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Jordan: A Promoter of the Catholic Press

Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, the Founder of the Salvatorians, was determined to use all the worthy means accessible to him in order to reach as many people as possible and preach the Gospel to them. No wonder that he made use of all the media available during his times, in particular the press. However, what makes one wonder is the enormous scale of Father Jordan's activity. Indeed, he showed an outstanding courage and a deep involvement in broadening the specter of his work.

Initially, the Catholic press was Jordan's chosen means of propagating his apostolic work. But later it became the vehicle of his apostolic impact, or, in other words, of the evangelization efforts he continued. He was fully aware that using the press was crucial to a fruitful development of any apostolic endeavor. He was strengthened in his opinion by numerous conversations and encounters with magazine publishers and their employees. It was among them that he would seek his collaborators. He needed dedicated people, and soon he won the cooperation of numerous printmakers, editors, and graphic designers. He was very concerned about the quality of his publications and of their layout, in particular about the images published in his magazines. He personally involved himself in the printing process, even though its results might not have been instantly visible.

Fr. Bernard Lüthen recalled that in early 1882, Father Jordan was sending out the first issue of his magazine *Der Missionär (The Missionary)* full of hope that it would reach as many deaneries in Austria as possible. Unfortunately, there was almost no response. Still, the Founder would not lose hope, he would not get discouraged by that initial failure, but continued his work and did not stop printing his publications.

Already in 1881 the print run of the magazines and booklets he published was as high as 60,000 copies. In the early phase of the activity of the Society, he initiated the publication of numerous magazines, among them: *Il Piccolo Monitore*, *Il piccolo Monitore cattolico*, *L'amico dei Fanciulli*, *Il Monitore Romano*, *Der Missionär*, and *Nuntius Romanus*.

Also, the Founder's abundant correspondence proves that he found the issue of the apostolate of the press particularly important. In 1882 alone he wrote over 140 letters. He would send them to various publishing houses, such as Benziger's, Herder's, or Libreria Salesiana in Turin, but also to the editors of various journals, such as the Jesuit *Civiltà Cattolica*. Among others, he contacted the editor-in-chief of *O Apostolo*, a journal published in Rio de Janeiro, the apostolic prefect in Copenhagen, monsignor Grüder, editor-in-chief of the *India Cattolica*, a journal published in Bombay, and the Director of the Italian Post, as well as his numerous friends and collaborators... Among the letters the Founder wrote, one may also find his official statements sent to the Holy Father and to the Cardinal Vicar of the Diocese of Rome. All these letters show Father Jordan's dedication to the issue in question, as well as the large scale of his activity.

The attitude of the Founder should instigate our deep reflection. His zeal and the courage with which he continued his effort to evangelize people may put us all to

shame today. In our times communication is easy, and the social media dominate our lives. Practically each of us may unlimitedly and cheaply publish content on the Internet, thus reaching thousands of people. Also, printing is incomparably simpler and cheaper today than it was in the times of Fr. Jordan. Today, we may also use the new media, or audio and video files, which did not exist in Jordan's times.

Perhaps we should ask ourselves questions about what we share with other people and how we do it. We frequently publish photos of the meals we have, photos of our apartments, even of our closest ones and of ourselves. We publicly share the most personal information: we say what we have eaten, where we have been jogging or walking, whom we have met or what we have seen etc.

Our public activity is usually not very wise, and it does not have any practical aim. Having many more opportunities than Father Jordan, who lived in the 19th century, we do not use them for the purpose of evangelization. Turning the pages of the magazines and booklets our Founder published or co-published, we cannot help the thought that although compared to our modern standards these publications look modest and simple, they were nevertheless created in order to spread the news about the works of God, and they were extremely useful. Owing to them the world could find out about Father Jordan's work, which could thus attract hundreds of candidates and expand. What inheritance shall we leave as a result of our "creativity"?

In Father Jordan's letters one may see the enormous flame of his apostolic spirit. When an anonymous benefactor offered a donation for the development of his apostolic work, he responded by saying:

A person filled with an apostolic spirit does a lot of good wherever he or she should be; one might say such a person "has passed through life doing the good." If we had the spirit of the Apostles, the world would soon change; let us pray for it [for this intention].

Let us also pray for such a spirit. Owing to the Internet, the press, and the social media we have many more opportunities to reach other people than Father Jordan did. Let us pray so that the zeal Father Jordan and his early collaborators showed will become also ours, so that it may inspire us with ideas and fill us with courage in putting them in practice.

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