart Monastery.

Another expansion

In 1940, the province realized that it once again was outgrowing its space. Sacred Heart Monastery needed room for a library, more classrooms, residential rooms for professors, a new kitchen and a larger dining area.

The house council decided to extend the building to the north and dig a new well to meet increased water needs.

A year later *Mission Call*, a magazine produced by the province, had photos of the new wing along with a plea to help furnish the dining hall (\$100) and the two large lecture halls (\$200 each).

The Benedictines arrive

The same Benedictine sisters who served at St. Joseph's Indian School since 1932 were invited to do cooking and laundry for the SCJ community at Sacred Heart Monastery. Coincidentally, their motherhouse, located in Yankton, S.D., was also called "Sacred Heart Monastery." They arrived in 1942 and remained until 1968.



Members of the Benedictine community were a vital part of Sacred Heart Monastery for many years.

From 1942-1959, the sisters lived in an old farmhouse across from the original monastery. When one of the sisters was hit by a truck (a side mirror caught her on the head) while crossing the road, it was decided that a convent should be built next to the monastery.

The convent had two floors and included a small chapel, parlor, kitchen, dining area, laundry, and rooms for the sisters.

These religious women were invaluable to the monastery. They canned fruits and vegetables from the monastery's garden and orchard, prepared everyday meals as well as those for special occasions, mended and sewed altar cloths, vestments and cassocks, and did much of the laundry.

Sacred Heart Mausoleum

When the monastery moved across the street the deceased members of the province came along as well. A province mausoleum was built behind what is now Sacred Heart Monastery/School of Theology. Those who were buried in the community cemetery facing Monastery Lake were reinterred in the mausoleum. This included several of the Dominican sisters who died in Hales Corners.

The bookstore

So what does one do with an empty monastery? In 1971 the Bruce

Publishing Company moved in. It served as a clearinghouse for religious books. When the monastery property was sold Bruce moved to rented space in Butler and was renamed "Clergy Book Service" and then "Theological Book Service." The province no longer operates the business, which, for a brief period, was also located on the grounds of the current monastery. The Provincial Conference Center was built in what was once a warehouse for the bookstore.

A developer purchased the original monastery property with hopes of building a condominium complex. The old monastery was demolished during which special effort was made in preserving its unique white clay bricks. The bricks seemed to sell better than the proposed condos. The developer defaulted on his loan and the property returned to province ownership.

Villa Maria

The province built its first retirement house in Pinellas Park, FL. When there was a need for a second residence in the north, SCJs took a look at the original site of Sacred Heart Monastery and built Villa Maria. Attached to it is the old convent, the last reminder of the original monastery.

Now the convent is coming down as the province makes space for a new use for the property: Sacred Heart at

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The community gathered for prayer in the chapel at the original monastery.

Monastery Lake. Once the Villa Maria community is in place at the new development, the building that houses Villa Maria will also come down.

A new chapter

The next chapter in the history of the original monastery property will include SCJs and the general public.

In November, the Common Council of the City of Franklin approved the SCJs' proposal for Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake. "The City of Franklin has a very comprehensive set of guidelines that need to be followed for projects of this type," said Dn. David Nagel, SCJ, province treasurer and director of the project. "There are many professionals involved in meeting these guidelines and preparing plans for review by the City of Franklin. The Project Team

has done a great job of working with the City of Franklin to receive the required approvals. Mayor Taylor from the City of Franklin has been very supportive of the project from the start."

Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake will have approximately 165 one and two-bedroom units, sized and priced for a variety of needs and income levels. All sections, including a wing for members of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, will feed into a common "Main Street" which will serve as the heart of the community. It will include a coffee bar, community room, serving kitchen, exercise facility, media center, bank, beauty shop, library, craft room and a guest suite for visiting family or friends.

There will also be a chapel and underground parking.

The complex will grow in several phases. The first wing will be for the SCJ community and will include space for both the retired and those in full-time ministry.

The second and third wings will be available to the general public (seniors age 55 and older).

Updates on the project will be available at the province website: www.scjusa.net



An artist's interpretation of "Sacred Heart at Monastery Lake" located on the original site of Sacred Heart Monastery. Construction is expected to begin by the end of 2009.

"God has been good to me"

Retired bishop reflects on years in South Africa

After 36 years in South Africa, the last 17 as bishop of the Diocese of De Aar, Bishop Joseph Potocnak, SCJ, is back in the United States for more than just a vacation. He's doing something he had not given much thought to when he first left for South Africa in 1973 – he is retiring.

