

The Holy Spirit in Early Salvatorian History
Sr. Carol Thresher, SDS
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Introduction: As I begin, I want to call into our presence Father Tom Novak who is unable to be with us today. Much of what I will share with you is the result of his original work, although periodically I will tweak it with my own research and thoughts. In the late 1990s, Tom was in Rome and deeply involved in assisting the work of the Postulation Office and the research of Fr. Peter Van Meijl. In one of our conversations, he shared with me some of his initial thoughts on the presence of the Holy Spirit in early Salvatorian history. At the time, I was part of an ongoing formation team which also included Sr. Bonaventura Fürhacker from Austria and Sr. Sebamalai Peries from Sri Lanka. At the request of Sr. Jean Schafer and her Generalate, we were in the midst of preparing and leading 3 international encounters that would gather Sisters from all the units of the Congregation for renewal. I had been part of a similar experience in 1995. However the focus of these 3 sessions was preparation for the celebration of the Year 2000, the Christian Millennium. Following the promptings of the universal Church, we drew up a three-year program that looked at our Salvatorian Charism through the lens of the three persons of the Blessed Trinity. 1998 happened to be the year of the Holy Spirit, so we entitled that year: *The Spirit's Life-giving Power for Inculturating our Salvatorian Mission*. As we sat down to plan, my conversation with Tom came to mind. As a result, I asked him to prepare a day for the group which he then entitled: *The Holy Spirit and Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan*.

Tom joined us in Rome at Salvator Mundi on June 16, 1998 which also happened to be the 150th Birthday of Father Jordan. As I recall, it was a stimulating day that opened new insights for many of us. Tom, with his usual fascination for art, dotted his presentation with early Salvatorian images, pictures and logos. He closed the day, by saying, "It seems to me that the topic of the Holy Spirit and Father Jordan has just been opened here with a preliminary gathering of the sources and some elementary reflection. Now it needs some time for more considered reflection, deepening, maturing, etc."¹

¹ Thomas Novak, *The Holy Spirit and Father Francis of the Cross Jordan*, unpublished paper (hereafter referred to as Novak) p.62.

It was clear to me that our day with Tom had only scratched the surface of a topic that would have to be taken up at a later date. I was hopeful that Tom would at some point publish what he had shared with us. However, life moved on and that never happened. Last year, as the theme for this National Assembly was finalized, I knew we had to find a way to recover the initial research Tom had done. Incomplete as he knew it to be, it was and continues to be a beginning that cannot be ignored. Tom himself had lost track of the work he had done for us in 1998 and, in fact, hardly even remembered it. However gratefully, he had kept electronic files of much of his work from that period. And thus began my commitment to recover and sort through his multiple electronic files labeled *JB* and *the Holy Spirit*. My hope was to finally share what he had begun.

Father Tom's Original Approach: Tom organized what he had found into the following 5 topics:

1. The Holy Spirit in the Early Prayer Formulations
2. The Holy Spirit in the Early Rule Formulations
3. The Holy Spirit in Jordan's *Exhortations and Admonitions*²
4. The Holy Spirit in the *Spiritual Diary*
5. The Holy Spirit in Early SDS Art, Images and Logos

Since Tom spent an entire day developing these five topics, there is no way I can do his work justice in the time allotted to me. So, I have chosen here to present a summary of four of Tom's themes and then take a little more time on the one he felt was the most revealing. That section contains the references in the Founder's

² In 1998, the *Talks of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan*, translated by Daniel Pekarske, SDS and Aloysius McDonagh, SDS, Krakow, 2003 (hereafter JT) were not available in English translation, so Novak limited himself to the summaries found in *Exhortations and Admonitions of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan* translated by Winfrid Herbst, SDS, Third Edition, Society of the Divine Savior, New Holstein. However, he did make reference to the more complete texts of the talks which already had been published in their original German in DSS XIII.

