

INPUT FOR PERSONAL OR COMMUNAL REFLECTION

5. Father Francis, inspired missionary with apostolic fire

by Fr. Konrad Werder SDS, BW Gottesberg, 1 September 2020

Gospel according to Mark

“Go out to the whole world; proclaim the gospel to all creation.”

(Mk 16,15)

“The Apostolic Teaching Society has set itself the task of helping to spread, defend and revive the Catholic faith in all countries of the world ... It seeks to inspire all teachers who are already active in the Church of God for their profession and to support them in its fulfilment. Existing works of the religious press are to be taken up as far as possible, concentrated into one great power and their personnel sanctified according to certain rules of Christian perfection. It also intends to win the scholars of Germany for that unification of all scholars of the world. May the existing associations and federations come together in the bosom of this Society. May the whole Catholic world take part in this new creation, from professor to maid, from father of the family to farmhand, from master to apprentice, so that its spirit may fill church and school, lecture hall and parliament, workshop and family room ...”

(P. B. Lüthen, 1881. In: DSS IV, p. 19-33 [quotes])

If Fr Jordan's three-step model is already comprehensive, this text goes even further. An advertising text, certainly, but still: no wonder that the Founder was accused of wanting to found a church within the Church. Whether the Founder already had an inkling of the unrealizability of the ideas? He had to learn it bitterly. The three-stage model failed because he could not win enough diocesan priests for the first stage; they were trained in the Order later on.

Fr. Jordan and the Society burdened themselves with the vision of a global, all-pervading mission; at times this brought him and the Society to the limits of their endurance. Father Jordan deepened his trust in God: HE [GOD] must, HE will lead everything to the goal. This trust became so great that for a while he wanted to let go of everything and start completely anew. Finally, God would be everything in everything, He would realise the mission.

P. Jordan envisioned an all-encompassing mission, the improvement of the world, the salvation of the world, in Christian terms: the Kingdom of God; nothing less. Many have wanted that, but no one has succeeded. What does someone do who fails in his vision? He either becomes depressed or radical. Father Jordan became depressed in such a way that he clung to God; there he is in the best company

- with Jesus.

The thought of improving the world, of saving the world, is always excessive and exaggerated, but on the other hand, it is not possible without this thought. It always distinguishes a person when he is passionately moved by it. The trick is not to want to force the Kingdom of God, but to expect its completion from God. That would be the overall theme for us Christians, but at this point, we are always in danger of resigning ourselves to the circumstances. That is exactly what Father Jordan did not do - ever. In this, the enthusiastic missionary with apostolic fire becomes visible

What does “the Kingdom of God” mean...:

1. ... when we think today of the salvation of people in this world?
2. ... when we think of the task of the Church and its mission?
3. ... when we think of the charism of the Founder and the Salvatorian mission?
4. ... when we think about current issues such as the refugee crisis or climate change

Prayer:

“God, our Father, through Jesus Christ
you work in our world.
Fill us with your Spirit,
so that we may be motivated and empowered
to work for the salvation of the world.
Amen.”