

MINUTES OF THE FINAL SESSION OF THE VII INTERNATIONAL DEHONIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINAR

Date: August 4, 2026

Place: Auditorium of the Faculdade Dehoniana / Convento Sagrado Coração de Jesus (Conventinho), Taubaté-SP, Brazil

Session theme: Conclusion of The Theological Seminar

Opening of the Final Session

On the fourth day of August in the year two thousand twenty-six, at 8:40 a.m., in the Auditorium of the Faculdade Dehoniana, in Taubaté-SP, Brazil, with the participants housed at the Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent (Conventinho), the Final Session of the VII International Dehonian Theological Seminar began.

The moderator, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou, welcomed everyone and presented the program of the concluding morning: consideration and approval of the final message prepared by the coordinators of the Continental Theological Commissions; evaluation of the Seminar; communications; and, at the end, the concluding addresses of the president of the Seminar and of the Superior General.

Before beginning the work proper, the assembly paid tribute to Fr. Mateus de Almeida Brito on the gift of life on his birthday.

1. Final Message of the Seminar

After the tribute, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou invited Fr. Manuel António Teixeira to present the draft of the final message prepared by the coordinators of the Continental Theological Commissions.

Fr. Manuel António clarified that the text to be read was only a draft, open to alteration, addition, or deletion after the reading and plenary discussion. He then proceeded to read the full message addressed to the Dehonian Family.

The moderator proposed the following method of work: first, to receive overall impressions of the text; then to proceed paragraph by paragraph for more specific observations; and finally to entrust the reworking and approval of the text.

1.1 General considerations

Fr. Eduardo Nunes Pugliesi mentioned the need to insert the official name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Convent, rather than using “Conventinho,” in the text of the final message.

Fr. Victor de Oliveira Barbosa, taking an overall view, considered the content of the message good, but felt the lack of an explicit mention of the method that guided the work of the Seminar—namely the identification of the implied author and the mock reader in Father Dehon’s texts—as well as of the shared understanding of the importance of having an appropriate method for reading and understanding the Founder’s writings.

1.2 Paragraph-by-paragraph considerations

The first paragraph was read. Fr. Wyllians Prado Rapozo then suggested that specific mention be added of the presence of laity and formators as participants in the Seminar.

The second paragraph was read, in which Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz suggested the deletion of a sentence.

The third paragraph was read. Immediately afterward, Fr. Michel Simo Temgo and Fr. Yudistiro Adifitriyassanto suggested an explicit reference in that paragraph to the method used in the Seminar. Fr. Josimar Baggio proposed adding creative fidelity as an element of the reading that had been carried out. Fr. Stefan Tertünte and Fr. Wyllians Prado Rapozo suggested placing the theme of the Seminar, *Father Dehon in His Texts*, in italics. Fr. Emmanuel Nanduri further suggested the need to affirm a more complete knowledge of the person of the Founder.

The fourth paragraph was read, with the four points listed. Fr. John van den Hengel made observations on the paragraph concerning the work of the CTDAN regarding oblation and proposed separating into two points the work of the CTDAL and the CTDAS. Fr. Stefano Zamboni suggested replacing references to the continents with references to the Commissions. Fr. Victor de Oliveira Barbosa likewise stressed the need to distinguish in two separate points the work of the CTDAL and the CTDAS and requested correction of the name of *La Chronique du Sud-Est*. Fr. Wyllians Prado Rapozo further suggested that the texts studied be mentioned explicitly (for example, *Couronnes d'Amour*).

The fifth paragraph was read. Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz asked whether it was not rather a dialogue among the participants, and not only among commissions. Fr. Josimar Baggio suggested, in the English version, the use of “among” rather than “between.”

The sixth paragraph was read. Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec proposed making explicit in the text who is giving thanks, namely the members of the Seminar.

The seventh paragraph was read. Fr. Gustave Lulendo N'dotony suggested ordering the acknowledgments from the more general to the more particular: General Government, BSP Province, Faculdade Dehoniana, etc. Fr. Wyllians Prado Rapozo requested correction of the name of the Brasil São Paulo Province.

The eighth paragraph was read. Fr. Zbigniew Morawiec observed that some sentences were excessively long. Fr. John van den Hengel indicated a preference for “his texts” rather than “his writings.” Fr. Stefano Zamboni asked that social commitment be included among the fundamental concepts, so as to be more faithful to what had been studied in the Seminar. Fr. Stefan Tertünte proposed standardizing “Dehondocs” (without a period) and/or indicating the link to the site. Fr. Josimar Baggio suggested incorporating into the final message some conceptual insights that had emerged in the Seminar, updating the language of the fundamental Dehonian concepts.

