

**SALVATORIANS AND
THE EXPERIENCE
OF GOD**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

Ocean of Love

Rejoice and be glad, timid soul,
because the Creator of all will take up his
dwelling with you;
the King of the heavenly choirs is coming to you;
the strong, omnipotent God is coming to you.

Rejoice and be glad!
The Lord of angels is coming to you.

Rejoice and be glad, O troubled soul!
Not an angel is coming to you, nor a saint,
nor a cherubim or seraphim;
But there is coming to you
the King of the cherubim and seraphim.

Rejoice and be glad, exalt and sing,
Because there is coming to you
not the Virgin of virgins, but the Most High Himself,
the Most Pure, the most holy King of virgins,
the all-patient One, the Almighty,
the all-meek, the Healer of all ills,
the Savior of the world!

Immerse yourself in the
Ocean of the love of your God!

(SD 1, 150a [follows SD 1, 159])

√ **Prayer in silence & solitude:**
SD III 1,3: „Pray earnestly, more earnestly, most earnestly! Go into solitude and be urgent in prayer!” Please also refer to SD I 64, 1 & 2 (see also Luke 6:12!)

√ **The “fruitfulness” of prayer:**
SD I 170, 1a: “My prayer will never be fruitless, provided it is good prayer ...!” Please, also refer to SD I 18.

√ **Prayer as self-dedication to God:**
SD I 144, 5 & 6: “Give yourself over totally to God; O lord, what do you want me to do; speak, Lord, your servant is listening. - Here I am, send me as soon as possible!” Please also refer to SD I 68 1-2 & SD I 140, 7.

√ **Meditation & Spiritual Exercises:**
SD I 136, 4: “Never omit your meditation, unless it is a duty to do so!”

SD I 125,3: “Now and then read and meditate on the Most Holy Eucharist!”

SD I 162,6: “It is of the greatest importance to give and to make the Spiritual exercises!”

SD II 9,6: “Daily meditation and annual retreat!”

SOURCE MATERIAL

In addition to the Spiritual Diary and the Chapter Talks of Father Jordan:

- √ Joseph Lammers, SDS (ed. 2006): *The Spirituality of F. Jordan*
- √ Arno Boesing, SDS: *Salvatorian Key elements, Charism, Mission, Spirituality, Identity Part I: “SDS Spirituality”*
- √ Mario Agudelo, SDS: *Salvatorian Key Elements, Charism, Mission, Spirituality, Identity Part III: “Some Essences of our Salvatorian Perfume”*

SALVATORIANS AND THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD

The Experience Of God

“Lived in the real world, our personal and communal spirituality is rooted in our experience of God the Father. Jesus Christ, who came to give life to all, is the Source and the Center of our spirituality. With Mary, His mother, we bear to others the Savior we have come to know ourselves. The Holy Spirit guides and enlightens us along the way.”
(*Charter of the Salvatorian Family, chapter 3, para 10*)

Icons for reflection on “The Experience of God”

- √ The Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush (Ex. 3: 1-7).
- √ The encounter of St. Paul with Jesus Christ (Acts of the Apostles: 9: 1-9; 2: 6-16; 26:12-18)
- √ The text of John 17:3, which becomes Jordan’s founding vision

Biblical Texts

Those already mentioned above under Point B, and Luke 6:12 and Luke 9:28-36!

Key elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality

Knowing God, That Is, Experiencing God As The Center Of Our Lives...(1st key element)

Very early in his life F. Jordan experiences God: during his first Holy Communion, his studies (SD I, 1-2) and also later during Holy Communion (see prayers SD I, 9; 149, 150*). Together with Catherine of Siena, in all gifts of God he recognizes God’s loving affection (SD I, 77). He gives himself fully to Jesus, his “beloved spouse”, to become one with Him. See prayers SD I, 142, and 168, as well as the following:

- √ SD I 83; 178 (and refer to SD I, 2002; SD II 52; 70): “This is

eternal life, that they may know you, the one true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (John 17:3)

√ SD I 202 and SD II, 52: “The said creature gives himself totally and for ever to his almighty Creator”. “The creature gives and will give to his Creator, whatever the Creator Himself has given, gives and will give to him.”

Trusting In Divine Providence... (2nd key element)

Fr. Jordan often experienced God’s provident love. God shows Himself like a loving mother and like a courageous hero (see spiritual testament). In his confidence he bases himself on God’s promises, even on God’s oaths (SD II, 8; 15; SD IV, 22). But he also knows, that with confidence we have to combine also our willingness to fulfil God’s will. In Jordan’s “Talks” we find the respective texts:

√ February 2, 1898 (p. 186): “Trust in the Lord! Believe in Divine Providence! Ah, when in old age you look back on some disturbing past events and compare how sadly you received them with how you later saw that God directed everything to your best advantage, ah, then you will judge things quite differently!”

√ April 27, 1894 (p. 26): “How shameful it is to shrink from every difficulty when all human help seems lost. Then you must trust in God all the more! How can anyone say he trusts in God, when in all his needs and sorrows and works, when all seems lost, he loses heart? Precisely there confidence in God needs to be established! , When he hopes in me, I will save him.”

√ February 25, 1898 (p. 190): “How can you hope if you don’t live in accordance with your position and instead jump into big projects following your own will? How can you have trust in the Lord there? So do your duty and cast all your worries on the Lord. He will help you and rescue you.”

√ December 10, 1897 (p. 158): “If you plan your steps only

according to human cleverness, you can never rely on extraordinary help (from God) and you will never achieve great things!”

Being People Of Prayer...(5th key element)

Following the witness of his fellow brothers, F. Francis was always concentrated on and united with God. Therefore, for us he became a real teacher of prayer. In his talks and Spiritual Diary we find countless explanations.

√ **The power of prayer:**

SD I 201, 2: “Prayer is the powerful weapon which triumphs: it is the stairway and the door of Paradise; it is the coin minted by God himself, with which the eternal joy of the heavenly Jerusalem is securely bought.” SD II 103,3: “Prayer is the greatest power in the world.” – we also point out to SD IV 10,3 (Dec. 10, 1915).

√ **Based on prayer:**

SD II 8, 5: “Erect the edifice of your holiness on prayer, work & strict silence...”

√ **Prayer & confidence:**

SD II 36,2-6: “O, pray very much and place your complete trust in the Lord, even when dryness and abandonment assail you.... I can do all things in you!” – we also point out to SD II 70,3 and SD IV 6,2.

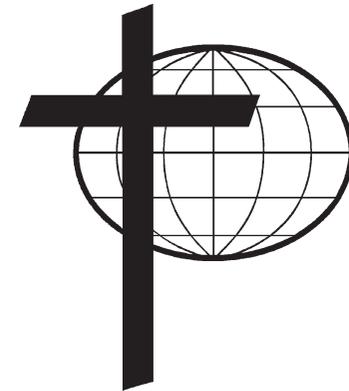
√ **Perpetual and passionate prayer:**

Please read SD I 197, 1-7 (a very strong self-encouragement to pray insistently)

SD II 84,5 (also see Luke 18:1): “Pray without ceasing!” - we also point out to SD II 85,1; SD II 13,4 and SD II 28,3.

SD II 65, 1-3: “Pray always and do not give it up! It is necessary to pray; to him, who believes, all things are possible. Prevail upon the dear God, who can do all things!” Please also refer to SD II 68,4; SD II 73,3; SD II 83,4; SD II 84; SD III 1,3; SD III 5, 1-3; SD III 14,1.

**SALVATORIANS:
PRAYER AND APOSTOLATE**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

PRAYER

*(Combination of various texts from the
Spiritual Diary of Father Jordan)*

Burning Torch

Lord Jesus Christ,
Sun of Justice,
illumine and enlighten my soul,
in such a way that my footsteps
may be like the morning light
till it reaches perfect day.

O Savior of all,
Let me always burn
With great love for you
So that I inflame all!

Lord Jesus Christ,
Take my prayer and all that I have.
Here I am, send me.
Show me the ways to guide all to you.

O Savior of all people,
You are our Savior!
AMEN

SALVATORIANS — PRAYER AND APOSTOLATE

“The witness of Father Jordan and Mother Mary inspires us to be persons of prayer, to embrace the Cross for the sake of our mission, to have an unshakeable trust in Divine Providence and to live a simple lifestyle, and to have a special devotion to Mary as the Mother of the Savior. We manifest the goodness and kindness of God both in our mission and in our way of relating as a Salvatorian Family. In prayer and dialog, we seek to understand one another and are ready to forgive.”
*(Charter of the Salvatorian Family,
Chapter Three, para. 11 and 12)*

Icon for reflection on the theme:

√ After having read the Spiritual Diary, the Christian author Alessandro Pronzato describes Father Jordan as a “person animated by the divine fire, like a seismograph, measuring the movement of his own personal feelings and his spirituality, or like a compass, indicating the direction.”

Bible Texts: We connect the Pentecost experience of the disciples of Jesus With this example: Acts 1: 12-14 and Acts 2: 1-4.

Key elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality

Referring to the theme “Prayer and Apostolate”, we interpret the word “prayer” in a wider sense as the orientation of our lives versus God. If we carry inside the deep joy of belonging to God, of being united with Him and accepting His will, i.e. trying to reach holiness, our lives will always be determined by apostolic dynamism, the fire of love and apostolic zeal.

Living Holiness As A Vocation And Helping Others To Do The Same...(3rd key element)

The fire of divine love, the Holy Spirit Himself, is urging us to holiness, to perfect love. This love is made visible through Jesus Christ.

√ SD I 79,2: “It is the will of God and it is likewise true, that we should all become holy; consequently, it is also true that we can become holy. If, then we believe this to be true also in regard to ourselves and, consequently, make the determined resolution to become holy, striving for holiness with all our strength of body and soul, we than correspond with the divine Truth.” (Grundkötter)

√ SD III 23, 5: “Just as charity alone makes apostles, it alone also makes saints.”

√ Please also refer to SD 52, 2; SD I 46,4 and to SD III 22, 1, 3rd line.

***Manifesting the goodness and kindness of the Savior
(Titus 3:4)... (4th key element)***

If we believe in God, we know that He grants us His kindness day after day. This kindness appeared in His son, Jesus Christ, and fills us with confidence and humility. If we carry the image of Jesus in our hearts, we will become His witnesses.

√ SD I 80,4: “With God’s grace, accustom yourself also to recognize the goodness of God, even in the smallest things.”

√ SD I 80,1: “Be completely convinced that of yourself you are only evil and indeed worse than your fellowmen, and that therefore all the good which God has bestowed on you or which he works through you are, in a high degree, gifts of grace from God, for which countless other persons would e worthier than you. Live especially in this conviction, because the good God bestows his grace on you, so that you undertake and accomplish great things for his glory.”

