



Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer SDS *Apostle – Leader – Peacemaker*

Prayer Service for his 75th Death Anniversary¹

1. Introduction:

Welcome everyone to this moment of communitarian prayer with which we want to honor the 75th anniversary of the death of our confrere Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer (1945 - 2020). With our whole Salvatorian Family, we want to give thanks to God for his magnificent witness of consecrated life as a Salvatorian apostle, leader and promoter of peace. In Pancratius' life story we find a faithful testimony of what it means to live Fr. Francis Jordan's apostolic charism with depth.

- Invoke the Holy Trinity...
- Song: *Salvator Mundi (or another song)*

2. Opening Prayer:

God of kindness and love, as we remember and honor the life of Father Pancratius Pfeiffer on the 75th anniversary of his death, help us to recognize how his extraordinarily gracious spirit of service for all people, can inspire us especially today.

As we face many global challenges, open our heart, mind and soul, so that we may move forward together with courage as the one body of Christ, our Divine Saviour - blessed, broken and to be shared with gratitude for the good of all. A prayer we make in your sacred name. Amen.

3. Reading from Titus 2:11-14 and 3:4-7

- *On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the Society, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, as Superior General, commissioned the verses from Titus 2:11-13 to be inscribed on the walls of the motherhouse chapel. This text, "The kindness and love of*

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“God for humanity has appeared in God our Savior,” was brought to the fore by our Founder, but was popularized by Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer.

Reader: “For the grace of God has appeared, saving all and training us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age, as we await the blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to deliver us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people as his own, eager to do what is good... But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.” *The Word of the Lord.*

Silent Reflection

How do we give witness to God’s generous love and kindness today?

4. Praying the life testimony of Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer:



4.1 - A Salvatorian Exemplary Apostle

Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer entered the Society at sixteen years of age. Soon after being ordained, because of his wisdom, compassionate heart, and apostolic commitment, he became increasingly involved in the administrative responsibilities of the Society. As the righthand person of Fr. Francis Jordan, he also became the pivotal contact with the Vatican’s top officials for many years.

- a. “But I thank the good Lord that I have known the Most Reverend Father General personally. On a few occasions, I got to know only some of his excellent qualities. I saw and experienced his rare greatness: his wide always helpful heart; a kindness that is so pleasant because it is so simple; joyful and natural, and this was combined with unusual energy.” (By Sister M. Regis, *Superior General of the Mission Congregation of the Servants of the Holy Spirit*)
- b. “What a beautiful reward the Lord will give him after such a laborious, full, and holy life. Our little house that has the great honor of having had him as chaplain for more than 40 years ... our girls, who all morning waited for a good word from him and often a reflection that always brought a note of healthy cheerfulness. And for us Sisters, he provided examples of piety, of meditation, of self-denial, of faithfulness to our ministry... (By Sister Margherita Defasques, *(The Daughters of Charity)*)
- c. Father Pancratius has always edified and comforted us with his shining example. He was always in the same pleasant mood despite his countless worries. He was exceptionally prudent, boundless in charity, and always smiling. How many times during this war we have been struck by his serenity and his spirit of sacrifice. Many

times after Mass, we would see him consoling or encouraging people of all conditions who had been waiting for him to assuage their troubles. After Mass, Fr. Pancratius would take a moment at the piano to sing the Psalms or a hymn to Our Lady. He would play, sing and laugh, saying that this was the moment of rest in his day." (By **Sister Margherita Defasques**, (The Daughters of Charity)

- Short silence...
- **Song:** Laudate omnes gentes (or another song)



4.2 - A Salvatorian Leader

On the occasion of the III General Chapter, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer was elected to be the first Superior General to succeed the Founder at forty-three years of age. He embraced this role with great vigor and dynamism for thirty years. He moved the Society forward into a sustainable and prosperous future.