Chapter Talks which Tom himself calls “...the richest vein to explore for references to the Holy Spirit....”³

The Holy Spirit in Early Prayer Formulations: Many of the reference to the Holy Spirit in the early prayers of the Society appear in Trinitarian liturgical formulas.⁴ However, there are also specific daily, weekly, monthly and yearly (Pentecost) invocations which focus on the Spirit’s special role in the life of the members. Tom concludes that the Founder and the members were very aware of the inspiring and enflaming role of the Holy Spirit in their striving for holiness. He concludes that these early prayers “all witness to the primary role of the Holy Spirit in the piety of the Founder and the early members: the Holy Spirit inflames and inspires us in our striving for holiness and zeal.”⁵

The Holy Spirit in the Early Rule Formulations: In this section of his talk, Tom reviewed eight documents beginning with the earliest (probably 1878) double page document found in Jordan’s handwriting and concluding with the 1886 Latin Rule.⁶ In the earliest rule, we find a link between the Holy Spirit and apostolic zeal grounded in love which is to be supported by daily devotions including reciting the *Veni Creator Spiritus*.⁷ For the members, the Holy Spirit is to be the motivation for their apostolate and, in fact, the source of their apostolic fervor. Tom also cites Fr. Bernard Lüthen’s 1881 brochure on the Apostolic Teaching Society which very

³ Novak p. 25

⁴ Novak bases these conclusions on his study of DSS XXI *Preces Salvatorianae (1880-1962)*, specific references can be found in his original paper. Many of the earliest reference to the Holy Spirit here can be traced to the 1889 *Manna Religiosum* compendium of community prayer compiled by Father Otto Hopfenmüller under the direction of the Founder.

⁵ Novak p. 9

⁶ Novak p 10-15.

⁷ DSS II, 13ff English translation by Novak.

pointedly describes Jordan's undertaking as a work of the Spirit and sealed by the Spirit with its principal feast on Pentecost."⁸

Concluding this section, Tom asserts that the Founder's "most stunning and arresting statement about the Holy Spirit in these early documents is in the 1884 Rule which reads: "The first rule for the members is the law which has been written into our own hearts by the Holy Spirit."⁹ Although Tom doesn't elaborate on what provoked this bold statement by Father Jordan, I think it helpful to know the context in which it arose. These 1884 Rules for both the male and female communities of the, by then, *Catholic Teaching Society (CTS)*, were written by the Founder while on retreat in Switzerland in July of 1883. Having abandoned his original dream of an inclusive group of modern day apostles from all walks of life, Jordan creates a short rule for each of the now religious communities. Fr. Timoteus Edwein describes these two rules as: "...short, clear and captivatingly vivacious."¹⁰ These two rules, one for the men's community and the other for the women's community, consist of 4 identical short paragraphs on poverty, chastity, obedience and admission to the CTS. These are followed by a unique final paragraph on the apostolate in each rule. This final paragraph in the men's rule has come to be known as the *Apostolic Rule* and can still be found in the Society's Constitutions today.¹¹ Clearly, Fr. Jordan felt that these short rules captured what was to be the essence of the group he was still in the process of founding. However, upon the Founder's return to Rome and when faced with the desire to gain approval from the Holy See, he then added specific norms for each of the

⁸ See Bernard Lüthen, *The Apostolic Teaching Society, 1881* AGS E1228. English translation by Aloysia Kliemke in *Mailings I-C,1* available in *Contributions on Salvatorian History Charism and Spirituality Volume 6*, Milwaukee, 2009.

⁹ Novak p. 14

¹⁰ Timotheus Robert Edwein, *SDS A Biographical Study DSS XVI* English Edition 2008, Translation by Daniel Pekarske, SDS, Milwaukee (hereafter Edwein) XIV, 5.13/17.

