

Salvatorian Spirituality & Charism Series

3

International Charism Commission

SALVATORIAN KEY ELEMENTS

**Charism
Mission
Spirituality
Identity**

Part 1

SALVATOR

Society of the Divine Saviour
India 2002

TO ALL SALVATORIANs, MEN AND WOMEN, RELIGIOUS AND LAY

Dear Salvatorians,

We, the members of the SDS International Charism Commission are happy to present the results of our work in which we have expressed in a synthesized and simple manner what we believe to be our charism, mission, spirituality and identity.

The objective of our work was an expressed response to what we sincerely hope evokes in you a renewed Salvatorian spirit for the future.

This was made possible thanks to the many contributions from all three branches of the Salvatorian Family. We have in large part tried to incorporate these recommendations into the *Key Elements* statement. Our thanks go out to all of you for your concern and interest.

In this booklet we publish also seven articles that help us to understand better our Salvatorian Charism and Spirituality.

You are invited to reflect on the whole content in the light of our shared Salvatorian life.

We hope that we have contributed to a worldwide spread of Salvatorian life as a concrete starting point for the work of the

International Joint Charism Commission composed of members
from the three branches of the Salvatorian Family.

Sincerely yours in the Savior,

The International Charism Commission:

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Rome,
April, 11, 2002

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THE KEY ELEMENTS: SALVATORIAN CHARISM, MISSION, SPIRITUALITY AND IDENTITY

Introduction

We Salvatorians, men and women, religious and lay, describe our Salvatorian charism, mission spirituality and identity by stating that these elements are all inseparably related to one another. Charism and mission are two sides of the same coin, which are lived out in spirituality. Identity is the composite of specific Salvatorian characteristics that we recognize in ourselves and by which we are recognized by others.

In the beginning, we agreed upon the following working descriptions of the terms.

Charism is a specific gift given by the Holy Spirit to a person or a group for the sake of others so that God be better known and loved.

Mission is that dimension of the charism by which the one who receives the gift is sent to share it with others.

Spirituality is a dynamic way that a person or a group lives out their specific charism and mission given by God.

Identity is who we are to ourselves, as well as how others see us. This is the incarnation of our charism, mission and spirituality.

Salvatorian Charism

The founding charism is the specific gift of the Holy Spirit given to Fr. Jordan for the Church and the world. It is rooted especially in four biblical texts that are key to His life and work. They are at the core of the charism he communicates to all of us Salvatorians.

1. John 17:3 ¹

And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

2. Matthew 28:19-20 ²

Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.

3. Mark 16:15

And he said to them, "Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all Creation."

4. Daniel 12:3 ³

But the wise shall shine brightly like the splendor of the firmament, and those who lead the many to justice shall be like the stars forever.

Key elements found in these foundational texts by which we are called and empowered are: ⁴

- ◆ to live eternal life
- ◆ to know the one true God and the one he sends, Jesus Christ
- ◆ to follow in the footsteps of the apostles
- ◆ to make disciples of all nations
- ◆ to lead others to eternal truth and justice
- ◆ to proclaim the universality of Christ's message
- ◆ to be able to discern the signs of the times

Salvatorian Mission: ⁵

We Salvatorians are sent in mission to announce through our lives and actions the gospel message as contained in the key elements of the charism.

- ◆ to make known the Savior
- ◆ to work for the fullness of life or salvation
- ◆ to lead others to a conscious awareness of God
- ◆ to support one another in our apostolic commitment
- ◆ to involve others in the mission
- ◆ to emphasize the role of the lay apostle
- ◆ to proclaim the message to all people, everywhere and at all times, and to do this through whatever ways and means the love of Christ inspires.

Salvatorian Spirituality: ⁶

Salvatorian Spirituality is the way we Salvatorians live out our charism and mission in a concrete day-to-day way. Specific elements of this spirituality are:

- ◆ knowing God, that is, experiencing God as the center of our lives
- ◆ trusting in Divine Providence, living holiness as a vocation and helping others to do the same
- ◆ manifesting the goodness and kindness of the Savior
- ◆ being people of prayer
- ◆ being poor in spirit
- ◆ having apostolic zeal
- ◆ living out truth, justice, solidarity, and faithfulness
- ◆ being willing to bear the cross for the sake of the mission
- ◆ loving inclusively
- ◆ following the example of Mary by making the Savior known
- ◆ loving the Church
- ◆ living the simplicity of the sons and daughters of God

Salvatorian Identity

We identify ourselves as Salvatorians by the way we live out our charism, mission and spirituality both individually and as a group. We are bonded together in mutual commitment to be the incarnated expression of these key elements through which others are able to identify us as Salvatorians.

**International Charism Commission,
Rome,
June 16, 2001**

Advisory Notes

All scriptural citations are from *The New American Bible*, Catholic Publishers, Inc., New York, 1971.

Citations marked **SD** are from the *Spiritual Diary* of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, translated from the original by Sr. Miriam Cerletty SDS, Salvator Mundi, Rome, Italy, 1981.

Citations marked **EA** are from *Exhortations and Admonitions* of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, translated by Fr. Winfrid Herbst SDS, in the second edition, published by the Society of the Divine Savior, 1946.

Citations marked **SDS CONS** are from the Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Savior, 1994.

Footnote 1. Sources supporting John 17:3 are from:

SDS CONS. 101; 103; 104; 201; 202- 321.

SALVATORIAN SOURCES:

Rule 1888 - Glorify and announce God (CTS, DSS 1, 81).

Lüthen, 1882 - Announce to all the saving truths of the faith (ATS, DSS IV, 39).

EA (Apostolate) 5 - We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples (EA, Apostolate, no.5).

Statutes, 1881 - Our Most Holy Redeemer became incarnate... to save us. The one task that he gave to his apostles was the salvation of mankind (ATS, *DSS* II, 101).

Rule 1884 -The purpose of the Society is to defend, spread and extend the Kingdom of God through religious instruction (“*institutio religiosa*”) (CTS, *DSS* I, 35).

SD I, 118 - It will be aimed especially at popularizing theological truths and so making them accessible to the people (March 16, 1878).

SD II, 70 - Do not rest until all know Jesus the Savior and serve him. (See. *SD* I, 182; II, 1).

SD I, 3 - Knowledge and teaching [See. *EA* (Apostolate) 5].

SD II, 12 - Here I am, send me for you, for souls, for the Church of God.

SD I, 12 - O Lord, Father, God and Creator, ought not those who walk in the dangerous night of paganism know your goodness and mercy? My Creator and God, my soul is anxious for your glory and for souls.

Lüthen 1882 - Realizing its mission, the Society shall effectively put into practice the burning desire of this most sacred heart of Jesus, bringing mankind in the knowledge of the one, true God, that they might have eternal life, in accord with the memorable expression of Christ in his great priestly prayer which he uttered on the vigil of his passion. From this work there ought to flow a new breath of life for the entire Church. It will be an authentic

renewal of Christian consciousness in all sectors of ecclesial life. (ATS, *DSS* IV, 53-54).

SD I, 82 - Put forth every effort and be very zealous to promote the knowledge of truth. Consider these words to enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

ATS 1880 - The Society shall work with great zeal towards a type of religious education that really builds the spirit; that gives birth to religious consciousness; that produces an insight into the rationality of religious truths and a fundamental knowledge of the proofs for the same (*Folded Manuscript. DSS* II, 69).

Smyrna Draft 1880 - The goal of this Society is that the members labor and toil intensely devoting themselves by instruction, formation and teaching, wherever in the world the greater glory of God’s will requires it, according to the words of our Lord Jesus: Go to all peoples and teach (ATS, *DSS* XX, II, 8).

Der Missionär 1881 - The Society wished also to instruct and animate Catholic Christians so that they will defend our holy faith courageously and skillfully. The priests should not rest content with the traditional care for souls in the schools and Church, but they should also apply other methods of spiritual renewal. (N. I, p. 22).

Rule 1882 - The purpose of the Apostolic Teaching Society is to spread, defend and strengthen the Catholic faith everywhere in the world according to the disposition of divine Providence. Hence through the exercise of the “ecclesiastical magisterium” both by the written and spoken word it intends to achieve this that all people come to fuller knowledge of the one true God and him

who he has sent, Jesus Christ, that they lead a holy life and save their souls (ATS, *DSS I*, 21).

Rule 1888 - If the Kingdom of God is to come to all of us, it will be necessary that those called by God guide people to happiness and eternal life (CTS, *DSS IV*, 113).

SD I, 78 - I often think that most persons who are lost, are lost because of a lack of instruction (Cure D' Ars).

SD II, 1 - As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love Him above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest. As long as God is not everywhere glorified, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest.

EA (Apostolate) 157 - We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples.

ATS 1880 - The Apostolic Teaching Society seeks once again to introduce right religious principles in the field of the press; it seeks to break more and more the dominance of the sensual, the ephemeral, the worldly now rampant; and to blaze a trail for a more serious religious direction. (*DSS II*, 71-73).

Rule 1878 - They must teach and train students of stainless character from all peoples, nations and languages so that they become the salt of the earth. (SC, *DSS II*, 13).

Statutes 1881 - In this Society scholars and professionals, priests and lay people join forces in a holy association in order to help the Church of God in the spreading, in the defense and in the animation of the faith in word and deed (ATS, *DSS II*, 101).

Lüthen 1882 - Well then, the ATS places great stress on the lay apostolate; it reminds leaders, teachers, parents, persons of high rank, of the obligation of their apostolate; it reminds scholars of the importance science has for the Kingdom of God. (ATS, *DSS IV*, 49-50).

SD I, 202 - ... the creature, trusting with all his powers in the help of the Almighty, not in that of man, submits to His reign the whole world, i.e., all persons who now or later live, so that they may know, love and serve Him, and themselves find salvation.

Rule 1884, *De Apostolatu* - Dearly Beloved, teach all nations, especially the children to know the true God and him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ, etc. (ATS, *DSS I*, 53).

Pfeiffer, Pancratius - During his [Fr. Jordan's] visit to the Holy Land, while visiting Mount Lebanon, there came to his mind the words of the Savior: This is eternal life; that all may know thee the one true God and Him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ. And he [Jordan] prayed and said: Yes, Eternal Father, the work which I must found will be to make you known and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ. (*I Salvatoriani*, Roma, Società del Divin Salvatore, 1942, p. 57.) (Note: There is no doubt that this "Mountain Top" experience expressed all that the Founder believed in and made him the man who he was. We can set aside for the moment whether this particular mountain top is fictional or real. For Jordan, it was symbolic. It was like Moses on Mt. Sinai. It was like Martin Luther King, Jr., who also had a dream on a mountain top.)

Pfeiffer, Pancratius - What mattered above all for the Reverend Founder was to further religious education, religious instruction. He proceeded from the assumption that religious ignorance is one

of the main causes for religious degeneration. Because of this, he wanted to teach, to enlighten and, in this manner, to attain the final end...For this reason he named his society the “Teaching Society” (*Annales*, SDS, Vol. 1, p. 211).

Pfeiffer, Pancratius - The purpose of this Society is to defend, propagate and extend the Kingdom of God through religious instruction. The expression “*institutione religiosa*” is printed in italics in the original—a fact to be noticed. It was an effort to clarify with emphasis, what kind of institution, what type of instruction, was meant.

Pfeiffer, Pancratius - *Instructivum* indicates something that is instructive because of its very nature. In this sense we speak of events, experiences, conferences, and the like as being instructive, i.e., capable of teaching us something. (*Annales*. SDS. Vol. I, p. 213).

Footnote 2. Here the texts of Matthew and Mark will be footnoted with the same sources. But special attention is to be made between the two. In Matthew the mandate is clearly “to teach.” However in Mark the mandate is universal: “go out into the whole world.”¹ Keeping this distinction in mind, we cite the following sources:

SDS CONS. - 101,103, 104, 201, 202, 203, 303, 306, 310, 313, 315, 321, 327.

SALVATORIAN SOURCES:

Lüthen, 1882 - Announce to all the saving truths of the faith (ATS, *DSS* IV, 399).

EA (Apostolate) 5 - We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples. (*EA*, Apostolate, no.5).

Statutes, 1881 - Our Most Holy Redeemer became incarnate...to save us. The one task that he gave to his apostles was the salvation of mankind. (ATS, *DSS* II, 101).

Smyrna Draft 1880 - Go, teach all people, instructing, educating and teaching them (ATS, *DSS*, XX II, 8).

SD III 20 - May I burn always with vehement love for You and enlighten all.

SD II, 12 - Here I am, send me for you, for souls, for the Church of God.

SD I, 192 - For the glory of God and the salvation of souls, I intend and resolve to make every sacrifice, even of my own life, to promote and further the Society. I will always act in accordance with its purpose in the name of the Lord.

Smyrna Draft, 1880 - The goal of this Society is that the members labor and toil intensely, devoting themselves by instruction, formation and teaching wherever in the world the greater glory of God’s will requires it, according to the words of our Lord Jesus: Go to all peoples and teach. (ATS, *DSS* XX, II, 8).

Rule 1882 - The purpose of the Apostolic Teaching Society is to spread, defend and strengthen the Catholic faith everywhere in the world according to the disposition of Divine Providence. Hence through the exercise of the “ecclesiastical magisterium” both by the written and spoken word it intends to achieve this: that all people come to a fuller knowledge of the one true God and Him

who he has sent, Jesus Christ, that they lead a holy life and save their souls. (ATS, *DSS*, 121).

Rule 1888 - If the Kingdom of God is to come to all of us, it will be necessary that those called by God guide people to happiness and eternal life. (CTS, *DSS* IV, 113).

SD I, 138 - Oh that there were holy apostles hastening through the world evangelizing all. *SD* II, 1 -As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love him above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest. As long as God is not everywhere glorified, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest.

EA (Apostolate) 157 - We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples.

EA (Universality) 147 - Well, our task of the Society, the spirit of the Society is the *omnibus et ubique*. This is a very important point. And if you depart from it you do not live up to the spirit of the Society.

Rule 1878 - They must teach student of stainless character from all peoples, nations and languages, so that they become the salt of the earth. (SC, *DSS* II, 13).

Statutes 1881 - In this Society scholars and professionals, priests and lay people, join in a holy association in order to help the Church of God in the spreading, the defense and in the animation of the faith in word and deed. (ATS, *DSS* II, 101).

Appeal 1882 - The Apostolic Teaching Society therefore, turns to Catholics in all countries, in an appeal to encourage them to support its endeavors. (ATS, *DSS* IV, 59).

SD I, 202 - the creature, trusting with all his powers in the help of the Almighty, not in that of man, submits to His reign the whole world, i.e. all persons who now or later live, so that they may know, love and serve him, and themselves find salvation.

Rule 1884 - Dearly Beloved, teach all nations, especially the children, to know the true God and him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ, etc. (ATS, *DSS* 1,53).

EA (Apostolate) 153 - We are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. We seek to extend His Kingdom, We seek to become like Apostles. We seek to spread the teachings announced by the Apostles.

Footnote 3. Sources supporting Daniel 12 : 3 :

SDS CONS: 104, 105, 108, 202, 203, 205, 302, 303, 310, 311, 313, 315, 323, 327.

SALVATORIAN SOURCES:

SD I, 158a – “They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament and those who instruct the many to justice shall shine like stars for all eternity.” (Dan. 12:3).

(Note: This citation contained in Jordan's *Spiritual Diary* in 1880, appeared on the front cover of the Statutes of the Apostolic Teaching Society in 1881. It speaks more directly about Jordan, the just man. It describes a man that was concerned for the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden.).

SD II, 30 - May the Society be a compact and solid phalanx, and be totally dedicated to the established end. Each member should dedicate himself to this same end. (*DSS* II, 30,5-5).

SD I, 186 - One who is not on fire does not enkindle fire.

Lüthen 1881 - Animate all the active forces of the Church (ATS, DSS IV, 21-22).

Lüthen 1882 - From this work there ought to flow a new breath of life for the entire Church. It will be an authentic renewal of Christian consciousness in all sectors of ecclesial life. (ATS, DSS IV, 54).

Rule 1882 - They leave behind all things and will work there where the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls awaits each one. (ATS, DSS I, 21).