At 75, Bishop Joe submitted his retirement papers to the Holy Father, as do all bishops. In July, 2009, another SCJ was named to succeed him – Bishop Adam Musialek. The new bishop was ordained in September. Bishop Joe stayed in De Aar through October to allow Bishop Adam time to visit family in Poland before jumping into his new duties full time. Soon after the new bishop returned to South Africa, Bishop Joe, now 76, headed to the States to spend time with his own family on the East Coast.

The week before Thanksgiving the bishop was at Sacred Heart Monastery, visiting with his SCJ family. While there, he reflected on his years in South Africa and the transition back to the States.

"God has been good to me," he said. It's a line he repeats over and over, almost as a reflex action. "I never thought that it was a burden or hard to be in South Africa. The people there are wonderful."

More American than Catholic

Bishop Joe said that when he first went to South Africa he was "probably more American than Catholic," meaning that he found himself often thinking as an American instead of as a member of a faith that includes the cul-

tures and nationalities of many. "But soon I came to learn that there are more ways to look at and do things than what I came to know in the United States."

The opportunity to get to know another culture is something for which Bishop Joe is especially grateful. After tossing out yet another "God has been good to me," the bishop said that being in a different culture allows a person to look at things from a new perspective and can also "help you to see that people are people; there is goodness in everyone."

Seeing the basic goodness in others is the rudder that guided Bishop Joe in his ministry in South Africa. "If someone is nice to you, treats you with respect, you pick it up, even if your language is different," said the bishop. "If you are good to another, that person feels your goodness. The Catholic Church brings a bit of hope to people in need by treating them with respect, by caring for them. Developing a sense of faith is important, and I think the faith is getting deeper in South Africa, but the first thing the Church must always do is be good to others, see the basic goodness in others."

Bishop Joe said that this philosophy earned the Church respect during the years of apartheid (the government-sanctioned separation of races). "People were supportive," said the bishop. During the uprisings that led to the end of apartheid Bishop Joe said that he always felt safe. "The people were burning tires in the street but they said to me, 'Don't worry,' and they'd take care of us. During apartheid we [the priests and religious] were generally the only white people who went to the black locations. For a while I was the only white guy living in Graaff Reinat. When there was a big march

[against apartheid] I was the only white person marching with them. The people knew that we cared about them and so they cared about us."



Bishop Joe Potocnak during a recent visit to Hales Corners. He had thought about retiring there but after a few cold Midwestern days he said that he wouldn't mind giving Florida a try!

He said that he always felt welcome in South Africa. That is what made two incidents especially troubling for him. Twice in recent years Bishop Joe was robbed. He was stabbed the first time and hit on the head with a brick the second. "Crime has gotten worse in recent years but it is still only a small minority of people who do the crimes," he said. "The blacks are victimized the most. Many people are trying to make the country work but it is hard when there is a

small group of people making things difficult."

Much is still the same

The bishop saw many changes during his 36 years in South Africa. He came to a country living in the midst of apartheid and then watched as it was dismantled, even serving as a poll monitor in South Africa's first multi-racial national elections.

He has seen much change, but Bishop Joe said that many of South Africa's challenges are still the same, especially poverty, unemployment and health care. For the Church, the low number of priests and religious serving in the country is always a challenge.

When asked about his years as bishop of De Aar he says that one of the things he is most proud of being a part of is the healthcare outreach that he helped to initiate. "I was so naïve," he said. "I thought that the Church could take on health care but I didn't realize the cost." Working with a religious sister who had formerly served as a hospital matron (head of nursing), the diocese

was able to establish a health care network of counselors and caregivers, along with several hospices. The government now funds much of the work begun by the diocese.

"AIDS has had a horrible impact on South Africa," said Bishop Joe. With an estimated 5.2 million people living with HIV/AIDS in 2008, South Africa is thought to be the country with the largest number of people living with the disease – not just in Africa, but in the world. Almost one-in-three women aged 25-29, and over a quarter of men aged 30-34, are living with HIV/AIDS.

"It is still an incredible challenge for the people of South Africa."

Hard to leave

The hardest part about leaving South Africa for Bishop Joe is leaving the people, those to whom he ministered and those with whom he worked.

"It was an honor for me to be a bishop there; I always felt the loyalty and love of the people," he said. "It was a good place for me to be a bishop because it was a small diocese and I could still be a parish priest. The bishops I served with in South Africa were good. They were working guys; pastors like me."

