

# POSTULATION SALVATORIAN P R E S S

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YEAR  
of JORDAN 2009

The beatification process for the Servant of God Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan has reached the stage when the Holy See investigates the submitted documents required by the procedure in which we have postulated that our Founder, owing to his life full of devotion to God, deserves being raised to the glory of the altar. While we are looking forward to the successful conclusion of the beatification process and expecting a prompt elevation of the Servant of God John Baptist Jordan to the glory of the altar, we must, as his spiritual sons and daughters, intensify our prayers for his beatification and become more familiar with the personality of our Founder, so that the testimony of his life, faith, zeal and devotion to God should inspire us to strengthen our bond with God and to fulfill our Salvatorian mission more zealously. We should also "share" our Founder with others, since he belongs to the entire Church, while his universal idea of the "evangelization of all" – the evangelization carried on everywhere, by all ways and means which the love of Christ inspires – must extend beyond the Salvatorian Family. The originality of the thought of our Founding Father, if we compare him with the Founders of many other religious institutes that appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (who have already been elevated to the glory of the altars and with whom, in many instances, he maintained close contact), lies in the fact that while a majority of them would strive to respond to the demands of the times by focusing their works on some pressing social issues, our Founder would focus his on the paramount idea of EVANGELIZATION, having adopted its very broad concept. His desire to save souls, the desire with which he was burning, puts our Founder among the Apostles who have devoted their lives so that Jesus Christ can be preached everywhere.

The YEAR OF JORDAN, proclaimed by the Leaders of the Salvatorian Family in 2008, which will continue until June 2009, has brought a significant growth in the interest in the person of the Founder of the Salvatorians among the members of the Salvatorian Family itself as well as in other milieus. Evidence of various initiatives confirming this fact has already reached Rome.

In the current issue, we wish to share with you the event of the inauguration of the Year of Jordan in June 2008, as it was experienced by the community of the Motherhouse in Rome gathered around Father Jordan's tomb. A guest of our community on that occasion, who celebrated the event together with us, was Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints.

In the current issue of the *Postulation Press*, we also wish to offer members of the Salvatorian Family an opportunity to get acquainted with the six conferences on Father Jordan's spirituality prepared on the basis of his *Spiritual Diary* by the famous Italian writer, journalist, professor and theologian Fr. Alessandro Pronzato, who delivered them in the Center for Spiritual Formation in Cracow. Let me take this opportunity to thank Fr. Krzysztof Wons, SDS, the Director of the Center for Spiritual



AN  
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FATHER  
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Formation in Cracow, for making the transcripts of the conferences available to the editors of the *Postulation Press* as well as for his help in editing them.

Among the texts included in the current issue, you can find a report on the inauguration of the Year of Jordan, as well as the speech delivered by Fr. Andrew Urbański, Superior General, on that occasion, and the homily by Cardinal José Saraiva Martins delivered during the solemn Holy Mass celebrated to mark the inauguration.

The documentation of the diocesan process concerning the alleged miracle through the intercession of Father Jordan has already been submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. It is currently being investigated and complemented. However, we are still receiving information about other graces received by the intercession of our Founder. In the current issue, we have included two testimonies: one coming from Ecuador and the other from Albania.

Following the exhibition devoted to Blessed Mary of the Apostles and Father Jordan, prepared in the Motherhouse on the occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of the Blessed Mary, a new exhibition is on display to mark three important events celebrated during the year of Jordan due to their round anniversaries, namely, the anniversary of Father Jordan's birth, of his ordination and of his death. An article on the current exhibition and on the events it marks can also be found in this issue.

As it was the case in the previous years, we have included photographs showing visitors to the tomb of Father Jordan. This time the photographs show those who made their pilgrimages to the Founder's tomb in the Year of Jordan. One could notice that the number of people visiting the place of our Founder's eternal rest has grown considerably this year. One of the groups (a group of professionals) gathered around the tomb of Father Jordan for a particular purpose. What was that purpose? You can find out in this issue of the *Postulation Press*.

To conclude, I wish to thank everyone who has contributed to this year's issue of the *Postulation Press*, and as usual I appeal to you to undertake the task of translating it to your native languages in the particular administrative units and to make it accessible to a broad range of readers.

- Fr. Bronisław Jakubiec, SDS



Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, is praying at the tomb of Father Jordan.

**O**n Wednesday, June 18, 2008, the solemn inauguration of a "Year of Jordan" was held at the Salvatorian Motherhouse in Rome. The celebrations were presided over by His Eminence Cardinal José Saraiva Martins, Prefect of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints. Among those present were the confreres from the community of the Motherhouse, as well as specially invited guests: S. Edith Bamberger, SDS, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, members of the General Council of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, S. Anne Morgan, SDS, Superior of the Roman region of the Congregation, S. Teresina Marra, Superior General of the Congregation of the Franciscan Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother founded by Father Jordan and Mother Frances Streitl, Fr. Marian Babula, CSMA, representing the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Fr. Gino Mattia, SDS, superior of the Italian Vice-Province of the Salvatorians, Roberto Gattini, President of the Lay

## Solemn Inauguration of a “Year of Jordan” in the Salvatorian Motherhouse in Rome

Salvatorian community in Italy, and Salvatorian sisters from the Italian Province. Among the confreres participating in the celebrations were also newly ordained priests from Poland and Fr. Andrzej Kusiak, SDS, who works in a mission in Mayotte island in the Comorian Archipelago.

At 10 a.m., His Eminence Cardinal José Saraiva Martins was welcomed by Fr. Andrzej Urbański, SDS, Superior General of the Salvatorians, Fr. Bronisław Jakubiec, SDS, General Consultor, Fr. Stephan Horn, SDS, Vice-Postulator of Father Jordan’s beatification cause and Fr. Adam Teneta SDS, Superior of the Motherhouse community. Cardinal Saraiva Martins visited the chapel of the Motherhouse, where he first prayed at the tomb of our Founder, and then, together with the Salvatorians and guests, prayed for the beatification of Father Jordan.

At 10:30 a.m., a mass presided over by Cardinal Saraiva Martins started. In his welcome speech, Fr. Andrzej Urbański, SDS, stressed the significance of the present “Year of Jordan” for the entire Salvatorian Family. A “Year of Jordan,” he said, is not only an important event leading towards Father Jordan’s beatification, but also a tremendous opportunity to become more familiar with the rich life and charism of the Founder, and to share the knowledge thus gained with other people. Father General warmly welcomed Cardinal Saraiva Martins, who is the Holy Father’s collaborator, responsible for the beatification and canonization causes in the Church, and also a close neighbor of ours.

In his homily, Cardinal Saraiva Martins expressed his respect for the precious initiative of declaring a “Year of Jordan” in order to strengthen and spread the cult of the Founder of the Salvatorian Family. Referring to the text of our Founder’s *Spiritual Diary*, he pointed out the need to discover Father Francis as a man of faith, hope and love who focused on the question of salvation, who loved Our Lady and carried his cross having totally entrusted himself to the Divine Providence. In that context, Cardinal Saraiva Martins quoted the words of Pope Benedict XVI from his Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi*: “The Christian message was not only *informative* but *performative*. This means that the Gospel is

not merely a communication of things that can be known – it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.” Cardinal Saraiva Martins referred those words to the life of our Founder, which was indeed a testimony to them. He also stressed the fact that Father Jordan was a man of prayer. He would pray seven hours daily. He was a humble man who dearly loved the poor, and in his spiritual testament placed the faithful observance of poverty in the hands of the Salvatorians as “a treasure of great price.”

As a generous and enthusiastic priest, Father Jordan dedicated his life to knowing the Gospel. He showed the entire Salvatorian Family an exemplar of how to follow the way of the Gospel. In conclusion, Cardinal Saraiva Martins said that the present “Year of Jordan” is an important time to live through the essentials and ideals that Father Jordan left us, as well as to be aware that it is through Father Jordan that we have received a true gift of the Holy Spirit. As the beatification process of Father Jordan is progressing, the entire Salvatorian Family should intensify its prayer for the cause, so that it will “proceed smoothly.” The Prefect of the Congregation observed that the issues regarding the beatification process itself are going well, so there is a well-founded hope that Fr. Jordan, a “good and faithful servant,” will be raised to the glory of the altar. He encouraged the whole Salvatorian Family to pray for this intention, in particular during the just declared “Year of Jordan.”

After the Holy Mass a showing of the film *Father Francis Jordan: An Apostle for our Times* took place, preceded by an introductory word from Fr. Stephan Horn SDS, Vice-Postulator of Father Jordan’s beatification cause.

The concluding event was a solemn dinner at which Fr. Adam Teneta, SDS, Superior of the community of the Motherhouse, expressed his gratitude to everyone who participated in the celebrations, as well as to those who were involved in preparing them.

- Fr. Łukasz Kleczka, SDS

YEAR 2009  
of JORDAN

## Words of Welcome by Father Andrew



**Y**our Eminence,  
Honorable Guests,  
Dear Members of the Salvatorian Family,  
Today we celebrate the 160th anniversary of the birth of our Venerable Founder, the Servant of God, Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan.

At this celebration we are very honored by the presence of His Eminence and by the presence of all of you who are the representatives of more than 3000 Salvatorians, religious and lay, in more than 40 countries.

We meet His Eminence and see his car quite often at our small Via Pfeiffer, named after the first successor of our Founder. Pfeiffer was the only liaison between Pope Pius XII and the Nazi occupation forces during the Second World War. With satisfaction I can say that we have never hit his car, even when we are sometime in a hurry to go out of our garage to the airport. We are his closest neighbors but, knowing that His Eminence is very busy, we have never dared to invite him to visit us until recently.

We congratulate His Eminence for preparing the announcement of a great number of blessed and saints since he started his ministry as the Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. These blessed and saints give witness to the sanctity of the Church and good example to the followers of Christ.

Your Eminence, we are very grateful that you have accepted our invitation to preside over the Eucharist on the anniversary of the birth of our Founder. He lived for 37 years in the room which is above the entrance to ANCORA. He was not only our Founder, but first of all a faithful son of the Church, a man of vision who desired to do everything for the revival of faith. The secularized spirit and religious ignorance of his times continue today and his charism is still very relevant and needed.

We Salvatorians and the people whom we serve around the world deeply believe that he is a saint and we pray for his beatification in various forms, languages and cultures.

Today we thank God for the gift of our Founder's life, for the gift of his charism, and for the gift of the universal mission for the Church which he left us as his inheritance. We hope that one day the Church will also recognize officially his sanctity and the gift of his charism for the universal Church.

We pray at this Eucharist that our Divine Savior give Your Eminence the strength and necessary graces to fulfill your important mission for the universal Church and that he give to all followers of Father Jordan the perseverance to live faithfully his charism and his great apostolic zeal for our mission of announcing SALVATOR in a universal way.

## Solemn Inauguration of a “Year of Jordan” in the Salvatorian Motherhouse in Rome

### Homily of the Cardinal Prefect

I am delighted to preside the eucharistic celebration on such an important day for the whole Salvatorian Family, formed by the Society of the Divine Savior (Priests and Brothers), the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior (Sisters) and by the International Community of the Divine Savior (Lay), which inaugurate today “Jordan’s year”, that will continue until the 16 of June 2009. I would like to stress how much I appreciate this beautiful initiative thought up by the Salvatorian Family to enhance and spread the knowledge and veneration of father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, Founder of the Salvatorian Family.

The first reading tells us about Elijah and Elisha. It is very suggestive and mysterious because we clearly see in it the relationship with Jesus. Elijah’s abduction, the fact of being torn away from the ground and lifted to the skies represents a prefiguration of his mystery. The story underlines the importance of being witness of it. Bearing witness, as we well know, is also a condition to enter into the mystery of Jesus. What Elisha asks, is to be conveyed with the Spirit of his master, the prophet Elijah so that he can continue his prophetic mission, and it is very significant to you all, as members of the Salvatorian Family.

In fact, the word of God comes to remind us that you received the gift from the Holy Spirit to follow the footsteps of the Divine Savior with a very spe-

cific charism. In the beautiful invitation letter to celebrate Jordan’s Year, your Reverend Superiors wrote: *“the Charism, a gift granted to Father Jordan and conveyed*

*to us was given to be shared with others instead of keeping it as a secret or personal gift. If we want our Charism to be a living gift then we need to make it visible through our lives and find different ways to share it with others.”*

It is a specific and stimulating exhortation for you since the patrimony you received is so important and meaningful that sharing it will not reduce it a shred, on the contrary its potentialities can only be multiplied.

Suggesting and special are the prayerful exhortations of Psalm thirty, proposed to us a few moments ago, reminding us that for a Christian it is essential “to love the Lord”, to “receive not honour from men”, and seek “the glory which comes from God alone”.



Cardinal Jose Saraiva Martins delivers his homily at the eucharistic celebration opening the Year of Jordan.

These attitudes abound in Father Jordan's life. It would be enough to read the text he wrote on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1894 that was chosen as the "Charter of the Salvatorian Family" to discover how he lived faith, hope and charity, the universal dimension of salvation, the love for our Lady, the love for the cross as well as a deep trust in the Divine Providence. I am convinced that every one of you remember well what he says in *Exhortations and Admonitions*: "You should form a great, a holy phalanx, a body of God's chosen soldiers in close array who joyfully give their lives and their all for His glory and for the gaining of souls for Christ."<sup>1</sup>

These are words rooted in the Bible with a strong "Pauline" influence that see life as a "good battle" since we are called to fight with the arms of faith, wearing the armor of the Christian (Eph. 6,10-20). An intriguing context if we think of the close celebration of the Pauline year which the Holy Father is going to open in less than ten days.

It is important for us to remember what Benedict XVI with solemn words asked us in his beautiful encyclical *Spe salvi* in which he affirms: "The Christian message was not only "informative" but "performative." That means that the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known – it is one that makes things happen and is lifechanging" (n.2).

And your beloved Founder's life shows it clearly.

But let us come back to today's Gospel which reminds us of the three attitudes of the Christian: charity, fasting and praying. These three attitudes have a double relationship: with God since they are expressions of the love to God and to the others because they are three concrete signs of fraternal charity. Three were the religious practices taught by Jesus in the evangelic pages, already very important in the life of the people of Israel and that the Savior does not deny but rather wants to bring back to the original meaning of the personal search for God.

In fact, it is about three actions through which the man starts a dialogue with the Lord who should be his one and only referent. The ostentation of these acts in comparison to the others, make evident oneself's affirmation towards the others. Whereas, in having a relationship with the Lord, Jesus teaches us that the only way of having a dialogue is "in secret," by the chasteness and moreover by the interiority of the gesture. This is the style of the disciple that should

not fall into the proud temptation of announcing how extraordinary the kingdom of heaven is, as an ostentation that only serves itself, but that it rather should bear witness "in daily life, in what is normal or hidden, giving a sign of life to real obedience and authentic truth" (D.Bonhoeffer).

This was father Jordan's evangelic style. He is the father that "sees in what is secret" and that is being rewarded by a real progeny of spiritual sons spread in the world.

Your beloved founder, Father Jordan was a man of prayer, a man who could pray for seven hours a day, he had a real contemplative and worshipping soul and with great humility he did things not to appear or to receive other people's recognition. He deeply loved the poor and left a spiritual diary where he gives us poverty as his precious treasure. He was a generous and passionate priest, he spent his life in making the Gospel known, making everyone of you and all the Salvatorian Family an eloquent example to follow in the practice of the Gospel.

This year we celebrate the 160 years of his birth, 140 years of his ordination as a priest and 90 years of his birth in heaven. It is really important for you to live the principles and ideals he conveyed us with, being aware of having had in him a real gift from the Spirit.

In the horizon of the Salvatorian Family, the desire to start the beatification process of Father Jordan servant of God grows rapidly. It is a wish that I am really happy to share with you because all the things that start well let us hope the happy achievement of receiving the honor in all the altars for this good and loyal servant, so that the light of his saintity could be placed in the chandelier of the Church. We pray deeply for this intention in particular in this year dedicated to him.