Folded Manuscript, 1880 - Our times demand an entirely different kind of religious instruction than the former peaceful easygoing times. This timely, basic, reasonable religious instruction forms the main responsibility of the pedagogical section of the Apostolic Society. For this every opportunity and every means pleasing to God shall be utilized in school and church. (Note: Attend to the fact that first Jordan sets out raising religious consciousness as the main responsibility of the Society and only within the parameters of this “instruction” does he posit all ways and means which the love of God inspires). (In Schneble, 10).

ATS 1880 - ... the creation of proper press media uniting Catholic forces all over the world...establishing education institutes, orphanages, ...directing of retreats and popular missions, family, education, foreign missions, associations and movements. (DSS II, 71-73).

SD I, 33 - Guard yourself from all affection. Rather let your works be too short and too few. However, be very loving, understanding

and compassionate to the poor, the sick, the despised and abandoned.

EA (Apostolate) 153 - We are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. We seek to extend His Kingdom. We seek to become like Apostles. We seek to spread the teachings announced by the Apostles.

EA (Poverty) 73 - Contemplate the Divine Master. He was born poor; he lived poor; he died poor. If we wish to follow the Divine Savior ...then let us become poor.

Footnote 4. Key Elements of Charism: Confer citations in footnote one above.

See also *Commentary on the Constitution* of the Society of the Divine Savior, International Charism Commission, 1999, p. 28, No. 4; p. 47-48, No.1& 2.

Footnote 5. Salvatorian Mission: Confer citations in footnote two above.

See also *Commentary on the Constitution*. pp. 28-29, No.5; PP. 81-83, No.1& 2.

Footnote 6. Salvatorian Spirituality:

SDS CONS. 104, 105, 107, 108, 201, 202, 301, 302, 309, 310, 311, 314, 321, 323, 326, 327, 401, 402, 403, 404.

See also *Commentary on the Constitution*, pp. 99-100.

SALVATORIAN SOURCES

Rule 1884 - The rule and life of this order is to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (See. *DSS I*, 31).

SD I, 164 - Lord, in you do I hope. I will not be confounded forever! From you, O Lord, I hope for all! I hope and trust only in you.

SP n, 29 - Trust firmly in the Lord; call upon him (See Last Will).

EA (prayer) 18 - Become men of prayer.

Last Will 5 - Always be true and faithful sons of the Holy Roman Catholic Church; teach what she teaches, believe what she believes; abhor what she abhors.

SD I, 70 - Always love more the holy catholic church; do not spare fatigue or suffering for this precious mother.

SD IV, 107 - Be willing to conduct an authentic Christian life and transform others.

SD I, 138 - Look to the apostles as they plough the universe, evangelizing all.

EA (Brotherly Love) 154 - And we precisely who have the duty of imitating the apostles should take into consideration seriously what the Divine Savior gave as a command to his apostles, and that is love.

EA (Unity) 226 - He (Jesus) is our Model.

EA (Zeal) 187- Think about what the Savior himself has done. What the holy apostles have performed.

Lüthen 1881 - The members are those who following the example of the Holy Apostles, renounce all earthly things and for the sake of God attach themselves exclusively to the Society and devote themselves to this Holy and deserving purpose (*ATS, DSS IV, 22*).

EA (Spirit) 134 - It is our task as far as possible to live in the spirit of Jesus Christ and to follow the holy Apostles.

Rule 1882 - Since, however, without effort toward their own perfection no fruit is to be expected from their labors in the Lord's vineyard, they are bound to make progress on the road to holiness. Let them, therefore, know that all our progress is the work of Divine Grace which they show in unceasing prayer implore for themselves from the Father of Light. (*ATS, DSS I, 22*).

Rule 1882 - The Society is consecrated to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, and is placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Queen of the Apostles, St. Michael...and the Holy Apostles. (*ATS, DSS I, 22*).

EA (Spirit) 131 - Make it a point often to reflect that you are called to a Society whose purpose it is to follow the example of Christ and His apostles and as far as possible to forsake all things.

SD I, 111 - In you O Lord have I hoped. I will not be confounded forever.

SD I, 45 - Be merciful because God is merciful [concern for the poor].

SD II, 22 -Even though he slay me, yet I will hope in Him (Job 69).

EA (Faith) 4 - Live as men of faith and do become thoroughly firm and strong in faith.

Rule 1882 -They shall treat each other with kindness, support one another with patience and accept correction from a confrere in all humility. (ATS, DSS I, 26).

EA (Apostolate) 157 - We should make the Savior known to all peoples... But we unite ourselves intimately with God.

EA (Brotherly Love) 102 - We should be one of heart and mind. For us in particular it is a specific duty that we be one.

ABBREVIATIONS

ATS	Apostolic Teaching Society
<i>CONS</i>	<i>Constitution of the Society of the Divine Savior</i>
<i>CTS</i>	<i>Catholic Teaching Society</i>
<i>DSS</i>	<i>Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana</i>
<i>EA</i>	<i>Exhortations and Admonitions</i>
<i>P or pp</i>	<i>Page or pages</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>Rule, Rules</i>
<i>SD</i>	<i>Spiritual Diary</i>

FRANCIS JORDAN'S APOSTOLIC VISION A LIGHT FOR LIVING IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

by

Carol Leah Thresher SDS

Preface

Today the Salvatorian Family finds itself at an important juncture in the realization of the apostolic vision of its founder, Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. After many years of being restricted to two canonical religious congregations (the Society of the Divine Savior and the Sisters of the Divine Savior), the lay branch of the organization has taken root. In a number of countries it has taken giant strides both in membership and independent juridical status. While the specific structures of the lay organization vary from country to country, there is no doubt that through its existence lay men and women have begun to participate fully in the Salvatorian charism and mission. Now the apostolic dream of the Founder is closer to being realized throughout the world.¹

The challenge presented by God's Spirit in the Salvatorian charism is both demanding and up-to-date. However its actual impact depends on how we present day Salvatorians live its gift. The charism will respond to today's needs only if we rediscover and reinterpret its gift in light of our own historical context. This is how we are faithful to our vocation. I believe that the reinterpretation done by all of us, in our diverse ways of life, will

impact the Church and the world. It will also provoke a greater awareness of the radical and contemporary nature of Fr. Jordan's apostolic vision for all Christian people.

Introduction

John Baptist Jordan was born on June 16, 1848, in a small German village. Few imagined that this poor boy, son of Lawrence and Notburga Jordan, would be a priest and much less a founder. No one dreamed that he carried within himself, a light for all Christians of that time and the future as well. John Baptist, later known by his religious name, Francis Mary of the Cross, dreamed of an apostolic work in which people from all over the world and from all levels of society could unite their efforts for the evangelization of all peoples.

Today Fr. Jordan's vision has taken on flesh around the world in the Salvatorian Family. Those of us who belong to the group have the responsibility of making his dream a reality. Through us the Holy Spirit's gift to the world will become active and fruitful today. God's Spirit acts within history in order to communicate important messages. Our Salvatorian Charism contains a significant proposal for our times. Built into Fr. Jordan's dream is an apostolic vision that has power and life-giving qualities for us as individuals as well as for the Church and the larger society in this new millennium. It presents a vision that is holistic, universal and inculturated. Because of this, it is a light for the Christian mission in the modern and post-modern world. It offers an alternative rooted in the Gospel that is ever new and always good news.²

A Holistic Vision

The search for meaning in life is a strong characteristic of our days. As we move into the new millennium, humankind searches for authentic answers amid the numerous responses offered by the false prophets of our age. One of the paths clearly being pursued today is that of spirituality. Paradoxically, a society that declared God's death, finds itself in a frantic spiritual search. People can no longer bear the false divisions introduced by secularism. The human spirit thirsts for a holistic energy that can unify life. A fragmented person is easily disoriented face-to-face with life's pressure-cooker pace. Stress and depression result. Bit by bit, life loses meaning. That is why today we see so many attempts to build spiritualities that integrate people's lives. Traditional religious institutions are no longer seen by many as bearers of this integrating force. That is why groups such as the New Age Movement are so popular. They attempt to create a new spiritual integration by selecting symbols and elements from many different religious traditions. Each person can pick and choose from a host of offerings with no lasting commitment to a group or religious tradition. This search reveals the deep need for a holistic religious experience able to heal the cracks of our fragmentation and alleviate the pain of our emptiness.

Fr. Jordan's apostolic vision grows from an inner wisdom that knows that life will only have meaning when it is rooted in God who is the source of all life. This is why John 17:3 is the biblical foundation of Jordan's spirituality. *And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* Grounded in this foundational experience of *the one true God*, Fr. Jordan holistically lived his mission in the Church and the world. This is the vision he passes on to us and through us to our world. Apostolic passion and the search for holiness are one. Together they create holy energy able to overcome life's

fragmentations as well as the alienation that comes from subjectivism and purely privatized religious experience.³ We plug into this integrating power when our tap root is planted firmly in the God of Life. Hollow emptiness will give way to a vibrant solitude from which true solidarity is born. Then we are able to reach across the barriers that separate us from one another. Then we are able to commit ourselves to building a just society.

When we live our Salvatorian charism, we have something to offer our searching world. This is what the Holy Spirit unleashes within us. Life has meaning and the gospel message is at its heart. When our energies spring from the fountain of true life, our actions lead to unity not fragmentation. We believe that John 17:3 presents us with the golden key to a spirituality that responds to the needs of today. Fr. Jordan urgently desired that every person experiences the God of life. He knew that human beings need to know deeply the true God in order to be whole, healthy and therefore, saved. Jordan could not rest while people were still lost in blind alleys and false answers.⁴ He teaches us that when we are rooted in the true God, we experience God's holy energy enlivening us to become evangelizers of the new millennium.⁵

A Universal Vision

The global village is a term used today to speak about our life experience. It describes a world in which we can watch life and death happen in any corner of the globe as if it was happening in our neighbor's backyard. Communication technology has advanced to such a point that nothing is out of reach. Consequently, life has become a spectator sport which can be viewed from our living room couches and computer screens. We can know everything without having to become involved in anything. Thus, we can remain safe and isolated behind the closed doors of our myopic

worlds. Prejudice festers in this hot house atmosphere, fear increases. We become less and less willing to open our doors and engage people in the real world. Virtual reality takes the place of hands-on, flesh and blood experience.

Globalization manages the economy in our global village. Capital gains provide the lens through which reality is viewed and interpreted. The Hong Kong stock market vacillates and steel workers in São Paulo are laid off. International Monetary Fund experts and mega-investors like George Sores determine internal political policy in countries where national governments are often powerless. Coca Cola presents itself as a sign of true faithfulness because it is able to be there for you in even the most remote corner of the globe. Advertising presents the beautiful face of globalization covering over, with ever darker eye shadow, the growing poverty and human exclusion which accompany it.

Fr. Jordan's apostolic vision is global, however the lens he uses is God's and not that of an entrepreneur.⁶ The universality of the Salvatorian charism is grounded in God's gratuitous love which involves us in life. Instead of being mere spectators we are participants. God's approach teaches us that all peoples and nations are to be respected. They all have the right to a full life.⁷ Any movement toward exclusion must be replaced by love large enough to embrace the universe.⁸ Prejudices must be identified and overcome through the process of conversion so that all people have access to the fullness of life. The life of the planet must also be valued and promoted with loving care.

Inclusive love is an essential element in our Salvatorian Charism. When we live it, we tell our new millennium world that in our global village life must be promoted. All our neighbors are worthy of respect and should never be excluded or marginalized

for any reason. Individualism cannot be the source of our way of looking at the world. God's all embracing love places us in kinship with one another. We can see that Fr. Jordan's apostolic vision offers a clear alternative to our competitive, dog-eat-dog world. With it our global village will become a place where dignity and solidarity are alive and well in our daily lives.

An Inculturated Vision

Conventional wisdom proclaims that everything is relative. According to this false wisdom, permanent values no longer exist. Everything, including life, is a throw-away. With this, commitment and faithfulness are old fashioned and outmoded values lived by people or groups who don't keep up with modern life. It is true that today things change at an alarming rate. Not even the experts can keep up with everything. Faced with this fact, some throw their hands up in the air and follow the flow from fad to fad. Others, dig in their heels and let life pass them by.

Immediate happiness and instant gratification are overvalued. Children of the new millennium are often unable to wait for anything, much less suffer for some long-term objective. It is normal to run away from what is difficult be that in relationships, work or any other area.

In light of this reality, Francis Jordan presents us with an inculturated vision which gives life direction.⁹ He shows us the two poles necessary in order to discern the path of gospel values. He speaks of divine or eternal truth that flows from knowing the one true God.¹⁰ We learn from God that life is not a throw-away. The other necessary pole for discernment is creativity and flexibility in the use of "all ways and means the love of Christ inspires."¹¹ This is how the Founder teaches us that announcing the Gospel is

an unchanging priority but that the way the message is communicated must always be up-dated. We must use ways and means that arise from the historical and cultural moment in which we live. To believe in lasting values is to challenge the concept that everything is relative. Fr. Jordan does not flinch when faced with this challenge on his journey. The inculturation of the Gospel demands sensitivity, creativity and courage to confront the deep resistance that always accompanies this work.¹² Anything can be taken on and even embraced for the cause of Christ.¹³

Living the Salvatorian charism witnesses to the world that life is a permanent value. It must not be trod underfoot or thrown in the garbage. When we embrace life with firmness we open ourselves to many new creative possibilities. Undreamed ways of being in mission present themselves. We are no longer afraid to stride out onto new paths in order to update the message of the Gospel. This is creative fidelity. When we live this way, our approach to mission challenges the culture while at the same time it encourages the seeds of truth within it to grow. The new millennium will only be evangelized through this courageous yet highly respectful dynamic called inculturation.

Conclusion

Because John Baptist Jordan was a man touched deeply by the suffering reality of the people, he felt moved by the Holy Spirit to give an apostolic response. We can be certain that this response that is present in our founding charism, holds enough energy to generate new responses today and in the coming centuries as well. Through it we can walk in the direction of the fullness of life for everyone. A more authentic and thus radical living out of our Salvatorian charism should be a light for all people in the new millennium. It is up to us to respond with generosity and

enthusiasm. This will make things happen.¹⁴ Today, let us pray as Fr. Jordan did in the early years of his apostolic venture:

“O Sun of Justice enlighten and set my heart on fire so that my footsteps be like the morning light that walks and grows toward the fullness of the day.” *SD I 54,4*.

REFERENCE NOTES

¹ For descriptions of Jordan’s full vision see Smyrna Statutes of July 31, 1880 translated in *Familia Salvatoriana*, Joint Bulletin of the SDS Generalates No. 1 - December 8, 1984; and early statutes and rules of the organization found in Mailings I and II published by SDS-W Generalate 1979.

² “[The] Society by accomplishing its task, helps to fulfill in a most effective way ...[the goal that] all may recognize the only true God and possess eternal life ...[and that] many souls can be awakened from their indifference.... And further, from this undertaking a new refreshing breeze will touch the entire organism of Holy Church; it will be a renewal of Catholic consciousness in all walks of life; for the orphaned communities it will prove an inestimable main stay; for the well-organized pastoral work, it will be a strong support.... May there be found, therefore, many priests and lay persons who commit themselves completely to this idea with life and property, with life and limb! May scholars and learned persons not shy away from such an alliance with the common people! May the existing associations and unions gather in the heart of this Society, in order to be inspired there with the right spirit, the spirit of fraternal love and unity, the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice! May the owners of printing presses try to convey its spirit gradually to their personnel, or even give themselves completely to the Society. May the whole Catholic world take part in this new creation, from the professor to the servant girl, from the head of the family to the servant, from the master to the apprentice, so that its spirit may fill Church and school, university hall and parliament, workshop and family room, everywhere may all join enthusiastically together with the founder of the Society under the motto: Everything with God and for God for the good of our neighbor!” *The Apostolic Teaching Society 1881 DSS IV 17-34*, translation Mailings I-C-1 p.18-19.

³ “Oh, that I could convert the whole world! I hope that God will allow us still to work and suffer much for him. Let us become saints... I urge you most

earnestly to be deeply filled with genuine apostolic spirit and zeal Apostolate! Apostolate! Let us leave the future to the Lord. Let us steadily move ahead, seeking holiness: our own and that of others. So, courage and confidence! ...Fr. Jordan to Mother Mary in 1883 and 1885, Letter Dialogue, *Studia de Historia Salvatoriana* Section 1.2. pgs 11 and 19.

⁴ “As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love Him above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moment’s rest.” Francis M. of the Cross Jordan, *Spiritual Diary (SD) II 1*.

