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In The

SHADOW OF THE CROSS

Salvatorian - Indian Mission Vicariate Magazine



“To those who believe, all things are possible” Fr. Jordan

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MESSAGE

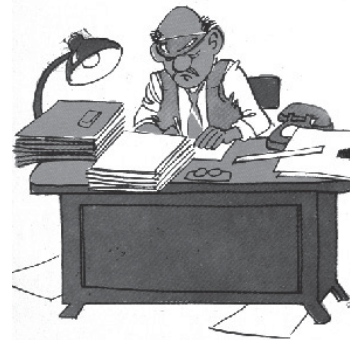
“Some people are so afraid to die that they never begin to live” Henry Van Dyke

The month of November is dedicated to our beloved relatives and friends who have gone before us. In some countries this event is celebrated in a big way. Prayers, Holy Masses, candles, wreaths, visiting the cemetery are some of the important activities during this month. We are happy to gather extra strength and effort to make sure that our dead ones have all their due fulfilled. But most of us will not in a remote sense think that we too will one day walk through the same door. We hate to think or talk about our own passage from this world, for we all love to be here. The biggest mistake that we as human are committing every moment of our lives is this; *we know that one day our turn will definitely come without fail, yet we think, act and live as though we are going to be here forever.* We fail to take to heart that death has been conquered and destroyed long ago. *‘Death where is thy sting? Death where is thy victory?’* (1Cor15:55). With the resurrection of Christ, death is no more an agent of nonexistence or a source of extinction; rather it is a door for the old and existing life to a new environment. It is the golden key as John Milton says that opens the palace to eternity. Hence the fear of death is nothing but the love for the temporary thing of this world. Let us thank the good Lord for the gift of death that we hate, for without it we will be imprisoning in this world that love to enslave us. Let us not forget to live our life to the full in harmony with God, with our fellow being with the nature and with ourselves so that when we die even our grave digger will be sorry.

I take this opportunity to thank all our dear friends and readers for your support and encouragement. I thank especially, all who have contributed towards the betterment and continuation of this magazine in the forms of articles and finance. May the good Lord blesses and keep you in His loving care.

Yours in the Saviour

Fr. Peter Kordor Nengnong SDS

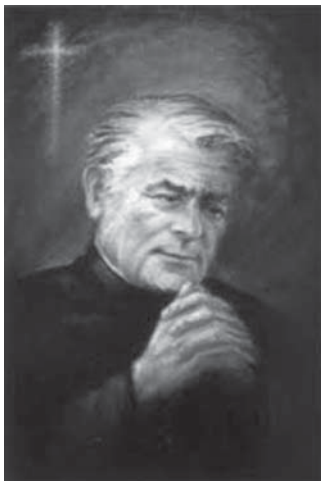


Passion for Universal Mission



Fr. Kuriakose Poovathumkudy

Professor of Oriens Theological College, Shillong



Introduction:

Fr. Francis Jordan was a man of firm determination and resolute commitment. Seemingly everything went wrong in his life; as a young lad he experienced abject poverty,

lost his father at a tender age and could not complete the basic education. He looked at these catastrophic and dreadful incidents not as obstacles but as opportunities and stepping stones to march forward. His commitment to life impelled him to fix his gaze on the goal. Commitment is the willingness and the resolve to do whatever it takes to get what one wants. In commitment one does not entertain excuses or justifications, but demands tangible results. Fr. Jordan applied these principles in letter and spirit and followed

them meticulously in his own life. As a young priest he nurtured a strong desire to take the message of the Divine Saviour to the people of various continents. This ardent desire coupled with strong sense of determination and commitment made him to found the Society of the Divine Saviour (SDS) with a specific emphasis on universal mission. Thus he has left behind a challenging and inspiring legacy to his beloved sons and daughters to be different, to make a difference and to be *omnes et ubi* (to all and to everywhere).