√ SD II 78, 5 (September 11, 1904): “Oh, how good you are, O God! Oh, help me to glorify your name everywhere and to save souls.”

√ Also refer to SD IV 37, 6a: “The goodness and loving kindness

of God, our Savior, has appeared....”

Having apostolic zeal(7th key element)

Deeply touched by God, F. Francis is encouraging himself and us to be kindled by the fire of faith, confidence and apostolic zeal and to set others on fire.

SD I 200,2 (Holy Chrysostomos): “One man, who is enflamed with zeal for the faith, suffices to set aright a whole people.”

√ SD II 1, 7: “Let no betrayal, no infidelity, no coldness, no abuse lessen your zeal!”

√ SD II 20,4b: “Be a trumpet! Elias rose up ... like a fire and his words blazed like a torch...!”

√ SD IV 36: “The fire of confidence in God! ... without this, Don Bosco could have done absolutely nothing.” (March 6, 1917)

√ Also see the prayers SD I 137, 5-10 and SD I 138, 1 & 3.

√ From Jordan’s Chapter Talks (Jan. 5, 1900): “Prayer is where you should get fire...!”

SOURCE MATERIAL

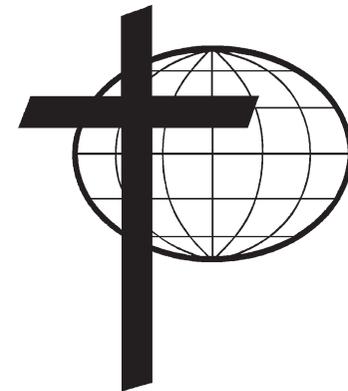
In addition to the *Spiritual Diary* and *Exhortations and Admonitions* of F. Jordan:

√ Joseph Lammers, SDS (ed. 2006):
The Spirituality of F. Jordan

√ Arno Boesing, SDS *Salvatorian Key Elements, Charism, Mission, Spirituality, Identity, Part I*: “SDS Spirituality”

√ Mario Agudelo, SDS: *Salvatorian Key Elements, Charism, Mission, Spirituality, Identity, Part III*: “Some Essences of our Salvatorian Perfume”

**SALVATORIANS:
DEFENDERS OF LIFE
IN FULLNESS**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

so that I may lead others to you and
through your grace bring them to salvation!

O Savior of the world!
O Savior of all humankind!
Be our Savior!

Prayer of the Salvatorian Family

(Adapted from 1880 Statutes of the Apostolic Teaching Society,
Donauworth Draft)

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the World,
You took on our human nature
to save all of humankind from sin and error
and to teach lasting truth.

By your suffering and death,
we ask you to enlighten those in error and
those who do not yet know you.
Give them true wisdom!

Through the Holy Spirit you promised that
those who teach justice shall shine forever
like the stars in the heavens.

Grant that we who are united in the same mission
may teach many the true Christian faith
and manifest your glory
as you promised
through Jesus Christ, our Savior.
Amen.

*You are encouraged to deepen your understanding of this topic
through continued reading of Salvatorian and other sources.*

One by one, each person places his/her piece of paper in the center of the group and describes to the other participants this threat. After some time for personal reflection, share your thoughts with the others on:

- √ What are actions that can defend life against these threats?
- √ In what ways are we as Salvatorians called to “defend life”?
- √ With whom can we collaborate in doing so?

CLOSING PRAYER

Slowly re-read the two references from the Charter at the beginning of this Study Guide. Allow time for personal prayer and shared intercessions. Close with one of the following prayers of Father Jordan.

Burning Torch

*(Adapted from Fr. Jordan’s *Spiritual Diary*)*

Lord, Jesus Christ, Sun of Justice,
enlighten and set my heart on fire,
so that my footsteps be like the morning light
that walks and grows toward the fullness of the day.

O Savior of all,
may I always be burning with great love for you,
so that I may enkindle others.
May I be a torch
that blazes and illuminates!

Lord Jesus Christ, receive my life
and everything that I possess!
Here I am, send me!
Show me the path

SALVATORIANS: DEFENDERS OF LIFE IN FULLNESS

Instructions:

*The focus of this study guide is the theme **defense of life** in our Salvatorian call, as described in Chapter II of the Charter for the Salvatorian Family, “Our Mission.”*

If possible, gather with other Salvatorians for this experience. The guide may be adapted to the needs of the local group. Please begin with prayer that includes the following articles from the Charter.

Following in the footsteps of the Savior like the apostles, we are called to live and announce God’s unconditional love, continuing Jesus’ life-giving work of bringing salvation to all creation and liberation from all that is a threat to fullness of life.

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 5*

We involve others in our mission and seek to collaborate with those involved in promoting truth, justice and the defense of life, making a preferential option for the poor and for those whose humanity and dignity are not recognized.

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 8b*

Setting the Context

Please read the following stories. (Others may be substituted if appropriate for the local Salvatorian situation.)

“The Story of Hermann”

Hermann suffered from AIDS. For two years, he lived with our community Emmaus House. For a few years, he was able to live quite well with the HIV virus. He even had plans for the future – work, apartment, girl. In our community, he liked to care for the garden and for the animals.

However, after some time his illness broke out with full force. Hermann was discouraged and sad, becoming more and more silent, trying to come to terms with the illness and with death. One day, he was at the end of his inner strength. He came to me and lamented that he could no longer carry on with his life, because he was not able to continuously go towards death. Hermann shared his plan with me; i.e., to discontinue the antiviral therapy, to stop eating, and finally to take an overdose of sleeping pills.

In this situation, it was impossible for me to offer him consolation, good ideas, or support; nothing would have reached him. I took Hermann's hand and led him outside into the garden and showed him a sunflower he had planted, which was now in full bloom. I said, "Look, Hermann, what has become of your little plant. Isn't it just beautiful?" He smiled; his face brightened up, he touched the flower softly, and said, "Is this possible? I didn't even see it anymore. And look, there is another one! Next year, I shall plant many. And anyway, the grass has to be cut and the weeds have to be pulled..." He went to take the garden tools. Life took hold of him again. (Note: Hermann did not live to see the summer. He died at Easter in our house.) As told by S. Imelda Augscheller SDS, South Tyrol, Italy

"Changing the Face of the Mountain"

Once upon a time, in a remote, unfriendly village that clung to the side of a mountain, there lived an old woman whose habits seemed strange to her neighbors. Since the harsh winters kept most villagers huddled near their fireplaces, they did not cultivate the art of hospitality, and rarely spoke to anyone outside their immediate families. The mountainside, itself bleak and barren, beckoned no one toward its slopes, even in the less harsh seasons of the year. Only the children ventured to climb, ever so stealthily, partway up its side; a daring feat that they were cautioned not to do by their parents.

During such furtive forays, they inevitably met the old woman. Most of the time she was bending over, digging a little hole in the ground, and dropping a tiny something into it. The braver children asked, "What are you doing, old woman?" Her reply was always the same: "I am changing the face of the mountain."

physical and spiritual sorrows.

"The Salvatorian Concept of Salvation in the Context of John 17:3"

S. Justine Mbuyi Mashila SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 2

Embraced by the love of Christ who saves, we seek to dynamically develop all the possibilities of ongoing (eternal) life. In this, we always work toward the wholeness of the human person in all his/her dimensions. The salvation we want to bring to humankind concerns the whole person. It is necessary to free people from all their physical and spiritual sorrows.

"Salvatorian Spirituality: A Vast and All Embracing Concept"

F. Arno Boesing SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 1

After time for personal reflection, share your thoughts with the others.

YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION HISTORY

Please reflect and then share with the others on these questions.

√ How have you experienced not being considered or recognized – how you have been "poor" or your "humanity and dignity [have] not been recognized"?

√ In the midst of these experiences, who / what helped life to take hold of you again – to experience fuller "life," to experience "salvation"?

TAKING A STAND FOR LIFE

Suggested dynamic: Those preparing the gathering provide pieces of paper with markers. Each participant selects a situation in your surroundings that threatens life and/or human dignity.

Describe this threat on your slip of paper – in words or sketches.

Begin in such a way that you feed about 12 poor people daily at noon,
at the same time joining some instruction to it.

Spiritual Diary I, 156

“Look, the whole world is found in evil, and what are you doing?”

Quoted by Father Jordan

Spiritual Diary I, 192

Avoid material injustice also as far as possible.

Spiritual Diary III, 15

My yearning now is stilled. And my God
gazes tenderly at my side.

People everywhere are finding life:
salvation!

God’s kingdom is spreading worldwide!

“*Yearning*”

Mother Mary of the Apostles

1875

RELECTIONS BY OTHER SALVATORIANS

Fr. Jordan did not close his eyes nor his heart to what was going on around him. He was aware of the presence of the evil in the world and it moved him to compassion. He felt called to make a difference. The Founder saw himself as an active partner in bringing all people into God’s Reign. He sought to bring everyone and everything back into right relationship with the Creator. This is the thrust of the Pact [of Father Jordan], his personal covenant with God.

(See *Spiritual Diary I, 202-204*)

“Daniel 12:3 as a Foundational Text in Salvatorian Spirituality”

S. Carol Leah Thresher SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 2

The salvation we want to bring to humankind concerns the whole person.

It is necessary to free people from all their

The children grew into adulthood, and most left the village for the world of cities. It came to pass, however, after several decades, one grown child returned to show her husband and children the harsh environment of her youth that she had often described for them. She came back but she did not recognize it. The mountainside was ablaze with a dazzling array of colorful flowers gently swaying in the breeze. Clusters of bushes and young trees lent their foliage as shade to the myriads of children and adults gathered along the base of the mountain. All spoke to each other, laughed and played games. Families and neighbors picnicked together.

The woman who had returned stopped one of the villagers to ask: “When did all this come about? What happened to the bleak and barren mountainside of my childhood?” The villager replied, “Do you remember the strange old woman who lived here, the one who would wander up and down the mountainside?” It was she who planted all these seeds. She went out everyday, intent on her sowing; believing all the while the results would bear fruit.”

The woman did recall the image of this old and bent woman from her childhood. At last, she understood the meaning of those words: “I am changing the face of the mountain.”

Changing the Face of the Mountain

Daily Reflections on Visioning for the Future

Leadership Conference of Women Religious USA 2006

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Regarding these stories:

- √ What touches your heart or spirit?
- √ How is “life” threatened? Where do you find “life” defended or promoted?
- √ Have you had similar experiences in your life?

After time for personal reflection, share your thoughts with others.

