Encouraged, driven and guided by His Sacred Heart, the pursuit to bring education, justice, compassion and the love of our Savior to the poor is what it means to be a Priest of the Sacred Heart.

Dear Friend,

As Spiritual Director, I am blessed to speak and write to so many of you about our important work in the US: educating men for the priesthood, caring for our elderly priests, social action and pastoral service in Wisconsin, South Dakota, Texas and Mississippi.

However, when I can visit our missions in other countries, I am especially moved by what is being accomplished, and the impact it is making on the lives of individuals, families and communities. This is possible only because of your loyal support, for which I am profoundly grateful.

Twice last year, Pam (Director of Mission Advancement) and I traveled to our communities in India to see firsthand how your generous donations are being put into action. In October 2017, we also visited Vietnam, and invited three of our benefactors to see how their gifts have made a difference.

I can tell you that what you see on paper cannot compare to the in-person experience. For our guests, there were many times that their emotions could not be kept inside. Each community, village and SCJ was humbled that our guests would travel all this way to meet them, experience their culture, devotion and everyday life.

Let me share some highlights from our recent travels…
The Dehon Tailoring Center is giving women in the poor village of Vempadu, India the skills needed to earn a living for their family. The women, many over the age of 40, now produce purses, school uniforms and vestments for priests, among other items.

The Dehon Tailoring Center was the brainchild of Fr. Jojappa, SCJ, as a way to help the village economy while also giving “older” women, who are often marginalized in the local culture, a sense of purpose.

Twice we have brought back with us a limited number of purses to show the quality of work created at the Center and to raise funds for its continued operation. Blessed by donations for additional sewing machines, the Center is expanding to help more women contribute to their families.

The income level in our mission area in India is roughly $100 a month. That is $3 a day, when there is work. In the 11 communities where the Priests of the Sacred Heart are present we are; educating men for the priesthood; serving parishes; building churches, homes and sanitation units; providing for the education of children, and serving those most in need.
New Life in an Old Space

With thanks to so many of our benefactors, the new St. Joseph’s Church in Sooranad was finally completed. It is a beautiful representation of the hard work of its pastor, Fr. Colin, and its parishioners who labored over the building for more than 5 years.

Most surprising for us was that the 100-year-old structure that was the former main church was not taken down but converted into an Adoration Chapel. We didn’t recognize the transformation! Inside the chapel sits a cross made from jackfruit tree wood which holds a special story.

The history of the miraculous Jackfruit Tree...

The original St. Joseph’s Church was built in 1919. Before its construction, there was a temporary church, basically a shed made with wood and coconut leaves. When the new church was blessed, the temporary one was destroyed...but it was noticed that the dried wood pillar that was used for the shed had sprouted!

This was viewed as a sign, and it was not removed. Later a jackfruit tree developed from that sprout and the tree was regarded as a miraculous tree. In the 1950s the tree was cut for making furniture for the church, and they discovered the old wooden pillar inside the tree! The piece was removed, and a cross was made from the wood. This cross is now kept in the new adoration chapel.

Since the tree had so much importance, one seed of the jackfruit was blessed by the parish priest and it was planted in a separate place. The tree that grew from the seed still stands and is believed to have inspired many miracles.
The Joy of Innocent Children

After our visits in India in October we had the opportunity to visit our school in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam – the Huong Tam School. Not only were we greeted by 320 energetic children but also devoted SCJs, who along with our partners from St. Paul Parish and the wonderful teachers give the families of these children much hope.

We visited each of the nine classrooms with gifts of bouncing balls and chocolates for the children, and we were richly rewarded by song and dance.

Huong Tam School serves the families of the working poor, mostly migrants from remote, poverty-stricken villages. The families pay no tuition, no fees for books or uniforms, unlike other schools in the city. For them, we are their only hope for giving their children an education.

We are losing our lease on the current school building. Fortunately, a new property has been found which will allow our student population to grow to 500.

But real estate is extremely expensive, especially in the high-density area served by the school. While we have raised some of the funds for the new school, we are still in great need of donations to ensure that we will have a place to educate our needy students by early next year.

Our missions and the devoted SCJ priests around the world continue to bring God’s love to those thirsting for more. Please help us reach out to the many in need of education, housing, churches, clean water – and most importantly, the knowledge that someone cares.

Your gift makes all the difference in the world. Please join us in bringing God’s love to all of His people. Use the enclosed card to make your donation or request additional information.

To read more about our missions and see photos and videos, visit our website, www.poshusa.org.

Sincerely in the Sacred Heart,

Fr. Dominic, SCJ

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Children celebrate our visit from the US with song and dance

Fr. Dominic distributes a rare treat of snacks to the children

The site of the new school, for which funds are urgently needed