⁵ “We should make the Savior of the world known to all peoples.... We should join ourselves to Him. But for that it is necessary that we ourselves...unite ourselves intimately with God. If you wish to do justice to this task, if you wish to become apostles, if you wish to accomplish great things, then become [people] of prayer.” *Exhortations and Admonitions of Fr. Francis Jordan (EA) p. 181*.

⁶ “A Society to help the sick and the poor, the lapsed and the like of a particular parish or of the whole world!” *SD I 140*.

⁷ “As the Society is not restricted in regard to place, so neither is it restricted to certain classes of people. We are to labor among the educated and the uneducated, among civilized and uncivilized peoples. No nation, no people, no class is excluded. This is of such importance that you are to take it well to heart. From this it follows that you are to be absolutely on your guard against always striving to concentrate there where the best results can be obtained..” *EA 171*.

⁸ “With us no nation is excluded. ...Among us, as members of the Society, there is to be no nation! All are to be brethren.” *EA 171-172*. “Grow steadily, increase, spread everywhere! Embrace and renew the universe!” *Mother Mary of the Apostles in Spiritual Journal in Poetry, Studia de Historia Salvatoriana No. 2, Section 2.11MM p.95*.

⁹ Inculturation is the encounter between the Gospel and a particular culture: the Christianizing of culture and the “culturing” of Christianity (Anthony Gittens). According to Marcelo Azevedo it is the “dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them.” M. de C. Azevedo, *Inculturation and the Challenge of Modernity (Rome, Gregorian University, 1982) p. 11*.

¹⁰ “O man, when meditating and contemplating divine things, you perform the functions of angels!” SD I 61; “Put forth every effort and be very zealous to promote the knowledge of truth.” SD I 82.

¹¹ Rules and Constitution of the Catholic Teaching Society 1886 Chapter 1, No.3, DSS I pp 47-74.

¹² “Fall in with the mood of the person with whom you are speaking: be all things to all, so that you may gain all.” SD I 15.

¹³ “No sacrifice, no cross, no desolation, no trial, no temptation, oh! absolutely nothing should be too difficult for you with the help of God’s grace. I can do all things in Him who strengthens me. Let no betrayal, no infidelity, no coldness, no abuse lessen your zeal!” SD II 1.

¹⁴ “Believe, trust, hope, love, work - you must lead all to Christ” SD I 192.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SOCIETY

by

Leonard F. Gerke SDS.

*Some reflections proposed to the Salvatorian gathering at Lanham,
December 8, 1965, by Fr. Leonard F. Gerke S.D.S.*

You will recall a remark in the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas a Kempis: “I would rather have the true spirit of compunction of heart than be able to define it.” Transferring this to the theme of our topic, we might equally say: “I would rather live the true spirit of the Society than be able to define it.”

There can be no doubt that it is of the utmost importance that we, the members of the Salvatorian community, truly possess and ever guard and deepen this authentic spirit and spirituality of our Salvatorian apostolate, or, what is the same, the spirit of its founder.

Father Jordan never wearied of insisting and exhorting that all his sons (and daughters) must ever be imbued with the true spirit of the Society, the spirit of the founder. In spite of his utterly sincere and deep humility—or perhaps rather because of it—he was unshakably convinced of his divine vocation to call into being, to orient and to inspire the worldwide Salvatorian Apostolic Institute and that this institute must ever remain true to this inspiration and orientation which God had given it through him.

In her last will and testament, Mother Mary bequeaths this concern about the founder’s spirit to her daughters: “Humbly I

hope... that my good Sisters will continue with holy zeal to sanctify themselves by always striving to do good to their fellowmen, ever holding fast to the spirit of the founder of the Society of the Divine Savior.”

To the insistence of the founder and the foundress, we may add the voice of Pope Paul who, a year or so ago, in an address to a group of various General Chapters then meeting in Rome, urged as essential to each religious institute that it keep alive the genuine and vital spirit of its God-given founder.

And to judge from occasional remarks of other people—who sometimes seem to know us better than we do ourselves—we may gratefully feel assured that somehow we do have a distinctive “Salvatorian” spirit or character.

However, though it is undoubtedly more important to have and to live the true Salvatorian spirit than to be able to put it into words, it is of great importance also to express, formulate and define this true spirit and authentic character of our Salvatorian life and apostolate. It is important especially today, at the present juncture of both the Church and the Society, for two reasons:

First of all, the living contact with the founder and the origins of the Society is becoming more and more tenuous, in the sense that nearly all the members of the first generation of Salvatorians have gone. And thus it becomes imperative to crystallize and formulate, beyond the general lines of the Constitutions, the inspiration of the beginning—the spirit of the founder—to mould and vitalize the coming generations, especially in order to give clear and sure lines to all those who are called to guide the young people whom Divine Providence leads to us.

Secondly, this is the time of modernizing and up-dating in the life of the whole Church of Christ; only today Vatican Council II terminated its tremendous work of finding and laying out the lines for this “*aggiornamento*.” And the man who gave the impetus to this enormous task, great Pope John, gave it also its essential orientation: the Church is to look at herself in the light of her beginnings and try to see, and see more clearly, the features and the simple beauty of her face as she came forth from the hands of her divine founder. In this great effort to bring the Society part of the Church up to date, it is equally important that we renew rather than change—that our up-dating be not in any way contrary to the first inspiration and spirit of the founder, but be rather, out of that spirit which he gave us, a devising of ways and means to express that inspiration more fully, more vitally, more effectively in the context of our time and world—a world which, though less than a hundred years away from the 19th century world of Father Francis, is yet so profoundly different.

The spirit of the Society or its founder; the theme is difficult and large. In order to do it justice we would have to examine thoroughly three main sources.

1. The man John Baptist Jordan, who became Father Francis Mary of the Cross, who under God’s call and guidance conceived, founded and directed the Salvatorian Society, his life and his spiritual stature, especially the inner secret of his life, the mainspring of his spirituality.
2. The institute in its becoming and its growth, developing into something quite different from its first structural conception, and yet continuing to embody the original orientation and spirit which gave it birth.

3. The Constitutions, very specially the first chapter, where the essential aim and purpose, the very nature and apostolic orientation of the Society is embodied; and again, through the various succeeding formulations, the aim and purpose and spirit remained the same.

If asked to express, as briefly as possible, the characteristic spirit of the Salvatorian Society, I would say it is this:

To be an incarnation and an instrument of the tremendous, universal, saving love of God as it appeared in the human love and kindness, *benignitas et humanitas*, of God our Savior.

And I would elaborate a little in the following manner:

- ❖ An apostolic love, which is not over-concerned with distinguishing one's own self-sanctification from the saving and sanctifying love and work for others, but one which rather views this two-fold purpose as truly one aim and end—even as Christ's love of the Father was the selfsame love with which He gave Himself for us and to us even unto the death of the Cross.
- ❖ A universal love, refusing to know any limitation in principle or orientation, as to place or people, as to ways and means, recognizing only one limit (which is indeed no limit), the inspiration of the love of Christ; and within that inspiration, an utter openness and readiness to the concrete calls of Divine Providence—even as Christ's concrete saving acts and ways were ever a ready answer to His Father's call and will.

- ❖ A wholly committed love, wholly and entirely, totaliter ac prorsus, dedicated, devoted and consecrated to the work of Christ's saving love, without reservation, without shrinking from risk or danger, trusting in the protecting and strengthening grace and presence of Christ who gave us the paradox that losing or risking our life is saving it.
- ❖ A truly human love—warm, personal, concerned, involved— even as human and genuinely personal as was the infinite love of God incarnate in the Savior, who, while going about doing good, somehow truly made His own the problems and the ills, the sufferings and the concerns of the people, who “took upon Himself our infirmities” in order to heal them.
- ❖ A humble, self-forgetting, serving love, knowing neither pretention nor condescension, knowing no motives of any form of self-aggrandizement, either individually or collectively; ready even to take up works which perhaps others refused to do as not great enough; ready to make beginnings where others will continue and reap the harvest and the credit; ready to bring the knowledge and the love of Christ to the catechism class as well as to college students; desiring only to be of help and service, to bring the saving love of Christ in any way that comes—even as the Divine Savior had not come to be served but to serve, to be of help, not in the grand manner of efficiently dispensing blessings on the largest possible crowd, but coming down the steps and walking among the sick lines along the path and laying His loving, blessing and healing hand upon each one, so that each one should realize how personally he was known and meant and loved.

There now remains the task of showing, however briefly, how the spirit just outlined and analyzed is indeed the true spirit of Father Francis, and hence the essential spirit of his Salvatorian foundation.

The life of Father Jordan, the man and his work, are full of paradoxes. Although born of humble peasant stock and always retaining much of that naive simplicity of the artisan he once was, he conceived a plan by which he hoped and desired to bring the saving love of Christ to all the world. His natural make-up was hardly the stuff of which great human leaders and organizers are normally made. He was impressionable, eager, sensitive and warm-hearted; by turns enthusiastic and even impetuous and hesitant and diffident. He was shy and rather awkward in the company of others, often unsure of the proper ways in which things should be done —yet he became a founder. He was well aware of his own limitations and deficiencies; yet he had the courage to begin the formation of an apostolic institute, visualized on truly grand proportions. And, against all odds, he held to this inspiration and this plan with a truly staggering perseverance.

The question unavoidably comes: How could this man come to conceive the idea of becoming the founder, inspirer and organizer of a worldwide apostolic institute? The answer is that it was not really he who conceived this plan; it was God who called him, beginning with that mysterious sign of the white dove on his First Communion day at the age of twelve. It was God who thus singled him out and led him on a strange way to the priesthood. It was God who turned the young man's natural compassion for the poor, born out of his own family background and deepened by what he saw on his travels as an artisan all over Germany, into a burning apostolic urge, a tremendous desire to help people in their deepest ills and need: the not knowing or not knowing well enough, the

not loving or not loving more “the one true God” who, around the time of his Ordination, gave him the final preparation through a period of mysterious inner trial, of intense and purifying suffering, so poignantly echoed in the intimate remarks of his *Diary*.

Thus, even before his ordination, the idea of founding some kind of common apostolic undertaking kept coming to him. Conscious of his human inadequacy, and yet more conscious of his unworthiness before God, he tried to escape the call, wrestling with God in prayer; but when finally he could not help the utter conviction that God indeed called him, he put himself at God's disposal in unreserved surrender, with absolute and unquestioning confidence and love—and nothing henceforth would stop him.

Here, I believe, we have the source and the explanation of the founder's inner attitude and outward action: the absolute conviction that he had been chosen and called, however unsuited, to be an instrument, a tool, for shaping an apostolic organization, in itself an instrument or tool of the loving and saving plan and Providence of God. Father Jordan never thought of himself as the principal agent or the determining factor; all the initiative he left to God, and to God he gave all the glory. It was God's to give the strength and the means, to send success or failure; he had but one concern: to capture God's meaning, to fall in with God's plans, to submit and to persevere in humility and confidence. He had but one fear: the anxious fear of ever crossing God's Providence, of ever going against God's will. He had but one ambition: to be used by God as an instrument for the salvation of the world. Ultimately, he had but one prayer: “Be it done to me according to Your Will.”

These two qualities: his burning apostolic zeal and the humble and unreserved readiness to be no more than a tool in God's hands, made him eminently fitted in the eyes of God to be a religious

founder, whatever men might say about his human inadequacies. And when they did point them out, even to his face, he was not offended, but would reply eagerly and with unconscious sincerity: “But don’t you see that God often chooses the most unlikely instruments for his divine purposes?”

And out of these two fundamental attitudes—the ardent apostolic love and desire to help, and the humble conviction of having been chosen as an instrument to serve the saving love and Providence of God—stem the universality of orientation, the humility or unpretentiousness of approach, the warm and loving readiness to help and serve, which the founder instilled into his foundation.

Universality of apostolic aim and purpose: living with profound absorption in God’s plans and Providence, Father Francis desired nothing more and nothing less than to help to fulfill God’s desire that “all men be saved and come to know and acknowledge the truth.” Who was he to set limitations to his service of the universal saving will of God? Who was he to choose only some certain ways or forms of the apostolate and thus narrow the expression of the universal, saving will of God? Who was he to restrict the mission of his institute to only some lands or classes of people? No, his work must be meant for all men everywhere, “*omnibus et ubique*,” his family must welcome members from all men everywhere, without discrimination of race or color or class; his sons and daughters must be ready and willing to do anything, to use any means, to try any way which the saving love of Christ might inspire, and which, in the concrete situation, would be indicated by Divine Providence—by obedience to the call of the Church, by the needs of times and places, by the number and quality of members available, by the means at hand.

It was not primarily the clear vision of a certain definite structure or organization that inspired Father Jordan—it was first of all the vision of a tremendous drive and purpose of apostolic love; that all men should know the one true God and the only Savior whom He had sent, Jesus Christ. For this was eternal life and salvation. As to the actual, organized realization of this vision and aim—it was again through his humble and ready openness to Divine Providence working through events, Church intervention, opposition and difficulties, that the final framework of a religious society, or rather two congregations, and the new name emerged out of the first attempt of realizing his apostolic institute in the much larger and wider and looser organization of the Apostolic Teaching Society.

A brief look at this Apostolic Teaching Society will indicate the width and breadth of Father Jordan’s apostolic aim and also the courage that his humble reliance on Divine Providence gave him. It was meant to be a loose but very comprehensive organization of people from all walks of life; priests and lay men and women, learned teachers and writers as well as ordinary folk. The whole Society was to be divided into three grades or degrees: The first degree: the inner core of wholly dedicated men and women who would bind themselves by private vows to the perfect following of Christ in the footsteps of the Apostles; they would work in the apostolate under obedience to the General Director, either continuing in isolation on their posts or living together for the directing of the work and for the education of priests and missionaries. It was like what today we would call a secular institute.

The second degree: Catholic intellectuals who, by means of a scientific publication, would collaborate with the apostolic aim of the Society on their academic level. The *Nuntius Romanus* was the organ, actually published for a few years, for this planned collaboration. The third degree: any of the faithful who would

care to join; *Der Missionär*, a monthly publication in the form of a religious magazine, was envisaged largely as the means of contact with these members. On the one hand, these people were to be made more fully conscious of their Christian vocation and dignity, and, on the other hand, they would in turn be real helpers of the Society, contributing to its universal apostolic aim by prayer and especially by the witness of their own fully Christian lives.

One cannot fail to see how tremendous, how far-reaching and far-seeing this conception was—anticipating forms and emphases which today have become part of the Church's life and orientation, but which were new and startling at the time. Pressure from Church-authorities, lack of response to his appeals for members and many difficulties soon made Father Jordan narrow down the organizational structure, changing his institute into a proper religious congregation, and changing even the name twice. Some saw in this uncertainty and fumbling, and charged that he did not know his own mind; but the founder's only concern was to seek and do the will of God whose tool he was.

However, though he had to change the framework and rephrase and modify the constitutions of his institute, the universal apostolic inspiration and orientation remained the same; this he guarded and defended as an essential of the work God had called him to do. He defended it against understandable attacks from outside and against criticism from within. This universality was one of the reasons which made him choose Rome, the heart of the Catholic world, as the birthplace and center of the Society, insisting that it must ever remain there. This universality was the concern that made him hurry from country to country, from foundation to foundation, dangerously scattering his forces. He wanted to see his Society established on a worldwide basis before he died. "Remember that you must never depart from this universality;

this is my most ardent desire, a desire which I want to see firmly rooted before I die. Do not try always to concentrate where there is the greater success. Wherever there are souls we must work. And this I should like to leave you as a legacy. Never depart from this.... This universality, the "*omnibus et ubique*," must always count as an essential characteristic of the Society."

It has been said, and not without reason, that this universality or orientation and aim does not make, humanly speaking, for efficiency and success, but Father Jordan refused to allow such human considerations, however valid in themselves, to trim or narrow down his general purpose, inspired by the universal saving will of God and the all-embracing love of the Savior of the world. Ceding all the initiative concerning the actual sphere and form of apostolic work to the Providence of God, he placed his hope and confidence of success in God's help and blessing. And this should always remain so in his Society: "Consider as your abiding inheritance confidence in Divine Providence; as a loving mother, God will always care for you. Place your trust in God alone; He will fight for you like a mighty hero in battle. Woe to you if you place your confidence in men or riches."²

Refusing to make purely human considerations the norm, and maintaining the deep conviction that he and his congregation were only serving as instruments of the saving love of God, he warned against the "heresy of success," against the desire to "climb up too high," against standards of merely human greatness and importance.