Instructions: Now please read through the following passages from Scripture, words of Father Jordan / Mother Mary, and reflections by fellow Salvatorians. Consider how they deepen your understanding of “fullness of life,” how it can be threatened, and how it might be defended or promoted. Depending on the size of the group, these resources can be worked through in small groups and/or by sections, and then reflections shared with the large group.

Biblical Roots

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

Daniel 12:3

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 158a)

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed,
breaking every yoke;
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.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall
quickly be healed;
your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the Lord shall be
your rear guard.”

Isaiah 58: 6-9

Fight for justice even unto death, and God will fight for you.

Sirach 4.28

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 154)

“Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these,
you did for me.”

Parable of the Judgment of the Nations

Matthew 25: 31-46

“Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’
victim?”

He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.”

Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

“I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.”

John 10:10

But during the night,

The angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, led them out, and
said,

“Go and take your place in the temple area,
and tell the people everything about this life.”

Acts 5.19-20

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 158a)

WORDS OF FATHER JORDAN AND MOTHER MARY

My child, do not lose your tranquility or peace of heart.

My child, give me your heart. Let me alone reign in you. I will be your life.

Jordan’s Prayer to God

Spiritual Diary I, 13

Treat your neighbor with the same charity with which you would treat

Jesus Christ Himself.

Spiritual Diary I, 55

Oh Lord, in such corrupt times exceptional means are necessary in order,
with the help of your grace, to put a stop to sin.

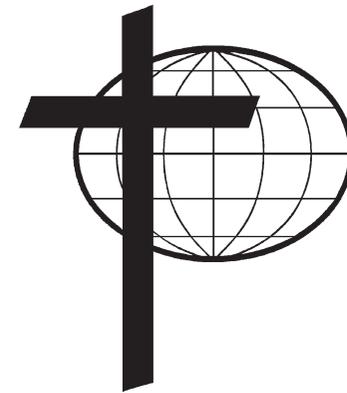
Spiritual Diary I, 61

Let your zeal always proceed from the love of God,
and let it be ordered to prudence, constancy, and justice...

O Lord, I am coming to life again, I am coming to life again!

Spiritual Diary I, 137

**SALVATORIANS:
CALLED TO EMBRACE
THE WORLD**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

Your experience of Universality

Please reflect and then share with the others on these questions.

- √ What does Salvatorian **universality** say to us in regard to racial prejudice, ethnic and class conflict and other injustices of our times? How does it inform our relationships with others?
- √ How have you and your country experienced or been impacted by “globalization?”
- √ If F. Jordan were alive today, how might he view globalization? How does our charism call us to respond?
- √ What elements of Salvatorian **universality** energize you personally in your life and mission?

Taking a stand

Suggested dynamic: Gather in a circle with a globe in the center. Close your eyes and picture Father Francis Mary of the Cross at his desk. His hand is resting on the globe; he turns it reflectively. His gaze comes to rest on you.

- √ What is Father Jordan asking of you? Asking of us?

In an atmosphere of prayer, share your responses with one another.

Closing Prayer

Slowly re-read the references from the Charter at the beginning of this guide. Allow time for personal prayer and shared intercessions. Close with the following prayer.

O Savior of the world, inspire us with your Spirit,
the zeal of your Apostles, and the charism of Father Jordan and
Mother Mary, so that we may work tirelessly, going ‘into all the world
and proclaiming the good news to the whole creation’

(Mk. 16:15).

“Show us the way to lead all to you”

(SD II.32).

You are encouraged to deepen your understanding of this topic through continued reading of Salvatorian and other sources.

universality. What does change according to the circumstances is the concrete use of the means to accomplish the purpose of our mission.

“Our Salvatorian Mission”

F. Arno Boesing SDS

*Contributions on Salvatorian History, Charism,
and Spirituality, Vol. 5*

USA Joint History Charism Committee

[The heart of the Salvatorian mission is] “love for all and the desire that they be led to the fullness of life, salvation.” Following the example of our Savior, our love is to be inclusive with a special attention to those who do not count socially, culturally, and economically... God’s inclusive love for all is tender and compassionate. This is the experience of God that Salvatorians are called to bring to others.”

*“Universality as Inclusive Love: A Key to Understanding
the preferential Option for the Poor in Salvatorian Spirituality”*

S. Carol Leah Thresher SDS

*Contributions on Salvatorian History,
Charism, and Spirituality, Vol. 4*

USA Joint History Charism Committee

The gift of *all ways and means* is to be both treasured and respected. It may not be interpreted, however, in an absolute way. It requires prayerful discernment. We employ all ways and means within the context of our Salvatorian mission, attentive to the one limit that our Founder placed on it: *all ways and means which the love of Christ inspires* (2 Cor. 5:14). The compelling love of Christ - that is, his love for us and our love for him - inspires and gives direction. Let us then, impelled by love and compelled by love, move ahead with new insight and dynamic fervor: **I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me** (Col. 1:29).

“All Ways and Means”

An Unpublished Paper

S. Miriam Cerletty SDS

After time for personal reflection, share your thoughts with the others.

SALVATORIANS: CALLED TO EMBRACE THE WORLD

Introduction

Instructions: The focus of this study guide is the theme **universality** in our Salvatorian call, as described in Chapter II of the Charter for the Salvatorian Family, “Our Mission.” If possible, gather with other Salvatorians for this experience. The guide may be adapted to the needs of the local group.

Please begin with prayer that includes the following articles from the Charter.

Following in the footsteps of the Savior like the apostles, we are called to live and announce God’s unconditional love, continuing Jesus’ life-giving work of bringing salvation to all creation and liberation from all that is a threat to fullness of life.

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 5*

Our spirit of universality is expressed by all ways and means which the love of God inspires.

a. We open ourselves to the questions and challenges of our historical epoch, allowing the signs of the time to reveal to us the ways and means to respond.

b. We involve others in our mission and seek to collaborate with those involved in promoting truth, justice and the defense of life, making a referential option for the poor and for those whose humanity and dignity are not recognized.

c. We make the eternal truths of the Word of God and our Faith accessible to persons of any culture, race, ethnic group, social class, nationality and religion.

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 8*

Setting the Context

Please read the following account. (Another account may be substituted if appropriate for the local Salvatorian situation.)

Most of the Salvatorians, who have heard of Fr. Felix Bucher, remember the story of his diabolical possession during the time of his novitiate. His healing took place over the course of several months in 1887, during which the rites of exorcism were administered over him by Fr. Jordan and Fr. Lüthen. Healed and apparently left with a gift for the Latin and Greek languages, he studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1891. Shortly afterward, Fr. Felix, accompanied by another priest and a brother, were sent by Fr. Jordan as missionaries to the northwest part of the United States.

Fr. Felix, a native of Bavaria, soon found himself far from home, ministering to the needs of the poverty-stricken Native Americans in the state of Oregon. Fr. Cletus La Mere SDS, who studied the life of Fr. Felix, characterized him as a priest who resembled the Curé of Ars, loving but strict; a man who gave his bed away, had very simple furnishings, and lived on a diet of potatoes and milk. Sharing the hardships of his neighbors and ministering wholeheartedly, Fr. Felix endeared himself to the people, who affectionately called him their “black-robed chief.”

The rainy winter season along the Oregon coast often made traveling between missions difficult for Fr. Felix. He reported several harrowing trips:

On one winter trip my horse mired down. He became discouraged with trying to get out of the mud, so he lay down and would make no effort. I had to get the Indians to come, attach a rope and pull him out. I got another horse, but the sticky clay tired this horse too and he also became discouraged and refused to negotiate the mud, which was more than knee deep. I finally finished my 8 ½ mile trip on the back of a third horse...When the water was high, I would have to swim the rivers. One

Impart true wisdom to the learned;
give pure form to the arts;
consecrate and transform the workworld.
Oh, do it . . . do it!

Enlighten your own leaders,
ignite them heart and soul
so that truly they seek nothing
but Jesus alone!

O holy, venerable,
unique Society!
Apostolic, soul-zealous,
greathearted Society!

“Lyric”
Therese von Wüllenweber
July 22, 1882

RELECTIONS BY OTHER SALVATORIANS

...it is true that we cannot serve the universal Church without being inserted here and now in a particular local Church. Nonetheless as we do this, we must always be aware that our mission is not limited to this or that local Church. It must always be open, attentive and available to the needs of the Church in any part of the world... ..In principle we do not exclude any apostolic activity as long as it serves to accomplish our mission. We select our apostolic activity in accord with the circumstances of time and place (necessities of the Church, personal charisms, human means and materials...). The charity of Christ which desires to save all, inspires us to take the right step at the right moment... ..However, this does not mean “to do everything” indiscriminately. Rather, we use any means or apostolic activity as long as it corresponds to our charism and is suitable to the concrete needs of the time and place. What is really important is to achieve our final (long range) objective. The permanent givens do not change: what we want (the glory of God and salvation of people); our specific way of realizing this (emphasis on Christian leadership); and ethnic and geographical

Do not rest until you have carried the word of God to the
four corners of the earth...
Fly like an eagle around the globe and proclaim the word of God...
Spiritual Diary I, 182

Shout mightily like a trumpet through all the regions of the earth...
fly as an eagle and as an angel...
Rouse and summon the sleepers! Spur the inactive! Shout, shout...
Spiritual Diary I, 190

Yes, this apostolic spirit we, all of us, have to try
to acquire more and more.
Letter of Mother Mary,
28 June 1900

O holy, venerable unique Society!
Apostolic, soul-zealous,
greathearted Society!

Grow steadily, increase,
spread everywhere!
Embrace and renew the universe!

Draw to yourself pastors of souls,
draw teachers, educators and
dedicated women -
Oh, lead and guide them all!

Rechristianize the homeland;
evangelize non-believers;
protect orphans, homeless children -
Oh, teach and instruct them all!
Motivate fathers to steadfastness,
mothers to holy child-rearing,
country innkeepers to trustworthiness -
To holiness, call them all!

time I crossed the Siletz River while it was in flood and was washed off
my horse, but I held to its tail and it towed me safely to the opposite
bank. (La Mere, 1996, p. 24)

These are but two examples of the extraordinary effort that Fr.
Felix made in order to fulfill his Salvatorian mission. Seemingly isolated,
Fr. Felix knew how to involve others in his work. When he needed money
to build a church and residence on the reservation, he enlisted the support
of Blessed Katherine Drexel, foundress of the Sisters of the Blessed
Sacrament. Katherine, who had a great love of Native and African
Americans, had, at her disposal, a large fortune inherited from her father,
an extremely successful banker. Throughout her life, Katherine supported
projects of service to Native and African Americans. Happily, Fr. Felix
was often the recipient of Katherine's generosity. He was also supported
by friends in Bavaria who, in 1911, made him an altar and shipped it to
New York. It was Blessed Katherine Drexel who paid the freight charge
from New York to Oregon. Solidarity with friends sustained Fr. Felix.
"This thought alone has kept up my spirit all these 30 years of mission
life."