I would like to finish with an exhortation from the Founder: "As long as God is not everywhere glorified, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest." May the Lord wants us to make ours this apostolic zeal Father Jordan had, being called as we are, following the footsteps of the apostles, to live and announce the infinite love of the Lord and to continue Christ's salvation work, which wants to free us from everything that could be a threat to real life, to life in plenitude and to eternal life!

Amen.

Fr. Alessandro Pronzato  
**From Apathy to Spiritual Passion**  
*A Spirituality for our Times*

**Conference I**

**Mystery of the Person**

**I**n my studies, I have noted that the saints are reflections of the face of Christ. Now we wish to approach Father Jordan in order to explore the reflection of Christ he provides. In order to accomplish this task, we must first of all try to sketch his portrait, and so to ask ourselves the question: Who was Father Jordan? The first remark I might make in answer is the following: in his case, we are dealing with a complex personality, which, however, does not mean a complicated one.

There are two possible ways to approach Father Jordan, and the first one is to look at him from the outside, to analyze what he did and what he accomplished in his life. And it is here that we encounter the Founder of two religious families. The activity in



which he was so deeply immersed certainly took place within a particular historical frame. Thus we can point to the landmarks in his life, according to the chronology of his *Spiritual Diary*.

Father Jordan was born on June 16, 1848, in Gurtweil, Germany, not far from the Swiss border. On the next day, he was baptized and received the name John Baptist. In the following years he attended primary

school, worked as a daily wage earner, then as an itinerant apprentice, subsequently became a high school student and, finally, a theology student. On July 12, 1878, at the age of thirty, he was ordained to the priesthood. In 1880, he made an important journey to the Middle East, and in 1881, he founded the first branch of the Apostolic Teaching Society in Rome. Two years later, he took a new religious name, Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. In 1883, he founded the female branch of the Catholic Teaching Society in Tivoli, near Rome. In that same year he gave an official name to his religious family, namely, the Society of the Divine Savior. Father Jordan died on September 8, 1918, in a hospital for the poor in Tafers near Fribourg in Switzerland, where he was in exile.

Now, the second way to get to know Father Jordan is the one leading towards his inner self. And that was

**Father Alessandro Pronzato was born in 1932. He graduated from the Major Seminary in Monferrato with a master's degree. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1956. He is the author of over 120 books which have been translated into many languages. He is in the service of the Church not only as a writer, but also as one who preaches and gives conferences. He is involved in pastoral work at the Santa Maria nursing home in Savosa (Lugano, Switzerland).**

the way I have followed. It is also closely related to the subject we have been asked to undertake these days. Thus the main question is not one about what he did, but about what he was like, what his inner world was like. Evidently, we are faced with a mystery here, with the mystery of a person. And in the face of a mystery, we must, like Moses, “remove our sandals,” mortify our curiosity, aware of the fact that, as St. John said, only He “knows what is in man.” We must remain content with mere intuitions and guessing. Besides, Father Jordan himself guarded his secret. I would say he demonstrated a certain shyness about his feelings. In his *Spiritual Diary*, he quotes a saying that belongs both to St. Francis and St. Bernard. On his stigmata, St. Francis would say: “My secret belongs to me” (SD, I, 15) – “*secreto meo mi*”. And so Father Jordan would jealously guard his secret and did not like to talk about himself. It seems that in this respect he differed significantly from our contemporary world, a world of appearances in which everyone thinks that their own life stories are of interest to everyone else and does not avoid revealing all the dirt of life to others. Let me literally quote what Father Jordan writes on the subject: “Be silent and again be silent about the good things which the dear God bestows on you” (SD, I, 22). And God indeed bestowed so many good things on him! Another entry from his *Spiritual Diary* we might quote in this context is the following: “When you speak with others about religious things, be on your guard that you do not by chance, even if ever so fine and hiddenly, show off your piety” (SD I, 51).

So, there is a certain difficulty in entering his spiritual world, in crossing this threshold, the barrier that he put up himself. To those difficulties, I would add another one, of personal nature. Our Superior General has given me the task of writing a biography of Father Jordan, but so far I have, so to speak, remained on the threshold of this job. Indeed, I have read the *Spiritual Diary* thoroughly, but a lot still remains hidden before me. On my desk, in front of me, I have four extensive volumes with the material on the canonical process hopefully leading to the beatification. I shall study these thousands and thousands of pages carefully, so that the portrait of Father Jordan I have been sketching will not differ much from the original. Thus, I must repeat, my knowledge is still incomplete and I should even stress this important fact.

What I have so far discovered in Father Jordan, is the basic characteristics of his personality. He was a hard man, strict with himself, yet lenient with others.

Let me quote his thoughts: “Be severe with yourself and indulgent towards others” (SD I, 24); “You accomplish to the extent that you apply yourself.” (SD I, 201) In this context, one can once again mention the saint that Father Jordan loved very much, namely, St. Francis of Assisi. In his *Legenda maior*, St. Bonaventure writes about St. Francis as follows: “Although he encouraged his brothers in rigorous life with all his heart, he did not like the relentless austerity that does not let the heart fill up with mercy and is not flavored with the salt of discretion or discernment”. That aspect of St. Francis’s personality is well illustrated by a certain event that took place when St. Francis lived with his first followers in the impossible environment of Rivo Torto. The place was a former leprosarium, and life was really hard there: it was very cold in winter and unbearably hot in summer. Moreover, one was expected to live in absolute poverty. There were two huts separated by a sort of roof made of tree branches that served as protection. One night St. Francis heard a brother moaning in one of the huts, found him and, asked what was wrong. The brother answered, “I’m dying of starvation.” St. Francis immediately woke up everyone around, and himself went out to the fields to pick some vegetables, probably lettuce, or maybe to steal an egg, or to bring some water from the stream. Despite the fact that it was the period of Lent St. Francis suspended the fasting and obliged all the brothers to eat together with the one who was starving, so that he would not feel humiliated. Such was the humanity of St. Francis, who was a hard and demanding man, and yet a sympathetic one.

The same characteristic can be seen in Father Jordan’s personality. Still, we must add that despite being a strong minded person Father Jordan was physically weak. Moreover, he did experience crises, periods of spiritual drought and doubt. At times he would painfully realize his distance from the Lord. The lament: “Lord, my God, I call out by day; at night I cry aloud in your presence. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry” taken from Psalm 88, could have been his own. That aspect of Father Jordan’s personality makes him very close to us indeed, since, I believe, all of us share in such experiences.

And yet there is still another characteristic I would like to bring to light. He was a man who remained absolutely faithful to his idea. I believe the great personalities we admire now did not have a hundred views of how to lead their lives, they usually had

just one, fundamental idea, the realization of which dominated their lives. Unlike them, we often “stroke” so many projects at the same time; we would like to do this and that, and maybe still something else. Not infrequently do we spend our lives following whims. Father Jordan, in contrast, had just one ideal in his life, the one of the salvation of all souls. It was that ideal that determined all his choices, and it was for the sake of that ideal that he was ready to accept constant sacrifice and neverending work.

We must also mention the fact that Father Jordan’s personality combined two apparently contradictory aspects: He was a man of action, but also a man of contemplation. In his life, one can discern a constant search for solitude, about which he would say: “In solitude the air is purer, heaven is opened more, and God is more intimate!” (SD, I 48). He would also repeat: “Give the days to your neighbor. Take the nights for recollected prayer” (SD, I, 64). Thus we see he was a person concentrated on daily duties, yet one who would not abandon the contemplative activity and who used nocturnal hours to continue it. Father Jordan would also say: “Whenever you take upon yourself a significant work, something which seems most useful and good to you, withdraw for at least a few hours of recollection of God, still to examine it, if possible, before you dedicate your complete strength to it” (SD I, 65). In his opinion, each and every action must be a result of contemplation and adoration. Metaphorically speaking, before we make our hands do their work, we need to let our knees do theirs.

While reflecting on Father Jordan’s need for solitude, we cannot help recalling the story from the Gospels in which Christ tells his disciples to go to a

secluded place and have rest. It was no accident that Father Jordan recommended at least an hour of meditation daily. In 1896, he committed his ways to Father Pfeiffer, his successor, who wrote them down literally and in a somewhat mysterious way: “Pray in the forest”; “At the age of 12, superficial, reckless, changeable,” “Strict confession,” “The First Communion – good,” “Father dies, changed,” and then “To pray in secluded places”.

It was the first entry. Later, Father Pfeiffer tried to analyze those events, and interpreted them in the following way: At the age of 12, Father Jordan was superficial, but later, after his First Holy Communion, and following his father’s death, he changed. The words “strict confession” meant that he was most of all concerned about good confession. His fondness of seclusion made him wander away to the forest or to other desolate places.

It was also meaningful that he ordered his religious to read, in the refectory, not only the lives of the Saints known as the Saints

of charity, but also the lives of the Desert Fathers, whose ideals differed considerably from the one his own religious family was pursuing. And some more reflections of Father Jordan’s: “More often alone with God” [so he would speak to himself]; linger more often alone near the tabernacle detached from all” (SD II, 92); “Perfect detachment from all that is not God” (SD I, 166). “Go to a secluded place to talk to God and constantly pray” (SD II, 1).

Another characteristic of Father Jordan’s personality was his passion for the actions he undertook; he was not a functionary or a bureaucrat, but a man embraced by passion. He was a person who deeply loved God, a person who deeply loved souls. There

***Father Jordan had just one ideal in his life, the one of the salvation of all the souls. It was that ideal that determined all his choices, and it was for the sake of that ideal that he was ready to accept constant sacrifice and neverending work.***

is no way to comprehend Father Jordan unless we recognize that passion.

However, there is still another aspect to his personality, an aspect I consider important. The question about him that is so often posed is the one whether his message is still timely today. I think we must be careful while talking about its timeliness, as Father Jordan would generally measure it with the Gospel. He was not concerned to be fashionable or to “follow the pace of the time,” as it is often expressed today. He cherished the concept of Christianity as a sign of contradiction and interpreted Christianity as an ability to go against the current and not to succumb to the fashions of a given time. He would even say: “If the world does not hate you, you cannot be my disciple” (SD I, 2), and he ascribed those words to Christ. They certainly do not mean that we should let the world hate us. Rather, Father Jordan wanted to point in this way to the fact that if one genuinely lives the Gospel, he or she cannot but evoke a certain response. It is the same kind of reaction that the Prophets encountered, since they became simply unbearable to their contemporaries.

And there is one final characteristic of Father Jordan I would like to bring to light during this first meeting. He liked quoting a certain sentence from St. Francis. And he quoted it also in 1911, seven years before his death: “When will we begin once and for all to love God with our whole soul and our neighbor as ourself?” (SD III, 23). We may ask ourselves this question: When? So asked St. Francis, so asked Father Jordan. Thus we can say that, paradoxically, Father Jordan was a person who never finished to begin the things anew. I am convinced that the Saints were those persons who always attempted a new start again and again.

To conclude, I would like to refer to what I have said about silence in Elijah. We have agreed that Father Jordan’s personality was very complex and that it is not easy to interpret. However, if we restrict ourselves merely to such a study, if we get involved in fervent debates, we shall not reach our goal easily. But I believe if we listen to the dimension of silence, if we offer our concentration, we shall be able to understand something more. These days, you will be asked to keep silent, but I believe silence is an important aspect not only on such very special days as the ones we are going to experience now. Silence and peacefulness in general may become the keys to our reading of the life and personality of Father Jordan.

## Conference II

# The Spirituality of Father Jordan

Now we are approaching the essence of our subject, namely, Father Jordan’s spirituality. This spirituality is reflected above all, although not exclusively, in his *Spiritual Diary*, to which I shall be referring. We shall attempt to understand this *Diary*, the circumstances in which it was written, and in particular the reasons why it was written. Now, let me specify what I intend to address. What I shall present is not exclusively my own insight as I will be referring to a thorough study made by the then Postulator General Father Van Meijle, Dutchman and Salvatorian, who presented his study on the *Spiritual Diary* at an international seminar held in Bagno, Poland. It was indeed his study that yielded the essential clues as to how one should approach and understand Father Jordan’s *Diary*, and provided, so to speak, the hermeneutic keys. That study became part of the *Positio*, namely, the preparatory volume compiled in connection with the beatification process of Father Jordan. I find the observations included in Father Van Meijle’s survey absolutely justified and telling.

The *Diary* offers us an opportunity to follow John Baptist Jordan’s spiritual peregrination that took place approximately during the first year of his studies. Let us move back to year 1875, the year in which the first entries in the *Spiritual Diary* were made. These entries

offer us an insight into the soul of a young man who sensed he had received a particular calling from the Lord. One might say this document opens a crevice through which we can look at the spiritual life of Father Jordan, at his struggles, at his victories and at the defeats that he occasionally suffered. Already these pages make it possible for us to grasp the essence of his apostolic program. One might say the *Diary* was Father Jordan's special interlocutor that would hear his confessions. In a way, it mirrored his soul, reflecting his simplicity and sincerity, without, however, concealing his limitations, his weaknesses or mistakes. Thus the pages of the *Diary* are a testimony to the spiritual journey Father Jordan made, they reflect the way he covered, the strivings whose ultimate goal was God. I find it particularly significant that the inner life of Father Jordan was in a way a response to what was happening around him. Already in his early youth, when he had to earn his living, he experienced poverty as well as the hardships of life. After his primary schooling was over, when he became a wage-earner, he got immersed in everyday life. Yet Father Jordan kept his eyes wide open and he learned to put things in the right perspective. Later, when he was in high school, he traveled a lot, in particular during his summer holidays. It gave him the opportunity to improve his command of foreign languages, but also to have very important spiritual experiences resulting from his visits to various places, his stays in various environments and in various cultural milieus. A record of those experiences can be found in his *Diary*, which can be read not only as a mirror of his soul, but also as a reflection of the experiences he had lived through. Indeed, the *Diary* was in a way an echo of those experiences, and not only a record of his emotions. In his *Diary*, he would also refer to what was happening in the world around him, among other things to the issue of *Kulturkampf*, which was a tangible problem at the time. The initial entries in the *Diary*, made in 1875, are particularly telling: "What is man that You are mindful of him? The Lord has taken pity on His sinful servant; He has visited him with His grace. Who will stand against me when the Lord is with me? Convert, you nations, to the eternal Father, to God, just and holy. You have provoked and rejected your Creator. Rise up and do not delay because the Lord is near! [...] Convert, you peoples and nations, because the Lord will judge the generations. And you, Germany, why do you defy your God? Why do you abuse His precious Bride? With vehement anger He will pronounce His holy sentence upon you." (July 1, 1875) Also on Thursday,

July 1, 1875, on the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, he wrote down the word "July" in beautiful, big letters, in the Serbo-Croatian language, using the Cyrillic alphabet. Then he added an abbreviated maxim of St. Ignatius: "All for the greater glory of God and for the salvation of souls." It was written in block letters, in Latin, in the way characteristic of him. And then, immediately afterwards, he added in Greek "Alpha and Omega." Such is the first page of the *Diary*.

Now we may ask about the role the *Diary* played in the life of Father Jordan. I believe that the most precise answer is the following: the *Diary* was the compass of his soul. The compass is used first of all in navigation. Today, cars are equipped with so-called satellite navigators, which, however, significantly differ from the compass. They show the topography of a given place and prompt you for instance which way to follow, where to turn left, tell you to go straight on, say, for a distance of three kilometers and then turn right etc. Everything is set very precisely, the way is already marked out for you. Unlike a satellite navigator, the compass will not tell you, "you must stop here, here you will encounter obstacles, here you will have to face something unexpected..." The compass just gives you the direction, and I believe this is essential in spiritual life: one should not expect any particular clues, but have a sense of general orientation, a sense of one's goal. All the rest is then a risk, an openness to the unexpected. It is also an openness to the novelties and to the surprises of the Spirit. To Father Jordan, his *Diary* became such a basic compass. How important those notebooks were to him can be seen in the fact that he would always have the *Diary* with himself. He would take it to church while going to pray there, and sometimes the successive pages of the *Diary* became the fruit of his meditation. However, he usually wrote the *Diary* after a long prayer in the evening. In time, the first two notebooks were brought together into one volume by a lay brother, who gave them a brown leather binding. From that time on, the *Spiritual Diary* would accompany Father Jordan not only when he was sitting at his desk or praying at church, but also when he was traveling. He never parted with it. While visiting Jerusalem, for instance, he put his *Diary* on the Tomb of our Lord, in a symbolic gesture.

