



**Message of the Dehonian bishops**

***"Put out into the deep water: the love of Christ impels us!"***

Dear Dehonian confreres and all members of the Dehonian Family,

We were gathered together, from January 10 to 15, 2013, in Rome: 19 Dehonian bishops from Asia, Africa, America and Europe, to share with one another our life and ministry.

We have drunk from the wellspring: in fact, the Superior General and his Council let us in on to the project of the Congregation about spirituality, formation and internationality;

We have finally realized a desire of many years: to find ourselves as Dehonian bishops living together the *sint unum*.

What did we feel during these days? A great joy, yes!

Our joy:

- to feel ourselves as confreres in the Congregation and thus to reaffirm and share the desire to serve our people wholeheartedly;
- to have lived these days, drawing from our spirituality of mercy and reconciliation which is at the root of our episcopal ministry;
- to have been confirmed in our living of the missionary spirit that unites us to Christ and the Church in its proclamation of the Good News to all. What resonated in us was the voice of our Founder urging us to "get out of the sacristy and to go to the people";
- to have been able to reflect on the importance of our social involvement through the study of the social doctrine of the Church in the formation of consciences and in the preferential option for the poor and the excluded;
- to have insisted on the necessity of a deeper cultural engagement which requires from us a better intellectual formation and wisdom to face the new challenges of our time.

We feel ourselves also in solidarity with the concerns and hopes of those provinces whose future is in jeopardy through the aging of its members and the lack of vocations.

In all of this, however, we look at the reality of the Congregation with the eyes of faith. From it springs the hope and assurance in us that the Dehonian charism cannot die. This may require a renewal on our part so that we may be able to face the challenges of post-modernity, promote a community centered on Christ and proclaim reconciliation and mercy, as brothers and servants of the people of God. All this asks of us, however, a personal, communal and pastoral conversion.

With Fr. Dehon we love the Church deeply and we reaffirm our total availability to her and to the people. In filial loyalty to Pope Benedict XVI, we are committed to live the Year of Faith, and to promote the New Evangelization for the transmission of Christian faith through contemplation and love for the little ones and the poor.

We love the congregation by whom we feel loved. We identify ourselves as Dehonian religious, offered and sent by the Congregation for the pastoral service, entrusted to us by the Church. We thank God for being able to share in the same charism with the other consecrated people and laity, with whom we form the Dehonian Family. We extend to her all good wishes and we pray that she may grow.

In this fraternal sharing, we dare to ask you that we may be better informed about the life of the Congregation. We ask that you send us materials that can help us to better understand and deepen our appreciation of authentic Dehonian values. We would like to see that you do all you can to preserve the history of the Congregation.

We also pray that our Founder may be beatified and that through him we will be stimulated to a greater holiness of life and fidelity to our charism.

Through the intercession of the Venerable Father Leo John Dehon, we ask God to continue to speak to the hearts of young people so that many may join us to help realize the dream of the Founder: being prophets of love and servants of reconciliation in the world.

Finally, we renew our gratitude to the Congregation for having allowed us to become sons of Father Dehon, with a solid spirituality, with an apostolic zeal and with an outlook of mercy.

A very special thanks to the Superior General and his Council, and to the community of Rome II for their warm welcome and for the opportunity to spend this time together.

Thank you for making us feel like full members of the Congregation, sharing the joys and hopes, sorrows and struggles of the people of our ministry.

A special thanks also to the two Italian Provinces for their fraternal sharing with us.

We also feel to be in communion with our fellow bishops who, for various reasons, could not participate in this event.

We entrust the Dehonian Family, our dioceses and the ministry of all to Mary, who "intimately associated with the life and the redemptive work of her Son," "inspires us to availability in faith" (Cst. 85).

Let us move forward, sustained by the Holy Spirit and impelled by the love of Christ.

Rome, January 15, 2013.

**Mons. Tomé Makhwéliha,**  
Arcivescovo di Nampula

**Mons. Aloisio Roque Oppermann,**  
Arcivescovo emerito di Uberaba

**Mons. Claudio Dalla Zuanna,**  
Arcivescovo di Beira

**Mons. Vilsom Basso,**  
Vescovo di Caxias do Maranhão

**Mons. Murilo Sebastião Ramos Krieger,**  
Arcivescovo di São Salvador de Bahia

**Mons. Aloysius Sudarso,**  
Arcivescovo di Palembang

**Mons. Elio Greselin,**  
Vescovo di Lichinga

**Mons. Adam Leszek Musiałek,**  
Vescovo di De Aar

**Mons. Virginio Domingo Bressanelli,**  
Vescovo di Neuquén

**Mons. José Alfredo Caires De Nóbrega,**  
Vescovo di Mananjary

**Mons. Vital Chitolina,**  
Vescovo di Diamantino

**Mons. Antônio Wagner Da Silva,**  
Vescovo di Guarapuava

**Mons. Antônio De Sousa Braga,**  
Vescovo di Angra

**Mons. Gaetano Di Pierro,**  
Vescovo di Moramanga

**Mons. Manuel Neto Quintas,**  
Vescovo di Faro

**Mons. Carmo João Rhoden,**  
Vescovo di Taubaté

**Mons. Teemu Timotheus Sippo,**  
Vescovo di Helsinki

**Mons. Nelson José Westrupp,**  
Vescovo di Santo André

**Mons. Józef Wróbel,**  
Vescovo ausiliare di Lublino