¹¹ For English translations of these two Rules courtesy of Sister Aloysia Kliemke, SDS, see *Rule and General Regulations of the First Order of the Catholic Teaching Society, 1884* and *Rule and Common Regulations for the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society, 1884* in *Mailings II-B-2.2 & II-B-2.3* available in *Contributions on Salvatorian History, Charism and Spirituality Volume 7* Milwaukee, 2009.

groups. However before he added these more juridical dictums, he recalls the words of St. Ignatius of Loyola and writes:

The mercy and wisdom of the Creator who has deigned Himself to call into being the Catholic Teaching Society, will also sustain, guide and foster it. **Therefore, the first rule for the members is the law which has been written into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.** However, because it is the will of God that we cooperate and because the authority of the Church wishes it, we, after **invocation of the Holy Spirit** and our holy patrons, place before our (brothers & sisters) in Christ the following points to be followed so that we will reach our proper goal with greater facility.¹²

The Holy Spirit in the *Spiritual Diary* of the Founder: Tom reminds us that what we find in the *Spiritual Diary* reflects Father Jordan's most intimate and personal relationship with God. In it, we do discover references to the Holy Trinity as well as to the Holy Spirit but it seems clear that the Holy Spirit was not the primary focus of the Founder's personal prayer. What Tom's review does find are a number of allied themes which when placed alongside Fr. Jordan's *Chapter Talks*, he concludes to be the Founder's understanding of the work of the Spirit. These themes revolve around the Spirit's work to enlighten and enflame the believer and are often expressed with the image of fire. On three occasions in the course of the diary, we find a notation of St. Paul's words in Acts 20:22ff. "Behold, I am going to Jerusalem, compelled by the Spirit."¹³ Perhaps these words of the apostle Paul, reconnected the Founder to his own pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1882 during which he finally committed himself to establish the Apostolic Teaching Society.¹⁴ Regarding the fire image, we are all familiar with the blazing torch prayer currently used by many Salvatorians around the world. This prayer draws on images and expressions found in the Founder's diary. It draws together

¹² Ibid

¹³ *Spiritual Diary*, Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, New English Language Edition, 2011, Network Printers, Milwaukee, WI (hereafter *SD*) I/170; II/10 and II/72

¹⁴ See *SD* I/152†; I/155†

into one prayer numerous notations from the diary, which Tom posits are references to the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit in early SDS Art, Images and Logos: In this section of his presentation, Tom limited himself to what he found in DSS I-IX. He indicates that more work needs to be done with the early issues of *Der Missionaer*, the *Apostelkalendar* and other early Salvatorian publications. In the material he did review, Tom found that in many of the early paintings, prayer cards, leaflets, catalogues and similar publications, the Holy Spirit was depicted as a hovering presence. You can see an example of this in a portrayal of Mary Queen of the Apostles in a work done by Brother Aegidius Roeder as a gift to Fr. Jordan on his nameday, October 4, 1892.¹⁵ Other art work from the period, such as the artistic rendition of the sending of missionaries to Assam, India, also included the hovering presence of the Holy Spirit. Here we see it on the painting seen behind the altar.¹⁶

Tom also shared with us a simple circular sketch of Mary, Queen of the Apostles, holding the child Jesus, surrounded by the apostles which clearly shows the Holy Spirit hovering over all.¹⁷ This design, or one very similar to it, is found often in early publications of the Society. It appears on the cover of the Society's Constitutions up until 1914 when it was then replaced by an image of the Teaching Savior. In these early years, this circular image is also found on the seal of the General of the Society and other Superiors, as well as on numerous holy cards, leaflets, brochures, catalogues, diplomas, ordinances and other publications.

Tom concludes that the Holy Spirit is indeed present, even if subtly at times, in early Salvatorian art work. This was especially true during the thirty years between the early 1880s and 1914. Most often this presence is in a Trinitarian context and relates to the apostolic work of the foundation.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1

¹⁶ See Appendix 2

¹⁷ See Appendix 3

The Holy Spirit in Father Jordan’s Chapter Talks: I will now return to and expand on Section 3 of Tom’s paper in which he limited himself to what was at that time translated into English in *The Exhortations and Admonitions of the Founder*. Rather than simply summarize what Tom had to say in his presentation, I have gone to *The Jordan Talks*, a source which was not available to him in English at that time. I can’t imagine that Tom would disapprove of the liberty I am taking with this section of his presentation, especially since in his concluding remarks in 1998 he saw the Founder’s chapter talks as “the richest vein to explore for references to the Holy Spirit...”¹⁸