Now, let us ask ourselves the question how the *Diary* is constructed. It comprises four books. The first one is 213 pages long, the other 121 pages long.

These two books, as we have said, were brought together and they include Father Jordan's notes from 1875 to 1909. The other two books are not so thick. The third one, which comprises the entries made from 1909 to 1915, has only 37 pages, and the fourth one – only 39 pages in all. As we have said, Father Jordan started to write the first book in 1875, but most of the entries are from year 1878. They describe his inner attitude towards the priesthood and his ordination, which was approaching. These pages are not only biggest in number, but also most intense. Concerning the structure of the *Diary*, one can say that the entries are rather short and very compact. Sometimes they are merely one line long. Yet they can be divided into two categories. The first one embraces quotations from Father Jordan's favorite authors (we shall refer to them later), whose thoughts he made his own. The second category includes the entries that express his own, personal feelings. Most frequently it is the feeling of joy, but fear, uncertainty, pain and doubt are also present. However, what predominates is trust. While speaking about Father Jordan's spirituality, we will concentrate on that subject, but let us already now reveal that joy is one of the feelings that most frequently emanate from Father Jordan's *Diary*. The form of this *Diary*, in particular Father Jordan's personal confessions, could be compared to the Psalms. If we were to compile the expressions he uses, we could say that we in a way have got his personal prayer book. Occasionally, we encounter in it an image that as if a flash of light that appears in a cloudy sky. Sometimes, an entry ends with an exclamation mark or with a dash. This punctuation is meaningful. Someone has noticed that some verses resemble a seismograph record, a graph made by the device that registers earthquakes. Such were the movements of Father Jordan's soul. Another thing one might notice is that sometimes an idea is repeated many times, and on occasion one word is repeated. Sometimes the same idea is repeated fifty pages later, sometimes ten years later. It has also been observed that the metaphor that aptly grasps that manner of writing a diary is one of a drop that hollows the stone.

As far as linguistic issues are concerned, one is astonished to find out that Father Jordan uses fourteen different languages in his *Diary*. A prevailing part of it was written in German and in Latin, but occasionally one can encounter expressions in twelve other languages. Let us mention here only French, Italian, Spanish, English, Serbo-Croatian, Greek,

Dutch, Portuguese, Arabic, Syrian, Hebrew and Polish. However, they were not the only languages Father Jordan spoke. While talking about his studies, we shall see that he knew many others. Yet, the fact is that in the *Diary*, we find entries in fourteen different languages. We must also add that Father Jordan's handwriting often reflects the state of his soul at a given moment. The entries he made in the *Diary* did not include any theoretical treatises, neither did Father Jordan aspire to put down ideas he considered definite or ultimate; rather, he would express what he thought and experienced at the given moment. Thus we find in the *Diary* a reflection of his sufferings and of his hopes, but also of his disappointments and joys, as well as of his bitterness. And all those feelings were very intense.

What strikes us throughout these pages is Father Jordan's familiarity with the Bible. Although he certainly had his favorite spiritual authors and read them frequently, the special, privileged place belonged to the Holy Scripture. It is important to note here that we are talking about the years from 1875 to 1878, namely, the time that preceded the Second Vatican Council, which once again put the Bible in the hands of the People of God, by almost a hundred years. In Father Jordan's times, it was not customary to read the Bible frequently. Indeed, believers were sometimes dissuaded from studying the Holy Scripture, whose interpretation was left to experienced priests. Yet Father Jordan, even before he was ordained to the priesthood, was familiar with the Bible. He would use the six volume German translation of the Bible made by the rector of Munich University Joseph Franz von Allioli. This fact is worth stressing, because sometimes saints and founders are said to have been ahead of the Council, to have been prophets. In the case of Father Jordan, such an opinion is absolutely true, because his relationship with the Bible shows that he was a herald of the spring of the Church the Second Vatican Council became. It is also remarkable that while we find about five hundred quotations from the Bible in the *Diary*, very rarely is the Bible quoted literally. Father Jordan's way could be described as that of paraphrasing the Bible, namely, of using the Biblical language in a manner that was specifically his own. The reader can certainly notice that in some entries Father Jordan makes references to the Psalms or quotes certain extracts from the Book of Isaiah, yet he felt no need to make literal quotations, much as it would have been easier. Today, we may refer to a Biblical

concordance or to a Biblical dictionary in order to quote the verses pertaining to a given subject, and we claim to be great experts on the Bible. Father Jordan, however, felt no need to demonstrate his familiarity with the Holy Scripture to anyone. Instead, he deeply assimilated the Bible, which found an expression in the fact that his own words as such were permeated with the Biblical language. This is very important, indeed fundamental. The Biblical texts Father Jordan refers to most frequently are certainly the Psalms, but he also includes extracts from the Wisdom Books, for instance from the Book of Sirach, from the prophets, in particular from Isaiah. If one can speak about Father Jordan's most favorite Psalm, it was Psalm 31, verse two, the sentence that he would quote in Latin, in this case literally. Father Jordan also referred to St. Jerome's Vulgate.

The sentence in question is the following: "In you O Lord, I have hoped, I will not be confounded forever". Our translation is "In you, LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame." I might venture to say that Father Jordan would "stick" to that verse mainly when he was experiencing difficulties. It was a lifeline to him. It is indeed meaningful that the verse in question appears only once in the first part of the *Diary*, but later after Father Jordan had founded his religious family and was experiencing numerous problems, beset by persistent worries any founder must bear, he would repeat that single verse twenty six times. Indeed, this is meaningful. As far as the Gospels are concerned, his privileged Evangelist was Matthew. Father Jordan was in particular attached to St. Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount and of the Beatitudes. Such was his special familiarity

with the Bible. However, I would like to bring to your attention one peculiar detail of it. In the *Diary*, we find a particular interpretation of Jacob's ladder: "The mystical ladder of Jacob has three steps: reading – meditation – prayer – contemplation" (*SD I*, 29).

One might say that in those days Father Jordan had a rather free interpretation of the Bible, which, nevertheless, was very deep. He would say: "Always read Sacred Scripture with great reverence and kneeling, at least when you are alone" (*SD I*, 68). "Read the Sacred Scriptures often and never let the sacred reading be laid aside. Let sleep find you holding the Bible, and when your head nods, let it rest on the sacred page. *St. Jerome*" (*SD I*, 145). I believe this latter experience was not exclusively St. Jerome's; Father Jordan must have shared in it. His spiritual masters – and according to the

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*Diary*, there were five of them, namely Luis de la Puente, Paulo Segneri, an Oratorian, Frederic Faber, a convert, Andre Jean Marie Hamon, a Frenchman, who pursued Sulpician spirituality, and Heinrich Grundkoetter from Germany – were the ones whom he would read continuously. Today, these authors may not be quoted very often, yet they did lay the foundation of Father Jordan's spiritual formation.

We spoke about the *Diary* as a compass, but Father Jordan himself would perceive his compass in the Word of God above all, but also in the texts of his spiritual masters (he had also others whom he did not quote), and later he would refer to some of them as paragons. Those paragons were the Saints. One is impressed to see all the names of the Saints to whom Father Jordan refers. Indeed, this is a broad panorama.

In order to imagine it, let us recall the “litany” that Father Jordan wrote in Rome in 1879, one in which his favorite Saints are invoked. Let us read this “litany,” as Father Jordan’s prayer is deeply moving and each Saint is the source of an encouragement to him. Let us remember that the purpose of the *Diary* is finding encouragement, indeed being inspired with courage. In the Biblical language, we call it parenthesis or exhortation. Thus, one might say Father Jordan, before giving an exhortation to others, gives one to himself. The saints provided motivation for him, as well as encouragement to imitate them. Let us read some of the exhortations from this litany:

*“Imitate St. Vincent de Paul! [...]*

*See and consider the purity of St. Aloysius and humble yourself!*

*Consider the zeal of the holy Apostle Paul, of St. Francis Xavier, and other saints, and humble yourself.*

*Consider the mortification of St. Catherine of Siena and humble yourself.*

*Consider the desire of St. Teresa to suffer and humble yourself.*

*Consider the mortification and simplicity of the first hermits and humble yourself.*

*Consider the spirit of Elias and of St. John the Baptist and humble yourself.*

*Consider the meekness of St. Francis de Sales and humble yourself.*

*Consider the discipline of St. Gregory VII and humble yourself.*

*Consider the constancy of St. Lawrence and of the Machabee Brothers and humble yourself.*

*Consider the poverty of St. Francis and humble yourself.*

*Consider the teaching of St. Augustine and of St. Thomas Aquinas and humble yourself.*

*Consider the celebration of the Mass of St. M. Alphonsus and humble yourself.*

*Consider the contemplation of St. Gertrude [...] and humble yourself.*

*Consider the humility of St. Benedict Labre and of St. Alexis and humble yourself.*

(SD I, 156-158)

So one can see that the purpose Father Jordan had in invoking the Saints was to experience the saving pangs of conscience rather than obtain graces.

Generally speaking, such is the structure of the *Diary*, in the first two books of which we find very many quotations. However, as we move forward in our reading, we find fewer and fewer of them, which is particularly significant. Myself, I read the entire *Diary* with profound emotion, but I must say that it was the final pages that I found particularly moving, as Father Jordan no longer quotes other spiritual authors and Saints there, which points out that he was becoming a spiritual master himself. This key will help us in our reading of the *Diary* and in grasping not only the fact that Father Jordan described the process of his formation and his indebtedness to others in it, but also that his own ideas were made to surface that way. He gave us a lesson without ever pretending to be our master and we can make his words written down in the *Diary* our own, since they are not simply the fruit of some study. Rather, they truly present the way Father Jordan followed and the necessary risks it involved, as well as all the discoveries and sufferings that made him a particularly trustworthy master.



Conference III

# A Man Who Knew Hardships

**W**henver one talks about spirituality, there is always the risk that one will be referring to something abstract and elusive, while true spirituality needs truly human foundations. If these human foundations are absent, genuine spirituality turns out impossible. Let me now specify the fundamental issues that will introduce us to the subject.

Lately we can witness that a great theologian who was a little forgotten — also due to his somewhat controversial personality — has gained a new recognition. I am speaking about Father François Varillon, SJ, who died in 1978 and who might be considered an avant-garde theologian. He wrote two fundamental volumes entitled, respectively, *The Suffering of God* and *The Humility of God*. His intention was to write a trilogy and he was planning to entitle the third volume *The Delight of God*, but his premature death prevented him from accomplishing that goal. At some point he wrote: “The task that God sets for man is that man should make himself human.” Such is precisely the task that God gives to each of us. In his texts, Father Varillon would frequently return to that idea, and he would also add a reflection that incidentally concerns our subject, namely: “Spiritual life is life as such.” Let us remember then that spiritual life is life as such, it is a life in the human dimension. One day my friend Father Fabretti, a Franciscan journalist and writer, told me about an event that had moved him deeply. After the Blessed Alois Orione, generally recognized for his charity work, had passed away in San Remo, Italy, his body was transported in a hearse to his home town of Tortona. When the hearse was passing

Genova, the entire traffic was held up, since everyone wanted to pay homage to that remarkable priest. Father Fabretti happened to be on a tram and looked through the window. Two workers were working on the tram rails and one of them asked, “Who was that man transported in the funeral hearse?” “He was a priest,” said the other. “But a brave one,” he added. So it seems that a priest can be accepted only when the human dimension is fully present in him. Certainly a priest who renounces his humanity is not credible as a priest, he becomes insignificant. Such is my deep conviction. Let us probe this subject, which is so close to our hearts, in relation to Father Jordan.

Before Father Jordan made his profession of vows, he truly experienced the hardships of life, poverty, even extreme poverty. His father, called Lorenz, did various jobs in order to provide for his family. Among others, he worked in the stables. It was then that he suffered a dangerous accident: his duty was to look after fifty nervous and restless horses, and at some point they hit him and made him fall, trampling on him. He suffered a broken leg and a wound in his chest. From that time on he had to use a wooden crutch. The wound in his chest never healed, and finally gangrene set in. He died at the age of 44, eight years after the accident. From that time on the burden to support the family lay on his wife Notburga. At the time of his father’s accident, John Baptist Jordan was only seven years old. He had two brothers, the elder and first-born, who was five years his senior, and the younger, who was three years his junior. (His mother would die of an attack of apoplexy at the age of 73.) Francis Jordan felt responsible for his family, although he was only a youngster, and started to undertake various jobs. First he worked as a teacher, then as a wage earner at an 88 kilometers long railroad construction leading to Constanz. At that time, no machines were used in railroad work, everything was done manually. So Jordan had a chance to get to know hard physical work, and he had to learn it, although he would rather continue his education. His mother is known to have once said, “I know everyone says you were born to be educated, but I cannot give you even 20 pfennig for your education.” It sounded as if she was telling him, “Get down to work.” So Jordan did a whole range of jobs. Among others, he became a painter apprentice and specialized in gold and silver decorations. That job, however, was not permanent, and despite his passion for it, he had to content himself with wall painting. However, he would not lose his serenity even in that difficult

period of his life, which was often stressed by his colleagues. His joyfulness and cheerfulness were so manifest that his mother could hardly believe him when he told her he wanted to be a priest. We must add that he had a weak health, he spent a lot of time studying, ate little and slept little. In spite of it, his mother would often insist that, instead of studying, he should earn more money to support the family.

At the age of 26, Father Jordan graduated from high school, and at the age of 29 he received a Master's Degree in Theology. He was able to accomplish those goals owing to his strong will, but also as a result of numerous sacrifices and renunciations. I like to quote the opinion of the rector of the seminary who spoke about cleric Jordan as almost exceptional a person. He included such an opinion in a letter to the local Bishop. Let me quote it literally: "In particular, I'm taking this opportunity to focus your attention on the theologian and third year student John Baptist Jordan from Gurtweil. He shows deep piety and humility, and has an unmatched gift for languages." Let us point here to the fact that although Father Jordan was somewhat unpractical in his relation to the external world, he understood more than fifty foreign languages! He was able to speak all those languages and to translate from most of them. He even started learning Chinese, and indeed a notebook of his was once found, full of notes in Chinese. In his library, Father Jordan kept works written in Sanskrit, in Armenian, Chaldaic, Chinese, Romanian, Japanese, Ethiopian, and Persian. It was all part of his preparatory work for the priesthood. Father Jordan knew the hardships of life, but despite the necessity to do hard physical work, he was striving hard to satisfy his need for education, as he was aware that education would be very important to him in the future. Jordan was ordained at the age of 30, having experienced a truly tough life.

Let us now analyze a text in which Father Jordan himself – on the basis of his own experience – offers advice. We can clearly see that this advice is not a result of some study, as we sense in it the characteristics of Father Jordan's way of thinking and acting. Let me quote a piece including such advice: "Avoid long and useless pondering over your mistakes; because it is a loss of your time, discourages you and confuses your mind and heart" (SD I, 46). That type of pedagogy and that type of wisdom are very important, indeed they are more important than pangs of conscience. Instead of contemplating your faults, concentrating on yourself, try to move

forward, as too much indulgence in self-analysis results in a confusion of mind and heart. Having adopted that attitude, Father Jordan was nevertheless aware of his limitations. He quoted for instance the words of St. Leo the Great: "He who sets himself up as his own master, makes himself the disciple of a fool" (SD I, 47). Another quotation comes from his favorite spiritual master Hamon: "People allow themselves to be carried away by natural activity, when there is need to moderate it and to mortify it, leaving grace the time to act and to inspire them to do everything calmly and with moderation, with neither undue haste nor with sluggishness" (SD I, 54). Such was Father Jordan's wisdom. I also like to quote another extract, in which he refers to an experience of a certain Saint: "One time, when St. Rose of Lima was completely exhausted and without refreshment, she sent her guardian Angel to the house of friends for some chocolate" (SD I, 60). She did not send him to ask for prayer, but to ask for some chocolate! If Father Jordan refers to that episode, one can suppose that he himself would act in a similar way during his crises.