To Be Different: We live in a world of advertisements; some of them are very entertaining and enlivening while some others are rather disgusting. Today it is the media that decides the needs of the people, because they can create artificial needs with very persuasive and



BE DIFFERENT

enticing messages. Their captivating and mesmerizing slogans promise instant success and happiness; we are familiar with some of them, like, ‘give the minimum, get the maximum’; ‘invest the least, get the highest dividends’. Many succumb to their delusive tactics. Thus advertisements have become a very lucrative and promising business, with a turnover of millions annually. Unfortunately many “god-men” too resort to such nefarious methods to sell their religious products by using high-tech propaganda. They speak of triumphalism and glory, achievement and success, self actualization and fulfillment. In reality, life is not always consisting of only high notes and high flying situations. There are moments of utter loneliness, devastating experiences, agonizing desolation and blinding darkness. People of faith are able to see the finger of God even in the midst of deep turbulence, persistent tension and on-going turmoil. Gospel language does not always talk of consolation and triumphs. Christianity is a Way, and the Scripture speaks of the Way of the Cross leading to exaltation, because it has a different culture, a different emphasis and a different philosophy of life. Jesus told his disciples to be different in their attitudes and approaches to life and not to be conformed to worldly standards. “When you give a luncheon or a dinner do not invite your friends ... invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind” (Lk 14: 12-13). The message was clear: be different.

Fr. Francis Jordan’s life was in conformity with the exhortation of Jesus. He responded to the call of God to be



different for the sake of the mission of the Church. Even during the years of formation he exhibited such an attitude to life - his approach to formation, his special devotion to Mary, his liking for philosophy and love for languages. The missionary zeal was already taking deep root in his heart and that would come to full blossom in the subsequent years. As a young priest he wanted to be holy and different from the other priests of his time. In his own moderate way he desired to contribute his share to the universal mission of the Church. He realized that it was a formidable task and he could achieve such a noble cause only by being holy and different. Thus his perception of mission, life style, priorities, community living – all were something specific and different from his contemporaries. He visualized a particular life style befitting to Salvatorian mission. Today the members of the Salvatorian Society need to ask whether they are different from others in their ministry and life. Are they different from other religious groups, maintaining their individuality and specificity according to the directives of the Society? It means re-capturing the ideals and the charism of the Society and being faithful in observing and translating them into their ministry in a realistic manner.

To make a Difference: As a priest Fr. Jordan was sent to Rome to specialize in language studies since he had a fascination for Oriental languages. Even there his love for mission made him different from other priest-students. He came in contact with great apostolic men and gathered valuable information about the prospects and possibilities of mission *ad gentes*. Whenever he got an opportunity, he met the frontier missionaries, and eagerly listened to their adventurous stories, breathtaking miraculous escapes and enlivening conversion episodes. He was fascinated by their life style, courage, dedication and commitment to the universal mission of the Church. He longed to be one like them and help the Church by offering missionary personnel to intensify the work of evangelization. He cherished these ideals for days and weeks, trying to find a viable way out. He fully realized that to materialize such dream he needed a group of generous men to share his vision for the universal mission. Shyly and



with the current. Fish often swim against the flowing water, which help them to grow faster and bigger. It is like the athletes, who undergo strenuous training to build their muscles and stamina to compete in the sports arena. Fr. Jordan kept alive the flame of universal mission in his heart. He prayed more fervently and frequently for divine guidance. It was his ardent desire to found a teaching Society, so that its members could go to the whole world and proclaim the message of the Saviour. Eventually that dream became a reality. Today Salvatorians have inherited the missionary legacy of Fr. Francis Jordan and the members are involved in various types of ministries in different continents with one aim in view: to share the Gospel of Christ. Are the members striving to make a difference in the lives of the people whom they minister in a Salvatorian way?



reluctantly he shared his wild dream with one of his companions, who dismissed it immediately, and concluded that Francis had gone out of his mind and laughed at his incredulity. The disparaging and humiliating remarks did not deter him from achieving the goal. He realised that it was only the dead fish that would flow