The other freedom I am taking with this section is to insert my own contextual reflection related to the release of Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical on the Holy Spirit *Divinum Illud Munus* dated May 9, 1897. I want to thank Fr. Dan Pekarske, SDS, for suggesting that I take a look at this encyclical as I worked with this topic. The 1897 papal encyclical briefly reviews Church doctrine regarding the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity and underlines the Spirit’s special role in the work of the Church. Pope Leo closes by encouraging devotion to the Holy Spirit and decreeing, and I quote, “...that throughout the whole Catholic Church, this year and in every subsequent year, a Novena shall take place before Pentecost Sunday...”¹⁹ Given Father Jordan’s attentiveness to the mind of the Church, I don’t think it is a coincidence that his talks to the motherhouse community with special focus on the Holy Spirit are, with one exception, dated at the beginning and end of the Novena as well as during the Octave of the feast of Pentecost. The Founder’s first two talks take place in 1897, the year of the encyclical’s promulgation.²⁰ The others circle that same feast in 1899 and 1901²¹. I don’t think it is a stretch of the imagination to suggest that the Founder took advantage of Pope Leo’s call for devotion to the Holy Spirit in order to deepen his own understanding of the work

¹⁸ Novak p. 36

¹⁹ Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus* 13. Document downloaded from Vatican website at the following link: <https://w2.vatican.va/>

²⁰ See *JT* 1897/6/4; 1897/0/11

²¹ See *JT* 1899/5/12; 1899/5/19; 1901/5/24

of the Spirit in the Salvatorian foundation and to share that with the early members. The only substantive reflection on the Spirit's action in the lives of the members that falls outside this framework took place a month after Pentecost on the feast of St. John the Baptist in 1899.²²

As we study these six extensive reflections of Fr. Jordan on the Holy Spirit, we should also recall that what we are reading comes from notes taken by members of the Motherhouse community that heard the talks. While this doesn't "downgrade" their importance, it is good to remember that the words were spoken, not written, by Fr. Jordan. They reflect what the early members heard and remembered as important. As such, they contain insights gained from the Founder by the early Salvatorian community which, in turn, have been passed on to us today.²³

Now I would like to lift up what I find to be key themes in Fr. Jordan's six reflections on the Holy Spirit contained in *The Jordan Talks*. They are: unity of the community, apostolic effectiveness, combating lukewarmness and becoming people of prayer. In his last lengthy talk the Founder summarizes what I believe was the ultimate fruit of his personal reflection on the importance of the Holy Spirit in Salvatorian life. I suspect his words not only summarize what he felt at that time but also alert us to why the theme of this 2016 National Assembly is important to us today. Let me quote Fr. Jordan:

We are now preparing for Pentecost. This reminds us to prepare ourselves well to receive the Holy Spirit – the Spirit, which is necessary for a true Salvatorian. **One cannot be a true Salvatorian without it,** neither for oneself still less for others.²⁴

²² See *JT* 1899/6/23

²³ For a fuller explanation of the process that went into gathering these notes from Fr. Jordan's conferences into the *Jordan Talks* see the introduction of the English translation of the talks which I am using here pages XIII-XXVI.

²⁴ *JT* 1901/5/24

Unity of the Community: Using the image of the apostles and Mary gathered in the upper room, the Founder often emphasized the Holy Spirit's role in engendering love within the community.

What shall we accomplish as apostolic [people]²⁵ without the help of the Holy Spirit? It is especially important for us to implore the Holy Spirit to help us so that we, like the holy apostles, always remain unanimous, united in the Holy Spirit, one in heart.²⁶

This unity, Fr. Jordan emphasized over and over again, should never be undermined by gossip, slander or any evil which keeps us from being of "one heart and one mind." He encouraged the members to never disturb the harmony needed among them and thereby weaken apostolic enthusiasm. Using a homespun image he says, they "...shouldn't be like termites. [But rather] Be like bees who look for the best" in others thereby encouraging rather than undermining them.²⁷