While material concerns necessarily occupied Fr. Felix, he was
also a man of prayer and sacraments. He had the reputation of being a
mystic. His letters revealed that he spent a great deal of time in prayer
and meditation. He kept careful track of baptisms, First Communion,
Confirmations, marriages, and funerals. In his first 11 years in Oregon,
he buried nearly 100 of his parishioners, ministering to the dying and
comforting their families. "How many a night I spend at the bedside of
the dying Indians! They cling to their priest in all filial confidence and
say, 'Father, save my soul!' 'Father, I thank you!'" On Christmas Day,
1935, Fr. Felix suffered a stroke but, after three months, made a surprising
recovery. Shortly thereafter, he retired to St. Nazianz, WI, living there
among the seminarians as an example of "simplicity, piety, humility and
obedience" (La Mere, 1996, p. 54) until his death in 1938.

Please take some moments to reflect on this visual representation
of universality.



Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Regarding the story of Fr. Felix and the image of the globe:

1. What touches your heart or spirit?
2. What insights do you gain about **universality**?
3. What experiences have you had of **universality**?

After time for personal reflection, share your thoughts with the others.

Instructions: Now please read through the following passages from Scripture, words of Father Jordan / Mother Mary, and reflections by other Salvatorians.

Consider how they deepen and broaden your understanding of **universality** in our Salvatorian call. Depending on the size of the group, these resources can be worked through in small groups and/or by sections, and then reflections shared with the large group.

BIBLICAL ROOTS

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the holy Spirit,
teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.
And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:19-20

He said to them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim
the gospel to every creature.”

Mark 16:15

Peter said,

“God has shown me that I should not call any person
profane or unclean...

In truth, I see that God shows no partiality.
Rather, in every nation whoever fears God and acts
uprightly is acceptable to God.”

Acts 10: 28, 34-35

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave
nor free person, there is not male and female;
for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

“You are not acting wisely...

“You will surely wear yourself out,
and not only yourself but also these people with you.
The task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.

Exodus 18:17-18

WORDS OF FATHER JORDAN AND MOTHER MARY

O my Lord and my God, grant that I may be able
with Your help to carry out that undertaking for Your honor
so that all may be imbued with your doctrine...

Spiritual Diary I, 120

The Catholic Society of clerics and co-workers
in the vineyard of the Lord among all peoples...

Spiritual Diary I, 124

“Oh, (that there were) holy apostles hastening
throughout the world, evangelizing all”

Spiritual Diary I, 138

motherhouse of the Fathers, written on the statue (in the courtyard near the garage), dedicated in 1925 to the Divine Savior by Fr. Pancratius: «*Ego Deus Tuus Salvator Tuus*» («I am your God and Your Salvation»). It is also interesting to know that the same words are written in Italian on the statue of the Savior on the roof of the Jesuits, which can be clearly read from the terrace of the Motherhouse of the Salvatorian Fathers: «*Io sono la Tua Salvezza*», which means in Latin «*Salus tua ego sum*»; in English «*I am Your Salvation*», and in French «*Je suis Ton Salut*». It would be quite interesting to conduct a deeper historical study.

¹³ Sister Justine MBUYI, *The concept of salvation in the Context of John 17: 3*, in *Salvatorian Key Elements*, Part II, p. 46-53.

¹⁴ SD I, 1.

¹⁵ SD I, 19.

¹⁶ SD I, 61.

¹⁷ SD I, 58.

¹⁸ Today's world has nearly become a sort of village because of globalization and secularization; the latter tries to impose its own values on everyone. At the same time we will observe resistance from nations, peoples, and tribes, in order to save their own local values (localization). Instead of a conflict between those two (globalization & localization), we should engage in an open dialogue between globalization and localization, which we call «glocalization».

¹⁹ Yves CONGAR, *Cette Eglise que j'aime*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1968, p. 90.

²⁰ Bernard SESBOÛÉ, *N'ayez pas peur! Regards sur l'Eglise et les ministères aujourd'hui*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1996, p. 14.

²¹ SD II, 63.

²² Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our Founder – a Prophet*, p. 55.

²³ Jozef Lammers, *Elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 451.

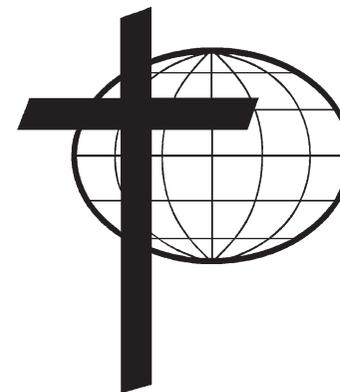
²⁴ Mario AGUDELLO, *Vocation, Salvatorian Key Elements*, Part II, p. 54-58.

²⁵ Antoni KIELBASA, *The Path towards Church Approval*, in *The Salvatorians in History and Today 1881-1981*, p. 109-129.

²⁶ SD I, 84.

²⁷ *Exhortations and Admonitions of Father Francis Jordan*, translated by Father Winfrid HERBST, Third English Edition, 1998, Chap. 30, §4-9, *Apostol*

OUR SALVATORIAN VOCATION



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addressed to the Ephesians: «Therefore, I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.» (4: 1).

Closing Prayer:

Our Lord and God,

It is your will that everyone be saved and
that all know the truth.

We beg you to send laborers into your vineyard,
so that they may proclaim your Work courageously,
and that your Word may arrive in all corners of the earth.
Then humankind will know the only true God and Him
Whom he has sent, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Footnotes)

¹ The biblical references (in French) are taken from the “*Bible de Jérusalem*”.

² *Spiritual Diary I*, 82.

³ *SDI*, 83.

⁴ Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our Founder – A Prophet*, 1985, p. 86-87.

⁵ *Charter of the Salvatorian Family*, Chapter I, para. 1.

⁶ Willibrord MENKE, *Exhortations and Admonitions of our Ven. Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan*.

⁷ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of Salvatorian Spirituality*, in *The Salvatorians in History and today 1881-1981* (translated from German), Matha Prints, Bangalore, 2008, p. 451. He refers to a talk of our Founder during the General Chapter of January 13, 1899.

⁸ *DSS I*, p. 21.

⁹ Peter VAN MEIJL, Our Founder - a prophet: “*Unser Christsein wird Heute nur in zweierlei bestehen: im Beten und im Tun des Gerechten unter den Menschen. Alles Denken, Reden und Organisieren in den Dingen des Christentums muß neugeboren werden aus diesem Beten und aus diesem Tun*”.

¹⁰ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 443-448.

¹¹ YVES CONGAR, *Vaste monde, ma paroisse*, les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 2001, p. 33 (first edition in 1966).

¹² *About the development of our emblems*, Rome, Salvator Mundi, 1979, p. 18-20. This motto is probably from Fr. Pancratius PFEIFFER because we also find it in the

lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light» (Mt 11: 28-30).

This metaphor reminds us of our Founder's personal life. How many difficulties did he endure from the Church authorities and his own brothers in order to save his lifework? If we study Salvatorian history, we realize that he had to face countless difficulties in all possible dimensions, but he always overcame them with a great Confidence in God.²⁵ The zealous meditation in his Spiritual Diary tells us about all the sufferings of his heart. In February 1878, he wrote: «*Prepare yourself for contradictions of every kind, for whatever physical and spiritual suffering may befall you in carrying out the work; however, trust in God, for whom and through whom alone you should and can accomplish it. Never be cowardly about it, but rather be glad if you may suffer much for your Savior.*».²⁶

D. CONCLUSION

To end, we are proposing two things. On one hand, do a meditative lecture of Mt 5: 16 and compare it to *Exhortations and Admonitions* of our Founder: «*Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus*»; «*So let your light shine before men*».²⁷ Our Founder exhorts us to shine by our good example from now onward. Each one of us has to be light, life and salvation for humankind. On the other hand, a meditative thought might help us to discern our particular Salvatorian vocation and try to realize Jesus' dream, i.e.:

- √ To give hope and free people from their chains
- √ To love everyone, independently from his race, language, religion, and culture
- √ To become the way of joy and peace
- √ To struggle against injustice
- √ To give our lives for others
- √ To live the Gospel of salvation and to pay attention to the needy
- √ To become broken bread for others and the wine shed for the salvation of the world
- √ To be salt and light for the world.

To be Salvatorian means to live according to the call of Saint Paul,

OUR SALVATORIAN VOCATION

«*Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ*». (John 17: 3)¹

If God calls a person, it is always for a very precise mission. In the context of our spirituality, this mission is given to a person based on our Salvatorian charism, which makes this vocation given by God visible. Exactly in the light we want to develop the meaning of vocation and charism as a whole, because the one *ipso facto* involves the other. Far from excluding one other, they are complementary to each other.

I. OUR VOCATION

A. INTRODUCTION: SOME KEY ELEMENTS

Each Christian vocation is a free call from God, addressed to a person, whom He entrusts with a precise mission. God first takes the initiative and the called person responds to the call of the *Initiator* of the vocation. The different reports about vocation, which are found in the Holy Scriptures, are tangible proof that God is the *Initiator* of every vocation. The call of Jeremiah is the most explicit example: «*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you were born, I consecrated you...*»(Jer. 1: 4-6). The Gospel formulates even better this aspect: «*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you...* » (John 15: 16). We would like to underline some aspects of this important theme on vocation:

- √ Christian vocation – in general
- √ The vocation of our Rev. Father Francis Jordan (John 17: 3)
- √ The Salvatorian vocation limited by that of the Founder
- √ Proclamation: what - who?
- √ Jesus as the source of Salvation

I.1. THE SALVATORIAN VOCATION IN THE LIGHT OF OUR FOUNDER

The Salvatorian vocation is located within that of our Venerable Founder, Fr. Francis Jordan. Our vocation should be based on the model of our Founder, who heard God's call, followed Him, and contributed to the building of God's Kingdom in this world. In his Spiritual Diary, he said: *«Put forth every effort and be very zealous to promote the knowledge of truth. Consider these words: 'to enlighten those, who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. In everything, hold strictly to the truth, because God is Truth'»*.² He enriched these words by the founding text of his vocation: *«And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent»* (John 17: 3).³ Thus it is important for the members of the Salvatorian Family to know above all the vocational story of our Venerable Father, as well as to study and meditate on his Spiritual Diary, which truly reflects his vocation – before we talk about our own vocation.