To be *Omnes and Ubi*: Fr. Francis Jordan never wanted to found a Society in order to add one more to the existing ones. He envisaged his Society to be different from others and he did express that desire in many ways. First and foremost he envisioned a universal mission for the Salvatorians. It meant not to be restricted or get tied down to a particular nationality or culture, language or tradition. From the very inception this strong sense of **Universality** was at the heart of the Society. Accordingly Fr. Jordan precisely chose the motto ***Omnes et Ubi*** (to all and to everywhere). Opening the General Chapter in 1902 he categorically stated: “The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of universality, not a particularity. Because Christ died for all, our society too has a universal character. To become nationalistic means betray the Salvatorian apostolate: **to all and to every place**”. It is of paramount importance to any Congregation to have a common approach to mission. Wherever the members have a common vision and a set of priorities in consonance with their charism, they reap rich harvest. Fr. Francis Jordan was convinced that the Society of the Divine Saviour was meant for a universal mission. He wanted every member to share in his concern for the universal salvation of souls. Sending missionaries to new places was always a momentous and sacred moment in his life. As early as 1890, when he had just a handful of members, Fr. Francis Jordan willingly and gratefully accepted the invitation of the Sacred Congregation to



send missionaries to an unknown territory, North East India. That was a giant step because it was the first foundation of the Society outside Rome. He sent the best members who were academically qualified and pastorally equipped to take up the initial mission, because he was convinced that the mission required the best personnel. Such action alone speaks volumes of the universal outlook of the Society.

Today's world is torn apart with incidents of ethnic clashes and communal violence; it is often fuelled by animosity and hatred, towards people of different ethnicity, religious affiliation and nationality. The obvious outcome is a xenophobic approach to life with an exclusivist mentality and ethnocentric attitude. How can the message and vision of Fr. Francis Jordan be made a reality, first and foremost in Salvatorian communities and in places of their ministry? How can the members carry forward the wishes and legacy of their founder in their recruitment policy, formation programmes, missionary thrust and fraternal communion? A conscious and uncompromising all-

inclusive policy should be adopted to withstand any form of parochialism or exclusivism that could stealthily creep into the Society as years go by. Unfortunately many dioceses and congregations were destroyed due to petty politics, ethnic and tribal rivalry, excessive regionalism and narrow-minded provincialism. In such an atmosphere mission takes the back seat and groups with vested interests occupy the driver's seat and they either deviate from or water down the original charism. The very thought of *Omnes and Ubi* is an antidote to nip the bud of divisive forces within any community. These are painful

processes, but at times they are necessary to reap a pastorally rich harvest.

Conclusion: Fr. Francis Jordan founded the Society of the Divine Saviour to share the love of Christ with people of various nationalities and cultures. Thus mission is the heart and centre of the Salvatorian Society. Wherever communities have a common approach to mission and give priority to the missionary apostolate, they will radiate the missionary zeal of Fr. Francis Jordan through the members. Such communities enable every member to live and carry forward the legacy of the founder: *Omnes and Ubi*.

Wait a minute!!!

A man is talking to God.

“God, how long is a million years?”

God answers, “To me, it’s about a minute.”

“God, how much is a million dollars?”

“To me, it’s a penny.”

“God, may I have a penny?”

“Wait a minute.”

*“Have a pure
intention in everything
and at all times, and
never let yourself be
moved by passion.
Pray much with
great humility,
confidence and
fervour.”*

Fr. Francis Jordan

The Salvatorian heralds of Jharkhand



Fr. Benny SDS

Assistant Parish Priest & Principal, Ranchi



The State of Jharkhand is located in the eastern part of the country. It is one of India's newest states and was carved out of the southern portion of Bihar on 15th November, 2000. The name Jharkhand means "The Land of Forests". Separate statehood was the long awaited dream of the indigenous people of the place and the erection of the state was the fruit of centuries of struggle of the Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes). Ranchi is the capital of the State. The population of Jharkhand consists of various groups of peoples classified as Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes and General categories. Santhals, Oraons, Mundas, Kharias and Hos are the principal indigenous groups and together they constitute the majority of the total tribal population.

The state is blessed with natural resources, like iron ore, coal, copper



ore, mica, bauxite, graphite, limestone, and uranium and a vast forest area with many kinds of wild animals that enrich the flora and fauna of the state. Once the entire state was a dense forest but the discovery of the minerals opened the way for the development of the state like roads, railways, education centres and technical institutions.