Apostolic Effectiveness: Clearly, Father Jordan believed that apostolic zeal and its effectiveness were dependent upon openness to the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit who ignites the hearts of apostles with zeal that is grounded in love. The fire of love is essential for an apostle. In fact, zeal without love will do more harm than good. I think we can understand this insight even better today in a world where zeal (especially religious zeal) without love has often descended into a zealotry which destroys rather than builds up God's Reign on earth. In Fr. Jordan's own words:

We are called to the apostolate; we are called to announce God's word; and, like St. Gregory says, without caritas we are not qualified to preach the

²⁵ The translation reads "apostolic men" which was an obvious choice since Fr. Jordan was speaking to the all male motherhouse community. Since the goal of this National Assembly is to address the entire USA Salvatorian Family in 2016, I have opted to replace the word "men" with the more inclusive term "people".

²⁶ JT 1897/6/11

²⁷ JT 1897/6/4

gospel. Therefore, if we want to preach, we must possess love for each other. How much an apostle accomplishes if he is permeated with love! And on the other hand, how much harm a preacher does who is not filled with love. Even if he thunders, how can he strike fire if he himself is not aflame? Even if he is a scholar and preaches keenly, he must ignite through love.²⁸

Today, we can also understand that the preaching referred to by the Founder is not only from the pulpit but also through every aspect of our lives as modern day apostles. Living Gospel values infused with God's love for all of creation has a transforming impact on those around us. In contrast, words and actions that lack the fire of love destroy and often set us at each other's throats.

In Tom's original presentation, he expanded upon this image of fire which Father Jordan uses in the above quote and repeats often in his chapter talks on the Holy Spirit. Tom saw the Founder's use of this image as a clear connection to the same image we find so often in his *Spiritual Diary*.

Combating Tepidness or Lukewarmness: Closely connected to both community unity and apostolic effectiveness was Fr. Jordan's conviction that openness to the gifts of the Holy Spirit enable us to overcome the temptation to "lose zest" in our apostolic endeavors.

We all need the Holy Spirit, each one of us in our temptations, in doubts, in darkness, in weakness. We have so many needs, so many occasions to ask the Holy Spirit to stand by us! Oh come, ... Best Consoler, Light, Paraclete! ... Furthermore, we ask the Holy Spirit especially for those members who might be somewhat lukewarm. May he descend, ignite us with holy fire, ignite all, that they imitate the holy zeal of the apostles in striving for holiness, that they hold out - *perseverance*....²⁹

Fr. Jordan acknowledged that times of temptation, darkness and weakness come to all of us. This, he says, is when we especially need the Holy Spirit. On the last

²⁸ JT 1897/5/9

²⁹ JT 1899/5/12

day of the 1899 Pentecost Novena, the Founder prayerfully leads the community through the traditional *Come Holy Spirit* prayer calling down in succession each gift so much needed by everyone of us. Who, he asks, doesn't need each and every one of the Spirit's gifts...³⁰

Being People of Prayer: Finally, the Founder regularly returns to his conviction that we need the Holy Spirit in our lives if we are to be truly People of Prayer and to be holy. This theme permeates all of his conferences on the Holy Spirit and can be found repeatedly in other talks throughout his life.³¹ This important insight into Salvatorian living was strikingly described by the Founder in his 1899 talk on the feast of St. John the Baptist.³² In this conference we encounter the image which has become a favorite around the Salvatorian world. Fr. Jordan describes, the Baptist as a "Lamp Burning Brightly" indeed, a model for an apostolic person who is "afame with fire of the Holy Spirit." Using the Latin phrase "Lucerna Ardens et Lucens" as a reflective guide, the Founder compares John the Baptist to a lamp into which the Holy Spirit pours oil during times of desert solitude, contemplation, prayer and penance. This oil is what allowed St. John to burn brightly, shine and give light to others. In the same way, we all need times of solitude and prayer during which we will be filled with the oil needed if we are to be people of light for others. Without oil our lamp will go out. Without oil we will be light for no one. If we are to be on fire with apostolic zeal (ardor) and truly live a life that points to Jesus Christ like the Baptist did, we need to seek out time for the Holy Spirit to fill and refill our personal lamps. It is in this context that the Founder says: "Our Society is wholly contemplative and active." In other words, it is only in being people of prayer that Salvatorians will continue to become apostles for our times.