It made him stress that simplicity and unpretentiousness, that sincere humility (not only individual but collective humility) that was to characterize the Salvatorian Society—that humility and

ordinariness which he once illustrated by his comparison of the sparrows and the peacocks.

Father Pancratius and others who lived through those early years with the venerable founder summed up all this in the phrase of St. Paul to Titus, a true Salvatorian motto: “the human goodness and kindness of God our Savior”—to be incarnate and ever reappearing in everyone who bears His name. There can be no doubt that loving meditation on our final name as the Society of the Divine Savior contributed to this formulation or expression of the genuine Salvatorian spirit. And we may well be grateful that thus we are led beyond the saintly founder to the very center, to Christ, the Savior of the world, as our ultimate inspiration. But it is still Father Francis John Baptist Jordan, his life and his spirit, that leads us to the Divine Savior, even as John the Baptist directed his disciples from himself to the Greater One who was to come.

Robert Sencourt, in his short biography of Father Francis, has with reference to this the following fine and discerning lines:

“The secret of Father Jordan’s success in drawing and holding men and forming them into one family was the warmth and strength of his confident prayer, his fatherly kindness and his burning zeal for souls. “*Benignitas et humanitas*”—the goodness and kindness of their Savior, as St. Paul expresses it, is the spirit in which the Salvatorian is to be guided and by which he is to be led. That is what Father Francis tried to teach to those who sought to live his way of life, and it is not praise of his learning, his teaching, his preaching, that rills the Salvatorian with joy, but rather the hope that through him, though dimly, the goodness and kindness of the Master may shine.”

Concluding, then, we may say this: it is true that many of the verbal formulations in which Father Jordan tried to express the Salvatorian spirit and inspiration are not very original, but often commonplace and even stereotyped. To a superficial look they may, at times, hide rather than reveal the inner glow and the tremendous sincerity and concern that those who heard him give his exhortations never failed to perceive. And what is true of the way in which he formulated his ideas on the spiritual life holds good also for many of the individual rules he gave us; in this he is a child of his time, the 19th century. But the apostolic spirit by which he lived and the Salvatorian inspiration which he instilled into his work are timeless and will always be modern, because they are so essentially Christian and so truly Catholic.

Some ten years ago, in Rome, I knew a certain Father Aquiline, the postulator for the cause of Mother Frances Streitel with whom Father Jordan had tried, unsuccessfully, to realize the first foundation of a sisterhood within his Apostolic Teaching Society. Father Aquiline was very familiar with the life and work of our founder. When once I expressed regret and impatience at the slowness of the beatification process, he made this reply which impressed me very deeply: “God knows what He is doing; it may well be that He is saving Father Jordan’s canonization to be a special inspiration for some future period of restoration and renewal in the Church.”

At least to his Salvatorian Family, Father Francis can and must serve as an inspiration in this post-conciliar age into which the Salvatorian spirit and orientation fits so well. The emphasis on the all-embracing, serving and helping love of the Savior, as the soul of all apostolic work—the emphasis on witnessing, in a life of dedicated love, to the saving love of Christ—the compassionate openness to the need of all mankind—the desire (in the first

conception of the Apostolic Teaching Society) to draw also the laity into the apostolic task of saving and sanctifying the world—all correspond so well to the new orientations and attitudes in the Church of Vatican II: that open, outgoing, compassionate, pastoral, humble and incarnational, warm and understanding and serving love (the spirit of good Pope John—the spirit of Father Francis of the Cross), the infinite, saving love of God, incarnate in the “human goodness and kindness of our God and Savior.”

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SALVATORIAN CREED

Composed by Donald P. Skwor, SDS, and appeared in His article “Ten Years After: A Call to Action” for inclusion in the Jubilee Year Book of December 8, 1982

As a community of professing Christians, we seek the perfection of charity by following the Savior as did the Apostles having as our rule and life the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We strive to serve all people in simplicity and humility, adapting ourselves to the needs of all, thus making visible to the world the goodness and kindness of God our Savior .

Thus, our lives give glory to God by sharing the saving mission of Christ and by witnessing to the living presence of His Incarnate Love. Committed to the universal saving will of God our apostolic aim is to proclaim to all people everywhere the mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ the Savior of the World.

Therefore our aim is specifically missionary in character and spirit, proclaiming the presence of the kingdom of God already begun here on earth. We understand our missionary role as a participation of the universal mission of the Church, following the mandate of Jesus to go out into the whole world and to teach all nations.

We therefore hold ourselves ready and willing to serve people of every class, culture and race. To fulfill this purpose we keep ourselves free from such commitments as would limit our availability, thereby ensuring an ever more adequate response to the needs of the People of God.

Faithful to the intentions of the Founder, Father Francis of the Cross Jordan, we see that our task is “theology,” “talking about God” in a way that will enable people to live and act convincingly in the light of the Christian message in society today. Thus we understand theology as a “service,” telling the truth fearlessly and impartially regardless of politics and fashions.

Thus we commit ourselves to labor by example, by the spoken and written word, and by all ways and means which the love of Christ inspires for the spreading, deepening, and strengthening of the Christian faith.

We are prepared to engage in either communal or individual apostolates, whether they are purely Salvatorian or joint efforts with fellow religious, priests, and lay persons.

We readily cooperate in ecumenical endeavors and join with people of good will to promote social justice and the spiritual and temporal advancement of all.

While we remain open to many types of apostolic work and maintain a flexibility of means in the exercise of our works, we tend to choose those which are specifically evangelizing and more limited to such as permit of person-to-person communications.

Mindful of the admonition of our Founder, we “overlook no useful opportunity to announce and teach the doctrine of God to all, both publicly and from house to house.”

Where the needs of the People of God require it, or where the demands of the local church call for our assistance, we

willingly respond to these indications of Divine Providence which speaks through the call of the whole Church and through the signs of the times. But we do not seek to remain longer than we are needed in an auxiliary capacity.

Rather we wish to remain free to go where the need is greatest and where our special talents can be employed to the glory of God, the service of the Church and the manifold needs of our fellowman.

We recognize as the special mission of the Founder, and thus also of our Society, a direct missionary approach to proclaiming the word of God.

Thus we see ourselves as missionaries in the true sense of the word, free from institutional commitments, willing to step in where others cannot or dare not, ready to support ridicule and suffering, putting our trust solely in Him Who is our only hope.

Following in the footsteps of the apostles, we seek nothing for ourselves. We reject the false securities of the contemporary world which might lead us away from a radical living of the Gospel.

We are ready to put aside property, abundance, public esteem, social status, etc., and to seek our security in the living of the Gospel message itself.

Thus we see our Salvatorian life as apostolic because all is an expression of the love of Christ which urges us to spend ourselves for the salvation of our fellowman, confident that

thereby we ourselves grow continually in our union with God.

We believe that we encounter Christ and realize His presence in our confreres, in those whom we serve, and especially the needy.

As a community of disciples gathered in Christ's name, we endeavor to reflect His living presence in each of us through respect for one another.

We believe that each of us is endowed by God with special gifts which must be used in the service of the People of God.

We therefore strive to mutual understanding, offering our acceptance, love and support for one another, to attain self-fulfillment in the service of Christ as a necessary pre-requisite for the fulfillment of the Society's mission.

Donald P. Skwor, SDS
November 1, 1979

*Charism of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan in the Face
of the Challenges of the Contemporary World*

**CHARISM OF FATHER JORDAN
A CHALLENGE FOR THE LAITY OF TODAY**

Deacon Prof. Dr. Marco Ermes Luparia Sds

Kraków 5 – 8 December 1996

1. Introduction

The invitation to take part in this convention for the second time occurred in a period of inner suffering. The negative widespread influence of mass/media on the Western world forces people who are falling into their clutches, to be subject to psychological, intellectual and spiritual repercussions.

The evil is slipping through Christian and non-Christian families, and also under our bell tower's crosses. While the bells are ringing for Mass, there is nothing left for us to do but gather our soul's remains and ask ourselves the reason for it.

A painful feeling of powerlessness has often left me exhausted and full of sterile anger. With regard to these facts, I have felt the wish for seeking practical signs and instruments to be offered to God's people.

Jesus commands the demons to leave the possessed people, instead of simply observing the facts.

Jesus throws the merchants out of the temple, instead of accepting hypocritical compromises.

The above-mentioned Gospel parables will be the starting point. The reference to Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd, is of a God who is good and kind to weak and oppressed people, and a severe judge to oppressors and people who scandalize.

I found much of what I was looking for in Father Jordan's apostolic attitude. There are a lot of similitude's between the facts that occurred in the time he lived and the facts occurring nowadays. The reason for his unremitting zeal lays in a mature vocation against social injustice and spiritual degradation.

Recent times force us to make similar engagements. Moreover, moral and spiritual degradation should increase the efforts of men and women of good will to accept vigorously the challenge of our time.

To those who were looking for explanations about Salvatorian charism's particular aspects, we replied that it consists in a day—and—night apostolate which uses any means available.

Furthermore, today we must add that, cost what it may, it is a worthwhile apostolate.

I discovered this pivotal reading in the Founder's *Diary* and in particular in the pages where he speaks about the Cross.

His exile as soon as he became a priest and the restrictions imposed by the clergy must have convinced him that his ordeal could be found around every corner. Moreover, the distrust of the Church of Rome towards his intentions had led him to face the worst persecution, the one of the people he loved much.

The subtitle, which is perhaps even more important, represents a desire, rather than a clarity of views. You can judge for yourselves if I have ventured too far.

2. The Historical Period When the Founder Lived and Worked

During that period, secularization and the "Kulturkampf" were the two major problems in the Church and therefore Father Jordan had to face.

At the beginning of the century under the Empire of Napoleon, almost every monastery became a lay institute. Congregations were dissolved and their properties were confiscated by the State or sold off.

Automatically the flourishing monastic culture was destroyed because the Church could not carry out its functions anymore.

The Prussian State, which became stronger and stronger during that century, carried out an open conflict policy toward the Catholic Church. This clear hostility was called "Kulturkampf."

The State issued laws that damaged the Church's stability and influence and it even interfered with the Church procedures and concrete pastoral activities.

Furthermore, these events occurred in a historical period upset by rapid social changes. In particular, in Germany like in many other European countries, the Industrial Revolution was the reason for destabilization.

Scientific progress had fostered technological progress and industrialization process. Many young people left their villages and looked for a job in industrialized cities; therefore the traditional life style based on agricultural activities and on small trade was rapidly replaced. In Germany, like in England, a new working

class emerged and at the same time new kinds of social problems and poverty as well.

Due to the restrictions imposed by the State, the Church faced a lot of difficulties not only regarding its pastoral activities, but also concerning its attempts to eliminate the spreading phenomenon of urban poverty.

It was difficult to give credible responses regarding faith to people who every day had to face the concrete problems of poverty and degradation. This urban reality, its ghettos, its wickedness must have convinced Jordan of the necessity of a social and spiritual redemption for the poor, the rejected and also for rich and lonely people, subject to the spiritual dangers of their “ivory towers.”

2.1 Jordan and the Rebellion against the Evil of His Time.

The Founder’s *Diary* begins with the following fiery words: “Who will be against me, if God is with me? Be converted to the Eternal Father, to the holy and just God. You have provoked and rejected your Creator. Stand up and do not drag your feet, because the Lord is near! The Almighty Judge, fairly angry, is on his throne to judge the peoples who oppress his bride gained with precious blood! Peoples and nations become converted because the Lord will judge the generations. Germany, why are you defying your God, why are you scorning His precious bride? He will vehemently pass his Judgment on you.” (*SD I*, July 1, 1875)

First of all I want to underline the fact that when this page of the *Diary* was written Jordan was not yet a priest. In fact, it was written three years before he received Holy Orders.

The words are heavy and thundering and they do not leave any possibility of appealing. The betrayed God will take revenge against those who rode roughshod over him and his Church.

Jordan would not have begun a *Spiritual Diary*, as he was simply a clergyman, if he had not been deeply hurt during his wandering in the towns of industrialized Germany. Even his ideas must have been influenced by this sad experience. Necessarily, the fight against religious ignorance had to involve the fight against cultural ignorance. Is it possible to issue newspapers and “good and edifying reading” for people who cannot read and write? In a broad sense, ignorance is the pillar upon which social injustice is founded; in that period religious ignorance was the pillar upon which the influence of materialism was founded.

Further on in his *Diary* he clearly refers to some consequences of the situation recently created and he reveals a splendid social sensibility and spiritual inspirations:

“Why, man, are you looking for a home in a foreign country? Why, man, are you trying to please those with whom you cannot remain? Raise your eyes towards the sky, where the eternal friends continuously show you Heaven! Try to please the One with whom you can remain forever!” (*SD II*, July 2, 1875)

Who are those looking for home in a foreign country? Clearly they are the emigrants. Who are those trying to please those with whom they cannot remain? Clearly they are the poor who try to please the rich.

Could not the vehement attack against the non-religious Germany be today referred to every Western country and more than ever to economic powers? We can conclude that Jordan’s

position towards social injustice was anything but secondary. On the contrary, we can say that social promotion always joined spiritual promotion.

3. The Challenges of the Modern World

The challenges imposed by the modern world on the Christians of the Third Millennium cannot be compared with those of the past, even if they have similar aspects as mentioned before. Technological evolution and the power of mass media which operate more and more in a multimedial way have increased the invasive possibility of those who aim at intellectual massification and moral destruction of individuals. Therefore the Church has to face the moral attitude of those who want to keep the power and to cancel the brothers' dignity reducing them to intellectual and spiritual slavery! These kinds of slavery are the worst ones because they can hide very well in a world of false liberty and false solidarity. Now I will examine some aspects.

3.1 The Social World and Economy

- a) *Laissez-Faire*: Nowadays rich people are becoming richer and poor people are becoming poorer and poorer. The rich make the laws and regulate the rules in the market place. The poor must adapt themselves to these rules becoming poorer and poorer.

This state of false liberty is called *laissez faire*. It is the world of free competition where the following sentence is in force: "mors tua vita mea." (Your death is my life.) It is the grave of liberty and solidarity. There is no place for the necessities of your neighbor if your survival is at stake.

The pages of the Gospel are full of references to the rich who become richer and richer and who take care of the poor people

only because they want to grant the survival of the latter for their own purposes.

- b) *The dictatorship of mass media*: The first consequence of *laissez faire* has been the strong power of mass media. Thanks to their incoercible power, mass media spread by all means and delivers messages without any value and with a consumeristic ideology. The needs are no more met and dictated by the real man, but by a "virtual" one; he has been created according to market laws and has become the ruling idol.

In this culture of idolatry of himself or herself, everyone presents his/her own personal god made of narcissism and hedonism of various kinds which will fight against the other gods of the "pantheon," like in a bullring. The common man, loved by Father Jordan so much, that is the man who is intellectually and spiritually broken up, has been forgotten and receives a lot of blows and nobody intervenes or defends him.

It is therefore a real dictatorship; of this there is no way out unless we appeal to an evangelic radicalism, which implies an assent without conditions.

Some time ago Father Luca Brandolini said during his lecture: "Homilies must be prepared with the aid both of the Bible and the newspaper." This sentence struck me. In fact, people need to make the Gospel, which is always alive, living everyday.

- c) *Unrestrained consumerism*: Under the influence of *laissez faire* ideology the young people are interested in "having or possessing things rather than in "being someone." Unfortunately their families are not able to control the situation and are falling more and more deeply into this whirl. There is no place left for God, unless He is transformed into a

consumer's good and reduced to a formal presence with time limits.

Even Sacraments are consumed rather than "lived" day after day. Living in a state of schizophrenia, young people move rapidly from spiritual centers to fashion, drugs, and groups of friends, boyfriends and girlfriends.

On Sunday morning they sing in the Mass and in the afternoon they are willing to transgress because they are sure that the law is subject to them.

d) New Kinds of Poverty: Nowadays new kinds of poverty are appearing but we have trouble finding them both in ourselves and in other people. We are not speaking of the poverty known in the Caritas Centers; in fact this is mere economic poverty. We must, on the contrary, speak about intellectual, moral and spiritual poverty.