Among Father Jordan's favorite Saints a special place was occupied by St. Francis of Assisi, for whom he cherished an almost limitless admiration. And in the case of St. Francis, one can also point to an event that is similar to the one we have just referred to. The story about St. Francis concerns the time when he was close to death. While we all know that St. Francis, nearing the moment of death, asked his Franciscan brothers to set him down on the ground, it is forgotten that he had the courage to allow himself a certain weakness, which was described by St. Bonaventure in his *Legend of Perugia*: "One day St. Francis summoned his companions and told them, 'You know the woman called Jacoppa from the village of Seven Salts, who has been very faithful and who is attached to me and to our fraternity. I shall consider it a grace from heavens, and a consolation, if you let her know about my poor health and let me have that woman by my side. Let her know, and ask of her to bring me some linen of the gray color, the kind the Cistercians weave overseas, so that I could have a tunic made. Let her also make me some cake she used to bake when I was in Rome'" It was a cake called *mostacciori*, and it is made from flour, almonds, sugar, honey and other ingredients. And St. Francis wanted to taste that cake before he died! The *Legend of Perugia* goes on: "By the will of St. Francis it had been decided – and so it had been obeyed

from the beginning – that no woman could enter the enclosure so that the honor and the contemplation of the religious home be not violated. Therefore, when Jacoppa arrived, a brother came running to the dying Francis, asking him, “Father, what shall we do? Shall we let her in?” Francis then answered, “The ban does not concern that woman. Let us make an exception for her.” Then the woman turned to the brothers and explained to them, “Brothers, as I was praying, I heard the Spirit say: Go and visit your Father Francis. Hurry up, do not procrastinate, because if you are late, you will not find him alive. You will bring him the linen for the tunic and everything you need to prepare the cake. Take also a sparse amount of wax for the candles, and incense.” Then the woman made the cake, which was delectable, even though St. Francis barely tasted it, as due to his severe illness he was becoming very weak, and death was approaching. He asked to have many candles made, and the brothers made a tunic of the cloth the woman had brought, and so he was buried in it.

The events to which I am referring may serve as a commentary on Father Jordan’s belief that true Saints, much as they are ascetics, are not so strict as one might imagine. They are able to enjoy the good things on this Earth, which are also gifts from God.

Coming back to Father Jordan, I would like to quote his norms of practical wisdom. For instance, he would say: “Do not advise anybody before you have consulted God at prayer”, which means: before you advise others, ask God for advise. I like also another quotation very much: “If a man was shown me who had a long memory for little kindnesses, who never seemed out of debt in his affections, who exaggerated his obligations to others, kept anniversaries of them, and repaid them twenty times over, I should be more struck with the likelihood of his turning out a saint, than if I heard that he disciplined himself to

blood daily, slept on the bare boards, enjoyed the prayer of quiet, had been scourged by devils and had seen our Blessed Lady.” (SD I, 131). This quotation, coming from his favorite author Faber tells us a lot about his evaluation of sanctity. To him, a man who is delicate, considerate and attentive to others, who does not miss the slightest opportunity to show love to his fellows is most human. To him, it is such a man that has accomplished sanctity rather than one who fasts and mortifies himself through flagellation. Thus we might say that to Father Jordan, sanctity means above all genuine humanity.

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Another aspect of Father Jordan’s humanity is certainly the balanced attitude that his pedagogy entailed, both in relation to himself and towards others. In 1905, for instance, he wrote the following words: “You need more rest; never work too long without taking some rest. Thus you are able to do more for God’s holy cause” (SD II, 92). A phrase that often appears in the *Diary* is “Do not force!,” which can be rendered as “do not overdo.” The typical phrases Father Jordan used were: “Quiet”, “Do not force” or “Be watchful lest you become agitated; everything with the greatest possible peace” (SD IV, 21). A certain quotation from the second part of the *Diary* once again confirms his beliefs: “The Spirit of God loves quiet, peace and order. He does not dwell in agitation. So avoid haste, unrest, precipitousness, over-zealousness, especially in important things” (SD II, 96). Then he would add “God wants this.”

Now we are going to talk about Father Jordan’s zeal-ousness, about the zealousness that let him overcome all the obstacles. Nevertheless we should not forget about his incessant exhortation to quietness, to peace. Then, continuing the theme of a balanced attitude, Father Jordan said: “It is your duty to care thoroughly for your health” (SD II, 25). “You need more rest; never work too long without taking some rest” (SD

II, 92). In his words we can sense the concern of a tender father.

I would like to point to some other aspects of Father Jordan's humanity. Firstly, we must stress his sense of justice. I really need not support this fact with a quotation, but in the *Diary* we often encounter such injunctions as: "Fight for justice." (*SD I*, 154) The practice of charity does not release one from the duty of being just. Father Jordan also said: "Be careful, if someone wants to give you gifts" (*SD I*, 133), which certainly did not mean that one should not accept gifts, but rather that one should be watchful so that they would not limit one's freedom, so that they would not make one dependent on others and so that a gift would not become a prison cage.

And the final aspect I would like to discuss is Father Jordan's sense of gratitude. He would strongly stress the ability to say "Thank you," to thank the Lord, but also to thank particular persons. I think this value is frequently forgotten today. I know persons, who are gentle, caring and even persistent if they need a favor, and once they are granted it, they forget to say thank you. Indeed, the ability to say "thank you" should be a fundamental characteristic of the genuinely human and genuinely Christian personality. Having lived among the elderly (my youngest parishioner being eighty years of age), I have noticed in them the ability to thank even for minor things, as for instance calling them by their first names. They are grateful to their priest for knowing their names! Father Jordan was indeed a man of gratitude. In the third part of the *Diary*, he writes as follows: "While I was in Hamburg [...] I had A.R. P. Paulus make me a Deo gratias Rosary with 33 beads; in September I received a donation of 33.000 German Mark from a benefactor. 33 beads in memory of the 33 years of Jesus Christ." (*SD III*, 31)

To conclude, I would like to leave you with a thought of Father Jordan's to reflect upon: "Not to progress is to go backwards." (*SD I*, 27) I think this idea refers also to the need for an unremitting quest. A Christian is someone who is always journeying, who is seeking. The great philosopher Jean Guittou, a friend and advisor of Pope Paul VI, used to say that once someone stops searching, he will lose what he has already found.

Thus we have added a very important characteristic to the profile of Father Jordan, namely his humanity, which is the foundation of his spirituality.

## Conference IV

# Father Jordan: Man of Passion

In the first conference we attempted to reveal the human foundation of Father Jordan's spirituality. Metaphorically, one might say that Father Jordan had a strong backbone, and so he was able to bend his back not only to read books, but also to do hard physical work. His pedagogy, founded on his balanced attitude and on wisdom, is credible precisely owing to that aspect of his personality. We have already discussed some examples of Father Jordan's attitude. Although he would always "look upwards," his feet were firmly on the ground. That was the basic characteristic of his personality. In my view, the closer one is to God, the more human rather than merely spiritual this person must become. And "human" means sensitive, capable of sympathy. Otherwise, the God one has encountered is not the true God revealed in Christ. And this false God exists then only in one's imagination.

While speaking about spirituality, we must also pay attention to the difficulties concerning the definition of this term. A certain Italian thinker, an expert at matters of spirituality, would say: "Today, the word 'spirituality' is frequently discussed, since many people sense superficiality and excessive vagueness about it. Therefore some theological schools have decided to abandon the concept altogether. They no longer talk about spirituality, but rather about relations and internal, as well as external, dynamics." He added: "Such a provocation is not needless or unjustifiable, since the Jewish and Christian faith has never presented itself as exclusively or purely

spiritual. The Jewish and Christian faith is against dividing the human being into the spiritual and the bodily. Dividing the human being into body and soul is extremely difficult. The Bible is concerned with the person as a whole.” Cardinal Jean Danielou was then right in warning us that whenever we attempt to talk about the spirit, we must first of all decide, whether we are speaking Greek or Hebrew. If we are speaking Greek and considering the *pneuma*, we are within the horizon in which God, the Absolute, is radically separate from man and as such becomes an alienated reality. This was what Arius defended so strongly in his heresy, as he could not comprehend a possibility of the Incarnation of the perfect and absolute Divinity. However, if we are talking about the spirit in the sense of the Hebrew *ruah*, we are talking about God, whose “wind blows where it wills” (J 3: 8) and shakes history, permeates the inner being of man and makes him wonder. This is how Jeremiah and Paul conceived of the spirit, but they were followed by many others who also understood the calling of God so radically. Father Jordan was not the last of them.

Now, after we have specified our subject, let us attempt to address Father Jordan’s spirituality. In his *Diary*, in particular in the entries coming from the first years, we can sense a feeling of deep dissatisfaction. The young Jordan feels the limitations of certain prospects, he is aware of the deceit of certain mirages, of the falsehood inherent in some proposals. One could say that he senses the disappointment they will bring once he lets himself be lured by them. To use an image from the Book of Jeremiah, we might say that ever since his early youth he had an insight into the fact that the «vessels» so many thirsty ones come to drink from are broken, and moreover, they contain poisoned water, or in any case the water that instead of quenching the thirst makes it stronger. Father Jordan realizes that he cannot be content unless he accomplishes «everything.» A partial or illusive contentment can only make his thirst desperate. And his thirst was one for the Infinite.

In his youth, Father Jordan experienced a complex tragedy, and from that time on his spirituality was to be marked by struggle. In his case, nothing came to being by itself, there was always something that offered resistance, both in him or outside him, everything had to be accomplished at a high price. He who, like Father Jordan, loves too much, is bound to love with a mad love and doomed to suffer. In the

beginning, we said that Father Jordan was a man of passion, and we must remember that suffering is an inevitable consequence of being passionate. Even the Passion of Jesus Christ is the passion of a passionate Man. One cannot touch the fire without being burnt. We can say there is no love without pain, there is no willing without an effort employed, there is no fight without being wounded. Undoubtedly, Father Jordan was a radiant personality, but he became so due to the wound that had marked his existence deeply. At this point, we can draw the first conclusion: Father Jordan was content with no less than «everything,» but in order to accomplish «everything,» he had to belong entirely to the Lord. In his *Diary*, we encounter the phrase: “I am all Yours.” (SD II, 56)

Continuing our reflection on Father Jordan’s spirituality, we can see that he put love, a charitable love to others, above everything else. The foundation on which he would build was human sanctity. Indeed, Father Jordan showed respect to everyone. He would teach that no one should be considered as insignificant, since everyone was redeemed by Christ. To him, respect for the human person was tantamount to the respect for the Blood of Christ, which redeemed that person. That is why, he said, one must not despise any created being. Let me quote some of his thoughts that describe his attitude: “Always be friendly with other persons, even with your greatest offender.” (SD I, 21) “In every person, see the immortal soul purchased by the most Precious Blood, and never look down upon any person.” (SD I, 133)

In his *Diary*, Father Jordan points to a close relationship between love and sanctity. Essentially, sanctity is love. He used to say that “just as charity alone makes us apostles, it alone also makes saints.” (SD III, 24) Love of the neighbor is manifested also by taking care of him. In his *Diary*, Father Jordan says: “Furthermore, be especially attentive to the physical needs of others.” (SD I, 56) Indeed, as a priest, you cannot simply say, “I am interested in your souls only,” you must be interested in the actual problems of your fellows. Father Jordan even added: “Do not shy away from any inconvenience when it is a question of helping another or of doing a work of mercy. Take care that stinginess and self-interest never reign in you.” (SD I, 56)

Father Jordan would also warn us against the frequent danger of imprudent speech. In that respect, he obeyed the commands of the Bible, where we read that sins against love are most frequently commit-

ted by speech. It is shown in the Letter of St. James, which is a fundamental text in this respect. Let us read a piece of advice from Father Jordan: “With regard to defects of others, either those of brothers or of people of other nations, I will say nothing; rather I will not even think of them. Instead, I will think of their virtues and perfections and of my imperfections.” (*SD I*, 87) Love has a definite shape, it is expressed in sweetness, in kindness, in gentleness. The word “meek” appears many times in the *Diary*. Also many times the exhortation is repeated to remember that love consists in little things. This attitude shows Father Jordan’s practical wisdom. How often, while talking about love, we tend to think about grand gestures, at the same time neglecting the little everyday opportunities to render merciful love towards our neighbor.

We commit sins of negligence that might be easily avoided if we paid attention to those little everyday opportunities to practice love. In Father Jordan’s *Diary*, the word “kind” is as frequent as the word “meek.” Shortly before his death, when Father Jordan was admitted to hospital for the poor in Tafers, the Sisters who were taking care of him were astonished by his sincere kindness and gentleness. While reading the *Diary*, one gets the impression that Father Jordan perceived a deep bond between good manners and love, and that the rules of *savoir-vivre* are contained within the register of love. Good manners are not loosely tied to love, but they constitute its specific manifestation, one that is visible to others: they express goodness. I think we should stress this truth in our times, as one can get the impression that we live in a society from which good manners have been actually removed, where ordinariness, vulgarity and aggression predominate. When I was young, when I was a seminarian, we were given lessons of good manners. At that time we thought those hours were an unnecessary and a loss of time and we considered the rules of *savoir-vivre* as maybe important in the case of dandies, who are concerned merely with the external, but definitely not needed by us. Even during our theology course, while we were climbing up the peaks of St. Thomas’ *Summa*, the teacher would soon make us climb down, to the region of good manners. Today, I believe that those hours were simply providential. If it depended upon me, I would include such lessons in the curriculum for the supplementary training and in the so-called permanent formation. Today, we are proud to have got rid of many formalisms, of pretence, which is not a bad thing as such,

but we have forgotten that this is an area in which one must move very carefully. We have underestimated the significance of the form, which provides an indispensable “wrapping” of the essence it conveys. Whenever I hear talk about great openness, I would rather certain people simply learnt to close the door without making too much noise. We must certainly follow the spirit of the times, allowing ourselves those moments of rest Father Jordan spoke about, but our following the spirit of the times does not legitimize stepping on someone else’s feet or elbowing our way without the necessary word “sorry.” Love — let me stress it once again — needs also good manners. Pope John XXIII used to repeat: “Kindness is a branch of the tree of love,” and St. Francis of Assisi, so much loved by Father Jordan, stated, “God is kindness.” As we read in the *Legend of Perugia*, St. Francis said: “I want for myself the privilege from the Lord not to have any privileges from people, except the one to be full of respect for everyone else.” Then he described his project saying: “I want to convert the prelates through humbleness and respect above all,” and added: “My dearest brother, have this knowledge that kindness is one of the attributes of God, kindness is a sister of love, it extinguishes hatred and preserves love.” I believe Father Jordan would adopt that latter statement as his own.