³⁰ It would be worthwhile to take time to read this beautiful prayerful reflection in its entirety. It can be found in JT 1899/5/19.

³¹ A look at the word prayer in the JT index on page 493 of the English translation will confirm this.

³² JT 1899/6/23. All the subsequent quotes in this section come from this same source.

Conclusion: As I draw this presentation to a close, I will take the liberty to integrate some of Fr. Tom's original conclusions with those resulting from the additional research I have done. My decision flows from Fr. Tom's own closing words almost twenty years ago in 1998. He said: "It seems to me that the topic of the Holy Spirit and Father Jordan has just been opened here with a preliminary gathering of the sources and some elementary reflection. Now it needs ... time for more considered reflection, deepening, maturing, etc."³³ Following Fr. Tom's direction, let me now conclude with just a few points that I believe are especially important for members of the Salvatorian Family at this time 2016.

1. While we do not find evidence of a highly specific devotion to the Holy Spirit in Fr. Jordan, we do see that his personal Trinitarian experience of God integrated the Spirit as the divine agent of sanctification and apostolicity. Tom posits that the Founder "...was captured by the Spirit from the time of his first communion especially. He was a person 'grabbed and possessed by God.'³⁴
2. Father Jordan never speaks theoretically or doctrinally about the Holy Spirit. Rather his approach is "at once intuitive, artistic, poetic, inspirational, persuasive."³⁵ Following the promptings of Pope Leo XIII, the Founder urges the members to call on the Spirit to gift them with a unifying love that would not only build up the young Society but also sustain the members in holiness and fervor in a world so desperately in need of God's Saving Action.
3. Finally, Father Jordan would encourage us today to call on the Holy Spirit in order to ground ourselves in an experience of God that will sustain and give

³³ Novak 62

³⁴ Novak 61. In Appendix II *The Dove Incident* p. 45-46, Fr. Tom describes stories remembered by Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer and Gurtweil villagers about the 12 year old Jordan being distracted in his communion pew by the presence of a white dove over his head. Father Timotheus Edwein quotes these interviews in *DSS XIII 88-90*. Fr. Tom included this only as an appendage to his presentation and cautioned us not "to place too much emphasis on this first communion experience." The decision not to focus on the dove but rather on "a deep spiritual experience" at the time of his First Communion has been confirmed by more recent biographies of the Founder. See the *First Section* description of these early years in the New English Language Edition of Jordan's Spiritual Diary used for this paper p 1.

³⁵ Novak p. 37

fire to our lives as apostles in today's world. He would emphasize again that it is only People of Prayer who are able to be Blazing Torches that illuminate the world around them in a way that will lead others to know the God of Life.

It is my hope that during these days together, we are able to come to a deeper understanding of how the Holy Spirit continues to be active in the Salvatorian Family today. Members of our international leadership teams will share with us how they have experienced the Spirit in the lives of Salvatorians around the world from all three branches. As they do that, I encourage each one of us to reflect on how what they share connects to Fr. Jordan's own reflections. I am hopeful that the process we engage in here will deepen our own commitment to be, as Fr. Jordan hoped, people who are Blazing Torches and whose lamps indeed give real light to the world.

Carol Thresher, SDS
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Salvatorian National Assembly
June 2016

Appendix 1:

Mary, Queen of the Apostles
by
Brother Aegidius Roeder (October 4, 1892)



Appendix 2:

**Artistic Rendition of Assam Missioning by the Founder
by
Brother Aegidius Roeder**



Appendix 3

**Sketch used as seal and cover design
for Apostolic Teaching Society, Catholic Teaching Society
and Society of the Divine Savior
1882-1914**



Latin Inscription:

Top: Preach the Gospel to all creatures

Bottom: Queen of the Apostles, Pray for us