Leaving a country that has been home for 36 years takes some getting used to. Bishop Joe is spending his first months back in the States visiting friends and family. Although he had thought of moving to Sacred Heart Monastery, Wisconsin's winters have scared him off for now. Most likely he will join the retirement community in Pinellas Park, Fl. He hopes that he can do hospital chaplaincy. "I love to visit people; I love to shake their hands and talk to them. I guess that I should have been a politician," he jokes.

Although he is looking at a variety of possibilities, Bishop Joe said that he could be happy anywhere in the province. "We are so blessed here, we have so much," he said. And then it came again,

"God has been good to me."



Principal Clara Isom at her desk at Sacred Heart Southern Missions' Holy Family School in Holly Springs, Miss.

Student, teacher and now principal at Holly Springs school

Clara Isom is in her first year as principal of Holy Family School in Holly Springs, Miss. (the school falls under the Sacred Heart Southern Missions umbrella). However, it is far from being her first year at the school. Instead, she says that it is like coming home.

A graduate of the school when it was St. Mary's, Clara also spent 25 years teaching there, watching the name change from St. Mary's to Cadet to Holy Family.

"The name has changed, yes, but the wonderful spirit has always been the same," she said. "This school has been a vital part of the community for over 60 years. It has been a gift and a blessing for everyone who has come here."

Clara and her five siblings grew up on a farm near Holly Springs. "My mother worked three jobs so a lot of

our time was spent with our grandparents," she said. "They were a real inspiration to me."

"My mother and grandparents had a had a strong belief in the value and the necessity of education even though they had little of it themselves," she continued. "And they wanted to make sure that we had a *Christian* education; a holistic education, even though they might not have known what that word meant. They knew that St. Mary's would give us that and more.

"It was a long bus ride every day. When I was little, my grandfather would carry me the quarter-mile to the bus stop. I remember that the sisters would give us milk and cookies right before we got on the bus so we wouldn't get hungry on the bus ride home."

Clara said that it was at St. Mary's where she "learned about my own

worth, my value as a human being. I remember feeling loved and cared for and I also learned that I could do whatever I wanted to do in my life. That's a lesson that has carried me through my life and it is a lesson that I hope our children at Holy Family are learning too."

The first-year principal earned her bachelor's degree from Rust College and a master's from Ole Miss. Evidently she paid attention during class. After graduation from Rust she scored in the 95th percentile in the National Teaching Examinations.

"I'm excited and happy to be here. Great things are happening in this school and there's more to come!" she said. "We can give children things that aren't easily available in the public schools here: small classes, individual attention, and — especially — prayer and religious education. We talk about God and talk to God. We listen for God's voice in our hearts. That is the atmosphere here and we cherish it."

"Children are naturally curious," she continued. "They want to know and to learn. One of our goals here at Holy Family is to inspire them to be even more curious. As they search for answers to their questions and find them, they 'fall in love' with learning. That's when we know we've done our job as educators, as mentors and as inspirers."



Clara joins students in song during a school gathering.

SCJ NEWS

A good recommendation!

Sacred Heart School of Theology received a recommendation for a ten-year reaccreditation. From November 8-11 the seminary hosted six representatives from the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Universities and Schools. These national agencies accredit academic institutions by assessing their educational activities, formational practices, administrative governance, financial stability, organizational effectiveness, student services, physical resources, and institutional ethos. Renewal of accreditation required an intensive two-year self examination of all facets of Sacred Heart's institutional life, the findings of which are summarized in a self-study report.

Former SHST teacher dies

Fr. Andrew Ryder, SCJ, a member of the British-Irish Province, died October 15. He was 70 and had been a member of the Priests of the Sacred Heart since 1958. He wore many hats as an SCJ, including that of professor at Sacred Heart School of Theology.



Fr. Andy Ryder

Fr. Andy also served as general mission secretary and in that role ac-

companied Fr. Martin van Ooij, SCJ, to India in 1994 to help establish an SCJ presence in the country. Following his work in India, Fr. Andy spent several years at the Generalate in Rome before returning to the British-Irish Province. At the time of his death he was serving in Dublin, Ireland.

An avid hiker, Fr. Andy died after slipping from a cliff during a mid-day walk.



The new Canadian administration (L-R): Fr. Richard Woodbury, Fr. Paul Tennyson, Fr. Bill Marvee (regional superior) and Fr. Claude Bédard.