Jharkhand is a friendly state with simple people and accommodates all religions to practice and propagate their faith. The major religions of the state are Hinduism, Islam, Sarna, Christianity, Jainism,

Buddhism and Sikhism. Christianity has made a big impact on the state and 4.1 percentage of the total population is Christian. Jesuit missionaries were the pioneers in bringing the faith to this place and till today they take the upper hand in Christian missionary work. The work of these missionaries opened a new chapter in the life of the indigenous people. The rays of education paved the way for a new era awakening the sleeping giants of the state, transforming it into a socio-economically civilized society in the country.

However, there is a thorn in the flesh. The state is hit by Naxalite-Maoist insurgency, and they have a considerable influence in the life of the society. So far, thousands of innocent people, police, militants, politicians and members of paramilitary forces have lost their lives in various encounters and ambush. And the problem continues unresolved but all are searching for an answer to this perennial problem.

The latest survey reveals that growth in literacy has taken a remarkable leap forward in the state. There is rapid growth in the field of education and sports and the younger generation is full of dreams for their future. The pride of the state is the Captain of the Indian cricket team, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who hails from Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand.

Salvatorians in Jharkhand

The birth of the Jharkhand- Ranchi Mission of the Salvatorians is the result of the hard work, efficient administration and astute leadership of Fr. Jose



Kannamparmbil SDS and his councilors. It heralded the society's rapid expansion in the country. The request of the Salvatorian administration to begin a centre was accepted by the Ranchi Diocese and Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo of Ranchi graciously consented to open a parish in a place called Bhita on the way to Kanke. The Salvatorian Generate was kind enough to allot the required amount of money to acquire the land and the process was completed at once. As the first step, Fr. Rajesh Toppo SDS was sent to the Diocese and he stayed in the Bishop's house for a couple of years laying the foundation of the new centre.

The Divine Saviour Parish was officially erected on 14th January 2010 by Cardinal Telesphore P. Toppo, the Archbishop of Ranchi by specifically demarcating its jurisdiction with about 300 Christian families and 1500 members. Fr. Rajesh SDS was appointed the first parish priest and Fr. Varaprasad Rao SDS, as the Assistant Parish Priest. Over the years, the parish has grown by leaps and bounds. I succeeded my predecessor as the Assistants Parish Priest in April, 2010.

As the years passed by, the Divine Saviour School was established to cater to the needs of the children of the locality.



The school was inaugurated by Fr. Rosario SDS and the incomplete School building was blessed by Fr. Rajesh Toppo in the presence of some Salvatorian fathers, Dominican and FCC sisters and the parishioners on 2nd April 2011. I was appointed as the Principal of the School. The school started with three students in

the garage of the landowner Mrs. Kamala, where the pioneers stayed for rent almost two years. Since the building was not yet completed the classes were conducted in this odd place and the first teacher was Sr. Anny, a Dominican Sister. The school was accredited to its sign of growth that was found visible by taking admission of 30 students in the next year. The school can be a potential landmark for Salvatorian apostolate in north India, if it is given the adequate priority by the Vicariate.

Another milestone in the history of the Ranchi Mission was opening of a computer centre on 25th March 2012, offering a few computer courses like DCA, DTP and Tally. Miss. Swapna Kerketta was appointed as the instructor with 10 students. The parish, the School and all the other activities are well set to herald the message of Christ and the priorities of our Society.



A BRIEF SKETCH OF JAINTIAS AND THE FESTIVAL OF BEHDEINKHLAM



Cl. Lessmon Nongdu SDS

Student of Theology, Shillong



Jaintia Hills is one of the districts of the state of Meghalaya. In the recent past, it was bifurcated into two as West and East Jaintia Hills. Generally the people inhabiting in the district are known as Syntengs, but they prefer to be called as Pnars. They speak their own dialect which is different from Khasi (an official language of the state). The headquarter of the district is Jowai, a small town and the distance from the city of Shillong is about 60kms.