In this view both the rich and the poor are on the same level. A rich person can be very poor and a poor person can be very rich. According to Jordan's wonderful and original intuition. The world is not divided into "saints" and "sanctifiers." The rich and well to do are very often "sanctifiers," that is, those who will go astray. Perhaps someone is thinking that it cannot happen. Everyone has the right to be saved, the rich as well. On the other hand, people who show off their material and intellectual wealth, have the task to put themselves at the others' disposal. They have received the talents and must give them back becoming religious educators for the people they meet, their employees as well.

Therefore, good intentions and a good behavior are not enough. We have on the contrary a calling for an active

apostolate and everyone is on the same level as the others: the poor can evangelize the rich and the rich can evangelize the poor and they do not think anymore about the things they have, but about what they are.

This does not mean that economic poverty can be forgotten. It must be considered like other poverties. And the risk of feeding only the people and not the souls will be avoided.

Jesus himself, during his preaching to the masses, also took care of the physical well being of the people who were listening to him. We have to do the same, that is, we have to give "Bread and Gospel."

3.2 Moral Life

Nowadays morals are reduced to a mere individual fact. Everyone is making his/her own laws both on civil and spiritual levels. Laws are becoming general suggestions, which have to be respected in order not to pay a penalty. When sanctions are not to be found, people feel in a free zone where they can act freely even if they create problems or damage to other people.

The problem is not "doing something wrong but trying not to be prosecuted."

Statistics, carried out also by the Holy See, confirms what I am saying.

Ethics has completely been upset and anyone is allowed to do anything until he/she personally collapses or makes the civil system collapse.

The old are no more reference points for the young, they do not personify wisdom and they are not sure guides for young people anymore. On the contrary, they often are mis-educators, and they do not believe that spiritual and moral heritages are very precious. They are promoters of dominating idols such as success, sex and money. Moreover they remain astonished when their sons, daughters or grandchildren devote themselves to voluntary actions or humanitarian operations. According to these old people, the young waste their time because they do not gain money from these actions.

3.3 Spiritual Life

We are examining the situation more deeply. Now, I want to speak about a very deep and serious problem, which is difficult to discover: people are doing a thousand actions and they think they are satisfied by these actions. But at the conclusion of these actions are chimeras, which leave people empty, desperate and exhausted.

a) Spreading Theo mania: In the present age man is sure that he can live without the presence of God. Therefore, he has started a self deification process creating a huge pantheon of gods and goddesses. It appears like a hierarchy where everyone, the powerful and the poverty stricken, the cultured and the ignorant can enjoy their privilege of being deities.

This attitude is so clear and visible that the careful observer remains shocked. All things considered, truth promoters are only “cup bearers,” who pour wine everywhere the cup is raised. They are merciful gods of our time who want to withstand and overcome the true God who is rejected everywhere.

b) The Denial of Satan: We speak about the demon too little and wrongly.

Everyone knows that Satan’s biggest temptation and winning card is making people believe that he does not exist. Nowadays we are experiencing new changes in Satan’s intentions: that is, the use of the sacred for his own purposes.

The sacred, or what we believe is sacred, is considered a good and desirable thing only when it meets the needs of individuals. Everyone can have his/her own sacred areas, his/her own ceremonies and his/her own god.

When we think of Satan we smile but people who really believe in God, know that Satan’s under evaluation is very dangerous. The Fathers of the Church often mention the wicked consequences of the underestimation of Satan’s destructive action with regard to the spirit.

During our apostolate we have also to consider this fact and all the risks, which follow.

4. Answers to give to Men and Women

In the present time degradation is so widespread that a declaration without action runs to risk of being not useful. Father Jordan must have raised up to himself the following question: “What shall I do?” In the end he answered the invitation of the Holy Spirit to find a congregation with a clear apostolic attitude, that is, a congregation based on action first and foremost.

Therefore, we Salvatorians have to know better than the others what to do to face this situation, which answers to give to people who are asking for help.

a) *Injustice*: While I am writing this statement, the Society of the Divine Savior joins Columbian brothers in their trouble for Father Restrepo's kidnapping. Columbia is harrowed by a lot of problems and poverty is spreading all over the country.

Due to the lawlessness reigning in the country, the weak are subject to a lot of abuses of power. Probably our Brother was fighting against bullying and violence and this attitude had annoyed some people. He was only provided with the Gospel and the faith in the God of Providence and siding with the weakest and the poorest, he fought as he could against private interests of the people.

He put the Salvatorian motto, "preferential option for poor," into practice. This option was declared during the last SDS General Chapter. It was not only a declaration of principle, but a living Gospel, a "cost what it may" Gospel.

In fact, the Gospel is against every abuse of power, against injustice; it provides all, both users and receivers of violence, with the instruments of conversion. It is not possible to act as mentioned if one keeps silent. Neither the apostles, nor John the Baptist were silent. Being apostles means shouting with all one's strength the love of God for the last and the urgency of conversion for those who are the first on the Earth.

According to this view, silence and compromise mean consequently connivance and complicity. However, the pastoral pedagogy often admits some time of maturing. Nevertheless, the actions that occurred in Columbia, are happening in our countries as well. Not only delinquents use violence and injustice, but also even the constitutional state sometimes becomes unjust and unfair. What shall we do? How can we give testimony of our Creed? Which side shall we be taking?

We can surely discuss about "how to do something," but we cannot discuss about "what to do"! Every violation of the dignity of man, who has been created in God's own image, every violation of life and of its principles must be denounced without mincing matters. Those who want to defend the powerful's interests may consider the Salvatorian behavior as integrality. The denunciation refers to everyone, also to the poor who act, on a small scale and according to their means like the rich who can, on the other side, flaunt their wealth.

Injustice does not have a clear definition; it changes from time to time and every time it must be demystified. Only considering this fact, the Gospel passage telling the accusation of Pontius Pilate against the silent Jesus becomes real. Jesus was silent to himself but his words were abundant to the others. Therefore, we have to do the same.

b) *The Attacks of Mass Media*: Father Jordan understood very well the importance of the mass media and he believed they were useful for apostolic purposes. A good and modern press was necessary to spread the Gospel all over the world.

But during his time mass media did not have so great an influence. Today mass media are interfering to such an extent, that a simple and opposite action does not suffice anymore.

Catholic press is spreading all over the world. There are hundreds of thousands of editions for millions of good Catholics: books, newspapers, weekly and monthly journals. They are published in different languages. There are an abundance of TV broadcasting stations as well.

But I am asking the following questions: is it enough? Is it enough to put a book on a bookstall to increase the rich library of

a few good Christians? Who else will buy it? Which possibilities of conversion have the people who have already been attracted by television, which surely offers more tempting products?

The Church might have the most powerful and sophisticated TV broadcasting station, but if its programs do not have effect on the audience, it will not be sufficient. Consequently, it is necessary, like Jesus during his first preaching, to denounce negative programs before promoting new ones. First of all, negative and false messages of mass media, which follow market and consumerist laws, must be clearly condemned without any compromise.

Everyone knows that television and the other modern communication means have not always negative effects. It depends on the use we make of them. This negative use of mass media must be controlled, so that people who are attracted can defend themselves and choose differently. Is it true that modern apostles have nothing more to say about the contents of mass media? Have they nothing more to say to those Christians who listen more carefully to the easy and attractive words of “talk show people,” rather than to their words?

Nowadays, apostles also have to face these problems and learn how to overcome them, speaking about the real liberty and hope.

c) Neo-Barbaric Culture: I do not need to give examples of actions of cruelty, which sometimes are confused with modernism and progress, because everyone knows them. We need only read bioethics passages or newspapers to realize that the human being has reached a level of cruelty such as has never been seen before. Historians could object that cruel actions have been performed in the past centuries as well. In fact, today actions have not become crueler but, due to evolution and to progress, we are allowed to see now what we could not see in the past.

The worst thing is that this cruelty is proposed to the audience together with contents, which apparently speak about the contrary. For example, television broadcasts violent facts and crimes on live shows. Journalists assure that using their news right they can avoid similar shows. Unfortunately, the result is that the audience is no more sensitive to the real violence and in any moment people may become actors of this violence. Children of course are the most vulnerable subjects.

Cruelty is found not only in explicit violence, but also in the attacks on the law. In recent days an emblematic event has taken place in Italy. A social worker has taken away six out of nine children of a poor but decorous family. The children have been awarded to a religious institution operated by sisters.

I do not want to think about the money the State has to pay to keep the children in the institute, and the money which could be saved giving a subsidy to this family, avoiding its break up.

I want on the contrary to underline the opportunity for the sisters to give testimony of the Gospel by a strong opposition to the decision of the cruel judges. A firm condemnation and a determined evangelic stance would have been better both for the family and for the judges. Also, in this case “silent” people cannot be defined as apostles. Even less, can conniving people be called apostles. In every corner of our town, barbaric actions take place. Reporting these facts represents the first step towards a credible apostolate.

5. The Relationship between Salvatorian Religious and Lay

Unity of purposes between religious and lay was Father Jordan’s most important apostolic ideal. However, people born in the years

after the Second Vatican Council, or those who lived this experience like a passage, do not consider this ideal seriously. The situation changes if we consider that Father Jordan's intuition occurred a hundred years ago.

The system was not and is not founded on a hierarchical basis. In fact, an autonomous Salvatorian Lay Movement has always been promoted and fostered in all the generalates' deliberations. The best wording is "Salvatorian Family." This mature wording fully meets the needs of lay that are now more mature than in the past.

The Salvatorian lay state is closer to apostolic action than to mystic life. Praying and acting in the world, evangelizing people at work, at school, in the Parliament etc., are a very original ideal. This perspective must not be confused with an involvement in the policy like the Communion and Liberation Movement or like other political movements linked with the Liberation Theology. Being political subjects and giving testimony of a Christian life and of the love of Jesus are Salvatorian purposes.

It is much easier to join political movements or social promoting organizations, rather than being apostles and announcers of Jesus by the only means of the Gospel and of our identity.

We will see in the next chapter what "being active" means and we will try to outline a theology of apostolic action.

5.1 Unity in an Active Apostolate

The Salvatorian concept of unity is very particular; in fact, the Lay Salvatorian Movement wants neither to become a Christian political party nor a sort of trade union organization.

The chapter from the *La Voce di Padre Jordan* [Voice of Father Jordan; in English: *Exhortations and Admonitions*] on unity is very clear: First of all, unity is considered part of an apostolate and therefore the operational key.

We understand soon his intentions: "What a pleasure for us is being close to each other, trying to become saintly and to sanctify the others, helping each other physically and spiritually!" (*The Voice of Father Jordan*, 148)

Even if in this sentence he was referring to the congregation, nothing prevents us from applying it to the present situation of society, which includes also laity.

Becoming saintly and sanctifying the others are the main purpose and the main aspects of unity. The above mentioned concept was true in the past and is true even now due to the difficult modern problems. After fixing the target, operational exhortations are made:

"If we were very close to each other and offered our will as a sacrifice to God, if we marched like a compact mass against Hell and all our enemies, we would obtain all we want." (*The Voice of Father Jordan*, 149)

He goes on: "It is necessary that everyone carries out his own work conscientiously to keep this unity, this peace and this harmony." (*The Voice of Father Jordan*, 150)

He concludes: "Like in the human body, the whole organism suffers if a member does not work properly." (*Ibid.*)

Father Jordan urged all the people to trust each other and to correct each other like brothers. Unfortunately this does not happen very often. He goes from conspiracy of silence to angry disapproval:

“Another important point is the following one: if one of you thinks that one person mistrusts him, he must go to that person and speak clearly to overcome the problem.” (*The Voice of Father Jordan*, 152)

Father Jordan’s fervor when he speaks of unity clearly reflects his great interest in this concept. A divided Church is very fragile and subject to Satan; it is therefore, unable to undertake holy actions even if the ideas of one person or one group are holy and good.

Unity in a pastoral sense means communion between the Bishop and all the people, priests and laity; the same rule is in force in apostolic activities, but there are different implications.

For instance, in some parish churches there is often division among parishioners but pastoral activities go on thanks to the other members of the community.

It is not the same for apostolic activities. Due to the fact that apostolic actions are at the beginning embryonic, the lack of unity causes their demolition. If brotherly reproaches fail, they may even be completely destroyed.

Lay people rely on unity to a great extent and they want to put it into practice by any means, even if painful. They expect a lot of their pastors. Divided pastors represent the biggest scandal for God’s people and the worst thing is to carry out ambiguous, contradictory pastoral activities, which do not take into account pastoral ideas.

Therefore our Founder teaches us that everyone may be reproached in a brotherly way by all the others because we are on the same level before God. In apostolic actions, carried out by two religious, or by a religious and a lay, or by two lay, unity must

absolutely be present. Also brotherly reproach is necessary in this case, according to the principle of Christian brotherhood and Christian reciprocity. Saint Paul said: “Remember your leaders who have announced God’s words to you; consider carefully their life style and imitate their faith.” (Heb 13:7-9a)

5.2 Ready to a Fight without Quarter

Our enemy is strong and clever, the power of the means used does not allow us to elucidate too much. Even if Father Jordan was very mild and moderate, he could become as strong as a lion when spiritual salvation was at stake.

Informational means at that time were very limited; we dare even say that the Church in that period had greater possibilities than private citizens.

Today the situation has changed. Despite its big production, the Christian press is addressing more and more experts and it is far from being a means of apostolate and an instrument of conversion.

New apostles must be recruited to face the invasion of bad culture, of widespread *laissez-faire*, and of the destruction of values, even small ones. It is really a fight without quarter. Therefore, the elaboration of new instruments to evangelize the masses and consequently every action is not useful if the Gospel is not witnessed to.

When our hearts and minds are ready to receive the signs of the Holy Spirit, Divine Providence will put the necessary means at our disposal.

We have to face our enemy, who is present in mass media, in politics, in culture, by using similar weapons. Keeping silent in front of people who are shouting at the top of their voice is not a weapon, but a sign of complicity and fear. If we want to be listened to, we have to shout the Gospel loudly.

Some people say that a silent testimony is enough. Others are only able to shout. Probably none of them are right. As the sacrament is “sign and instrument” at the same time, and sacramental sign is made of “words and actions,” also apostolic actions which imply a fight against evil must be composed of actions and words.

Lay people want to have the possibility to fight against evil by putting the action of the Holy Spirit into effect, shouting and testifying their love for Jesus the Savior and for the people they have to save.

5.3 Refusal of Compromise

If Father Jordan had lived today, if he had seen the excitement of the Church after the Second Vatican Council, he would have exulted or joy and he would have led his congregation.

Compromise, in different shapes, is one of the sharpest weapons used by the world to destroy the Church’s strength.

Compromise can be found in politics, in the information means, in culture management and so on. Are we allowed to ask if this is a good thing? I think we are allowed to.

When a person tries and lives the Gospel and its indication, he is immediately considered as an integralist. The Catholic Church itself rejects integralism. Analogy with Islamic integralism immediately puts the followers of this evagelic aspect in a bad light.

I cannot be defined an integralist, but I cannot help admiring some people who make courageous choices, who are unfortunately very few compared to the multitude of Christians.

Furthermore, I cannot help thinking that an evagelic choice is absolutely integralist and it does not leave any way out, even though the invitation of Jesus is very kind.

All things considered, Father Jordan made in his time an integralist engagement, by proposing to lay people things and actions which had been undertaken up to that moment only by religious. One century after Father Jordan’s activity, some movements, like neo-catechumens, have carried out similar engagements: the rich take care of the religious education of their household staff and factory owners take care of the religious education of their employees.

Today’s lay people, like those in the past, cannot help being attracted by this dear evagelic proposal, where half measures are not allowed.

However, nowadays the proposed targets need more time and different procedures to be reached. That is, we need to wait and suffer. In fact we cannot call compromise the fact that we wait for our listener to make his own decisions and choices and to become converted. Maybe in the present times we have to accept every little step one person makes during his way towards God.

Nevertheless, the Salvatorian ideal is very radical. The capacity of reconciling different times and manners, and the lack of compromise are its strength and innovation.

5.4 Ready to Extreme Sacrifice

Father Jordan wrote the following words on the sacrifice of apostolate: “If we want great things, we have to be prepared to

follow the Savior not only to Tabor, but up to Calvary.” (*The Voice of Father Jordan*, 237)

This powerful and serious sentence was followed by the next one, that was quoted also in Jordan’s *Spiritual Diary*: “The works of God begin only in the shadow of the Cross.”