Coming back to the subject of love, I would like to add that Father Jordan stresses that one should condemn love expressed only “externally,” and directed primarily at strangers, at the same time excluding the family members. Using modern sports language, we might say this is the love one demonstrates while “playing away.” Then, there are only crumbs left for those at home, and sometimes there are not enough of those crumbs. While speaking about that kind of love, Father Jordan had a certain extract from the Book of Isaiah in mind, namely, the one in which the prophet stresses the necessity of “sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.” (Is 58: 7) A certain Italian spiritual master used to say: “On many occasions it seems easier to be good to strangers than to be good to the family members. One tends to be sweet, kind, caring and polite to strangers. Encounters with strangers make us show others the beauty of our souls, in which we are motivated also by our self-love. However, since we know the faults of our family members much better, we do not feel obliged to hide ours from them.” He concluded his

speech with a very pertinent remark that being angels when we are away from home and being demons when we are home is an incredible absurdity. In the positive sense, Father Jordan was saying: “Brotherly love, that divine cement, without it nothing can hold together.” (SD IV, 4)

Another important characteristic of Father Jordan’s spirituality was the virtue of humility. To him, humility was the fundamental virtue, which he confirmed by writing down an extract from the *Imitation of Christ* in his *Diary*: “What good would it do you to dispute learnedly about the Trinity, if you are lacking in humility and are therefore displeasing the Trinity.” (SD I, 40) Deeply aware of the meaning of his words, Father Jordan also said: “I have no other claim to be heard than out of my profound misery.” (SD I, 41) It was no accident that he would refer to his patron St. John Baptist, in whom he highly valued the incredible skill of withdrawal. “He must grow, and I am to belittle myself.” These words could express Father Jordan’s own program, as he was never inclined to be «on show,» to demonstrate his importance to others. Yet he would willingly point to their importance. He would also quote a statement from St. Augustine: “It is better to be a humble sinner than a proud just man” (SD I, 47). In his *Diary*, he wrote: “Do not come to the fore if it is not necessary, but love rather to be hidden and unknown. That will help you to make much progress.” (SD I, 62) On the pages of his *Diary*, we can see that Father Jordan often describes himself as a terrible sinner and a wicked creature. He truly believed it. He also

believed one should not concentrate on the external and visible side of things. His program was to preach the glory of God, avoiding empty fame, ambition or elevation of own self. He used to say: “Beg your Lord and God that, when you achieve some good

through Him, all men may praise and glorify Him, but despise you, the unworthy *tool*.” (SD I, 4) When others happened to be dissatisfied, because of their efforts being undervalued, Father Jordan would tell them: “Is it not enough if your Father in heaven and your guardian angel see it and know it, if you do something good?” (SD I, 22) In the case of Father Jordan, humility is combined with joy. His spirituality does not belong among the gloomy or depressing ones. On the contrary, it is a cheerful spirituality, a radiant one, manifesting Franciscan perfect joy. In his *Diary*, Father Jordan wrote: “Always be joyful, praise God constantly, come what may. Yes, rejoice each time God’s will is accom-

plished in your regard, be it through trials, afflictions or compensations. Always remain the same, knowing that you are under the protection of the All High.” (SD I, 11) One can notice in this attitude the genius of St. Francis of Assisi that consisted in introducing perfect joy even to negative situations. Being cheerful is not difficult when things are going on smoothly, but how can one be joyful facing adversities of life or predicaments? This is a secret of truly great souls. Father Jordan continued: “Always be content with whatever God may dispose for you and in whatever manner He does it.” (SD I, 24) “As far as possible, put all your effort into being serene, cheerful and friendly; (such dispositions) promote the well-being

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of body and soul.” (SD, I, 131) Already in his youth, Father Jordan used joy as a therapy, singing now and again a song to praise God, to express his joy. “Rejoice always in the Lord,” is another significant quotation from his *Diary*. (SD II, 110)

While discussing the elements of Father Jordan’s spirituality we must not overlook the most important one among them, namely the cross and suffering. He used to say: “The works of God prosper only in the shadow of the cross.” (SD I, 163) In his *Diary*, he also refers to the calling of St. Paul, quoting an extract from the Acts of the Apostles: “He is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name... for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name,” and he comments on it in the following way: “It is clear that Paul and other chosen servants of God were chosen and destined by God more to suffer much for Him than to do much, for the service of God and, likewise, the apostolate, consists more in much suffering than in doing.” (SD, I, 167) He also said a very important thing concerning preaching: “Preaching always bears fruit when it has as its minister a man who is truly crucified, who finds his happiness in suffering.” (SD I, 178) In an entry made in 1907, ten years before his death, Father Jordan confessed his suffering to the Lord: “O Almighty Father, have mercy on me, because my sufferings are very great. Oh strengthen me that I do not succumb!” (SD II, 105)

To conclude, I wish to stress a particular aspect of the cross. This was the cross accepted together with insults suffered from other people rather than one involving physical suffering. Those insults, however, could not extinguish love. Father Jordan illustrated this attitude of his with the following entry in his *Diary*: “A bishop said about St. Teresa: if anyone wants to be loved by her, he needs only to wrong her and to insult her.” (SD I, 46) The fact that Father Jordan points to this aspect of St. Teresa’s personality means that he preserved the ability to love, regardless of what he received from others, however unbelievable it might seem. In other words, his love was not response to what others were doing, but it was truly unselfish and unconditioned by the actions of other people. Let us recall at this point that the love of God is an unselfish one.

## Conference V

# Spirituality Open to Others

While speaking about Father Jordan’s spirituality we must consider the goal it is supposed to accomplish. Indeed, his spirituality is not a purpose in itself, it is not closed within its own boundaries, but it open to embrace all the ways and means. There is, for instance, a close connection between the spirituality of Father Jordan and his openness to the apostolic dimension. In fact, his spirituality is predominantly apostolic. What is then the perspective in which Father Jordan lived his life? How can the work he founded be explained? Let us focus for a moment on an entry in his *Spiritual Diary* that might shed some light on this question: “O priceless purchased souls, I would gladly offer my life if I could save you.” (SD, I, 6) Father Jordan wrote those words in 1875, when he was not a priest yet. However, even then he already had the desire to save the souls and was ready to pay any price for it. The prospect of martyrdom is in a way inherent in the quoted statement, even though the Lord did not call Father Jordan to become a martyr. One can offer one’s life in a one-off act of sacrifice, but perhaps it is even more important and maybe even more costly to offer a permanent daily sacrifice of one’s own life for one’s fellows. This is what Jesus says: “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (J 15: 13) And these words are the ultimate horizon for Father Jordan. Whenever he speaks about salvation, it is also important to note the scope of salvation he has in mind. And here, the *Diary* does not leave a doubt. There is a word that appears very often in it. This word is “all.” In one of his prayers, Father Jordan says: “Oh, that I could save all.” (SD I, 149) And he adds: “I am ready for everything [...] I will

gladly undergo troubles and difficulties with Your help.” (SD II, 71-72) Another entry that I consider fundamental leaves no doubt about Father Jordan’s attitude: “You are debtor to all.” (SD I, 192) Already St. Paul said: “Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another.” (Rom 13: 8) Love is not something we give to others in a sudden burst of generosity, it is not something we offer at some particular moment. Rather, to love means to pay the debt. In other words, everyone who approaches you has the right to ask you to pay your debt towards them. Father Jordan perceived a salvific dimension in such an attitude, which is confirmed in numerous entries in his *Diary* that reveal the main aspiration of his soul, namely the salvation of all, of everyone. The choice that Father Jordan made was not his personal choice, but rather a result of the awareness that he had been chosen by the Lord to accomplish a particular mission. His being an apostle, his being sent, was not his own initiative, but it depended on the will of the Lord. A similar idea recurs at the beginning of each of the letters written by St. Paul, who stresses that he is not an apostle out of his own will, but one advancing the mission he had received from the Lord. It is precisely in this perspective that Father Jordan says: “Lord Jesus Christ, here I am, send me!” (SD I, 146) And he waits. He waits to be sent by the Lord. This particular vision of salvation, of the salvation of all, is complemented by another characteristic of the life of Father Jordan, namely, the zeal that can be pictured as fire. The passion we spoke about earlier found its expression precisely in that inner fire. It was the same kind of fire that, as prophet Jeremiah says, would be burning in his heart, imprisoned in his bones, at the moment of crisis, when he wanted to stop his mission. He says he grew “weary holding it in,” he “could not endure it.” (Jer 20, 9) Father Jordan has in his mind an idea from the Gospel of St. Luke, one that he finds decisive: “I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing!” (Lk 12: 49) One might metaphorically say that Father Jordan took over that fire from Jesus, having accepted the task to pass it on to others, to enkindle the world with that beneficial fire. Having accepted that mandate from the Lord, Father Jordan would refer to a certain prophet, namely, to prophet Elias. In his *Diary*, he quotes an extract from the Book of Ecclesiastes: “Elias rose up like a fire and his words blazed like a torch.” (SD I, 161) One may observe that Father Jordan applies this image of anguish to himself. Another quotation he uses comes from St. Francis Xavier: “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.” (SD I, 166) All of it shows Father Jordan’s enormous, untiring zeal in the field

of mission that is to be continued in all those places where God is not loved, but also wherever man does not feel loved by God.

Let us return to Father Jordan’s awareness of the received task, of the mission that he is to fulfill, because he has been sent. This awareness permeates the following extract from his *Spiritual Diary*: “Converse with everyone and so speak as if you came from the other world! Act, speak and conduct yourself as if you were an angel sent from God, who speaks to people of nothing else than of his God-given task. Of what use is anything earthly! I am the angel of God the Most High, who sent me to preach to you all the words of eternal life.” (SD I, 181)

These words echo the Apocalypse. Despite the fact that Father Jordan attached much importance to education, he was aware that it was not merely knowledge that he was passing on. The image that constantly recurs in his *Diary* is one of fire. In that context, he would quote Gregory the Great: “He who is not on fire does not enkindle fire.” (SD I, 186) This attitude also tells us something about the way in which we are supposed to preach the Word of God on any level. We cannot be content with preaching the Word of God in cold, impersonal, almost “aseptic” a way. What we preach must be understandable and it must enkindle fire in the listeners, it must be the Word that is disturbing, that changes their entire lives. Jean Sullivan, a French writer and a friend of mine, used to say: “A truth that has not been warmed up by the heart is a betrayed truth.” In this context, we may pose the question about the criterion of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy cannot be simply limited to a presentation of the matters in question in a strict manner, just with the purpose of revealing their truth. This would be only a minimum. I believe we remain within the limits of orthodoxy also when we are personally involved in revealing truth. Moreover, only when the Word of God is warmed up by our hearts, does it become the Word that enlightens and enkindles others. I believe we can obtain a good illustration of what I have said by referring to the scene from the Gospels that presents two disciples on their way to Emmaus. This scene indeed reveals the pedagogy of Jesus himself. Jesus approaches those two travelers and acts as an exegete of the Word of God, he explains the Scriptures to them, and it is then that they fully comprehend the Word that had already been familiar to them. It is then that they themselves confess: “Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” (Lk 24: 32) The criterion of their

understanding of the Word of God is not the mind that says, "Yes, I can understand now." Rather, it is that spark that has been enkindled their hearts. Therefore, Father Jordan can repeat: "He who is not on fire does not enkindle fire." And here is another quotation that testifies to this apostolic anxiety of his: "Pray, suffer, endure, sustain, work, fight, even unto blood; cry to God, run, fly, spend yourself totally for Christ, for the salvation of souls, and that you may accomplish those things which you resolved yesterday." (*SD II*, 17) And still another one: "Go in the name of the Most High and enkindle all." (*SD II*, 21) One might say we find here an echo of Christ's commandment: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." (*Mt 28: 19*) Father Jordan's desire for the salvation of all can be seen also at the close of his life, when he cries out to the Lord that he wants to save everyone. Before, Father Jordan would repeat those words many times, but in his case, repetition points to what is hidden in his heart. This anxiety of his was never to be extinguished.

And here is what Father Jordan says about zeal: "Let your zeal be resourceful, active, persevering, patient; it must unite gentleness and strength." (*SD III*, 23). Moreover, one must combine sweetness and strength. It is essential that the zeal should be constant, persevering, that it should not be only momentary. Resourceful zeal consists in the ability to invent new things, to use one's imagination so that one does not keep repeating the same things continuously, it is the ability to seek for new things. This kind of zeal is absolutely important in relation to the apostolic activity, in particular if we consider the constantly changing requirements in this field, as well as the danger that the habits we have developed will be like the ash extinguishing the flame. As far as acquiring habits is concerned, I can recall some scenes from my stay in Africa, where I gave a retreat. The missionaries appointed a boy called Manuel to help me around. In the way Manuel acted, I noticed both a danger and a certain comicality inherent in habitual behavior. When I arrived at the mission, Manuel took my suitcase and, according to the local custom of how heavy objects should be transported, put it on his head. I told him then, "Look, Manuel, this suitcase has two handles which are used to lift it up, try to carry it this way, and you will see this is more comfortable. Manuel listened to me, smiled, and put it back on his head. On another occasion, during recreation time, Manuel took me to the seashore, where I took the time to write post cards to my friends. Suddenly, I realized I had run out of stamps. I gave Manuel some money and told him, "Go to the village and get me

the stamps." After a while I saw him coming back with a carnet of stamps on his head. Suddenly, a gust of wind blew it away, and Manuel bent down, picked it up, put it back on his head, and then put a stone on it. The way he acted pictures the attitude of those who will repeat, "We have always done so," and do not wish to try anything new.

Let us pass on to resourcefulness, which is combined with responsibility. In Father Jordan's pedagogy, great stress was put on obedience within his religious family, which was in itself a natural thing, because the founder of a religious institute cannot overlook this important aspect of the profession of vows. Yet while reading Father Jordan's exhortations and his conferences, one may easily see that he did not want the members of his Institute to be submissive. On the contrary, he wanted them to get mature, to abandon childishness, to be capable of accepting responsibilities. They were to be obedient, but not to abandon their reason. At this point, once again, I would like to refer to a personal experience. Some time ago I was giving a retreat to a female congregation in Switzerland. Almost all the superiors of that Institute were present. During the break between two sermons, I went to see a famous Benedictine Abbey. There, I found paintings telling the story of the life of St. Placid, Martyr. There were 12 or 14 altars, and each of them was to commemorate one moment from the life of that young monk: his birth, his family life, his joining the order, his studies, his prayer. When I reached the painting that showed his martyrdom (he was beheaded), I stretched out my arms and said, "Everything ends here." But I was wrong, there was still another painting that showed St. Placid taking his head and handing it over to his abbot. When I got back to the Institute superiors I could not help telling them my interpretation of that gesture. I told them the whole story and asked them to reflect on it. "You see," I said, "St. Placid handed his head over to his superior, but he did it only at the end, before that time, he was using it. It was my sermon about obedience that assumes also responsibility.

Let us come back to the theme of zeal. "O Lord, that I may always burn ardently for love of You and inflame all. May I be a burning fire, O God, and a flaming torch." (*SD III*, 20) Father Jordan desired that flame and that zeal not only for himself, he wanted to enkindle others with it. It seems that the Founder wanted us to pass on our zeal to others, so that as many as possible would share his ideal. There is a logic in it. Father Jordan wanted that passion to become a characteristic not only of himself, but

also of his entire religious family. He even founded his religious institute precisely for that sake. In his *Diary*, I came across a sentence that surprised me: “Your vocation to found... is morally certain.” (SD I, 151a) Father Jordan wrote down those words on December 27, 1879, after he had celebrated the Holy Mass. He must have had an insight telling him that God wanted him to become a founder. Yet while learning more about Father Jordan’s life, we get the impression that he had had that certainty even before he was ordained to the priesthood. Although he could not celebrate the Holy Mass then, his certainty flowed from his contact with the Eucharist. Father Jordan matured in that belief, which would later grow into the certainty that it was the will of God that he should found a religious institute. A confirmation of it can be seen in the first part of the *Diary*, on page 151. One can say that Father Jordan’s certainty was the fruit of intense prayer. Therefore we may say that the idea to found a religious family did not come to his mind all of a sudden, rather, it was maturing in his mind through prayer and meditation. Father Jordan did not hide that together with that special founding mission he would have to accept the price that must be paid. And indeed, below on the same page, we read: “Contempt ----- calumny, ridicule ----- and the like, will rise up against you but be courageous and cling firmly to God.” So we can see that, to Father Jordan, founding an institute was not a matter of triumph, rather, it was a way on which he would encounter opposition, misunderstanding, calumny, and even ridicule. There would be even those who would consider him mad. Yet he was able to take all this, because he would

firmly cling to God.