However, in view of the festivals that are performed in Meghalaya like Ka Shad Suk Mynsiem (Virginity Dance), harvest dance, sowing dance, Shad Nongkrem (Nongkrem Dance), etc., the Jaintia people also have a very well known dance called 'Ka Behdeinkhlam'. It is one of the most popular festivals among the Jaintias

and bears a religious significance. The celebration takes place every year in the month of July and its natural attraction catches the attention of a lot of participants and tourists as well. The date for the festival is decided centrally by the village *durbar* (administration). The most fascinating aspect about the festival is that on the day of the celebration, only male dancers perform the dance to the tune of drums and flute. Women do not take part in the dance but play an important role at home in offering sacrificial food to the spirit of their ancestors.



First Religious Profession



Bros. Ambrose Damian Lamin, Jitender Tirkey, Kitboklang and S. Soosai Raj, made their first religious profession in the Society in Rakshaka Sadan, Bangalore on 16th June. Fr. Rosario, the Vicariate Superior, presided over the celebration and accepted the new members in to the Society. The occasion was graced by friends and family members of the newly professed

Final Profession

To serve the church and the People of God with utmost dedication in the Salvatorian way Cls. Lalit Kerketta and Probestar Nogsiej, made their final commitment in the Society on 1st May. Fr. Rosario, the Vicariate Superior presided over the Eucharistic celebration and accepted their vows in the presence of their parents, friends and well wishers.



Diaconate Ordination



On 22nd June, the Vicariate witnessed the ordination to the transitional Deacon of Cls. Johnson Vinod Kumar, Lalit Kerdetta, Probestar Nongsiej and J. Stephen by Most. Rev. Dominic Jala SDB, Archbishop of Shillong in Otto Hopfenmuller Study House, Shillong. We thank God for them, who are specially bound to Christ and to his Church through the sacred ministry in the church.

General Visitation



Fr. Agustin SDS, the new General Mission Secretary of the Congregation visited all the communities of the Vicariate. It was a great joy for all the members to meet and interact with him on his maiden trip to India. He exhorted the members to grow in holiness as faithful Salvatorians.

Guests from Deutschland

We welcome Thorben Lanzrath, Lukas Herkt, and Kim Sarlette from Germany, who have come in search of some unique experiences in India. They are actively engaged in the Salvatorian missions in Assam. We wish them fruitful time in India.



Homage to the Pioneer

The teachers and the other staff members of the Christ Jyothi Institution, Nagaon visited the Monument of Fr. Otto Hopfenmuller in Shillong as part of their annual staff picnic programme.



Annual Retreat



The annual Salvatorian retreat of the Vicariate was held in Siloam Retreat Centre, Shillong and Camellians Pastoral Centre, Bangalore for the members working in northern and southern part of the country respectively. The retreat was a time to introspect upon one's faith life in this Year of Faith.

International Formation Commission Meeting

Fr. Sunil Kashamkattil SDS of the Vicariate attended the International formation commission meeting which was held in Rome from 9th -13th September 2013. The eight members of the new international Formation Team met for the first time at the Motherhouse to begin work on the agenda items provided by the XVIII General Chapter.



Initial Formation Program



31 students were received into the Vicariate's aspirancy formation program in a small ceremony by Fr. Agustin SDS in Rashaka Sadan, Bangalore on 20th October. The students are from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. During this one year of formation, the students are gradually introduced into religious life, trained in English language skills and other elementary studies.

Happy Birthday



The 80th birthday of Fr. Prakash was celebrated on the 27th August. The big event was attended by fathers from the diocese, religious fraternity from various communities, SDS brothers and sisters and many friends and well-wishers. It was solemnised by the Eucharistic celebration. There was a cultural extravaganza to make

the event more grand. He whole heartedly thanked God for the blessings and expressed his gratitude to everyone for their love and appreciation.

Mission Expansion

The construction of school cum hostel building is underway in the Salvatorian mission at Laitkynsew. The new project is supported by SOFIA and is expected to cater to the educational needs of the children of the parish and the surrounding area.



Pastoral Visit



Most. Rev. John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati visited Jordan Minor Seminary, Tokobari on 9th June. It was a joyful occasion for the community to welcome the shepherd of the archdiocese and interact with him. He invoked God's blessing upon all the members of the community.