- a. "Our Society was and remains deeply grateful to your late Most Reverend Father General for his good advice and help, especially during the past decades. I myself remember with gratitude many hours of conversations I had with him and from which I returned again and again inwardly strengthened and encouraged to do my work." (By **Fr. Joseph Grendel SVD**, Superior General of the Society of the Divine Word)
 - b. "Father Pancratius Pfeiffer possessed the great qualities of a diplomat, minus the shrewdness which often plays unscrupulously. The penetrating force of the simplicity of his speech was surprising. He knew everything and spoke the essentials. His unfailing memory allowed him to be most current and timely; a genius mind with irresistible spiritual traits." (By **Leone Gessi**, Journalist of *The Messenger of Rome*)
 - c. "Let us not forget this distinguished religious, confrere and Superior General in prayer and let us always keep his motto in mind: "Society will flourish to the extent that everyone does their duty." May the three shining role models, our Venerable Founder, Fathers Bonaventura Lüthen and Pancratius Pfeiffer, be our intercessors at the throne of God, so that our Society will once again receive a leader that will follow in the footsteps of these three great and holy men". (By **Fr. Bonaventura Schweizer SDS**, Provincial Superior of the Salvatorian North German Province)
- Short silence...
 - **Song:** Adoramus Te Domine (or another song)



4.3 - A Salvatorian Peacemaker

During World War II, he earned the name of "the Angel of Rome," due to his having saved the lives of many persons, especially Jews. He was an important intermediary between Pope Pius XII and the German generals. He died at the age of seventy-three on the 12th of May in 1945, as a result of a car accident.

- a. "I was an admirer and friend of Father Pancratius Pfeiffer in whom I appreciated his high qualities of spirit and heart. I was familiar with him in times of calamity and during difficult hours. I mourn his sudden and tragic end and send my most sincere condolences to his religious community." (By **Ivanoe Bonomi**, *Prime Minister of the Italian Government*)
- b. "Certainly, when I saw Father Pancratius approaching me in prison, I was deeply moved. After the first moment of surprise which came as I saw him in front of me, with his blue eyes, with his radiant smile full of hope, I understood that he was a herald of liberation and goodness. I owe my life being saved to Divine Providence, to Father Pfeiffer and to my friends. In a commemorative booklet, I read a beautiful extract on the Salvatorians, "We believe in Divine Providence, in facing the problems of the present time, in every place and in every historical period." I had an opportunity to experience how deeply that idea was being put into practice during a dreadful historical period, during the nine months of the German occupation of Rome." (By **Giuliano Vassalli**, *Italian Senator*)
- c. "I found myself in front, not of the prelate I had depicted in my mind, but of a simple, affable and smiling fraticello (little brother.) As soon as he heard what my situation was, he said to me, "I'll do everything I can for your son." I felt, in his readiness to help and in the way he helped, the charity of Christ. And I blessed him from the depths of my torn heart." (By **Clara Mattei Friedmann**, *mother of a war prisoner*)
 - Short silence...
 - **Song:** Ubi Caritas (or another song)

5. Prayers of the Faithful:

Being grateful for Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer's Salvatorian witness, let us now raise our prayers with confidence, knowing that we are all beloved sons and daughters of God:

- a. Let us pray for all members of the Salvatorian Family. That the apostolic example of Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer will compel us to live our vocation to be apostles today with joy, enthusiasm and faithfulness.
Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

- b. Let us pray that all the Salvatorians who have been called to exercise authority among us will be inspired by Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer to expand our apostolic mission with both determination and kindness throughout the world.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

- c. Let us pray for all people who are committed to defend the integrity of life and who seek to do justice and foster peace according to Gospel values, as exemplified by Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer.

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

- d. Let us pray for.... (*other intentions*)

Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...

Almighty God, we raise up all these intentions confident that you have heard. We trust that you will meet our needs, not just our wants, through the intercession of our Venerable Fr. Francis Jordan, mentor and spiritual father to Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer. Amen.

6. Closing Prayer:

Compassionate God, we ask you to enflame us with the same Spirit that compelled Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer. That we may respond selflessly and courageously to the needs of your people, especially during these challenging times. Help us to embody the Salvatorian charism and mission that remains relevant to help all people experience the reign of God on earth as it is in heaven. A prayer we make in our Divine Saviour's name. Amen.

- **Closing Song:** Regina coeli (or another song)