The last two paragraphs were read. Fr. Stefan Tertünte observed that, if the message is addressed at the beginning to the Dehonian Family, it would be good to conclude also with a reference to “our family.”

After the analysis of each paragraph, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou suggested that the drafting committee of the final message meet again, in the light of the indications formulated in plenary, for the reworking of the text.

2. Minutes of the Theological Seminar

Fr. Joseph Famerée was invited to speak on behalf of the committee for the review of the minutes. He affirmed that, in general, the minutes had been very well prepared, at once synthetic and complete, and that he found no substantial objection. The review committee offered a single suggestion: that, at the first mention of the working groups, the names of the members of the groups be cited.

The moderator, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou, asked whether the members of the Seminar still had any observation regarding the minutes, already made available on the Seminar website. There being no interventions, he requested approval of the minutes by a show of hands. The minutes were approved. The moderator thanked the secretariat for its work.

3. Communications

Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou opened the floor for important communications within the scope of the Theological Seminar.

3.1. SCJ Publishing House – Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz

Fr. Emerson presented a brief history of the SCJ Publishing House. He recalled that in the 1950s the Congregation had a publishing house directed by Fr. Pascal Lacroix; after his death, the initiative went through difficulties. Approximately five years ago it was resumed, and Fr. João Carlos Almeida is currently its director. The principal aim is to diffuse the charismatic patrimony of Father

Dehon and to be at the service of the Congregation. He highlighted the publication of various writings of the Founder, among them *Couronnes d'Amour* (currently the best-selling book), the new edition of *Dehonianos em Oração* for the three Brazilian Provinces, and the materials of the present Seminar. For the current year, publication was foreseen of a work on Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the edition of *Amor, Paz e Alegria* by the Servant of God Fr. André Prévot, and the Portuguese translation of *Retraite du Sacré-Cœur* by the Venerable Léon Dehon. He invited the participants to know and follow the work of the publishing house.

3.2. Doctoral research – Fr. Victor de Oliveira Barbosa

Fr. Victor presented the result of his doctoral research, completed in 2024 and published in no. 70 of *Studia Dehoniana*. The work arose from the need to find a method capable of interpreting Father Dehon's experience of faith, in keeping with no. 2 of the Constitutions. He developed the *Theological Decisional Method*, of Ignatian inspiration, centered on the fundamental decisions that mark a person's journey in the experience of faith. Applied to Father Dehon, the method made it possible to recover the principal decisions of his life, to reconstruct his spiritual itinerary, and to verify how this experience dialogues with the present and constitutes a patrimony for the Congregation and for the Church.

3.3 Research on “pure love” – Fr. John van den Hengel

Fr. John presented his research on pure love in Father Dehon, published in *Studia Dehoniana* 71. Starting from the observation that the expression appears some 270 times in the Founder's texts, he deepened the meaning Father Dehon gives it, in dialogue with Madame Guyon and François Fénelon. Although Father Dehon does not cite Fénelon directly, his language depends on him. The study seeks to verify whether this notion remains useful and edifying for the present time.

After these communications, before the break, the official photograph of the Theological Seminar was taken, followed by the interval at 10:00 a.m.

4. New Drafting and Approval of the Final Message

At 10:30 a.m., Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou resumed the session and invited Fr. Manuel António Teixeira to present the new version of the final message, already integrating the elements suggested by the participants. The reworked version was read.

In the discussion of the new version, Fr. John van den Hengel observed that, in the paragraph of thanks to the General Government, part of the sentence did not flow well. Fr. Joseph Kuate insisted on mention of the presence of formators and laity, and on correction of the expression “*Couronnes d'Amour*.” Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz suggested adding to the final message a reference to the pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida.

At the end of the debate, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou thanked Fr. Manuel António and the other drafters and invited the assembly to applause. The final message, in its revised form, was received as the expression of the Seminar to the Dehonian Family.

(The full text of the Message to the Dehonian Family, in the approved version, constitutes an annex to these minutes.)

5. Evaluation of the Theological Seminar

Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou introduced the moment of evaluation, wishing it also to be a space of voice for those who had worked behind the scenes and for the various faces of the Dehonian Family present at the Theological Seminar.