Peter van Meijl said: “In this case, the vocation of our Founder will remain a challenge and a continuous questioning of our Salvatorian vocation.”⁴

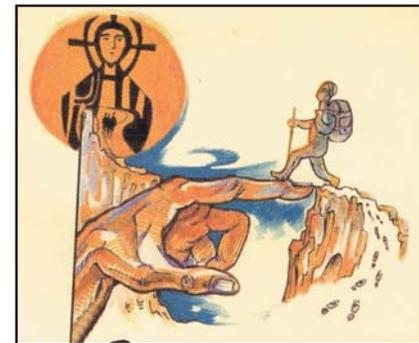
In fact, the first paragraph of Chapter I of the Charter says: *«Moved by a deep experience of God, the situation of the Church, and the reality of his time, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan was filled with an urgent desire that all people know the one true God and experience fullness of life through Jesus the Savior. His vision was to unite all the apostolic forces in the Church to love and proclaim Jesus as the Savior to a world in need of God. He included people from all ages and all walks of life, working together everywhere and by all ways and means.»*⁵

From this paragraph one can deduce the urgency of the Salvatorian vocation, which consists in making God known to the entire world and proclaiming Jesus as the Savior. Furthermore, Eternal Life resides in proclaiming Jesus as the source of salvation and life.

tasks are most important for our Salvatorian vocation in today's world: first of all, to work in order to give life; and secondly to struggle to defend it, denying the culture of death,²⁴ because the Risen Christ is the source of life for Salvatorian apostolic life.

B. BIBLICAL TEXTS

- √ Ex. 3: 1-15: The vocation of Moses and the revelation of the divine Name
- √ Mt 5: 13-16: To be salt and light for the world
- √ John 10: 10: To give life abundantly
- √ John 14: 6: Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life
- √ John 15: 16: God is the first to call us
- √ John 17: 3 : Eternal life is to know God and Jesus, Whom He has sent
- √ 1 Cor 4: 16 : Become disciples of Jesus Christ



C. METAPHOR

Many images can represent the Salvatorian call, which God addresses to us. We thought to illustrate this call by a work made by our former brother, Roumain Inocentiu Fron. We observe a pilgrim who carries a bag with the various burdens of his life. He is walking on God's finger. In the left corner, the Belgian

Salvatorian Family added the Salvatorian emblem of the Christ, probably teaching the following: *«If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and Gospel's will save it»* (Mk: 34-37). The Salvatorian vocation is one of sacrifice, a total giving into the hands of God. The Salvatorian vocational way is a pilgrimage with Jesus, the Master, carrying a light burden, and calling us: *«Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and*

From this perspective, we could conclude saying that the Salvatorian vocation invites every member of the Salvatorian Family to become an «ALTER CHRISTUS, OMNIBUS ET UBIQUE», i.e. to become another Christ, like a good Samaritan for each neighbor. Finally, we are to imitate the prayer of our Venerable Father: «Oh Jesus, Savior of the world, possess me completely! I am yours!»²¹

I.2.3. The vocation to life: Proclaim Jesus as the Source of Life

Who is Jesus Christ for us? What does He mean for me, for you? Our primary apostolate is to make Him known, because: «Eternal Life is that they know You» (John 17: 3). What is His role in the life of the Salvatorian Family?²² All these questions reflect the panorama of the Gospel scenario in which Jesus puts two important questions to His disciples: “Who do men say that I am?” and “But who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:13-18; Mk 8: 27-28; Lk 9: 18-21). Peter replies for all twelve of them: «You are the Christ, the Son of the living God»

Jesus places Himself before Moses in the continuity of the revelation of God’s name: «I am who I am» (Ex. 3: 15). The reply can be imbedded in this same reality. From God Jesus takes over the word «I am» or God’s name. In the same way as Moses received and transmitted to humankind the revelation of the divine name “I am”, Jesus reveals the divine name of the Father, who transforms men and women into sons and daughters, who are obeying out of love. In the same way as the Hebrew people wanted to live had to obey God’s commandments and hear his voice, also the disciples of Jesus Christ have to hear and obey the words of the Christ, which are «eternal life». As Moses was sent by God to save and guide his people, Jesus Christ was sent by God to give life to humankind. Jesus himself explains the reason for His coming: «I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly» (John 10: 10). This means that Christian vocation in general and the Salvatorian vocation in particular are putting the accent on Jesus as the center and the source of our lives. We have to underline that for the members of the Salvatorian Family “the mystery of salvation” means that God wants to share His own life with us in Jesus Christ.”²³ It is from Him that we got the gift of life, which we, too, have to expand and share. From this point of view, two

I.2. THE INCARNATION OF THE SALVATORIAN VOCATION

I.2.1 Proclamation: Proclaim what? Proclaim whom?

Here it is best to avoid the question which we often ask ourselves: «proclaim what?», and rather ask «proclaim who?». The Good News is not something to proclaim, but someone to proclaim, to live, to witness, to make known in daily life. The Salvatorian vocation does not mean a compilation of a doctrine to know by heart, but a life witness which brings to the world an imitation of Jesus Christ. In order to insist on this basic aspect, our Venerable Father Francis Jordan exhorts his brothers and sisters with the following words: «*May each one of you be able to say, no matter where he may be, what St. Paul said of himself: ‘Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi’, be imitators of me as I have imitated Christ (1 Cor 4: 16). Thus you will exert great power of attraction. You will arouse vocations; and you will stir the hearts of many to their conversion*».⁶ From now onward, our vocation consists in walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and becoming the most intimate collaborators of His Apostles.

Fr. Jordan, in one of his Talks of 1899, defines the Salvatorian vocation as follows: «*We are imitating Jesus Christ, we are trying to become like the Apostles, we are making efforts to preach the doctrine of the Apostles and to defend it against all errors – just like the Divine Savior and his Apostles did before us; for this reason we are carrying the cross*».⁷ Therefore, Salvatorian life means to follow Jesus Christ and the example of his Apostles. Right from the beginning of his foundation, Jordan continued to repeat: «All those who are collaborating in this work are leading an apostolic life or are imitating the Holy Apostles».⁸

Based on the foregoing, these questions could illuminate our way of imitating Jesus Christ: «How does the imitation of Jesus present itself today to the Salvatorian man or the woman of the 21st century? Are we aware of the call which the Lord is addressing to us? What are we doing with this call? How are we responding to this call? Do we remain deaf? Do we remain mute? Are we indifferent or do we just give up? In conclusion, with reference to the German Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who inspired Peter

van Meijl, we repeat: «*To be a Christian today means two things only: pray and act like a just man [and woman] in the middle of other men [and women]. If we wish to evoke a renaissance of the idea, the word, the organization of the Christian universe, this will be exclusively based on men [and women] of prayer, who will be men [and women] of justice*».⁸

I.2.2 The Vocation to salvation is

Proclaim Jesus as the Source of Salvation.¹⁰ How?

Without any doubt, the Salvatorian vocation is Christ-centered, because it is from there that we get our identity and our name «Salvatorian», which comes from «*Salvator*» and means Savior. In the Christian faith, this Saviour is named «Emmanuel», «God with us» or «the Word became flesh». Therefore, our Savior is the perfect revelation of God, the Father, because he says: «*He who has seen me has seen the Father*». (John 14: 9b). He is the Savior, but always in intimate and profound relationship with the Father, united with the Holy Spirit. Our call from God is therefore passing through Jesus Christ, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this call is being realized in His Church and in the world. The Church and the world are no longer considered enemies. The French theologian Yves Congar expresses this in an extraordinary way: «*Fundamentally the Church and the world need each other. For the world the Church means salvation, but for the Church the world means health. Without this, the Church would risk to get lost in its own purity and isolation. Therefore, it is not that the Church and the world are thrown into history side by side, but body by body. All this is not as if two crowned authorities observe each other out of the corner of an eye, from one easy chair to the other, on the same road, in order to get acquainted – but more likely as the Good Samaritan carrying on his shoulders the wounded whom he will never abandon, because he has been sent; or like the swimmer, who tries to rescue a drowning person with whom he has to struggle, but will never let him drown*». ¹¹ On the other hand, the title of this book already reflects the type of relationship which may exist between the Christian and his world, because the author affirms: «*the wide world is the parish of the Christian*». Consequently, it is in the world *hic et nunc* that the message of Jesus as Savior, as Source of Salvation, has to find and give concrete responses to us, the members of the

Salvatorian Family. For this reason God's call transforms into a call for Salvation. Following the example of Jesus «Joshua», we also become bearers of Salvation for all humankind. Salvation is an urgent demand for us Salvatorians.

The Salvatorian vocation is pushing and encouraging us to adopt the logo of the Salvatorian Sisters: «*Salus tua ego sum*».¹² If Jesus is my salvation, He calls me to be also the salvation for humankind. We may put the words of this logo into Jesus' mouth, when He says to Zacharias: «Today, salvation has come to your house»; in other words: «Today I became your salvation ».

In fact, our Founder's concept of «salvation» is at the core of his vocation and mission.¹³ : Salvation of souls, salvation on an individual and communitarian level. At the beginning of his Spiritual Diary in 1875, we discover his typical way to mark a page: «*OAMDGEASA: Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam et ad Salutem Animarum* ».¹⁴ Some months after his ordination, he writes: «*Build this work for the glory of God and salvation of souls*».¹⁵ Following the example of Jesus, our Founder desired that we become instruments of salvation for all humankind, for all forces possible. Thus we are called to work for salvation as a way to bring fullness to humanity, to liberate from all that reduces men and women to objects to be consumed. The greatest liberation would be to free humankind from the ignorance of God. «*I think*», said F. Jordan, referring to the priest of Ars, «*that most of the people are getting lost because of the lack of instruction*».¹⁶ He even exhorts: «*Insist on the importance in all countries to impart a good education to the youth, able to take profit from it; struggle for this education to take place, even if you have to shed your last drop of blood for the honor of God*».¹⁷ Salvatorian salvation also has to contribute to the promotion of an intercultural dialogue and glocalization¹⁸, because, as Yves Congar affirms: «*The Church exists and lives in true history, which also means that she cannot free herself from time, weight and thickness, which history imposes. It is not because time is passing, it is because the Church bears God's gifts and realizes them*».¹⁹ Following the opinion of Bernard Sesboüé: «*The Church is always in solidarity with its time and the culture in which she lives*».²⁰

PRAYER :

Oh, Savior of the world and Master of the Apostles,
with faith and confidence we address You with our prayer:

Awake in the Salvatorian Family the same spirit,
which animated
the Apostles to follow you.

