

4. Father Francis Jordan an open-minded thinker, with the whole world in view

by Fr. Georg Fichtl SDS, Maria Steinbach, 1 August 2020

From the letter of Saint Paul to Titus:

“For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and our saviour Jesus Christ.”

(Titus 2, 11 - 13)

Fr. Francis Jordan:

“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. (20.12.1894)”

All peoples, all nations, all races, all tribes, everyone – You are a debtor to all! Do not rest until everyone knows, loves, and serves Jesus the Saviour. Oh, Mother of the Saviour, pray for us! (14 February 1904)

(SD II/1+70)

I spent the first half of my high school days in the Salvatorian College in Lochau-Hörbranz. We had regular visitors from all over the world: recently ordained priests, missionaries from Taiwan, religious students from South America, and members of the leadership of our Society. The spirit of our Founder became tangible in that way. This spirit is described in more detail by Father Francis Jordan in the decree on his virtues:

“After completing these studies (in Constance), he began a three-year course in theology and ancient philology (1874-1877) in Freiburg im Breisgau. At the same time, he plunged into the study of many modern languages.

In a moment when he felt the closeness of God especially, he saw how much the church in Germany suffered from the battle between the German state and the Church and how much the peoples of Europe were in danger of falling away from the faith. This urged him to live completely with God and for God and to be his tool for the salvation of people.

While preparing for holy orders in the seminary of St. Peter in the Black Forest, an inner inspiration aroused the question of whether or not he was called to found an apostolic movement. So he struggled to know the will of God and strived for holiness with even greater determination. ...

After ordination on July 21, 1878, his bishop sent him to Rome, where he studied Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, Ar-

abic, and Hebrew. During a stay in the Holy Land and in Lebanon, he got convinced that he was called to found an apostolic movement. ...

Returning to Rome, he received the blessing from Pope Leo XIII for his plans and started to realize them. He wanted... to gather Catholic Christians in different groups: especially parents, teachers and educators who convey the faith, but also academics who were supposed to defend it and ultimately also children. At the same time, he wanted to found communities of men and women who live according to the evangelical councils and can be sent everywhere. ... “

I also became more and more interested in participating in this work and, like Jesus Christ, forming groups that do not exclude anyone. - I discovered more clearly that our God himself is deeply family, group, community.

Invitation to think ahead:

1. Which of Father Francis Jordan’s traits is most important to me? - Do I want to be a ‘builder of bridges’ too?
2. What does this “all” of our Founder mean for me / for us?
3. How do I imagine a community that can be guided and shaped by Father Francis Jordan’s spirit?
4. In what points would our unit need to become more like Father Jordan so that we can fulfil our mission convincingly today?

Prayer of Fr. Francis Jordan:

„Oh almighty God, help me, in You I trust,
You can do everything.

Behold the blood of Your beloved, only begotten Son.
Behold, send me.

Oh Mother of God, all-powerful intercessor,
I place my lot in your hands. Help me, protect me.

Oh God, look upon poor humanity, save it!
Oh send laborers into Your harvest!”

(SD IV/5)