In conclusion, I would like to show two more aspects. We spoke about zeal, but Father Jordan frequently stresses also a certain virtue in his *Diary*. It is the virtue

of patience. In fact, there obtains a very important connection between zeal and patience. Today, patience is frequently undervalued, many mistake it for being reconciled with one’s fate. Yet patience does not mean resignation, it means persistence and the ability to keep the ideal intact, even though it cannot be accomplished immediately. Patience is the ability to preserve the fire. It is not a passive virtue, but a fully active one. This is also a very important lesson that Father Jordan teaches us.

The final remark will concern Father Jordan’s self-awareness. He knows he is not infallible and that what he needs is also criticism that will send his thoughts to the right track. Indeed, he would recommend

such an attitude to his superiors, but above all, he would adopt it himself. “Have some (persons) observe you and tell you sincerely whatever is imperfect.” (SD I, 161) This idea shows also that Father Jordan recognized the need to cooperate with everyone in accomplishing his work, also with those who could notice his mistakes and talk to him about them. I think it also shows the sense of balance characteristic of Father Jordan. Owing to that attitude, he was able to appreciate his collaborators who were not servile, who would have the courage to tell him the truth.

*His spirituality is not a purpose in itself, it is not closed within its own boundaries, but open to embrace all the ways and means. There is, for instance, a close connection between the spirituality of Father Jordan and his openness to the apostolic dimension.*

Conference VI

# Spirituality Open to Eternity

**W**e have shown that Father Jordan's desire for the Absolute, for the Infinite, was one of the fundamental aspects of his spirituality. Another was eternity, which constituted a parallel dimension to that of the Infinite. It was manifest already in the life of the young Jordan. "Why, O man, are you seeking your homeland in a foreign country?" (SD I, 2), he would ask. Our homeland is not here. While belonging to this world and living in this world, Father Jordan felt alienated from it. He considered himself a pilgrim impatiently striving to reach his destination. In 1875, three years before his ordination, Father Jordan would write the following words in his *Diary*: "Do not tire, O wanderer, and never lose heart, because the Most High will strengthen and protect you on your tiring and venturesome journey to eternal paradise. O Lord and King of heaven and earth, when may I see you? The time until I can love you totally in heaven seems all too long for me. O Father, how long will you still delay? Oh, if I could already be entirely united with you" (SD I, 5). This is undoubtedly a mystical dimension in Father Jordan's spirituality.

I would also like to demonstrate that, to Father Jordan, eternity constitutes the fundamental background, being at the same time the ultimate criterion of verification for him. He would confront everything

with eternity. He wrote: "When you want to do a thing, ask yourself first of all: of what use is this for eternity?" (SD I, 10) Thus, in his opinion, eternity was the verification tool showing what is important and what is unimportant, what matters and what does not matter. In this context, Father Jordan would pose an analogical question: What will this avail for God? "What will this avail for eternity?" (SD I, 21) And he would conclude saying: "Whatever is not eternal is nothing" (SD III, 1)

On this earth, we have been given an opportunity to perform acts that have an eternal value. Within the spirituality of Father Jordan, this fact opens the horizon of eternity. An Italian novelist, showing a rather distant attitude to religion, once said about a certain priest that "he was a priest who seemed to be giving you the address to heaven, whenever he was speaking to you." I think a similar thing can be said about Father Jordan, except that he would give you the desire for the paradise instead of the address to heaven.

The subject that Father Jordan frequently brought up was time. He considered time very important, but perceived it in the perspective of eternity. He found every day a borrowed time, something that he received as a gift. "Do not lose a moment," (SD II, 50) he would say. Oscar Romero, a bishop killed in El Salvador, liked to quote a song popular in El Salvador, which went: "Life is eternal in five minutes." It might seem a paradox, but five minutes, even one minute, can have the value of eternity. Such was also Father Jordan's belief.

Probing deeper into the subject of the previous conference, we can say that Father Jordan was an extremely active man, and that he at the same time had an unlimited trust in the Providence. Paired with his activity, was his disposition for contemplation. At the foundation of everything, there lay the Pact that he made with God. We can even give the precise date of that event, it was made on April 20, 1903. We learn about it from the following entry:

*Pact between the Almighty and His lowliest creature.*

*1. The said creature gives himself totally and forever to his almighty Creator.*

2. *The creature gives and will give to his Creator, whatever the Creator Himself has given, gives and will give to him.*

3. *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.*

4. *The creature will lead also the irrational creatures to the service of the Almighty.* (SD II, 52)

Then, on the next page of the *Diary*, we read:

*The creature confidently expects from the Almighty these graces, through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary:*

1. *The Creator will clothe his creature with great sanctity, above all with humility so that, as far as this is possible, he may be a useful instrument of Divine Providence and may faithfully fulfill his promises, and after this life He will receive him into eternal joys.*

2. *The Creator, in His omnipotence, will assist His creature with a strong arm, to accomplish what he has proposed.*

A great familiarity with God is indispensable so that such a pact could be made. While stressing this

aspect of Father Jordan's great trust in God, we need to add that Father Jordan was working very hard indeed without saving his efforts. He spent all his time on the realization of his project, yet he did not rely on his own strength, but on the strength of God.

***To Father Jordan,  
eternity constitutes the  
fundamental background,  
being at the same time  
the ultimate criterion  
of verification for him.  
He would confront  
everything with eternity***

Entries such as, for instance, "When dark clouds brood over you and cold frost invades your heart, fling yourself patiently into the arms of your Savior!" (SD I, 3), "My child, do not lose your tranquility or peace of heart" (SD I, 13), and "Anxiety brings danger" (SD I, 17), testify to it.

Such entries in his *Diary*, were to be first of all Father Jordan's encouragements directed to himself, but they also served those who would turn to him for advice. We read, among other things: "O my soul, throw yourself completely into the arms of God; do not lose heart, even if snares are laid for

you on all sides; rise up to God, especially in these terrible and indescribable hours of affliction. Know that the good God loves you, even if He strikes you hard and heavy." (SD I, 37) He liked to quote Father Huby's maxim: "The more a soul completely abandons itself to the Lord, the more it is in safe-keeping." (SD I, 69) Entrusting oneself to God means being in safe-keeping. Father Jordan would also readily repeat a sentence from the First Letter of St. Peter: "Cast all your cares upon Him, because He cares for us." (1 Pet 5: 7; see: SD I, 163) About a year before his death Father Jordan wrote down in his *Diary*: "Great confidence in God!" (SD IV, 34) and he repeated those words five times. Also in the second part of the *Diary* we find a beautiful illustration of Father Jordan's confidence in God: "My confidence in God and the providence of God toward me resemble the two

plates of a scale. The more weight is put on the first, the higher goes the second.” (SD II, 9) In the second part he also writes: “Strive for the goal and have confidence! Should every (kind of) suffering break upon you, throw yourself into the arms of God. Oh trust in Him, He is able truly to do everything and He loves you above all. Trust! Trust! Trust! Trust!” (SD II, 19) At the end of his life Father Jordan put down: “Confidence in God” and repeated it seven times (SD II, 116), and let us have in mind that, according to the Bible, seven is the perfect number. A similar entry concerning prayer is also repeated seven times. A reflection of the state of Father Jordan’s soul can be found in the words of the Psalm: “The Lord is my strength and my shield, in whom my heart trusted and found help. So my heart rejoices; with my song I praise my God” (Ps 27: 7), which prompt finding strength in the Lord and singing his glory.



Father Jordan’s confidence in God was also manifested in his belief that one should not rely so much on human resources, one should be aware of their relative value. In that respect, he quoted St. Vincent de Paul: “Those undertakings which begin in simple and ordinary ways will be more favored by God, than those in which one employs unusual and brilliant means.” (SD I, 175) Today, an opposite conviction predominates, we tend to think that “brilliant means” are indispensable. The first thing taken into account is precisely the human resources, and it might seem that God does not participate in certain undertakings any longer.

In his founding activity, Father Jordan sometimes faced difficulties; occasionally, he would fall into debt. In such situations, he would frequently quote a saying of Father Bosco, who, while asked by a certain minister of the Italian Republic how he managed to accomplish his works, answered: “I move forward, like an engine, making: ‘puff, puff puff’” and let us note that in the Piedmont dialect the word *puf* means

“debt.” In the first part of the *Diary*, Father Jordan wrote down: “A man who directs his steps only according to the calculations of human wisdom will never be able to build on the extraordinary help of heaven, he will never accomplish great things.” (SD I, 200) A manifestation of his attitude to the material resources can in turn be found in the words of St. John Chrysostom he wrote down in his *Diary*: “They did not convert the world by their miracles, but because of their true contempt for glory and wealth.” (SD I, 163)

We still need to say something about Father Jordan’s attitude to prayer. In fact, Father Jordan combined work, his untiring activity, with an unlimited confidence in God’s Providence as well as with prayer. In my opinion, what strikes you in Father Jordan’s personality, is his contemplative dimension. It is reflected in some characteristic phrases he used, like, for instance: “My prayer will never be fruitless provided it is

good prayer; either I will be granted what I ask, or I will obtain still greater graces.” (SD I, 170)

Sometimes we get the impression that God will not hear our prayers, but we should never get discouraged. God will hear them in some other way, he will grant us something even greater than what we have asked for. What did prayer mean to Father Jordan? Certainly, it was a request for graces, but also a praise, a blessing. He put a great stress on the Liturgy being beautiful and admirable.

A characteristic aspect of Father Jordan’s prayer, which manifested his deep familiarity with the Bible, was fighting with God. He would repeat the words of the rarely quoted Venerable Pompilio Pirotti: “Argue with God, insist with Him, pester Him, and indeed do the same with His beautiful Mother, Mary, because this pleases them and they rejoice over your importunity.” (SD I, 183) Yet this is precisely what the Bible prompts. While reading it, we will notice that the greatest confessors were those who could

also fight with God. Let us recall, for instance, the experience of Jacob or the prayer of Moses, who poses a challenge to the Lord: "If you would only forgive their sin! If you will not, then strike me out of the book that you have written." (Ex 32: 32) Also prophets often demonstrated such attitudes. Again, Moses said to the Lord: "Was it I who conceived all this people? [...] I cannot carry all this people by myself, for they are too heavy for me." (Num 11: 12-14) I am certain that in our prayers we frequently commit the sin of insincerity. Sometimes, while praying we in a way "hire" the feelings we believe we should have, but in fact they are not ours. The thing is that while praying we must be ready to argue with God, to fight with him. It makes no sense to say, "Lord, I accept your will, I am calm, I'm in peace," while in fact we are full of agitation. We say,

"That person has offended me, that person has hurt me, but I no longer blame him or her," while in reality we feel the opposite. Instead of adopting such a false attitude, we should tell the Lord about our feelings, tell him that we are unable to forgive yet. One needs to have the courage to present one's vulnerabilities to the Lord, to tell him what one really feels, because this is in what true intimacy with him consists. Peace is not the point of departure, but the goal to be accomplished, even if it be after a fight with God.

I remember an elderly parish priest in a small town high in the mountains where I was once giving a sermon on prayer during the retreat. He came to me later and confided in me, saying ironically that even having lived so long (he was almost 80 years old) he still could not pray well. Then I asked him, "How come you aren't capable of praying?" And he answered me very sincerely, "Because when I am praying, I see that He and I never agree." I believe that becoming aware of that fact can also be the fruit of prayer.



Fr. Alessandro Pronzato praying at the tomb of the Founder.

Father Jordan would recommend that we pray even when it is difficult and arduous, even if it seems not useful, if we think God does not hear us. Despite all such feelings let us pray, let us bombard God, who can do anything. One can say such prayer has an urging force, it will make God hear us.

To conclude, I will tell you a story that may serve as an illustration of what I have just said. One day,

early in the morning, a Sephardi Jew was praying loudly, swaying his body, in front of the Wall of Mourning (which the Jews call Western Wall). An elderly American non-practising Jew spotted him and got interested in what he saw. Hours were passing and he was still looking on. In the end, after five hours had passed,

he could not stand it any longer, went up to the praying Jew and padded him on the shoulder. The praying Jew turned round and asked him, "Why are you disturbing me in my prayer?" "I am sorry, but I have been watching you since early morning and I see that you have been praying like that all this time," said the American Jew. "Yes," replied the Sephardi Jew, "Because I am experiencing a difficult time, and I have a lot to ask for, for myself, for my wife, for my children, for those in hospital... I have so many things to ask God for!" "Does it work?" asked the American Jew. "Haven't you noticed I am standing in front of a wall?" answered the Sefardic Jew.

Sometimes while praying we experience such an impression of talking to a wall, because God is silent, or he seems to be deaf. Yet this is not so. Father Jordan tells us to bombard God with prayer, because he will intervene at the right time. That was his certainty in which he wanted us to share.

## Testimony of Broz Jaku from Albania



Broz Jaku with his wife – holding the effigy of Father Jordan

My name is Broz Jaku. I am married and I have three wonderful children. I live in Sheldi, in the north of Albania, and my wife is a lay Salvatorian. She highly appreciates being a member of a community of lay Salvatorians. Her presence among them helps our family to grow in the climate of love. Together with my wife, I wish to testify to a miracle I experienced through the intercession of Father Jordan. The event took place on September 13, 2008.

It was a stormy day and it was raining heavily. There was frequent lightning in the sky as I was on a pasture with my herd of goats. At about 14.30 hours an enormous bolt of lightning struck the herd. I was standing among the goats, in the middle of the herd. The lightning killed twenty goats in front of me. As I was among them, I could not comprehend what had happened.

On my way back home I met my wife, who went out to meet me. I told her about what had happened. She said instantly it was a miracle done by Father Jordan that I was safe and sound and that I had survived. I must say right when it had happened I did not think about it that way, although the idea crossed my mind, because earlier all our family had entrusted ourselves to the care of Father Jordan and we prayed to him every evening.

To conclude, I would like to mention one more detail. On the morning of that day I made a wooden bust of Father Jordan. I was making it with a particular intention. Now I want to thank God that he saved my life through the intercession of Father Jordan.

Sheldi, October 12, 2008  
- Broz Jaku



Kevin Reinaldo Carranza Ibujes

## A Child in Ecuador is Cured From Lupus

A 12 year old boy Kevin Reinaldo Carranza Ibujes from Quito Ecuador, was cured from systemic lupus erythematosus in a *surprising way* after Father Luis Emilio Obando, a Salvatorian parish priest in the Church of Cumbayá (near Quito) went to see him at the hospital and prayed for the intercession of Fr. Francis of the Cross Jordan for the child's recovery. He also gave him a medal with the image of Fr. Jordan on it. On September 29, 2008, Father Edgar Orozco Balcázar, doctor and surgeon, went to see Kevin Reinaldo and made a report from which we extract the following:

"I met the boy on September the 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 in his family house in Quito – Ecuador. The next day I made a complete medical examination taking into account the clinical history sent by father Gabriel Sierra, SDS the month before. On the 1<sup>st</sup> October I had a meeting with Dr. Norma Moncayo, immunologist, pediatrician and the boy's treating doctor, who confirmed that Kevin's disease was very aggressive and for that reason the treatment was not giving the results they expected. In such conditions, even the boy's death was foreseeable as the consequence of the evolution of the disease. Then even the doctor said that "the touch of God was in Kevin's recovery".

YEAR 2009  
of JORDAN



Kevin with Father Emilio Obando SDS



Kevin with his family

As a doctor and surgeon, with a specialization in health administration and as a student with a Masters in Bioethics, my opinion about Kevin's case is that:

The clinical, pathology and lab diagnoses of Kevin Carranza's case was of systemic lupus erythematosus. On September the 29<sup>th</sup> 2008 I met a patient with sequela of lupus who was undergoing a treatment (with centrum, aloair, plaquinol, meticorten, omeprazol) and false-negative lupus test. For me *it was an incredible evolution in the medical treatment of the disease* that the doctors attribute to the excellent treatment, even if only time will tell if the boy is totally cured from the disease.