It is difficult to accept and understand the sacrifice of apostolate, and it is even more difficult to accept the extreme sacrifice.

Reading Father Jordan’s above-mentioned quotes, we realize that he understood Jesus’ message very well. Disciples and apostles, who are the founders of the Holy Church, understood his message very well, too. Apostolate is not effective if it is not ready to the extreme sacrifice.

Without this inclination, our decisions are subject to psychological and economical laws, which require less expense and less effort. This taking a stand leads to escape and fear. And our reasoning will give a logical explanation in order to hide our incapability of following Christ without conditions.

Father Jordan risked his life! He did not find himself in front of firing squads or violent men, but he spent all the energy he had until he consumed himself for the love of God. Is this not extreme sacrifice? He did not fall to the ground, struck by a heart failure only because of his strength, but he spent all that he had.

He bore the pain very well, but he had physical limits. The pictures of him show a suffering man, a man who was loved and preferred by God very much.

SALVATORIAN SPIRITUALITY A Vast and All Embracing Concept

by

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Knowing and living the specific spirituality of a religious institute is fundamental for the efficacy of its mission in the Church and in the world. The lack of a vigorous spirituality weakens the sense of belonging among its members and often renders truly joint efforts impossible. During his lifetime, Fr. Jordan himself complained that many Salvatorians instead of deepening and living the spirituality of the Society, sought out and were inspired by that of other religious institutes.¹

If we, Salvatorians, want to renew our life and mission, it is absolutely necessary for us to discover, deepen and love our own spirituality. All of our renewal work will be worth little if it is not guided by a spirituality that is specifically our own. In “*Annales SDS*,” the second Salvatorian Superior General, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, wrote and published some reflections about Salvatorian spirituality².

Since then, much to the detriment of our Salvatorian identity as well as the living of our charism, spirituality and mission, very little has been done to elucidate and systematize the understanding

¹ “Each institute has its own spirit; and just as soon as one deviates from it, he finds himself on the wrong road. An apple tree is not a pear tree. And a Franciscan is not a Dominican, a Jesuit is not a Trappist.” (EA, p. 94.)

² See *Salvatorianer Chronik*, year 3, number 3, May 1, 1919 and following.

of our specific Salvatorian spirituality. In reality, it is very difficult to be faithful to a mission and to incarnate a spirituality that is little known. A religious without a clear awareness of his/her mission and spirituality is a religious without self-identity.

Because of this need, I would like to share with the whole Salvatorian Family (women and men, lay and religious) some of the reflection that has taken place within the International Charism Commission in Rome. What I share here is the result of years of research and study by CIS (Inter-Salvatorian Commission).³ Obviously, this article is a summary that will require further development and deepening.

1. Christian Spirituality

Christian spirituality is a vast topic. It includes many aspects and challenges flowing from the life and message of Jesus Christ. It is difficult even impossible, to define it. In addition, any definition would be inadequate. What one can do, nevertheless, is to describe it in various ways. We are very familiar with some of the classic descriptions of spirituality:

- ❖ identification with the will of the Father
- ❖ life directed by the Spirit
- ❖ life of grace
- ❖ following Jesus Christ.

³ **CIS** (Inter-Salvatorian Collaboration): This is the new name for **CIP** (Inter-Provincial Collaboration). With the beginning of the Association of the Divine Savior (the Lay Salvatorians), the name was changed in general assembly, November 1990. **CIS** represents the collaborative efforts of the four Salvatorian units in Brazil: Association of the Divine Savior; Sisters of the Divine Savior – São Paulo Province; Sisters of the Divine Savior – Santa Catarina Province; and the Society of the Divine Savior – Fathers and Brothers.

These and other descriptions are certainly correct, even though incomplete. They describe complementary aspects. To be authentic, any description of Christian spirituality must always begin with the following of Jesus Christ. In effect, it is Jesus who reveals the Father to us. It is Jesus who sends us his Holy Spirit... On the other hand, Jesus presents himself as the Way to be followed, the Truth to be accepted and the Life to be lived. Christian spirituality originates in baptism and consists, essentially, in a growing identification with Christ in his paschal mystery.

The actual demands of following Jesus Christ make themselves known within history and within the happenings that concretely characterize human existence. In this sense, Christian spirituality is historical and is founded in the lived reality of persons. Life's events point to evangelical values which, in real life, indicate the way to follow Jesus. Because of the diversity of historical experiences, different values and emphasis emerge as important. This results in different spiritualities at different times and in different places.

Thus, within the same Christian spirituality, it is possible for diverse spiritualities to arise, even though, basically there exists only one Christian spirituality inspired by Jesus Christ. Each day, in every concrete situation, we experience the call to conversion in a different way. Thus, there arise different paths that lead to a unique following of Jesus Christ. In this sense, within a single Christian spirituality, there exist different specific Christian spiritualities. These are not essentially different from one another, for they have the same origin and identity.

The gospels show us that Jesus himself presents his followers with two distinct ways to follow him. The apostles are called to follow him more closely, leaving everything: profession, family,

goods... The other disciples are to follow him while remaining in the world, with their families, practicing their professions, etc. Persons with different lifestyles and different commitments, live the same basic spirituality in a different way. Thus, we speak of a contemplative spirituality, a matrimonial spirituality, an apostolic-missionary spirituality...

2. Salvatorian Spirituality

With a foundation in Christian spirituality, as well as in values proper to religious life, notably specific Salvatorian values, we can also speak of a Salvatorian spirituality. Our Founder perceived the necessity of a special mission in the life of the Church and for this reason founded the Salvatorian Family. Salvatorian spirituality in itself, happens to the extent that we live out our Salvatorian charism and mission. As long as the charism and the mission underlie, nurture and characterize our spiritual life, we can speak of a Salvatorian spirituality. To the extent that the Salvatorian charism and mission penetrate our spiritual and apostolic life, we constitute a Christian community with its specific spirituality.

Like charism and mission, Salvatorian spirituality is also a vast and all embracing concept. We can speak about it using five basic points of reference:

1. Christ Our exemplar
2. Salvatorian Being
3. Salvatorian Action
4. Salvatorian Methodology
5. Inclusive Love (Universality).

2.1. Christ the Savior, Our Exemplar

Salvatorian spirituality is totally centered in Christ Jesus, the One who is consecrated (Christ) to be Savior (Jesus). Fr. Jordan is very clear when he affirms, "*He (Christ Jesus) is our mentor.*"⁴ And he insists: "*Let this be our motto: I must become like my divine model.*"⁵

The inspiration, the exemplar, of our Salvatorian spirituality is Christ the Savior. For us, He is the Christ; that is, the Anointed One, the consecrated One, the One sent to be Jesus, which is to say, Savior. He is our example, par excellence, the one who inspires our way of being and acting. He reveals to us the immense love of the Father who desires that all be saved.⁶ In him is revealed the glory of God the Savior. "*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we have seen his glory: the glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with grace and truth.*"⁷

It is Jesus the Savior who integrates all the elements of human experience, guaranteeing our unity. In him and with him, we discover our Salvatorian identity. From him we learn to give ourselves in love: "*He emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.*"⁸ In light of his mission as Savior, he became poor, chaste and obedient, forming community with his apostles. He freed himself from all possible chains,

⁴ *EA* "Er ist unser Vorbild". This sentence was left out of the English Translation but can be found in the original *Worte und Ermahnungen*, 1938, p. 189.

⁵ *EA* p 13.

⁶ "This is good and acceptable, and God our Savior is pleased with it, for he wants all to be saved and to come to know the truth" (1 Tm. 2:3-4).

⁷ Jn. 1:14.

⁸ Phil. 2:7.

directing his entire life toward his mission to save all people.⁹ In order to find the strength to be faithful until the end, he sought to remain in constant union with the Father, even spending entire nights in prayer.¹⁰

Inspired by our mentor, Christ Jesus, and through the saving love of the Father revealed in him, we also commit ourselves through the profession of the evangelical counsels, taking on his life of poverty, chastity, obedience and apostolate.¹¹ Following his example, we seek to maintain a healthy balance between contemplation and action.¹² Called, attracted and finally captivated by him, we commit ourselves to a life of faith and service within community, always in light of our Salvatorian mission.¹³

In the daily effort to incarnate the example of Christ the Savior, we find in Mary, the Mother of the Savior and Queen of the Apostles, as well as in the Apostles themselves, precious examples and intercessors.¹⁴ With Mary, the humble servant of the Lord, full of grace, we glorify God for the wonders he has realized in the depths of our being.¹⁵ Together Mary and the holy apostles, anointed by the Holy Spirit, inspire us to follow the Savior.¹⁶ With

⁹ “In order to be totally free and to dedicate himself entirely to his mission as Savior, Jesus freed himself from all that in one form or another, could impede or limit his total availability” See CO SDS, 1984, 105.

¹⁰ See Mt. 14:23; 26:36; Mk. 1:35; Jn. 6:14.

¹¹ See **Constitutiones SDS**, chapter 3

¹² See *ibidem*, 501.

¹³ See *ibidem*, 403.

¹⁴ See *ibidem*, 304

¹⁵ See Lk. 1:46-55.

¹⁶ See *Jn 20:21; Acts 2; CO SDS 101, 102.*

them, we exclaim in the fullness of our being. “*The Father has sent his Son as Savior of the world.*”¹⁷

2.2. The Savior’s Being—Our Salvatorian Being

Following the example of Christ the Savior, the primary focus of Salvatorian spirituality is the revelation of God the Savior¹⁸ in the totality of our being and action. Everything ought to proclaim the love of God the Savior, for it is this, above all that we are called to incarnate in our personal and community life.

Referring to the Salvatorian mission, the Founder speaks of proclaiming the glory of God.¹⁹ He refers continually to the glory of God in his *Spiritual Diary*.²⁰ Impelled by the Holy Spirit, we are called to “*glorify, everywhere, God the Father, his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.*”²¹ In other words, we are called “*to reveal to all and glorify everywhere God the Father, his Son Jesus*

¹⁷ 1 Jn. 4:14.

¹⁸ See 1 Tm. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Eph. 5:23; Phil. 3:20; Ti. 1:3, 2:10; 3:4

¹⁹ See **Societas Catholica** (1878), DSS II, p. 13; **SAI** (Smirna), 1880; **Provisorische Satzungen** (Donauwörth), 1880, A-1, DSS II, p. 69; **Die Apostolische Lehrgesellschaft, oder Societas Apostolica Instructiva – Ihr Wesen und ihre Bedeutung**, B. Lüthen, 1881, pp. 11.14, DSS IV, pp. 29.31; **Regulae Imo. Gradui Societis Apostolicae Instuctivae Accomodatae**, 1882, p. 3, DSS I, p. 21; **Regulae et Constitutiones Societatis Catholicae Instructivae**, 1886, pp. 3-4; DSS I, pp. 49-50; **Die Katholische Lehrgesellschaft (Societas Catholica Instructiva)**, 1888, p. 3.11, DSS IV, pp. 105.113; **Constitutiones Societatis Catholicae Instructivae**, 1891, I, 3, pp. 1-2....

²⁰ See **SD** II 3; 53,5; 56,4; 67,4-5; 119,1; 149,5; 186,7; 192,1,3...

²¹ **Regulae et Constitutiones Societatis Catholicae Instructivae**, 1886, pp. 3-4, DSS I p. 49-50.

*Christ and the Holy Spirit.*²² Speaking to the lay people of the Society, Jordan affirms the same thing in language more accessible to them. “...we aspire to reveal to the world God, one and three: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”²³

Jesus Christ, our exemplar, not only reveals the Father through his words and actions but also through his entire way of being and acting. Everything in Him reveals the love of God the Savior. Everything he is and does points to the realization of his mission. “I have given you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do.”²⁴ He not only reveals the Father in his attitudes but also is the personal revelation of the Father. “If you really knew me, you would know my Father also.”²⁵ “...and whoever looks on me is seeing him who sent me.”²⁶ Jesus is one with the Father. “I am in the Father and the Father in me.”²⁷ We, as persons marked by a thirst for the absolute in the saving God, are called to follow Jesus the Savior and proclaim to all his saving and freeing love.

Thus, like our mentor, Christ the Savior, who is one with the Father, we are called to discover the integration of our whole person in contemplation and action, stripping ourselves of all that is not eternal, of all that does not reflect our divine model. Only in this way will we be living signs of God’s saving love, capable of attracting others to him and his mission. “As you Father, are in me

²² Ibidem.

²³ **Die Katholische Lehrgesellschaft (Societas Catholica Instructiva)**, 1888, DSS IV p. 105

²⁴ Jn. 17:4.

²⁵ Jn. 14:7.

²⁶ Jn. 12:45; See Jn. 14:9-10.

²⁷ Jn. 14:11.

and I in you, I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.”²⁸ In fact, the effectiveness of our Salvatorian mission in the world depends on our practical capacity to be revelatory signs of the love of the Saving God. “In his great mercy the Divine Savior has called us to become images of himself, to become as much like him as possible... to become holy.”²⁹

It is moving to see how Fr. Jordan pushes himself to live all that he recommends to us. He encourages himself. “See everything in the light of faith. Let everything you think, say and do be guided by faith. The just live by faith.”³⁰ He is aware that personal liberation is the combined result of the action of God and our human efforts. For this reason, he urges the early members of the Society: “Be men of prayer.”³¹ “Imitate, therefore, the Savior, being men of prayer... With this you will be giving glory to God. Our times need men of prayer...”³² In addition, for himself, he proposes seven hours of daily prayer.³³ With this deep experience of God as a starting point, one understands the ardent apostolic zeal of our Founder.³⁴

2.3. The Savior’s Action – Salvatorian Action

Our apostolic action or apostolate takes its inspiration from the action of Christ the Savior, who came to bestow eternal life in

²⁸ Jn. 17:21.

²⁹ *EA* p. 12-13.

³⁰ *SD* I 136,5-6.

³¹ *EA* p. 21.

³² Ibidem, p. 22.

³³ See *SD* I 197,6-12; 198,1-5.

³⁴ See *SD* II 1,1-6; 2,1-5.

abundance upon everyone.³⁵ Father Jordan points to Jesus, saying: “Think of what the Savior himself did for the salvation of souls. Think of how the holy apostles notably St. Paul labored for the salvation of souls.”³⁶ “In order for the reign of God to occur, it is necessary that those whom God has called to abandon everything, truly proclaim Jesus Christ through their words and life witness.”³⁷ On another occasion the Founder insists for himself: “...so that all may be imbued with Your sacred doctrine and that I, at the end, burning with Your charity, may pour out my life for You, that is, for your glory. Amen.”³⁸ Following the Savior, our greatest efforts ought to reflect the twofold dimension of proclaiming salvation: **to reveal** the Savior God in the fullness of our being through witness and action; and **to save**, to liberate; that is, make life happen in a way that it be permanent, eternal.

Before he proposes our mission to us, Jordan insists for himself: “Never forget the wonderful works of God... In all your actions and behavior, significant and insignificant, let your guiding motto be: All for the greater glory of God... and for the salvation of souls.”³⁹ And he directs us also: “We are called to work for the salvation of souls. And how are we to work if we have no zeal? ... We are called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.”⁴⁰

The goal of our Salvatorian mission is the salvation or liberation of the human person. In other words, eternal life; that

³⁵ See Jn. 10:10.

³⁶ *EA* p. 124.

³⁷ *Die Katholische Lehrgesellschaft (Societas Catholica Instructiva)*, 1888, p. 11; DSS IV p. 133.

³⁸ *SD* I 120,3.

³⁹ *SD* I 67,2-5.

⁴⁰ *EAF* p. 124.

is, life which begins here and now and transcends earthly life. “Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.”⁴¹ “He who believes has eternal life.”⁴²

Christ the Savior shows us that eternal life happens not only through “works” but also through knowledge;⁴³ that is, through being that spills itself out in action. With the entire Church, we labor that the Savior and his salvific message be known by all, so that incarnating it they can possess eternal life.

The Savior’s action is characterized by a threefold effort: discernment of the Father’s will, in order to reveal it through his mission; revelation of the Father and his salvific love for all; and sensitivity to human suffering, especially among those marginalized by the society.

Following the example of our mentor, Jesus Christ, Savior of the World, our preaching begins in lived experience. “What we have seen and heard we proclaim in turn to you so that you may share life with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with the Son, Jesus Christ.”⁴⁴ Because, “We have seen his glory: the glory of an only Son coming from the Father, full of grace and truth.”⁴⁵

⁴¹ Jn. 17:3.