New Canadian administration in place

The General Council has appointed Fr. Bill Marvee, SCJ, as superior of the Region of Canada. He succeeds Fr. John van den Hengel, SCJ, who was elected to the General Council. Born in the Netherlands in 1936, Fr. Bill has been professor of Liturgy and Sacraments at St. Paul University in Ottawa and is currently pastor of St. Mark the Evangelist Parish in Gatineau, Quebec. He also serves as Episcopal Vicar for the English-speaking sector of the Archdiocese of Gatineau. Previously, he was a member of the regional council.

The council, increased from two members to three, now includes SCJ Frs. Richard Woodbury, Paul Tennyson and Claude Bédard.

Devastation in Asia

"A devastating cyclone has hit Manila causing death and destruction," wrote Fr. José Ornelas Carvalho, SCJ superior general, in September. Soon after, an earthquake caused a tsunami that hit the island of Samoa and another strong earthquake caused destruction on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. Thankfully, no SCJs suffered significant injury and SCJ buildings remained intact. Fr. Ornelas wrote to the provinces asking that assistance be sent to help local SCJs reach out to victims of the disasters. In Manila, students have been spending their study breaks rebuilding homes.

The U.S. Province made a \$12,000 donation toward relief efforts.

Find us on Facebook

The U.S. Province now has a page on Facebook. If you are a Facebook member, you can become a "fan" of the page and subscribe to it. As Facebook users know, this means that you will automatically receive updates from the page on your own Facebook news feed. However, you do not need to be a member of Facebook to view the SCJ page. Non-FB viewers cannot interact fully with the page, but can read what is posted on it.



For those not familiar with it, Facebook is a social networking tool that many organizations use to share information about themselves with others. "Fan pages," such as the one set up for the U.S. Province, are increasingly used by universities, parishes, youth groups, alumni organizations, dioceses and religious communities. It is not a substitute for an organization's website, but simply another means to share brief news items with a wider audience.

To view the page go to: <http://tinyurl.com/yfk549z>. Or, if

the Tiny URL doesn't work, use: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Hales-Corners-WI/Priests-of-the-Sacred-Heart-SCJ-US-Province/169113070072>

Once on the page you can become a "fan" of it by clicking on the "Become a Fan" link near the upper right corner, after the title "Priests of the Sacred Heart (SCJ), U.S. Province." Being a fan allows updates to appear on your personal news feed; fans can also comment on posts made on the site. For those who want to join Facebook, simple instructions can be found from within the Facebook site.

Also on Facebook

Alumni from Divine Heart Seminary (Donaldson) have established a page on Facebook. To see it, go to: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Donaldson-IN/Divine-Heart-Seminary/182990445628>

SCJ General on USG council

Fr. José Ornelas Carvalho, superior general of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, was elected to the council of the Union of Superiors General (USG) during its General Assembly in Rome, November 26-27. Fr. Paschal Chávez Villanueva, rector major of the Salesians, was re-elected as president of the USG. This is his second three-year term.

Sacred Heart Awards

At its annual awards dinner Sacred Heart School of Theology recognized Fr. Jim Brackin, SCJ, with its 2009 Distinguished Ministry Award. Also recognized was the U.S. Province of the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians) with the seminary's the 2009 Archbishop Cousins Award.

The Dehon Distinguished Ministry Award is presented annually in honor of Fr. Leo John Dehon, founder of the Priests of the Sacred Heart. The award recognizes an alumnus of the seminary who has given distinguished service to the Church and humankind in professional or volunteer endeavors, in leadership, in civic or social work, or in the promotion of intellectual or cultural pursuits.

Fr. Jim graduated from Sacred Heart School of Theology and was ordained in 1975. His work with the seminary was key in helping to establish Sacred Heart as one of North America's leading seminaries. Named rector in 1993, he served in that position for 11 years. Prior to his work with Sacred Heart, Fr. Jim ministered in education, and as a civil lawyer, helping those who could not afford proper legal assistance.

A member of the Provincial Council, Fr. Jim is now involved in full-time ministry to elder SCJ priests and brothers.

The Salvatorians were honored for their decades of support and collabo-



Fr. Jim Brackin with Fr. Jan de Jong; Fr. Jim received SHST's Distinguished ministry award for 2009.

ration with Sacred Heart School of Theology. The Cousins Award honors an individual or organization that has demonstrated distinguished effort, involvement, and promotion of older vocations to the Roman Catholic priesthood. It was established by Sacred Heart to recognize Milwaukee Archbishop Cousins' leadership in promoting vocations. The Society of the Divine Savior is the 22nd recipient of this award.

Members of the Salvatorian community have served as teachers and administrators at Sacred Heart for many years. The community also sends its seminarians to Sacred Heart School of Theology.

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