The most surprising thing for me is the medical recovery the patient has had, according to what he, his family and the doctors say, as well as the false negative lupus tests after having prayed for the inter-

cession of Father Jordan and the imposition of the medal with the image of Father Francis Jordan.



Kevin holding the Father Jordan medal.

Father Emilio Obando SDS wrote his testimony in a document (he was the one who prayed and gave the boy a medal with the image of Father Jordan) that is with the clinical history. I also hope that the boy's grandmother could bear witness of the case too. All the clinical history, lab and pathology tests were put together with

all the signatures that make the documents valid.

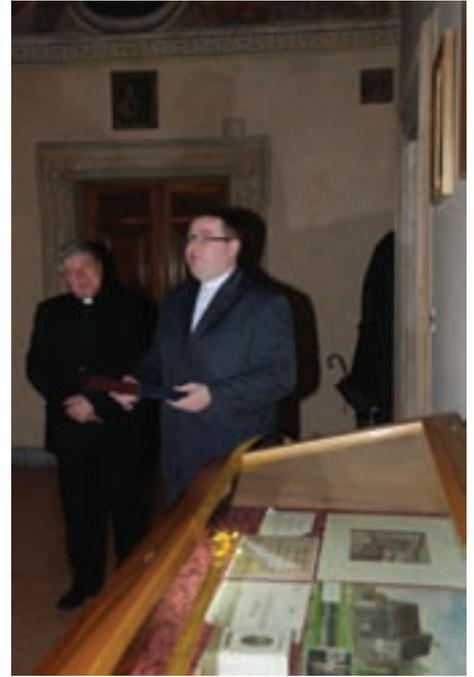
I am attentive to the clues that could give me a light in the research we are doing.

This is the witness of the doctor and Salvatorian priest Edgar Orozco Balcázar. We thank God for this event and we do not doubt that God acts through the intercession of Father Jordan for many people's sake.

- Mario Agudelo Roldán, SDS



Father Andrew Urbanski SDS, Superior General, opening the "Year of Jordan" exhibit



Father Adam Teneta SDS giving a guided tour of the exhibition

## A New Exhibition in the Motherhouse to Mark the "Year of Jordan"

For some years now, an exhibition devoted to the Servant of God Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan is held annually in the Motherhouse in Rome, where the chapel with the tomb of the Founder of the Salvatorians is located. The previous exhibitions presented various aspects of the Founder's life and activity. Their purpose was to popularize the man whose vision of the Church, supported by his zealous thirst for the evangelization of all, made him the Founder of two religious congregations, some of the many that appeared at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many years before the Second Vatican Council. One should note that Father Jordan was a particularly innovative Founder, although he has not been generally recognized as such yet. Thus each exhibition offers an opportunity for the visitors to become acquainted with the documents and showpieces that are otherwise inaccessible to the public. During the year, they are stored in the Postulation Archives, and even those visiting our Motherhouse normally have no opportunity to see them, since they remain on the shelves or in the drawers in the Postulation Archives. Brought into the daylight, they become a great attraction not only for Father Jordan's spiritual sons and daughters, but also for all those who come to visit our Motherhouse from all corners of the world.

On November 30, 2008, the Feast of the Apostle Andrew, a patron of our Society, which was also our Superior General's name day, another exhibition devoted to our Founder was opened. This time the subject of the show was inspired by the current YEAR OF JORDAN, proclaimed by the leaders of the Salvatorian Family. The proclamation was made because the year 2008 made three round anniversaries: the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Father Jordan's birth, the 130<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination, and the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. The archival exhibits displayed in three separate showcases have been chosen to mark precisely these three anniversaries.

The first showcase, with its content devoted to the anniversary of the birth of John Baptist Jordan on June 16, 1848, displays a graphic image of his family tree presenting his progenitors and closest relatives. One can also see there a copy of the entry in the Parish Book of Baptisms of Gurtweil, and two Baptism Certificates coming, respectively, from 1904 and 1952. The other exhibits include the oldest original photograph of John Baptist Jordan dating from 1860 (from the period when he was a primary school student), a photograph of the interior of the parish church of Gurtweil, as well as one of the interior of the house in which Father Jordan was born. The content of the showcase is complemented by watercolors painted by Fr. Makward Probst, SDS (1901-1978),

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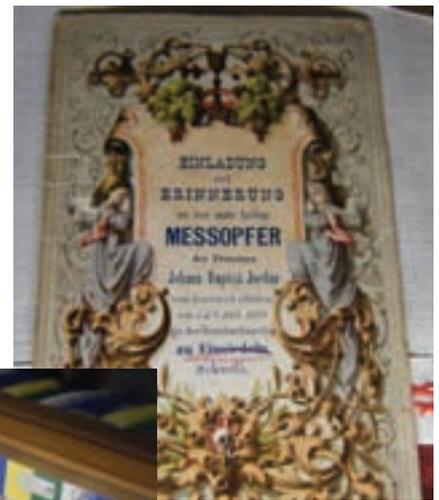


showing a panorama of the village of Gurtweil and the view of the Apostles St. Simon and St. Jude Thaddeus Parish Church, the Jordan family house, the interior of the bedroom where Father Jordan was born, and a sketch made by feather showing the 17<sup>th</sup> century baptistery in the Gurtweil church, where – a day after he was born – Father Jordan was baptized and received the name of John Baptist, the great Prophet and “Voice Calling in the Desert.” The visitors may also read a specially displayed note with the entry made by Fr. F. Clar, the parish priest of Gurtweil: *In year 1848, on June 16, at 8.00 hours, John Baptist, a lawful child of the local citizen Lawrence Jordan and Notburga Peter von Bühl, was born here, and he was baptized in church by the undersigned on June 17, at 7.00 hours.*

The content of the second showcase includes exhibits pertaining to the anniversary of Father John Baptist Jordan’s ordination on July 21, 1878. The following extract from the testimony to his ordination was put on display: *We make it known to all and we declare hereby as follows: On day 21 of the month of July in year 1878, thanks to the grace of the Holy Spirit, while administering Holy Orders in St. Peter’s Parish Church, according to the rite of the Holy Roman Church, we ordained the beloved in Christ John Baptist Jordan of Gurtweil and elevated him to the priestly dignity.* One can also see an

imposing, original document stamped and signed by His Excellency Bishop Lothar von Kübel, who ordained the Servant of God, as well as a photograph of the Bishop. In this showcase, watercolors by Fr. Makward Probst, SDS, are also displayed, presenting the places connected to Father Jordan at the time of his priestly ordination. The most prominent among them is the painting that shows the seminary building and St. Peter’s Church near Freiburg im Breisgau, where Father Jordan was ordained. The other watercolors in this showcase include a panorama of the town of Döttingen, the interior of the church, and the altar at which the new priest celebrated his first Holy Mass. In the same showcase, visitors can see the Founder’s chalice with the paten and his vestment, as well as two beautiful colored invitations to Father Jordan’s first Mass in the parish of Döttingen. Initially, it was planned that the first Masses would be celebrated in Einsiedeln and such information was printed in the invitations. Thus one can see the handwritten corrections introduced by Fr. John Baptist Jordan, who indicated that his first Mass would be held in Döttingen, Switzerland. The final object in this cabinet is a photograph from 1882, showing the young John Baptist Jordan.

The content of the third showcase commemorates the anniversary of the death of the Servant of God on September 8, 1918. The following entry from



the Book of the Deceased in the parish of Tafers was put in a prominent place: *In year 1918, on day 7 of the month of September, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan died in the Tafers hospital after having been administered the Sacraments, and he was buried in St. Martin Church on September 11.* This showcase also contains watercolors by Fr. Makward Probst, SDS. One of them shows the chapel in Freiburg, Switzerland, where, on June 25, 1918, the Founder celebrated the Holy Mass for the last time in his life. Adjacent to this watercolor painting, one can see the liturgical calendar of the Society of the Divine Savior from 1918, opened on the page on which Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer marked the day when Father Jordan celebrated the Holy Mass for the last time, as well as the liturgical form the Founder used. The next watercolor presents the hospital building in Tafers, and adjacent to it, one can see an original photograph showing the room in which the life of the Servant of God ended. In the center of the cabinet, visitors can see Father Jordan's death mask and, beside it, a hand watch that Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS, stopped at the time of Father Jordan's death (20.02 hours). The watch was a gift from Father Pfeiffer to Father Jordan and the Founder used it till the end of his life. Even during his sickness and stay in hospital, he did not wish to have an alarm clock with a bigger face bought for him so that he could

see it more easily. The other archival objects on display include obituaries announcing the death of the Founder of the Salvatorians, the original condolence telegram sent from the Vatican by Cardinal Gasparri in which the Holy Father Benedict XV expressed his condolences to the Salvatorians, a copy of the entry in the register of the dead for the municipal office, a photograph of the dead body of the Servant of God, wooden parts of the coffin in which he was buried, as well as a photograph taken during the funeral in the church in Tafers. Finally, the display shows photographs taken on September 12, 1956, during the exhumation of the earthly remains of the Servant of God in the parish church of Tafers, before they were transported to Rome. Visitors can see some photographs taken during Father Jordan's second burial that took place in the Motherhouse in 1956. The photos show the community of Salvatorians and Salvatorian Sisters gathered around their Founder's coffin. One of the photographs taken during the exhumation is a moving testimony to the opinion of the Founder's sanctity: it can be seen how, after the coffin with the earthly remains of the Servant of God Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan was opened, one of the confreres solemnly rubbed his rosary beads against them.

- Fr. Bronisław Jakubiec, SDS

## Under one Roof with Father Jordan



In the 16th century, when the foundations were being laid of the present St. Peter's Basilica, in the place of the former Basilica of Constantine in Rome, Cardinal Francesco Armellini started the construction of a palace in the vicinity of St. Peter's Square. Today, it is known as the Cesi Palace, as it was named after Cardinal Pierdonato Cesi, its later owner, who renovated it at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Part of the palace is located on the site of the ancient via Cornelia that led from the Elijah Bridge towards the Vatican. It was along that road that St. Peter was led from the Mamertine Prison to be crucified at Nero's Circus (which was located on the site of today's St. Peter's Square). St. Peter was buried at the foot of the Vatican Hill, and today a magnificent Basilica stands over his tomb.

Due to its architectural design and artistic value the Cesi Palace has been included among the most important historical monuments in Latium. Most remarkable are its frescoes, attributed to the famous painter Pietro da Cortona, among them a rare one that gives the illusion of movement: its position changes depending on the place from where you look at it.

In the four hundred years of its history, the Palace changed owners several times. In the 1880's, it was first rented, and then purchased from Prince Giuseppe Caffarelli Negroni by the Servant of God Father



Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, the Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior, of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, and of the Lay Salvatorians. Father Jordan must have frequently passed the Cesi Palace on his way to St. Peter's Basilica. He needed to rent a building after he had founded a new, but already rapidly growing religious Institute. He had to find rooms to accommodate the candidates as well as to establish a permanent residence of his foundation. Today, the Salvatorians on

all continents call this building *Casa Madre*, or the Motherhouse.

Father Jordan lived there for thirty three years. It was there that he would receive new candidates for his Institute. It was there that he would say farewell to the first Salvatorians leaving for the new foundations. It was there that, accompanied by his first collaborators, he developed his dream for reaching all the people all over the world – the people of all races and languages, the people of all nations and skin colors – with the Good News that Jesus Christ is the only Savior of the world and of man. It was from that house that Father Jordan would set off for his trips to join his spiritual sons spread all over the world and to strengthen them in their Salvatorian vocation. It was from there that he would set off on his journeys to start new foundations and communities.

Father Jordan's last trip away from the Motherhouse was very painful, as he was going to exile. It was the time of the First World War, and he had to leave Rome for the sake of his safety. He then moved the Generalate to Switzerland, which was a neutral state, and made the confreres of German nationality go to South America so that they could avoid being drafted and sent to the front line. Yet some of them were buffeted by the winds of war and had to change from their religious habits to military uniforms. The Founder probably did not realize that his trip away from Rome was his farewell to the Motherhouse, where he was never to return in his lifetime. On September 8, 1918, three years after he had left, he died in the opinion of sanctity in Tifers, Switzerland, and was buried in the local church.

Yet the spiritual sons of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan could not imagine that their Founder would not return to Rome. In 1956, his earthly remains were solemnly brought from Switzerland to Rome, and reburied in the chapel, today called the Chapel of the Founder, which has now become a shrine and the goal of pilgrimages of the Salvatorians, of Salvatorian sisters and lay Salvatorians from almost all over the world. One can see it in the supplications written down in many different languages in the visitors' book placed beside Father Jordan's tomb. Among visitors to Father Jordan's tomb have been Bishops and Cardinals, and the most remarkable pilgrim was the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, who prayed there in 1999. Today, Father Jordan's tomb is

surrounded with flowers. A candle is continuously burning, and every day the religious community gathers for prayer, in which it does not forget about its Father, and prays for his forthcoming beatification.

Every day, the Motherhouse speaks to those who live under one roof with Father Jordan. It reminds us about our Salvatorian history and tradition. While we live surrounded by works of art, and by the magnificent monuments of the Cesi Palace, while the past centuries speak to us, we remain aware that it is the Founder that is our treasure in this house. Every day, we follow the same corridors he used to follow, we look at the world globe he frequently studied, dreaming of the distant lands to which he wanted to send hosts of Salvatorians. We look at the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Lourdes in whose hands he would put little pieces of paper with supplications for help in important matters. To us, inhabitants of the Motherhouse, his desk, his library, his worn out kneeler, his shoes and his habit, are silent testimonies to his sanctity and zeal in the salvation of souls he demonstrated throughout his lifetime. We believe that he intercedes for us to the Savior also now, after his death.

His intercession and his support are something we all need very much, because it is precisely here, under the same roof, that the works he started are being continued. It is here that decisions important to the whole Society are taken and problems resolved, it is here that every Superior General, successor of Father Jordan, lives. It is here that, together with the Generalate, he governs the work for which Father Jordan sacrificed all his life. It is here that international gatherings of Salvatorians are held, it is here that international Salvatorian commissions have their sessions and confreres meet. It is here that numerous Salvatorians from all parts of the world come to live when they arrive in Rome to start specialist academic studies. It is here that they find the eternal spring, as the past centuries speak to them, and the example of the sanctity of the First Salvatorian, the Servant of God Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, is radiating also today. This example is the source of perseverance and strength so much needed by his spiritual sons so that they could do a still better service to the Holy Church at its very heart, in the shadow of the Apostolic Palace and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, in an immediate vicinity of the Vicar of Christ.

- Fr. Bronisław Jakubiec, SDS

## First founding group of Professional Salvatorians



A group of professionals at the tomb of Father Jordan

**S**unday, June 22 2008, the first founding group of “Professional Salvatorians”, after the Holy Mass held in the chapel of the Mother House of the Salvatorians in Rome, placed a plaque on the tomb of the Founder to remember this important day.

Architects, engineers, psychologists, teachers, educators, social workers, journalists, editors, computer engineers, doctors and health workers entrusted the idea of a Salvatorian missionary project to the Servant of God Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan and to Blessed Mary of the Apostles, asking them to sustain the initiative and to nourish its development, *so that all may know Jesus the Divine Savior.*

Since about a year, Mariella D’Angelica Lay Salvatorian, began to awaken various groups of professionals inspired by the original idea of the Founder on the Catholic Teaching Society: *an apostolate that reunites men of culture, journalists, scientists and all men of good will to unite forces and bring the message of salvation to the world.*

The work of Father Jordan issued from his great apostolic zeal. From the beginning of his priesthood, but even before it, he felt driven to gather around

himself a big group of lay collaborators in order to exert apostolic work on a large scale. Therefore, this is not a new idea, but an inspired indication, re-read and put in practice.

All of it began gradually and then each person encouraged others to participate. It was intentionally a slow process made up of pleasant and light-hearted encounters in which the idea was shared right away with everyone. In this first phase, it was very important to dedicate much time, so that the people could gradually assimilate the idea. Already in a few months, in fact, the first participants became enthusiastic, and formed various groups with an average of 6-7 people in each area.