⁴² Jn. 6:47; See Jn. 5:24.

⁴³ The biblical meaning of the term “knowledge” connotes a “lived experience” See Jn. 17:3.

⁴⁴ 1 Jn. 1:3.

⁴⁵ Jn. 1:14; See SD II 2,3.

To the extent that we **incarnate** gospel values in our life, following the Savior's example, we necessarily **radiate** them to others. In the same way, by its very nature yeast exists to ferment and light to illuminate.⁴⁶

The apostles' example, in their times, was rooted in the example of Jesus. In our day, we are also called to **evangelize through our life and work**, showing everyone the goodness and love of God for all people.⁴⁷ We can understand why Fr. Jordan insisted so often on complete availability, apostolic zeal and a love that saves. "*Therefore again and again, I recommend to you zeal for souls.*"⁴⁸

True apostolic zeal takes its inspiration and nourishment from the experience of the love of a God who saves here and now. "*Even if I speak in tongues..., have the gift of prophecy..., distribute my goods to the hungry..., hand over my body to be burned, if I do not have love, I gain nothing.*"⁴⁹ The example of our mentor, Jesus Christ, also calls us to give special attention to the poor and those in need: "*When we see the poorest, most abandoned, the lowest of men, we must behold in him an immortal soul for which Christ died and shed the last drop of His blood.*"⁵⁰

2.4. The Savior's Methodology - Our Methodology

The approach which should characterize our life and apostolate also finds its inspiration in our model, Jesus Christ. "*May each*

⁴⁶ See Mt. 5:13-16; 13:33. Jn. 8:12.

⁴⁷ See Ti. 3:1-7.

⁴⁸ *EA* p. 124-125

⁴⁹ 1 Cor 13:1-13

⁵⁰ *EA* p. 124.

one of you be able to say, no matter where he may be, what St. Paul said of himself: 'Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ'.⁵¹ Thus you will exert great power of attraction."⁵²

Reading the writings of Fr. Jordan that refer to the Salvatorian mission, we note a striking characteristic: the insistent call to form lay persons to be **apostles** or to always **involve more people**.⁵³ Looking towards the future of his group, he envisions: "*Oh holy apostles hastening throughout the world, evangelizing all! Oh, inscrutable zeal! How often you have been scorned and suppressed with the excuse that you are meant for the select few!*"⁵⁴ In the person of Jesus Christ, the Father reveals to the world his immense and saving love. Jesus became incarnate to reveal the goodness and love of God the Savior to all people.⁵⁵ We are called to follow the Savior's example, using the same approach that he, our Master and Lord, used. The one who is the light of the world⁵⁶ says to us as well, "*You are the light of the world....*"⁵⁷

We know that Jesus did not choose to act alone. From the beginning of his public life, he calls persons to follow him and to be his disciples. He calls, persuades, motivates and prepares people. And he makes them his **followers**, **leaders** and **successors** to continue his mission. Jesus calls the twelve to learn from him.

⁵¹ 1 Cor 4:16.

⁵² *EA* p. 164.

⁵³ See *Der Missionär*, 1881, anno I, N. 2, pp. 10-13.

⁵⁴ *SD* I 128,6-7.

⁵⁵ See T. 3:4; 1 Ti. 4:10

⁵⁶ See Jn. 8:12.

⁵⁷ See Jn. 5:14.

They go to him. He teaches, forms and sends them forth.⁵⁸ He forewarns them of the inevitable persecutions.⁵⁹ He encourages them to speak openly, without fear.⁶⁰ He tells them simply that to follow him, self-denial is necessary.⁶¹ He sends them forth as his representatives.⁶² And confides his mission to them.⁶³ And then, he continues to accompany them through his Spirit, who teaches all truth.⁶⁴

The most important methodology of Jesus that we are called to follow is the appreciation and love of the human person. It is the person who is the center of his preaching, to whom he directs all of his saving action. With his disciples, Jesus created a living community that was centered in him as a person. He, Jesus, is the center of gravity in the lives of the disciples, their destiny and their lifestyle. He, in himself, is the methodology, the way to follow. It is primarily through his lived experience that he forms his disciples. Proposing the reign of God, Jesus presents himself as the exemplar to be followed, Proposing the beatitudes,⁶⁵ he expresses his own experience and spirituality.

⁵⁸ See Mt. 10:1-41.

⁵⁹ See Mt. 10:17-25.

⁶⁰ See Mt. 10:26-36.

⁶¹ See Mt. 19:37-39.

⁶² See Mt. 10:40-42.

⁶³ "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations..." See Mt. 28:18-20. "Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to all creation." See Mk. 16:15.

⁶⁴ See Jn. 16:13-14.

⁶⁵ See Mt. 5:3-12.

In his mission with the people, Jesus teaches, cures, has compassion, pardons.... Even though his life is full of these formative activities directed toward the people in general and especially the poor, he does not neglect the specific **formation of the apostles**. He sets aside a good part of his time for their instruction and training, giving them special explanations.⁶⁶ Jesus educates not only by teaching but also by being Master.⁶⁷

Jesus does not hide the exacting requirements that he proposes for those who follow him. He demands that they not only be students but servants, following the example of the master.⁶⁸ He demands commitment to follow him,⁶⁹ in insecurity,⁷⁰ through trials⁷¹ and to wherever he will go.⁷²

Faith represents a fundamental value for Jesus. "*Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe... Blest are they who have not seen and have believed.*"⁷³ And on another occasion: "*Why this fear, people of little faith!*"⁷⁴ Prayer constitutes a central element in the relationship of Jesus with the Father and with human persons. He teaches the disciples to pray as he prays.⁷⁵ The great commandment

⁶⁶ See Mk. 4:3-28.

⁶⁷ See Jn. 13:4-20

⁶⁸ See Mt 10:24-25.

⁶⁹ See Mt 11:29-30.

⁷⁰ See Lk 9:57-58.

⁷¹ See Lk 22:22-28.

⁷² See Jn 12:26

⁷³ See Jn. 20:24-29.

⁷⁴ Mt. 8:26.

⁷⁵ See Mt. 6:5-12; Lk 11:1-4.

in the following of Jesus is love: “*remain in my love.*”⁷⁶ *There is no greater love than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*”⁷⁷ Jesus must always be the first love in the life of a disciple.⁷⁸ This implies renunciation, even the cross: “*If you want to follow me, deny yourself....*”⁷⁹

Inspired by the example of the Savior and the apostles, who were concerned with forming disciples to work with them and eventually replace them in their mission, we are called to take on this characteristic in our Salvatorian mission. We must **involve others**,⁸⁰ making use of the same dynamic as the Master,⁸¹ applying his methodology in order to lead others to a commitment. Therefore, as Salvatorians, religious and lay, we cannot act alone or in isolation. We need to unite our energies,⁸² involve⁸³ and form others in order to activate their participation and communion.

Jordan invites us to announce the Savior and salvation, letting ourselves be inspired by “*the charity of Christ*,”⁸⁴ allowing ourselves to be infected by the love that saves. In this respect, we understand

⁷⁶ Jn. 15:9.

⁷⁷ Jn. 15:3.

⁷⁸ See Mt. 11:37-39.

⁷⁹ Mk. 8:34.

⁸⁰ See **Der Missionär**, year 1 N.2, October 1881, pp. 10-13.

⁸¹ “Following the example of Jesus Christ and the holy apostles.” See **Regulae et Normae Communes Primi Ordinis Societatis Catholicae Instructivae.**, 1884, p. 7; DSS I p. 35. This expression was retained in each of the later editions of our rule of life.

⁸² See **Provisorische Satzungen**, 1880 (Donauwörth), DSS II, A-1, p. 69.

⁸³ See **Der Missionär**, year 1, N. 2, October 1881, pp. 10-13.

⁸⁴ See 1 Cor 13:1-13.

why Fr. Jordan insists so much on love as a fundamental element in our spirituality.⁸⁵ For this reason, we also understand Jordan’s great trust in **Divine Providence** as well as his confidence in others, giving them responsibilities. We ought to see persons through the eyes of the Savior, teaching as he teaches, involving them as he involves them, evangelizing as he evangelizes, using the approach he uses.

2.5. The Savior’s Inclusive Love—Our Inclusive Love (Universality)

The spirit of the Savior is grounded in an inclusive love which desires salvation for everyone. This all inclusive or universal love is a basic characteristic of our Salvatorian spirituality. The glory of God is the salvation of all men and women. What is important is the person to be saved. “*But love, I might say, should also be like a mother towards her child. It should be true, ready to make sacrifices, patient, attentive.... It should embrace all.... If our love is from God, then we shall love all.... This universal love is especially and specifically for our Society.*”⁸⁶ “*Christ died for all; because of this, our Society possesses a universal character....*”⁸⁷ “*Therefore, open wide Your hearts and exert yourselves to be all in all, in order to win all for Christ.*”⁸⁸

⁸⁵ “This universal love is especially and specifically for our Society.” **EA**, p. 100.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁸⁷ Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer SDS, “**Pater Jordan und seine Gründungen**,” p. 291.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*.

Thus, inspired by the love of Christ who saves,⁸⁹ we seek to include all persons, without distinction of race, color, class, nationality or apostolic activity. Just as we cannot exclude any person, we also cannot absolutize any apostolic activity, not even “ours.” As a result, we welcome any activity especially that which corresponds to the real needs of the Church and the people. In doing this, we are attentive to the concrete circumstances of time and place, opting always for “*the little ones*.”⁹⁰ the poor.

Our apostolic life is guided by the goodness and love of God for all, revealed in the person of the Savior.⁹¹ This helps us to be faithful to the Founder’s insistent plea which springs forth from the depths of his apostolic heart: “*Would be to God, that I could save everyone!*”⁹² Inspired by the attitudes of the Savior, he wants us to always keep in focus, the human person who is to be saved. Everything else is secondary. Jordan often says: “*Everyone*,” “*to everyone*.” “*through all ways and means...*”⁹³ Everyone ought to be an agent of transformation, reaching out to everyone, making use of all the ways and means that the love of Christ inspires.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ See 1 Cor 13:1-13.

⁹⁰ See **Rule of the Apostolate, Regula et Normae Communes Primi Ordinis Societatis Catholicae Instructivae**, 1884, DSS I, pp. 33-34. In Jordan’s writings, the term “parvulis” (“little ones”) does not refer only to children but rather to anyone marginalized by the society; i.e., the poor ones. Many early translations to the Portuguese, German and English have used the word “children” thus restricting our understanding. See also; Mt. 11:5; 18:2-3; 19:3; 1:14-20; Gal. 4:3; 1 Tess. 2:7.

⁹¹ See Ti. 3:4; 1 Tm. 4:10.

⁹² *SD* I 149,3.

⁹³ “Omnes,” “omnibus,” “omnibus rationibus et mediis.”

⁹⁴ See Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer SDS, **Annales SDS**, 1919, Vol. I, pp. 211ss.

Hence, we are called to work for the liberation and salvation of all people without distinction, as well as the whole in all her/his dimensions. In order that this happen, we ought to include everyone; that is, the greatest number possible. Embraced by the love of Christ who saves, we seek to dynamically develop all the possibilities of ongoing (eternal) life. In this, we always work toward the wholeness of the human person in all his/her dimensions. We are open to all and in principle make use of all ways and means that the love of Christ inspires.⁹⁵

To the extent that we know how to relativize all that is not for the greatest glory of God and the salvation of people, we are unmistakably marked by a simplicity of life. The more we grow in eternal values, the simpler we become. This requires the constant rejection of counter values, so proclaimed and exalted by the world around us. Fidelity to the mission demands its price in suffering. “*Our holy Redeemer became incarnate, took on a life of suffering, accepted a painful passion and death in order to save us. And the only mission that he confided to his apostles was the salvation of human beings.*”⁹⁶

Here, we see the key to understanding the asceticism of the cross so characteristic in the life and work of Fr. Jordan. He is convinced that, “*The works of God prosper only in the shadow of the cross,*”⁹⁷ For him, the cross is a powerful expression of salvific love and an instrument of liberation.⁹⁸ Truthfully, the cross is an indispensable condition for the following of Christ. “*If someone*

⁹⁵ See **Regulae et constitutiones Societatis Catholicae Instructivae**, 1886, pp. 3-4, DSS I, pp. 49-50.

⁹⁶ “**Statuten der Apostolischen Lehrgesellschaft**,” 1881, p. 3, DSS II, p. 101.

⁹⁷ *SD* I 163,6.

⁹⁸ See *SD* I 179,3-5; 180,1-4.

wants to come after me, they must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.”⁹⁹ It is the price of a greater love.¹⁰⁰ Love and the cross journey together and complement one another. Both are inherent to life and both are instruments of salvation. The more one loves life and the more one suffers when it is threatened or suffocated, the less one feels the weight of one’s own suffering. Love liberates. *”My yoke is easy and my burden light.”*¹⁰¹

[Translation: Carol L. Thresher, SDS]

⁹⁹ See Mk. 8:34-38.

¹⁰⁰ Jn. 15:13

¹⁰¹ Mt. 11:30.

TRUST IN DIVINE PROVIDENCE THE LEADING AND MAIN THEME IN THE *SPIRITUAL DIARY* OF FR. FRANCIS JORDAN

by

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Divine Providence – in this expression for Fr. Francis is hidden the belief in a caring God, in a God who listens and answers, who carries us and who is somebody whom we are allowed to put our trust in, like a little child is putting his trust in his mother. This is a belief that tense moments of life can turn into a real experience. In the life of Tatjana Goritscheva we meet a similar experience like a being touched by God, a touch that leads her to believe in Him. She tells how she, as a twenty-six year old woman, who never had prayed, never had visited a church or had read a gospel – that she recited the *Our Father* as an exercise of meditation, but without emotion, without expression. “But God even heard these cold words! The personal God, and He heard me. And He answered me. – That was my first talk with God. It was an unexpected, very strong experience. Above all, it was the feeling that I am loved, and this was the first time in my life.”

I. Experiences of this kind are not narrated in the *Spiritual Diary*. But they lighten up, they get density in stammering words, in words filled with surprise, with overflowing joy. Words, that we read unmoved, but which for Fr. Francis are brimming over with amazement because of God’s presence: providence – providence!

In the life of our Founder, we scarcely can find moments in which he would have opened up himself to others, to tell how

God touched him. It is only after his death, by people from his home village, that the confreres came to know about the vision at his first holy communion, that changed the young Baptist Jordan. Reports on extraordinary experiences of the co-foundress of the first sisters' community, Sr. Petra Streitel, he categorized critically as "dreams." But on a certain day, he told the young confrere Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer about early experiences: how God heard him, if and when he prayed with confidence. And Fr. Otto Hopfenmüller must have heard from him the amazing story from the beginnings of the foundation, when he received on the feast of Mary, Help of Christians (1883), exactly the large amount for which he was in great need.

In the beginning of 1887 in the *Spiritual Diary*, he reminds himself of the experiences of J. B. Cottolengo, with his *Piccola Casa*, the "Little House of Divine Providence." Cottolengo rented this house in 1827 in a suburb of Torino, Valdocco. Ten years later, it already housed 1500 people, who lived at the edge of human existence and in the margin of society, but without Cottolengo relying on income, or investing money for it. Fr. Francis writes in his *Spiritual Diary*: "Their provision is the providence of God who provides for them. Their support is their confidence in it (His providence)" (193, 4). It seems however, that he is not speaking on the *Piccola Casa*, but that he is envisioning a program for himself and his confreres. It is the moment in which the number of confreres jumped by leaps and bounds from over thirty in 1885 to more than seventy-two. Fr. Francis puts himself into the hands of providence as Cottolengo, whose principles he wrote down shortly before. On March 18, 1901, he reminds himself of irrefutable experiences, in the moment in which he calls himself to think of trust: "which make smooth and easy that which seems impossible, which open heaven, from whence are drawn incredible proofs, which the whole world of unbelievers will never overthrow" (2, -28-, 2).

If we cannot find the description of spiritual experiences in the *Spiritual Diary*, how then can we understand in a deeper way what Divine Providence and trust in Divine Providence meant for Jordan? A possible way for understanding could be to read the remarks in the *Spiritual Diary* on the background of his life. This offers us at the same time the advantage, to be able to taste something of the spiritual growth and maturation of our Founder. Of our Founder? Would it not be better to say: of Jordan? Because the *Spiritual Diary* already begins to be written in 1875, at the time when Jordan is in the middle of the theology study in Freiburg.