‘Behdeinkhlam’ is a combination of three words. ‘Beh’ means drive, ‘dein’ means stick or log and ‘khlam’ means plague, which signifies that it is a dance to drive away plague with the help of



sticks, or in other words to drive away evil spirits which causes destruction of crops and properties of the people. It is a dance performed mostly by the elders and the youth, in order to free themselves from various diseases and other evil spirits that plague human life, and to invoke God’s blessing for a bountiful harvest and well being of the people on the whole so that they can live happily throughout the year. People make use of this occasion to ask God to bless them and their occupations and to free them from natural calamities so as to enjoy a harmonious life throughout the year.

ORIGIN OF THE FESTIVAL

The origin of the festival is traced back to the time when human beings came to settle in the forested area of Jowai. The Jaintia people believe that in the ancient time, there were four sisters who along with their men-folks landed

at Jowai nearby a big stone. Since the place at that time was covered with thick forest, they spent the whole night around the stone. Unexpectedly, at mid-night the eldest among the four sisters heard an unusual sound. When she woke up and to her surprise, she found that the stone was dancing. She was horror-stricken and got all other awake. In fear and trembling, they all got ready to flee from the place but the dancing stone spoke, revealed his name as *U Mookhai* and ensured them all security and protection of life from every evil. Moreover, the dancing stone also told them about his three brothers (*U Mooralong*, *U Mootong* and *U Moosniang*) residing around Jowai in the form of big stones. Since then, the four sisters had profound trust in *U Mookhai* and they lived in peace and harmony for many years. When severe famine struck



them, during which, nothing grew on the land, they turned to *U Mookhai* in search of a remedy. *U Mookhai* suggested to them that they should perform a community festival after the sowing season in order to drive away the famine.

UNIQUENESS OF THE FESTIVAL

The uniqueness of this festival is the construction of the *rot* (a tall decorated

tree). *Rot* is classified into three categories called: *Deinkhlam*, *Khong Blai* and *Symbub Khong*. Among them, *deinkhlam* occupies the most significant role. Prior to the festival, the construction of the *rots* are done by different localities of the town called *dongs*. When the people set out to fell the tree called *deinkhlam* from the jungle they play the *chew chew* (a local musical instrument) with joy and active enthusiasm till they reach the place to get the tree. The purpose of this singing is to drive away all evil spirits on the way and at the same time to inform the people that the *Behdeinkhlam* festival is approaching

The other two trees namely; *Khong Blai* and *Symbub Khong* are expected to be prepared and brought for the show by other localities (*dongs*). These trees are considered to be sacred therefore the people long to see and touch them. On the day of the festival, these three decorated



trees (*rots*) are brought in procession by the respective localities to be laid in a muddy pool. The dancing men and young boys try to get on the top of them. According to the belief, those who are able to reach the top of the tree will gain sound health throughout the year.

ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVAL

No doubt, trees occupy a significant role in the ceremony. Trees are the main show of the *Behdeinkhlam*, which are considered sacred and which possess occult power. The people of Jaintia Hills firmly believe that trees are endowed with great divinity and through them people foresee a good fortune. They regard the trees as sacred and the mainstay through which they pray to God for good health, well-being, prosperous trade and bountiful harvest.

Nature, in fact, becomes a very powerful force that gives significance to every festival in the tribal culture. Nature is connected to various aspects of the tribal community primarily music and dance. They love to show respect for and communion with the nature. In the absence of nature, the tribals find many of their practices meaningless and devoid of charm and relevance.

"A soul that loves prayer will be able to conquer trials, crosses, difficulties, even the whole world, if need be."

Fr. Jordan

The Indian Trip



Mrs. Anne Schmalz

German Participant of School Partnership Programme

From March 22 until April 3, 2013 we, that is, a group of teachers from the Catholic School Salvator and from other schools in Berlin, Germany, as well as a camera team and a photographer, visited the Christ Jyoti School in Nagaon and Dhing in the State of Assam in order to plan ahead and establish a firm basis for the next years of our school partnership. The school is run, just like our school in Berlin by Salvatorians. Whereas one half of our group left India after a one-week stay in the country, six of us stayed on in order to celebrate Easter with the Salvatorians. We also travelled to Meghalaya with the

goal of getting to know the country and its history and learning about the work of the Salvatorians in India.