Teach us to fulfill our tasks and apostolates as they did.
Teach us to live the Gospel, thus spreading the Good News
over all the globe.

Amen.

(Footnotes)

¹ DONALD SKWOR, *Contributions to the Discussion. Ten Years After 'A Call to Action'*, in *The Salvatorians in History and Today 1881-1981*, p. 403-420.

Nous trouvons que cette contribution est une boussole formidable pour toute étude sur le charisme.

² Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our founder – a prophet*, p. 10.

³ Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our founder – a prophet*, p. 10.

⁴ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 454.

⁵ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 454.

⁶ *Exhortations and Admonitions, on Unity*, p. 113.

⁷ Peter Van Meyl – *Salvatorian Renaissance*, p. 8

⁸ *Charter of the Salvatorian Family*, Chapter I, §2.

⁹ Donald Skwor, *Contributions to the Discussion*, p. 406.

¹⁰ *Exhortations & Admonitions, on Living and Labouring in the Spirit of the Society*, Chap. 28 § 9.

OUR SALVATORIAN CHARISM



Joint International Charism Commision - 2008

am your salvation.”

With kindness and love Jesus looks into the heart of each of us, despite our weak faith. His love heals and saves us. His love accepts each of us in God’s project of salvation. He came to live among us. For us He died and gave up His life. He invites us to spread the Good News everywhere –into the whole world.

Under the image of Jesus is the dry earth, where the tree of salvation, Jesse’s trunk, is drying out. Jesus promises: “Who lives in me and I in him will produce abundantly” (John 15: 5). Without Jesus our life dries out and loses its flavor. But with Jesus we will bear much fruit for the greatest glory of God (John 15: 8). If we are united with Jesus, His Father, our loving Creator, will answer our prayers.

On this trunk we distinguish the images of several men and women, who lived following these texts and who bore the fruit of Eternal Life. These are the Salvatorian patron saints who inspire us – with their lives, faith and service. From them we learn about Jesus and how to live our own lives to the fullest. We address them as our intercessors and try to make God’s Kingdom visible in our world.

GROUP ACTIVITY

Each member imagines his/her image on this tree as a sign of attachment to Jesus Christ. On the basis of what was said before, we should carefully contemplate this image of the tree of life, meditate on it, and try to imagine that this tree can only continue to grow through us. Therefore, the Salvatorian charism is urging all members to fix their personal image on the tree of life, thus causing our charism to become also our daily challenge, which can be summarized in two questions: Who am I? Where am I on this tree? In other words, our charism shapes our mission, because: “The grace of God has appeared, offering salvation to all. It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires, and live temperately, justly, and devoutly in this age as we await our blessed hope, the appearance of the glory of the great God and of our Savior, Christ Jesus...” (Tit. 2: 11-13).

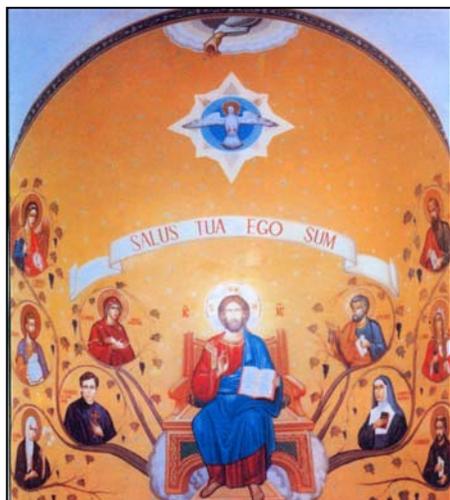
- Proclaim the saving truth of Jesus: “to live” comes to mean precisely “Jesus”
- Inclusive Universality...

Bible Texts

- Mt. 28: 19-20: The mission mandate to make disciples
- John 17: 3: Knowledge of God and Jesus Christ
- Tit. 3: 4: The goodness and kindness of God, our Savior, and His love for humankind
- Tit. 2: 11-15: The appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ
- 1 John 4 : 9 : Manifestation of God’s love for us by sending His only Son

METAPHOR: THE SISTERS’ CHAPEL IN ROME

One finds a painting of the *tree of life* in the Motherhouse chapel of the Salvatorian Sisters in Rome. We call this “tree of life”, because it starts from the central trunk, which is Christ, our Source of life.



The central figure of this tree is the Resurrected Christ, our Teaching Savior, surrounded by God’s glory. Jesus is sending us back to the Only Triune God. In His hands He holds the Holy Scriptures, opened to the passage John 17:3: “Eternal life is this: to know You, the only true God and Him, whom you have sent, Jesus Christ.”

This text contains our Salvatorian inspiration. As Salvatorians we dedicate our lives to intimately know God and to share this Good News with everyone. Jesus announces throughout all centuries “*Salus tua ego sum*”; “I

OUR SALVATORIAN CHARISM¹

The Salvatorian Family is an expression of the charism, the gift of the Spirit given to Father Jordan for the Church (Charter I,2). His vision was to unite all the apostolic forces in the Church to love and proclaim Jesus as the Savior to a world in need of God. (Charter (I,1).

Commenting the Theme

At the beginning of this work, it is important to mention that – all through the history of our Salvatorian life – the description of our Salvatorian charism has often been quite complicated. Why? A tentative reply could be that we always tried to compare it with other religious charisms. Our major concern is that we are not able to define our charism in one single word, such as “poverty” for the Franciscans or “youth” for the Salesians. This difficulty was already pointed out by the Salvatorian Fathers of the Congolese Province during the General Chapter in Steinfeld: “*As a Society we are still searching for our own spirit, for the proper goals of Father Jordan. All worked hard and employed all means, but never on the basis of our Salvatorian Charism*”² And the report continues: “*The slogan: ‘Our reason of being specific is not having any specificity’, caused more damage than good, because it relieved us from verifying if we were on our right way. It also causes a lack of unity in our action.*”³ This Congolese report depicted an image of not feeling well in our “skin” as Salvatorians. In fact, the report is definitely putting on the table the basic question of our commitment in the Salvatorian Family: what is our charism?

It is interesting to know that this question already was around in the founding period of our Rev. Father Francis Jordan. Fr. Jozef Lammers makes the following observation: “We often hear this complaint: ‘We do not know what we want, because we want to embrace everything.’”⁴ Consequently, the question turns up again: “What is the Salvatorian charism?” This question is as old as the foundation of the Society, because it already troubled the members during our Founder’s time. At that time, Father Pancratius Pfeiffer, the successor of our Rev. Father, tried to reply by taking our Founder himself as a witness: “To all, who think that the specificity of our Society is to do and embrace everything – because we say *omnibus rationibus et mediis, quae*

caritas Christi inspirat - I would like to reply that the Rev. Founder told me one day that a dignitary of the Holy See once remarked: ‘*Ma Lei vuol fondare una seconda Chiesa!*’ (But you wish to found a second Church!) His reply was: ‘we are using all means to reach our only goal, i.e.: ‘Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ’. Thus, this sentence is indicating the specific nature of the Society.’”⁵

Our Founder was so deeply imbued by the particular charism of his lifework, that he refused any possible attempt to push him to be more specific. And it was precisely the Salvatorian spirit of John 17:3 that he wanted us to inherit, so that we could transmit it faithfully to future generations. In this sense the Salvatorian charism is a special gift which the Spirit of God gave to our Venerable Father for the good of His Church and the world. Burning with the constant desire not to deviate from the original spirit, the Venerable Father formulated one admirable exhortation to his fellow brothers and disciples on the basis of this marvellous metaphor: “Each Institute has its own spirit; and just as soon as one deviates from it, he finds himself on the wrong road. An apple tree is not a pear tree. And, a Franciscan is not a Dominican ; a Jesuit is not a Trappist. It is the practice of the Church that, after the death of a founder, she points to the spirit of the founder.”⁶ This is the great spiritual heritage, which we have to dearly observe and treasure, in order to point out the specific nature of Salvatorian works.

On the other hand, Fr. Peter van Meil reminds us of the following:

“The founder is no longer the subject of history or research, he is the bearer of a message, of a ‘vision’. His life and his works are not simply something interesting or boring; they become the place where the spirit is acting. And he becomes a gift (the charism) of the Spirit to the whole Church.”⁷

Therefore, being members of the Salvatorian Family, we are bearers of the vision of our Founder for our times. Inspired by our Founder, the first chapter of the Charter, paragraph 2, says:

“The Salvatorian Family is an expression of the charism, the gift of the Spirit given to Father Jordan for the Church. We trace our

*common roots back to the Apostolic Teaching Society, founded by Father Jordan on 8 December 1881 in Rome. Diocesan priests were its first members. Therese von Wüllenweber (later Blessed Mother Mary of the Apostles) omitted herself to this Society in 1882. Large numbers of laity of all ages joined this foundation.”*⁸

More explicitly, Fr. Donald Skwor was of the opinion, that “*the charism is at the same time a gift of God and a call to serve.*”⁹

With regard to our vocation, the Salvatorian charism is neither a compilation of doctrines nor a list of rules to be learned by heart, but more like a way of life, or even more precisely something to be lived, witnessed, announced and shared with others. In light of John 17: 3, the Salvatorian charism could be expressed by the convincing words of the Apostle of the Gentiles: “To me, life means Christ” (Phil 1, 21) or in other beautiful words said by St. Paul to the Galatians: “... and the life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me.” (Gal. 2: 20a). The Salvatorian charism to “live for and with Christ” thus becomes the solid foundation of our vocation and Salvatorian mission. In order to encourage his members to live and act in the spirit of the Society, our Venerable Father exhorted them to grow in zeal for it, that it may grow strong within and without, especially through the self-sanctification of the individual members. Referring to Luke 12: 31 “Set your hearts on his Kingdom ...,” he recommended keeping the following three points as goals:

- the greatest possible glory of God;
- the greatest possible self-sanctification;
- the salvation of the greatest possible number of souls, by the grace of God.

And our Founder concluded: “I would like to set up those three points as a sort of motto for our Society.”¹⁰

Some Key Elements

On the basis of what we have read, we can underline some important points:

- Know the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He has sent...

Grant us that, united around the same mission,
we will teach to many the Christian faith
and attain the glory that you promised through Jesus Christ,
our Lord and Savior.

Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
as it was in the beginning, now and forever. Amen.

Holy Mary, Queen of the Apostles and our mother,
Pray for us! Don't abandon us!

Intercede for children and their teachers!
Intercede for our Salvatorian Family and for our leaders!

Intercede for our benefactors, friends and enemies!
Holy Apostles, pray for us!