The project was launched precisely in the year of Fr. Jordan, so that with his help a work could develop with the help of a few, for the good of all.

The goals inspired by the original idea of the Educational Catholic Society are: to spread the faith and the message of salvation to all and in every place, without limitations of any kind; to go in mission where the need of God is greatest, where he is yet unknown and where he has been forgotten; to sustain the faith and vocations in Catholic countries;

A group of professionals in the Motherhouse chapel



to encourage all professionals to be good witnesses of the Gospel and to commit oneself to the service of the poor and of the needy.

The great hope of this project is in the domino effect, that is, in the capacity to move through the exhortations of Fr. Jordan's "Voice" to the point of awakening in the people who accepted the invitation the desire to call other friends in their turn. This always happens when one discovers new and beautiful things.

The teaching method used in the meetings was simple in the sense that it responded to questions always and only with the words of Fr. Jordan, avoiding any risk of personal interpretation. In this regard, a good intuition was that of eliminating the classical figure of the formation-leader, but to present to the groups a welcoming person who offers his service as a simple messenger of the words of the Founder. In this way every group feels completely free to give life and shape to its own projects.

Another inspiration is found in the profound sense that Fr. Jordan has of humility to which one needs always to make reference and for this reason the work which we propose wishes to be clearly a work of continuous elaboration. We must be convinced that, to bring the development of Jordan's idea for professionals to fruition, it must be shaped and realized with the contribution of all of its participants, because its growth must not be stimulated by the single individual, but by every man and woman who progressively will participate in it. The great innovative intuition is

really in this concept, the "infinite project", so that all: "... may know you, the unique and true God, and the One you have sent, Jesus Christ."

The first thing that is said to the professionals is that of understanding the important Salvatorian concept of *being completely contemplative and completely active*. Fr. Jordan was a man of prayer and his every action was strictly connected to it, as he said: "*If you wish to be suitable for an assignment, if you wish to become apostles, if you wish to do great things, become men of prayer. You cannot realize your assignment if you do not have the strength and the grace from on high. The more you will turn to the earth, the less you will accomplish your mission. The more you will turn to heaven, the more you will accomplish.*" (The Voice 243).

Especially for professionals, naturally inclined through their work to act, it is fundamental to understand the power of contemplation and of prayer. But even this aspect, initially full of doubts, received the most beautiful answer when they themselves asked to place the "first stone" of such a project in front of the tomb of the Founder, after the Holy Mass in the chapel of the house of the Superior General.

To conclude, a quick note on the calendar of the new group. The first assembly is scheduled for July 8<sup>th</sup>, while March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009 there will be a benefit concert in Rome, to present the idea and contemporarily receive the necessary funds to sustain the new project. *All for the glory of God and for the salvation of souls.*



Bishop Oneres Marchiori of Lages (Brazil) with Fr. Milton Zonta SDS



Bishop William Pascal Kikoti of Mpanda and Bishop Desiderius Rwoma of Singida (Tanzania) with Cardinal Polycarp Pengo of Dar es Salaam, Father Andrew Urbanski SDS, and members of the Motherhouse community: Frs Zdzisław Tracz, Amon Kibung'a Sway and Brother Chrisanth Buberwa Mrwani



A group of pilgrims from Gurtweil



Salvatorian sisters from Albania



The Generalate of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother



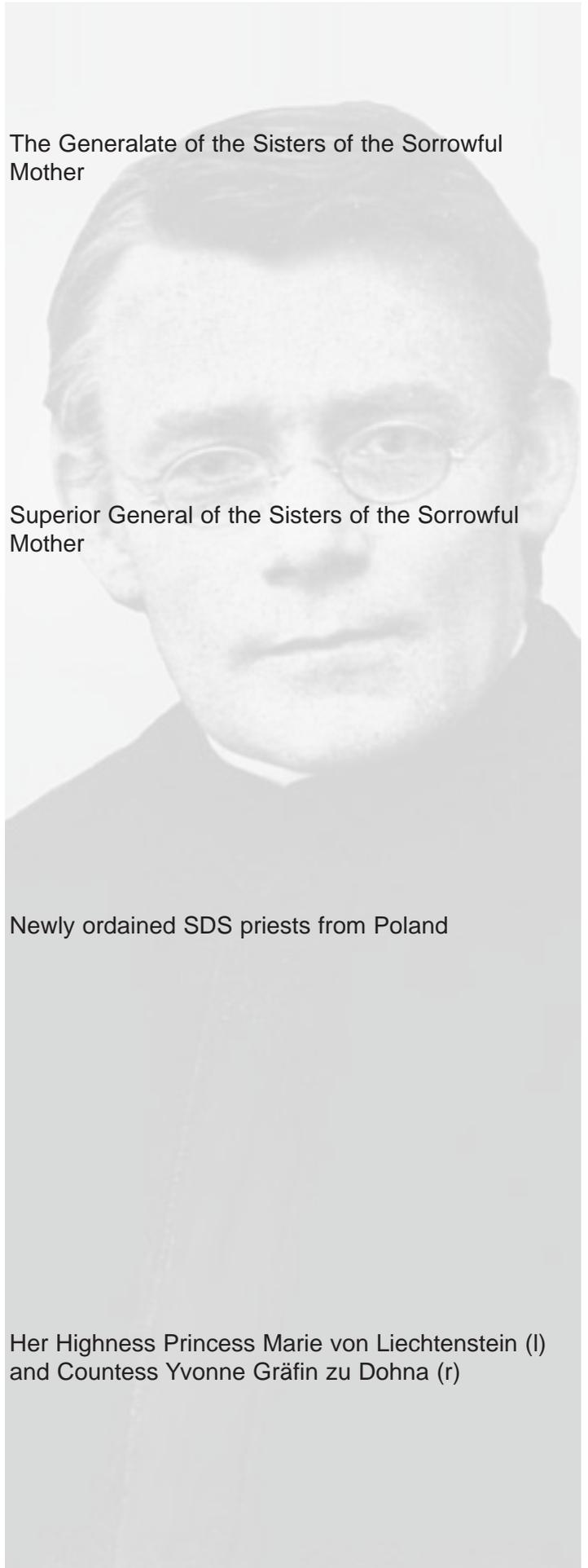
Superior General of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother



Newly ordained SDS priests from Poland



Her Highness Princess Marie von Liechtenstein (l) and Countess Yvonne Gräfin zu Dohna (r)





(l to r) Archimandrite Sergiusz Gajek, Apostolic Visitor for Greek Catholics in Belorussia; Bishop Wladyslaw Blin of Vitebsk; Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk-Mohilev; Fr. Andrew Urbanski SDS; Bishop Aleksander Kaszkiewicz of Grodno (Belorussia).



Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk-Mohilev (Belorussia)



Archimandrite Sergiusz Gajek, Apostolic Visitor for Greek Catholics in Belorussia



Archbishop Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz of Minsk-Mohilev (Belorussia)



Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture



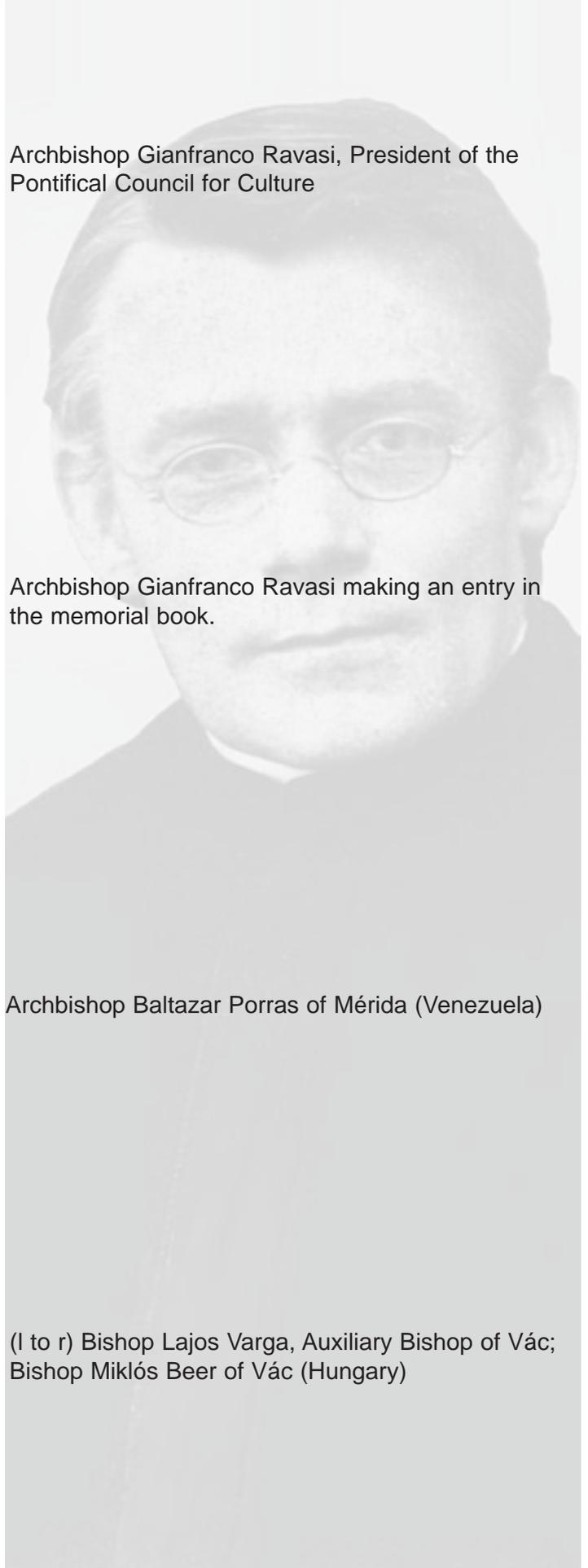
Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi making an entry in the memorial book.



Archbishop Baltazar Porras of Mérida (Venezuela)



(l to r) Bishop Lajos Varga, Auxiliary Bishop of Vác; Bishop Miklós Beer of Vác (Hungary)





Archbishop Evarist Pinto of Karachi (Pakistan)



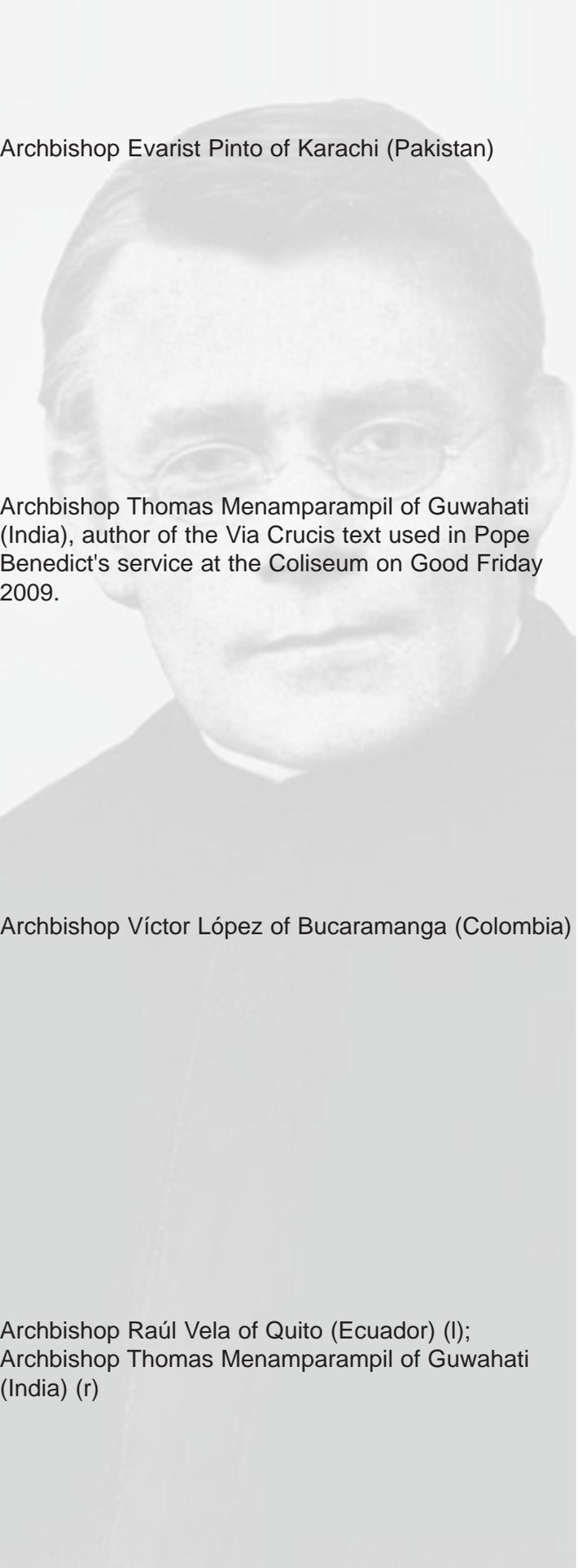
Archbishop Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati (India), author of the Via Crucis text used in Pope Benedict's service at the Coliseum on Good Friday 2009.



Archbishop Víctor López of Bucaramanga (Colombia)



Archbishop Raúl Vela of Quito (Ecuador) (l); Archbishop Thomas Menampampil of Guwahati (India) (r)

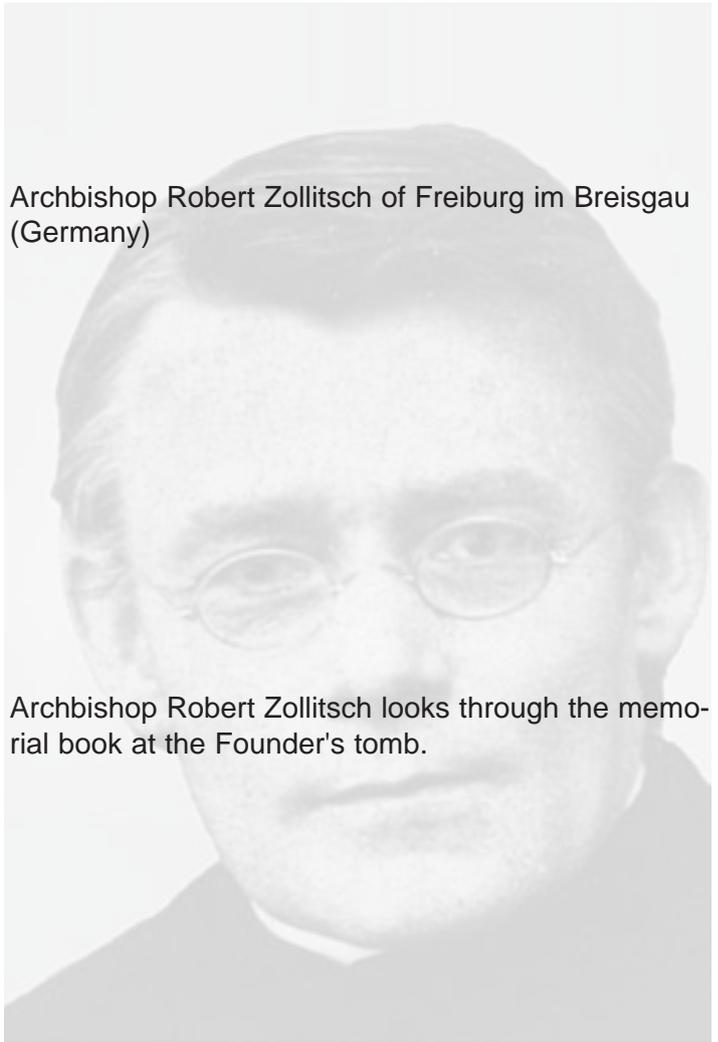




Archbishop Robert Zollitsch of Freiburg im Breisgau (Germany)



Archbishop Robert Zollitsch looks through the memorial book at the Founder's tomb.



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