II. The *Spiritual Diary* is starting exactly at the moment when the student Jordan sees very sharply how Germany and Europe are withdrawing themselves from Christ and the Church, and in the moment when he is shocked by God's call to resist to this development and to call people to conversion. In this first hour of his call, thus we find a word of Jordan's victorious trust, that sounds in the word of Paul, the Apostle: "Who will be against me, if the Lord is with me?" (1, 6). Only a few months after this merciful "visitation" (1, 5), towards the end of 1875, Jordan finds himself in a deep darkness, in a feeling of extreme loneliness and danger, which presses him in agony to cry: "Lord, save me, or I shall perish" (7, 2). The strength to persist, he finds in the psalm, the words that will accompany him like no other word does, during his entire life: "Speravi in Domino, non confundar in aeternum" – "In you, O Lord, I have hoped, I will not be confounded forever" (7, 8; Psalm 30, 2).

Two years later for the first time happiness shines forth from the *Spiritual Diary* because of the belief in Divine Providence. Jordan is taking it out of a meditation of Chaignon on the three kings: "How happy will I be if I place all my confidence in God, because His providence will not fail me in all my doings, protecting me from dangers before I fall into them" (45, 2). Out of this simple

meditation as a starting point, later on will develop with Fr. Francis one of the most important spiritual insights into God's provident Love. But also in this moment Jordan experiences anxiety. In early 1878, as he is approaching the ordinations to the major orders, the conviction is growing in him, that he is called to found an apostolic community. He is foreseeing what kind of difficulties and pain will come over him (84, 2). He fears the future, the ordeals and dangers, that seem nearly impossible to overcome (94, 5; 95, 1; 27.2.1878). We know from the experiences of St. Ignatius in Manresa how horrible and filled with spiritual dangers this fear for the future can be. Shortly before this ordeal, Jordan found a word of Ignatius, that was given in a meditation of Segneri, however in a strange modification (Fr. Timotheus Edwein says in a cautious way "in the then usual ascetic simplification"): "Be filled with all possible zeal, as if you would have nothing to hope from God; but then hope everything before God, as if you would indeed have done nothing out of zeal." This word could lead into a dangerous zeal and activism if one would understand it, as if the human zeal (and this without hoping on God's help) were the first and most important. But such a danger is not visible with Jordan. He was able to attach himself to the words of the apostles Peter and Paul, that he internalized shortly before: "Deus superbis resistit, humilibus autem dat gratiam" ("God resists the proud, however, he grants his favor to the humble" 1 Petr. 5, 5). "Idem Dominus omnium, dives in omnes qui invocant illum" ("The same Lord of all, rich in mercy to all who call upon him" Rom. 10, 12).

III. On March 13, 1880, the day on which Jordan put his *Spiritual Diary* on the tomb of our Lord in Jerusalem, a new period is starting in his life; a period which will enrich him with new spiritual experiences. These experiences will deepen his trust in Divine Providence. He is now sure of his vocation and wants to go to work immediately. Surely, he sensed it to be an act of

Providence that he was able to meet in the preceding weeks several times with the important and holy missionary Guglielmo Massaja and that this man acknowledged Jordan's vocation as inspired by God. In these days in Jerusalem, Jordan cheered himself up, saying: to refute every darkness, to keep a joyful and cheerful heart and to "carry out that work which God wills as soon as possible. Have profound confidence and a joyful heart in spite of the greatest sufferings" (152*, 4; see 152*, 2). He wanted to proceed energetically. When returned to Rome, he had to allow to be warned "to wait for the moment of Providence" (159*, 3).

The spiritual rules he is writing now deal entirely with the themes of the call, the apostolic preaching and the obedience to God; the theme of trust in Divine Providence is not integrated yet. But then he is taking it ever more into his spiritual reflections. He is formulating simple words, that for him will ever keep a great meaning. A first one, he takes from Chaignon (160, 2): "There is a simple means to obtain everything from the goodness of God. It is to hope with firm confidence that He will fulfill His promise and then to act in this trust." Our Founder will look at the pledges of God ever stronger and more decisive as promises, of which it is allowed to remind God, in which God bound himself. Thus he dares some ten years later even to enter into a pact with God. Already in the following text in the *Diary* (160, 4) he takes a quote from Isaiah (40, 31) and re-interpreted it in the sense of Mk. 9, 22: "Si potes credere, omnia possibile sunt credenti: - - qui sperant in Domino mutabunt fortitudinem - - (propriam in divinam) - -." "Many times the evil spirit has tried to kill him by throwing him in the fire and into water. Have pity on us and help us, if you possibly can!" To find new strength in a situation of tiredness and inner flatness: only the one who believes and trusts in God succeeds in this. Instead of his own weak, and indeed failing forces, he will exchange this for divine strength. Something

is starting to be a melody, which for our Founder later on will be even more clear: the conviction that by trust, one takes part in God's all-powerful strength. And already on the next page, again he is underlining Divine Providence and trust. Gods "providence will not let us hope in vain" (162, 2; see 1 Pet. 5, 7). The trust is expressed, that God's Providence will care and be of support especially for those who put their trust in God. The same text is underlined and derived from psalm 50, 15: "Our trust alone would already induce God to come to our help and to save us..." (162, 2-6). Also this spiritual insight will be formulated later on even more decisively by Fr. Francis: the bigger and stronger the trust, the more astonishing God's Providence.

It is with these considerations and attitudes of trust that Jordan in 1881 approaches the founding of the Society. But already in the first weeks after that, beginning 1882, serious problems arise – already on March 3, 1882, the Founder is forced to explain and to defend the title "Societas Apostolica Instructiva." Even a temporary approbation as a diocesan institute is not granted for Jordan's foundation. In this period however, he is having mystical experiences that show him God's caring presence. He experiences a vision of the apostles, which however is not reflected in the *Spiritual Diary*. But much more powerful are the words, which he is allowed to connect with himself and his foundation: " 'I will show the Church that the work is mine', says the Almighty" (166, 3). At the end of the first period of the foundation, which finds its culmination in the vows of the founder on Passion Sunday 1883, we find a magnificent prayer for trust: "Oh immeasurable greatness and omnipotence of God, oh give me so firm and great a faith and confidence as a person can possibly have with and through You. Oh I recognize my nothingness, but through You, O Lord, I can do all things. Oh, may You live in me; let me die, and You live; let

there die in me everything which hinders Your work in me, just as You will it" (168, 3-5).

Two years later, everything is again questioned another time. Fr. Francis of the Cross loses in September 1885 the direction of the sisters' community and thus the female branch of the Society. In the months after this event, also the male branch is in danger. During these months however, he is finding the deepest surety concerning his vocation. From this moment onwards, he is fighting in never-ending prayer, to be able to give birth for Christ to a holy and for God a favorable family, and to be able to offer Him once in heaven an immeasurable number of holy and for God favorable sons and daughters (184, 4-185, 3). He condenses his vocation in one single expression, that is filled with deep astonishment, with gratitude and with trust: "Divine Providence created me" (185, 4).

IV. Let us take a moment at this point, to look back and to understand more deeply, what we see if we connect the *Spiritual Diary* with the life of our Founder. The spiritual experience and the sureness of a unique vocation and mission by God is decisive for him. This is expressed already in the very first words of his *Spiritual Diary* when he feels for the first time the mission to create an apostolic community. This refers to the experience of feeling called upon in a very personal way—an experience which touches him in his deepest soul and which is turning him upside down, but which at the same time is still vague. This experience will only come to clarity and sureness through a long process of doubts and of discernment. After ten years of such spiritual experience and of examination – of self-examination as well as of examination by the Church – God's Providence means to be sure of God's provident love and of being chosen by God from the very beginning: "Divine Providence created me."

This fundamental sureness grew on the foundation of faith. Here a second essential element comes to light. The call and mission that Jordan experienced, led him to meditate more deeply on the ways of God's Providence and the ways of trust in the caring God. The content of the *Spiritual Diary* is not in the last place the fruits of spiritual reading and meditation. It shows how our Founder in the challenges and burdens of his life again and again is drawing from it. It is recognizable also in his chapter talks, how deeply he is permeated by this trust and how much he is trying to pass it on to his confreres.

Such meditations on God's provident acting get deeper fruitfulness of course in a life of trust and faith, which proves itself in the daily circumstances and tasks as well as in the big challenges, in disappointments and ordeals. In this way, also the *Spiritual Diary* is becoming from page to page more and more the mirror of a bold and ever more bolder trust in God. One would even say: the further the *Spiritual Diary* progresses, the stronger this fundamental line of the Founder's spiritual life is coming to the light. Of course, he is not always making the *Diary* the witness of his praying and his trust. It is, for example, amazing that the drama of his being removed as the founder of a female community leaves no traces in his *Spiritual Diary*. It is only from a letter that we know, that he invoked God, being sure He would hear him, in the moment when the ecclesiastical superior refused to hear him.

But there are traces of other situations of needfulness in the *Spiritual Diary*. They make visible how the belief in God's provident love is more deeply understood by Fr. Francis, especially in such moments. Only one example. When instead of the definitive approbation of the Society by the *Decretum Laudis*, which they were expecting, a new visitation was ordered, which started on August 16 or 17, 1894, the Founder invoked Jesus Christ as the

Savior of his community. On August 26, he wrote as prayer in his *Diary*: "O Savior, have mercy on us. Be a Savior to us!" (210, 1). A little later, he encouraged himself to simply continue, notwithstanding everything, and he wrote: "Believe, hope, trust, love and advance!" (211, 3 – after the 20th). After November 16, Fr. Francis is informed on the result of the visitation. One of the results is, that he is not only allowed anymore for the time being but for an undefined period to direct the community alone and be the main responsible, but that he gets Fr. Meddi as counselor and director ("Consigliere e Direttore"). This father took on his duties around mid-December. But it is exactly now, during the last days of Advent season in this year, that the Founder reaches a new wonderful drive concerning his apostolic mission and in his trust in the God of Providence. He starts a new booklet in his *Spiritual Diary* with the threefold apostolic appeal to himself, that we all know so well (20.12.94: 2, -1-, 1-3). In this appeal, he is making the quote of St. Francis Xavier, written down in 1882 or 1883, into his life program: " 'As long as there might be a corner of the world in which God is not loved, I could not enjoy a moment of rest.' St. Francis Xavier" (166, 6). The same day, he is renewing his pact with his Creator. And then he is pulling himself up to a new trust, as a whole series of notes under the following day is showing. We read words of nearly too far-reaching boldness, but also of child-like trust: "Attach yourself closely to the Infinite One and oblige Him to help you. Look for everything from Him who can and will give it!" (2, -3-4). Or the intention under the same date: "Equip yourself with all means, also especially with the sharing in God's omnipotence through an immense confidence in God" (2, -7-3).

A fourth consideration. There are also spiritual experiences and movements traceable in the *Spiritual Diary*, but not linked with a special event or a remarkable challenge in his life. One of

these moments is described like this by Fr. Timotheus Edwein: “Once in a while, the Lord granted His servant Francis of the Cross the grace to experience his vocation in a radical way. It felt for him as if a divine lightening was shining sharply over the landscape of his apostolic daily life. Such a grace he obtained on November 17, 1898.” Out of this moment not only grew a new very dense version of his life program, but at the same time also a deepening of his trust, based on words of Holy Scripture, and culminating in the word: “To those who believe, all things are possible” (1, -16-1 and 1-15-1-3). In the same manner appears, also unexpectedly, on All Saints Day 1891 the pact between the All-Powerful and “His lowliest creature,” which desired to be even more “an instrument of Divine Providence” and which trusted “with all his powers in the help of the Almighty” (204, 2; 202, 4).

V. But after this biographical entrance, we must try to catch how our Founder is immersing himself in God’s loving Providence, we must try to see which dimensions of the divine mystery are caught by his faith and his believing understanding and in which way this is shaping his trust.

A first surprising line in his belief in Providence is visible in the conviction that God’s loving direction and helping care are only able to be experienced according to the measure in which the believer gives himself to God in a believing and trustful way. He uses the colorful picture of a balance: the scale of God’s Providence is rising higher in the measure in which the other scale, with the weight of a strong trust, is pushed lower (2, -9-, 6). The more unconditionally our trust will be, the richer, the wider and the more fertile our life will be made by God’s Providence. God’s provident love is thus realizing itself within a totally dynamic event, in a continuous talk of trust and love. Fr. Francis draws this especially from the Psalms and from words from the New

Testament. “Let us place our trust in God in all that concerns us,” he says while quoting 1 Petr. 5, 7, “His providence will not let us hope in vain.” “Our trust alone would already induce God to come to our help and to save us, because our trust gives Him glory and shows Him that we know His name.” This he is adding while quoting Ps 91, 14 and 50, 15 (162, 2-6; see the text composition of 17.2.98: 2, -15-, 1-6). God is not only calling and sending, he is also hearing the trustful praying. Thus Jordan is able to encourage himself to throw himself completely into the arms of God (37, 2) and to attach himself closely to the Infinite One (2, -3-, 3). Because God’s Providence is, as Fr. Francis says in the *Spiritual Testament*, like a mother who is feeding her children.

Our Founder is ever more decisively leaning on God’s promises, for example when he exhorts himself: “Consider all – all – the promises, pledges and oaths which the all-faithful, almighty God has made to him who believes, trusts, asks! Abraham – Moses –” (2, -8-, 2). The most bold and personal expression of this spiritual insight is visible in the “Pact between the Almighty and His lowliest creature” (Feast of All Saints 1891). The paragraph in which he mentions God’s actions is primarily formulated as a trustful request to God to obtain great graces. But this trust with Fr. Francis is that steady, that full with firmness, that he knows God’s hands are somehow tied up: He will grant these graces, especially the gift of great sanctity and the grace, to become a useful instrument of His Providence (204, 1-2).

Furthermore, it becomes clear, that for Fr. Francis God’s Providence aims on an ever bigger spreading of God’s reign. Thus he prays, God might live in him (168, 5). God will lead him to take part in the redemptive passion of Christ (2, -17-, 2; 2, -16-, 2). In this way, also the trust is enlarged: it becomes apostolic nostalgia for the salvation of all people, to dedication to them, to

apostolic trust, hope and prayer for all. This again is expressed in the best way in the pact. While our Founder full of trust prays, that God might grant him sanctity, his entire striving is aiming at becoming a blessed instrument of God's Providence, of His divine plan of salvation. In his longing, Fr. Francis is boldly breaking all boundaries. He feels pushed by God to subject the entire earth to God's reign, to lead all people to knowledge, to love, to serving God and thus to their salvation. Surely, above all he trusts that God will grant him the grace, to take fully his individual position in the plan of salvation. But in the same time, his trust is enlarged to embrace all people. More and more his trust in God becomes a prayer of hope for all, becomes a trustful plea for the salvation of all people. His prayer turns into a trustful stammer: "All, all, oh all!" (2, -34-, 2; 2, -12-, 2-5).

If Fr. Francis is often only able to speak stammeringly on God's Providence, this stammering, nevertheless, is full of faith, of spiritual experience and especially also of joy: "Oh, trust always in the Lord; because he is all-powerful and will help you!" – "Oh holy trust, how easy do you make everything! O Holy Providence!"

According to a word of St. Bernard, trust means for him to take part in the all-powerful might of God, against which all evil powers are powerless. It means, that one's own weakness is exchanged in divine power (160, 4; 164, 7). More or less on the evening before the foundation, on Mount Carmel, on April 14, 1880, he wrote down: "...even if everything seems lost, God will not abandon you nor will his dear Mother" (155*, 5). After many dark hours and storms, he encourages himself on January 17, 1906 with the words: "Trust in the omnipotent Lord who rules the Society and protects it" (2, -95-, 2). And when he is not able anymore to write, he will say full of gratitude and trust: "The good Lord is so good! Providence has its own ways. One only has

to make sure not to thwart it; "your ways are not my ways;" many have lost their patience and stopped halfway; if one carries through, in the end a solution is given" (Words of the Servant of God Fr. Jordan on his deathbed, Nr. 2).

[Quotations from the Spiritual Diary are mostly taken from the translation by Sr. Miriam Cerletty, Rome, 1981.]

[Translated by Fr. Piet Cuijpers, SDS].

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