5.1 Dehonian Laywoman – Mrs. Rosemary M. Santos

Mrs. Rosemary presented herself as daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother, a Dehonian laywoman for more than ten years, with perpetual vows together with her husband, and linked to the

Faculdade Dehoniana. She expressed gratitude for the invitation and for the organization. She highlighted the richness of the readings, debates, and above all of the international fraternal life together. She affirmed that all are called to action, uniting faith and life, in the manner of Father Dehon. As Dehonian Family, attentive to the realities of the present time, they are invited to transform knowledge into concrete apostolate, so that the love of Christ may be the foundation of a more just and fraternal society. She recalled the Founder's expression: "to do the most ordinary things in an extraordinary way"; it is not a matter of great deeds, but of sanctifying the everyday.

5.2 Lay professors from Hales Corners

Prof. Michael Brummond expressed immense gratitude. He arrived with "fear and trembling," not being a religious or a priest, knowing little of the theme, and not speaking the language of the country; he was, however, received with great hospitality. He learned much about the depth and richness of Father Dehon, of the charism, and of Dehonians throughout the world. He made new friends and hopes for continued collaboration between Sacred Heart Seminary (Hales Corners) and international Dehonian theological work.

Prof. Jeremy Blackwood thanked for the invitation and the hospitality. Having visited Taubaté in October of the previous year, he had not imagined returning so soon. He deepened the richness of Father Dehon and was encouraged to see the Congregation committed to using the resources at its disposal, including *Dehondocs*, to understand better the Founder and itself. He thanked the Superior General, Fr. Carlos Luis, the committee, and especially Fr. John, coordinator of the North American commission. He affirmed the interest of the lay faculty of Hales Corners in continuing to reflect on Father Dehon and the charism.

5.3 Formators from Brazil

Fr. Elizeu Resende Silva, formator at the Postulancy of the BSP Province in Várzea Grande/MT, expressed gratitude for the opportunity. He highlighted: the density of Father Dehon's writings; systematic and methodological contact with the Founder from his texts; access to little-known texts; and the perception of the Congregation's effort, through the commissions, to know and love Father Dehon more. What remained was the invitation to deepen and replicate this knowledge in the formative mission, knowing Father Dehon from himself and from his writings.

Fr. José Zorer, formator of the BRM Province at the São José Seminary in Rio Negrinho/SC, underlined the renewing character of the experience, contact with unknown texts, and inspiration for initial formation. He thanked for the internationality and the life together, asking indulgence for linguistic limits.

Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou gave thanks and mentioned the intention of fostering an international commission of formators in ongoing dialogue with the Theological Commissions and other instances of the Congregation.

5.4 Provincial Superior of BRE – Fr. Pedro Silva de Moura

Fr. Pedro thanked Fr. Emerson for the encouragement to take part in person. He highlighted the conviction: one does not love what one does not know. To love the charism more, one must know Father Dehon better. He compared the Founder's writings to a hidden treasure that the Congregation continues to unearth. He thanked for the welcome and all who prepared the gathering.

5.5 Coordinators of the Continental Theological Commissions

Finally, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou invited the coordinators of the Dehonian continental theological commissions to express, in a maximum of two minutes, their impressions and evaluation of the Seminar.

Fr. Joseph Kuate, coordinator of the CTDAF, recalled the initial bureaucratic difficulties and the joy of having been able to take part in person. He thanked for the work on Father Dehon's

correspondence entrusted to the CTDAF and for the convergence of discoveries with the other commissions. He returns to Africa with the conviction of being an apostle of the Heart of Jesus.

Fr. Manuel António Teixeira, coordinator of the CTDAL, recalled the first theological seminar, in which few had read Father Dehon directly. Today the group of readers has grown; the seminars and commissions deepen theology and spirituality.

Fr. Stefano Zamboni, coordinator of the CTDEU, thanked for the hospitality, including the period of welcome at the Conventinho and in the BSP Province some weeks before the seminar. He considered the question of method decisive: a method unites, confers rigor, reveals riches, and opens to other methods.

Fr. John van den Hengel, coordinator of the CTDAN, recalled the inspiration, in Rome, to study Father Dehon in his texts as a new experience of the Founder. He had thought it would not be possible to realize that dream and lived the surprise of all that was lived and built during the Seminar. It was a rich experience of rediscovery; the task, however, is not yet complete.

Fr. Michael Moses Augustine, coordinator of the CTDAF, affirmed that Father Dehon is not an outdated reality, but a personality full of hope for those who struggle for dignity and integrity. The Seminar deepened understanding, challenged assumptions, and called us to carry the mission with creativity and fidelity. The methodology fostered fraternal collaboration. Finally, he expressed gratitude to all who made the event possible.