Father Jordan's Blessing (SD I 189,6)

May the Almighty God + the Father + the Son and
the Holy + Spirit bless you,
He will sanctify you, confirm and multiply as the sands of the sea
And as the stars in the sky, until the end of time. Amen

04. SOURCES FOR DEEPENING THE THEME

- √ Sociedade Apostolica Instrutiva – Sua Natureza e Importância –
Pe. Lüthen – Diretor do Ambrosius, CIP 20 –
- √ Uma Iglesia al Revés – La Hora de los Laicos – Luís Munilla, sds
- √ As origens da SDS – 1880 – 1883 – Alfredo Schneble, sds
- √ Padre Jordan e os Leigos – Uma Visão Histórica – Comissão
Internacional de História
- √ Salvatorian Key Elements – International Charism Commission

OUR IDENTITY AS SALVATORIAN FAMILY



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

OUR IDENTITY AS SALVATORIAN FAMILY

“Even through the three branches are autonomous, it is in the interaction of our life that we express our charism” (CD N° 15).

Opening Prayer

Father Jordan founded the Salvatorian Family to proclaim Jesus as the Savior of the world, through our joint efforts. The members of the Salvatorian Family are on the Five Continents, fulfilling a mission received from the Founder. We join the members of this Family, by praying to the Holy Spirit to enlighten and strengthen us during this discussion. (We can sing a song or say a prayer).

Motivation

The Salvatorian Family is like a river that has its origin in our sources, running its own way in order to reach out our destination. The landscapes are always new; the river never stops flowing. It starts in the wilderness, flowing dynamically, quick, weak at times, with difficulties that would put it at risk to disappear. One time, it grows and expands with other creeks joining their waters in order to spread out. The river of life and its boundaries goes through meadows, running slowly when there are obstacles. Very often as the river reaches its goal (the sea) it is enlarged, amplified. It's a powerful source of life... Our river goes on revealing its identity in three branches that is connected to other smaller tributary creeks. The more creeks we get, the richer we become. We are the Gospel's means of communication. Our river is deeper, and the water, abundant and rich. The river can be a “family” of creeks little animals, forests, life. As one example for the Salvatorian Family: we started from an originating source that grew out, forming the three branches which are intended to give life.

Biblical Enlightenment

As the water brings life to the river, our Charism is founded on fullness of life. We find, very often, in the Bible, the image of the river and the living water. In Ezekiel 47,1 -12 the running water symbolizes the presence of God in the Temple that becomes the centre of life, which spreads out to all

Being aware of the Salvatorian Family values as an inheritance received from the Founder, Father Jordan, we reflect:

1. Am I ready to go back to the sources and live my Salvatorian vocation courageously?
2. How do I nourish my apostolic ministries with the water of joy, goodness, and saving love of the Father?
3. Do we witness who we are to the people around us through our life and ministry?
4. How can each of the branches know its own identity better in order make greater and more intensive collaboration possible?
5. How can we grow in unity through the integration of our ministry as Salvatorian Family?
6. To What other challenges can we point in our search for deeper fidelity to our identity?

Time For Sharing

1. After personal reflection and internalizing our identity as Salvatorian Family, let us share our reflection and intuitions with the members of the community or group.
2. We want to finish this meeting with the following prayer:

PRAYER OF THE SALVATORIAN FAMILY

(Statutes of the Apostolic Teaching Society – 1880)

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, you assumed human nature to save all from sin and error, and to teach the eternal truths. By your suffering and death we ask you: enlighten those who are astray and those who don't know you yet. Give them true wisdom! Through your Holy Spirit you promised, that those who teach justice will shine for ever as stars.

The Society makes an effort to unite, sanctify and animate, in the apostolic spirit, all the forces of the catholic magisterium” (The apostolic Teaching Society – its nature and importance – CIP 20,6).

In order to live our identity more intensely as Salvatorian Family, we face some challenges such as:

1. *Needing to return to the sources of the Salvatorian river – our origins.* As time passes, much dust, that is, many values and philosophical concepts of the society of consumerism will penetrate the riverbed, creating difficulties and deviating the original riverbed, that is, the basic ideals and values of our charism and identity.

2. *Learning to work together: overcoming individualism and prejudices.* Father Jordan always dreamed of a “Society” in which it was possible to unite forces in order to propagate the evangelical values, that is, to evangelize among all peoples, by all possible means. It is necessary to overcome individualism, and avoid prejudices in order to be able to unite forces in view of our apostolic activities as Salvatorian Family.

3. *That all the members be aware of the richness in our life of the Salvatorian Family.* To continue developing efforts consciously to value the richness of this unity among the three branches of the Salvatorian Family. Thus we can fulfill the common goal of the evangelization of all peoples

4. *Understanding that the Salvatorian Vocation is expressed in various complementary and needed ways.* In view of the fulfillment of our common goal, we need vocations dedicated to the priestly ministry, to the consecrated religious life and to the lay ministry, forming a Salvatorian Family, as Father Jordan dreamed. Therefore, it is necessary that each one of us respond to the call in a vigorous, courageous and prophetic way; then there will be mutual complementarity in our apostolic ministries.

Being aware of the challenges of the world today, with the help of divine grace, we will be able to revitalize our Salvatorian identity, strengthen our solidarity and mutual cooperation in promoting the life of our Salvatorian Family.

the earth, in order to be transformed in paradise. If we commit ourselves to the project of life, we see that the natural goods multiply, in order to be shared, but we also become revitalized with the ability to share our own life in a brotherly and sisterly way.

Revelation 22,1-13 describes that a city from inside is a new paradise. The new humankind receives life from God, the Spirit – river of water of life. Everyone has the possibility to be fully actualized. The coming of Jesus is progressive and is manifested through the witness of those who keep on doing what He did: to manifest truth, to reveal the Saving Love of the Father, which provokes conversion.

In John 4,1-14, Jesus presents Himself as the “living water” that will be transformed into a spring that brings eternal life. The Samaritan Woman is thirsty for life and wants to quench her thirst, but finds only stagnant water. Jesus brings living spring water and acts so that the spring of water bursts from inside each person.

Let’s use this time to deepen our discussion, as we read and pray the texts indicated above. We can also discover other passages in the bible to illustrate and deepen our theme as Salvatorian Family.

DEEPENING THE IDENTITY OF SALVATORIAN FAMILY

The image of the river and of the family appears from the beginning in the words of Fr. Jordan and in the first documents as well. They are not three independent rivers or branches, but are uniting forces with the same and unique goal.

“I am the father of the family who takes care of all children and can give them everything. How painful it is, when the children look for help elsewhere” (SD I-165,03-04)

“Pray, daily, insisting to God and Our Lady, and don’t stop doing so, in order to offer to your beloved Spouse Jesus Christ a large family of both men and women, agreeable to God and accepted by Him, large as the sand of the sea and as the stars in the sky, that is:

1. In order to found a family that is holy and pleasing to God;
2. So that you can offer, one day, in heaven, to your beloved spouse, innumerable spiritual sons and daughters, holy and agreeable to God” (SD I-184, 05 e 186,01).

“Be a grateful river, but ever a river. Give back to the sea what you have received from the sea” (SD I-99,03).

All families have their own identity. We understand identity as a body of characteristics and circumstances that distinguish a person or an institution individually.

A description in the introduction of the Key-Elements of our Charism, Mission Spirituality, Identity explains to us and to others who look at us who we are. It is the inculturation of our Charism, mission and spirituality.

The Salvatorian Identity is thus defined: “We identify ourselves, as Salvatorian Family, by living our charism, mission and spirituality, as individual person and as community. We are united by the same commitment to be an inculturated expression of the key-elements, through which others will identify us as Salvatorians”.

We have received this identity from the Savior. As members of the Salvatorian Family we need to follow the footsteps of our Divine Savior, by identifying ourselves with Him. To follow Him is to be committed to His Project. “If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mk 8,34). Paul, the Apostle tells us about the following of Jesus: “I live now not with my own life but with the life of Christ Who lives in me. The life I now live in this body I live in faith; faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake. I cannot bring myself to give up God’s gift:” (Gal 2, 20-21). “There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself . . . In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus” (Phil, 2: 3-4).

The Salvatorian Family founded by Father Jordan with the name of “Apostolic Teaching Society” has as its goal, to dedicate itself, with God’s grace, to the salvation and perfection of its members. It consists also in dedicating oneself tirelessly and intensively everywhere in the world to what the glory of God requires according to the command of Our Lord Jesus Christ: “Go, teach all people”, instructing, forming, teaching, with words and in writing, that all people may know better the only and true God and Him who was sent, Jesus Christ, so that they can live saintly lives and save their souls” (Smirna Statute - 1880).

In 1880 when Father Jordan defined the goal of the Society, or of the Salvatorian Family, he already presented his plan of a Society organized in three Degrees, with participation of: fathers, brothers, sisters, as well as lay people who follow the Statutes.

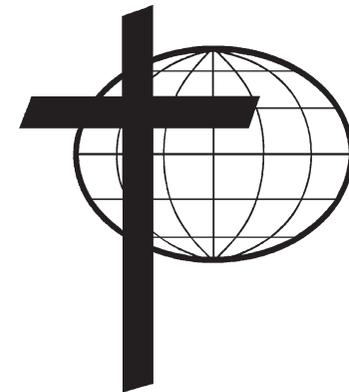
The name Salvatorian Family appears in the 1981 General Directory of the Fathers and Brothers and is thus described: “A Salvatorian Family includes those who make private commitment in the Society. The participation in the Society is determined by the Provincial Statutes” (1.6).

The XV General Chapter of the Fathers/Brothers in 1993, considers the lay Salvatorians as persons who by means of a special commitment, participate more intensively in the life, spirit and apostolic objectives of the Society.

The Salvatorian Sisters in the XVII General Chapter in 1995, say that “the Salvatorian Family is formed by the Congregation, the Society and Lay Salvatorians”, adding: “We are all inspired by the same Charism and sent to the same mission. We share our call in equality and complementarity”.

In the Salvatorian Family founded by Father Jordan, the religious men and women, lay men and women are called to commit themselves, with dedicated care, so that all the living forces of the Church, including the lay people, live their Christian vocation and mission: “The society tries to animate all the living forces of the Church in the fulfillment of its Christian vocation...,”

**RESPECT AND
INTERCULTURAL
DIALOGUE IN THE
SALVATORIAN FAMILY**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

Other Sources for deepening the theme

- √ “*The Spirit of Dialoguing and Universality*” – Article of Sylvie Brunzel- Lauri, SDS - Italy.
- √ “*Universality and Universal Love*” – Sr. Carol Leah Thresher SDS
- √ “*In Family and with Charism*” – Luis Munilla Article: *A vueltas con la expresión: “FAMILIA SALVATORIANA”, pg. 109s.*
- √ “Postulation Salvatorian Press” – N° 19 – December 2006.
- √ “Books 1, 2 e 3: Salvatorian Key Elements – International Charism Commission”
- √ Collection: *Drinking from the Sources of the Charism*”: The Salvatorian Family meeting with Salvation - 48/8 p. 11 – Feb /2007– CIS, Brazil.