6. Concluding Addresses

After the evaluations, in order to conclude the Theological Seminar, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou said that three addresses would be offered: one by the mentor and president of the Seminar, Fr. John van den Hengel; one by the coordinator of the logistics committee, Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz; and the last by the Superior General of the Congregation, Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú.

6.1. President of the Seminar – Fr. John van den Hengel

Fr. John situated the VII Seminar in the horizon opened since 2004, when the Congregation was asked for a renewed historical approach to the figure of Father Dehon, to which, among others, the work of David Neuhold responded. The Seminar *Father Dehon in His Texts* asked how the Founder appears textually and what authorial traces he left in the various literary genres.

He indicated the next steps:

- the Theological Commission will examine the suggestions of the plenary and propose paths of continuity;
- there will be a publication of the Seminar; for this, he asked that the commissions send the original texts revised (in the light of the responses received), preferably by the end of September 2026;
- the Continental Commissions should communicate the research to their entities and find ways of continuing the work;
- the International Theological Commission and the Scientific Committee would meet that afternoon to outline further steps.

He thanked all who made the Seminar possible and passed the floor to Fr. Emerson Ruiz for the logistical acknowledgments.

6.2. Logistics coordination – Fr. Emerson Marcelo Ruiz

Fr. Emerson offered a “litany” of gratitude, recognizing the Seminar as an academic extension of the celebrations of the Dehonian Jubilee. He thanked:

- the General Government, especially Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, Fr. Wyllians Prado Rapozo, and Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou;
- the government of the Brasil São Paulo Province, especially Fr. Eli Lobato dos Santos and his councilors;

- the Scientific Committee, composed of Fr. John van den Hengel, Fr. Stefan Tertünte, Fr. Yudistiro Adifitriyassanto, and Fr. Alain Martial Nguetsop;
- the Faculdade Dehoniana, in particular Fr. Marcelo Batalioto, Mrs. Carolina Brandão, Fr. Reginaldo Sturion, and collaborators;
- the Conventinho, particularly the rector Fr. Anderson Ribeiro and the economo Br. Valdemar Scramin;
- the secretaries, Fr. Nilson Helmann, Fr. Victor de Oliveira Barbosa, and Fr. Eduardo Nunes Pugliesi;
- the liturgy team, guided by Fr. Eduardo Pugliesi;
- the fratres of logistics and transport, Br. Ricardo Vinter, Br. Jeferson Adriano Caldas, Br. Lucas Pontes, and other fratres involved in various services;
- communications, Fr. José Ronaldo de Castro Gouvêa and team;
- Mrs. Simone and the whole snack team;
- the fratres of the “hidden” service of Nazareth, who cared for cleaning and meals;
- the entire Dehonian Family who accompanied from afar with prayer.

6.3. *Superior General – Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú*

Finally, the Superior General delivered the concluding address. Fr. Carlos Luis began with the poem-song of a poet of the Paraíba Valley (Father Zezinho) on what is needed to be happy, continued in song by the Brazilian participants. He reflected on Jesus, who wrote only once on the ground and, by those words that the wind carried away, saved a life. Father Dehon wrote much more: how many lives will his word have reached and transformed, his way of contemplating Jesus, of serving the Church, and of being present in society?

He recalled Fr. Govaert, third Superior General of the Congregation who, in 1943, in the midst of world war, when “the sources were closed,” committed himself to the edition of the first collection of the Founder’s writings. Today, on the contrary, the sources are open. He evoked the fruitful tension in Father Dehon’s life between the more mystical and interior tendency and the call to active presence in society—a tension that the Seminar helped to perceive as a vital synthesis, founded on the daily experience of the Gospel and on the love of the Heart of Christ, with reference also to witnesses such as Fr. Luigi Morello and to the memory of the Venerable Martinho Capelli.

He considered the work of the Commissions a gift to the Congregation and to the Dehonian Family, a stimulus to continue drinking from the sources. He wished for all not only a “well-furnished head,” but a heart open so that the Heart of Christ may continue to motivate life and mission. He declared the VII International Dehonian Theological Seminar closed, in the hope that the closing may be at the same time the opening of new paths of study, transmission, and living of the patrimony of Father Dehon.

Closing

As the final act, Fr. Charles Aimé Koudjou invited all to express gratitude to God with the *Prayer of the Dehonian Jubilee*. The assembly concluded with the acclamation: *Vivat Cor Iesu! Per Cor Mariae!*

Fr. Eduardo Nunes Pugliesi
Fr. Nilson Helmann
Fr. Victor de Oliveira Barbosa