RESPECT AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE SALVATORIAN FAMILY

“...men and women, with cultures and distinct history, working side by side in mission. We nourish mutual trust and respect by the differences existing among us”.... (CD IV, 14)

Opening Prayer

At this present time in our history, the theme of **respect and intercultural dialogue** is current and urgent. In the globalizing world today, very often tormented by divisions, sectarianisms and fundamentalism, we are challenged to experience internationality and multiculturalism as part of our identity as Salvatorian Family. Respect and intercultural dialogue are dimensions that need to begin within each person, creating and opening spaces towards others. We shall start reflecting on this theme and invoke the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (prayer or song), followed by a moment of silence in order to be in communion with all the Salvatorian men and women, of all ethnic groups, and with every person throughout the entire world.

Motivation

A student raised the following question to his teacher: “Why are there so many religions and political parties?” The teacher took a chair and put it down before all. He asked each one to look carefully at the side of the chair they were able to see. Some students could see the front side, others could see the side of the chair, no one could see the backside the same way. Then, the teacher explained that that was the reason of the diversity of religions, parties and opinions. Each one's vision of the chair was not absolute. In fact, no one was able to see the chair as a whole. Each one had a different vision, because they were in different places, looking at the chair from different angles. According to the teacher, the person who tried to see the chair by changing the area of vision would be closer to the truth. Walking around the chair would help to know it better; bending down it would be possible to see the bottom part of the chair; touching it would allow the person to experience the notion of texture and the material used in its making. The teacher explained that when we get up from our places, from our positions, when we allow

ourselves to evaluate things from another perspective, we learn more about the issue and our comprehension becomes enlarged, grows and is enriched. In light of this short story we can think about our challenge to witness our common identity to live unity in diversity. Diversity is, without a doubt, one of the greatest treasures of our Salvatorian Family. Each member, each community, each branch can be distinguished by its specific gift. In living our Charism the gifts of each person become like a link of the same chain, or threads of the same fabric. *“Even if the three branches are autonomous, it is in interacting that we express our Charism (DC IV, 15).*

However, it is not so simple and not so easy to live diversity, because it demands breaking down prejudices, being open to other identities, in a spirit of tolerance, and ability to dialogue among all those involved in this process. It requires above all humility to recognize that we do not always possess the “whole” truth.

1. From which angle do you see the Salvatorian Family? What is your experience of living the Salvatorian call in diversity?
2. In general, how does our group/community live this dimension of our Salvatorian Charism?

Biblical Meditation

The Salvatorian Family responds to its call based on a profound experience of God, as the center of our life. Engaged in manifesting the goodness and love of Jesus the Savior, we are called to practice respect and dialog with others. This open vision is rooted in the evangelical ground of the Savior’s universal brotherhood. In the Gospel, Jesus reveals in a translucent way an attitude of welcoming ALL. The most characteristic sign of His attitude was His openness to those who were different, to those who were excluded and marginalized. The great goal of his mission was not primarily to spread a new doctrine, but “to witness a new way of living and living together”. Thus, we Christians, find in Jesus the basic reason for our openness to others. The dialogue sprouts from the inner heart of the Gospel. What is most specific in following Jesus is to be so close to “another person” and to be what “the other from his/her irreducible way of being expects as a Christian attitude

That our discussions will not divide us, but will be means of searching for truth and wellbeing.

That each one of us, in constructing our own life, will not impede others in the construction of their lives;
That our differences do not exclude anyone from community.

That we look at one another, Lord,
with your eyes,
And love each other as you love us.
That by living as sisters and brothers we do not to be closed in on ourselves,
But be available, open and sensitive to the desires of others.

That at the end of all ways, beyond all our searches,
And at the end of each discussion and after each encounter,
There will not be winners nor losers, but brothers and sisters of the same family. Amen!

End with the Blessing of Father Jordan. (SD I 189,6)

May the Almighty God + the Father + the Son and the Holy + Spirit bless you,
He will sanctify you, confirm and multiply
as the sand of the sea
And as the stars in the sky, until the end of times.
Amen

We need to be open communities or groups to each other, as we live with attitudes of loving, attentiveness, welcoming, respectful, valuing and integrating gestures. However, it is necessary to overcome the so-called “higher cultures” and the “lower cultures”. All cultures have intrinsic and proper values.

The personal and community discussion we need to keep engaging in systematically, in addition to the deeper knowledge of our historical roots and traditions, presumes, also, interest in knowing about the cultures of other members of the Salvatorian Family, about the places where we do our ministry, about the signs of times current in the society today and in the life of the Church. As we face these challenges we are invited to take in heart the following questions:

1. How can we build greater unity in the diversity of our communities? Concretely, how can we strengthen the relationship among the three branches of the Salvatorian Family in our country?
2. As persons who live the same Charism, how can we know each other better, knowing about the different cultures, about the Salvatorian activities in ecclesial and social situations with their own and diversified characteristics?
3. What are the steps and commitments proposed to us in assuming collaboration in common activities?
4. What phrase would be the resume of our reflection today that helps us to live this Salvatorian theme?

Final Prayer

Lord, we ask you: Help us to grow in the knowledge of our inspirations, understanding better our own limitations.

Help each one of us to feel the need of one another.
That we may not be indifferent when another is tired, sad,
indisposed and discouraged.

today. Let us recall (or read) some Biblical texts that illuminate this theme.

Lk 10, 25-37: The love of our neighbor is, in the first place, an authentic human love that moves us, that is compassionate with the person who is maltreated and hurt. Through action in solidarity one can verify the love that brings us closer to others. For this, it is necessary, like the Samaritan man moved by compassion, to leave our own path in order to go into another’s way.

Acts 2, 1-11: For the one who allows herself or himself to be guided by the Spirit of Jesus there are no borders, because one’s main goal is to live by the Project of God Who came to save all. The Holy Spirit is a continuously renewed and updated memory of what Jesus did and said (cf Jo 14, 26). No one possesses the Spirit fully; nobody is deprived of this Spirit. Each member has own attributes. Each one speaks a proper language, but there is understanding among all. The Pentecostal experience does not erase the differences, but shortens the distances.

1Cor 12, 4-20: The diversity of the members of the Community is the factor of mutual growth. The Spirit within the Community gives it its deep unity. The Spirit builds Community in unity and diversity because “each one receives the gift to manifest the Spirit for the good of ALL” (1 Cor 12, 7). Everyone is nourished and becomes inspired from the same source, the Holy Spirit.

1. What other passages in the Bible refer to this theme?
2. How does the Word of God help us to live and witness our Salvatorian Vocation that leads us towards the dialogue with and respect for other persons?

Deepening Our Charism

The theme of Universality is the most genuine and lasting part of our tradition. The global apostolic vision was always a current theme in the mind and teachings of our Founder. The dream of Father Jordan, Mother Mary of the Apostles and of the earlier Salvatorians was a Society, which was enriched

by the diversity of gifts and functions, by the geographic, social, ethnic diversity of the members put at the service of the fullness of life, based on the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, the Savior. In order to make this dream concrete, Father Jordan calls all without exception, without caring what might be his or her view of the “angle of the chair”, once this “view” is inspired by the charity of Christ and put at the service of the mission of saving humankind. Let’s recall some texts referring to this theme:

Words of Father Jordan, Mother Mary of the Apostles

“All peoples, all nations, all races, all tribes, all human beings; you are debtor of all! Do not rest until all know, love and serve Jesus, the Savior.” (SD I, 70)

“Always hold on to this universality. Keep focused on the “ubique et omnibus”s! It is for all countries and each one in his place has the task, the duty, to participate in spreading this spirit. We shut out no nation. Thus, the Society is not destined for Italy or Germany, but for all. And it is also the spirit of the Society that people of every nation are admitted. This is a very important point. And if you stray from this you depart from the spirit of the Society. In addition, as the Society is not narrowly limited either to place or social class, so we should work with the educated and non educated, with the sophisticated and with the simple and uneducated. No nation, no people, no situation is beyond consideration. It is especially important for you to heed this. Therefore, don’t always concentrate on where the greatest success is to be found. Everywhere there are souls, there we must work. This is what I would like to leave you as my testament. Don’t deviate from this.” (Talks of Father Jordan General Chapter- 17.02.1899)

“Now in a religious order it is impossible never somehow to infringe on another’s rights; but on the other hand love and leniency must be practiced. There must be order. Everyone has rights but order must be also maintained”. (Talks of Father Jordan - 08.01.1897)

“The love for the neighbor is that divine cement, without which no community will be able to keep together in unity.” (SD IV 4, 3)

“Above all, however, keep mutual love among yourselves... That among you everything will be done with love”. (Rule of 1884)

“Disseminate always, spread out everywhere. Involve and renew the universe! Attract the pastors – attract teachers – and consecrated virgins, O, guide!” (Mother Mary)

Other Salvatorian Texts

“The universality of the Salvatorian Charism is grounded in God’s gratuitous love which involves us in life. Instead of being mere spectators, we are participants. God’s, approach teaches us that all peoples and nations are to be respected. They all have the right to a full life. Any movement toward exclusion must be replaced by love large enough to embrace the universe. Prejudices must be identified and overcome through the process of conversion so that all people have access to the fullness of life...” (“Francis Jordan’s Apostolic Vision – A light for Living in the New Millennium”. S.Carol Leah Thresher, SDS, in Salvatorian Key Elements, Charism Mission, Spirituality, Identity” – Part 1, p. 27).

“The human dimension of “caring” can and needs to be impregnated warmly in our community relationships. It lowers our defenses, breaks down the hardness of our hearts and allows us to spread our mercy in living out attitudes of tenderness and in solidarity”. (Drinking from the Sources of our Charism 48/8, Feb/2007, CIS – Brazil)

“We belong to different races, but are equal in everlasting dignity. It does not mean uniformity, but deep unity, communion and ministry. If the similarities bring us closer, the diversities enrich us.” (Jordan, A Young Man under the Fire of the Spirit, Milton Zonta, SDS, p. 27)

Challenges Of Intercultural Dialogue

As carriers of this precious gift of our Salvatorian call, we need to integrate and to balance our cultural differences. Humanity, so often marked by divisions, sectarianisms and intolerance needs our witness of being in communion. This is a demand that cannot be missing in the Salvatorian Family.