After the exciting time we had in Assam, we left for Shillong. On the way to Shillong when driving past the pineapple plantations, Meghalaya seemed to us like another world situated beautifully in the Khasi Hills. We Europeans particularly enjoyed the cooler climate and the absence of quite many cars and noisy car horns as in the other places we visited. We were very heartily welcomed by the Salvatorians and had the pleasure of their hospitality and a stay at the Otto-Hopfenmüller Study House, Shillong.

The first place to visit on the first day of our itinerary in Meghalaya was Laitkynsew. The first Salvatorian missionaries came to this village in 1897 and built a church which can still be seen today. What was especially impressive for us was the church's altar which had been transported all the way from Germany by the Fathers who, unlike us, had to face



the hardships of travelling by foot or on horseback through the jungle. In addition to this, it was a special experience for us to have had the chance to interview a few Khasis in and around Laitkynsew for our film project.

The next day, one of the Fathers took us along to visit the Don Bosco Museum. It was in this museum in particular that we could gain fascinating insights into the different traditions followed in the various States of Northeast India. Furthermore, we visited a number of schools in Shillong that are managed by the Catholic Church and we could interview the Sisters and students in these places of learning. The students were quite keen and very curious and asked us many questions concerning our home country. They could not imagine that during Easter the ground is often times still covered with snow and the temperature is below zero degree Celsius.

One of these schools accommodates the “WISE“ organization. There the dedicated sisters train women in the art of needle work and teaches them to make candles so that they can make a living out of it and support their children.



When we visited the Salvatorian Sisters in Shillong we were in for a surprise; The Mother Superior, Sister Antonilla SDS, had lived in Vienna for three years and thus is well-versed in German! Therefore, the invitation to have lunch together with her was quite a treat for us. After this we drove on to a village near Shillong, so that we could meet the Sisters, who run a boarding house for girls. We were accompanied by Father Peter. The Sisters’ work had a great impact on us as we were impressed not only by their professional management of the establishment but also by the care they extend towards the whole parish and the families they look after in the community they live in. As so often on this trip we were welcomed with much love and were invited to enjoy a delicious tea with the Sisters.

Two special occasions should not be left unmentioned in this account: First, a very nice lady whose acquaintance we had made at the church service and the subsequent breakfast at the Salvatorian place of operation in Shillong. She had invited us to have breakfast with her at her house in Shillong. She will always stay in



my mind due to the moving story of her life she narrated and the fascinating accounts of her many travels. Many thanks to her and especially for the wonderful farewell song!

The second experience I want to mention is the following: Since we were after all tourists besides our great interest in the Salvatorians and their work, we had

a great interest in the country's everyday culture. We quite enjoyed a trip to Shillong city centre and to the various shopping malls. Evarist Myrsing Mark showed us around Shillong and a great number of fabric stores with a patience that even Job might have envied. Even when, which happened much more than just once, our photographer had gone missing again in search of another picturesque motif, he stayed calm and kept his cool. It is him that we have to thank for one of the many great experiences we had in India.

I speak for our whole group when thanking all the Salvatorians in Shillong, who welcomed us with so much affection and hospitality, gave us their time and enabled us to travel back to Germany with memories of so many wonderful experiences in our minds and hearts. I will forever remember this trip to Assam and Meghalaya.

*"You learn to speak by speaking,
to study by studying, to run by
running, to work by working, and
just so, you learn to love by loving.
All those who think to learn in
any other way deceive themselves."*

St. Francis de Sales

*"Where there is charity and wisdom,
there is neither fear nor ignorance.
Where there is patience and humility,
there is neither anger nor vexation.
Where there is poverty and joy, there is
neither greed nor avarice. Where there
is peace and meditation, there is neither
anxiety nor doubt."*

St. Francis of Assisi

Faith and the Founder



Cl. Joby Koonthamattathil SDS

Student of Theology, Shillong

We are approaching the end of the Year of Faith but its goal to invigorate our quest to encounter and enter into a deeper relationship with Christ Jesus remains. As Benedict XVI says, “Faith is the lifelong companion...faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world” (Porta Fidei, 15). Faith is not a finished product rather it is a journey that continues until we encounter our Lord in eternity. The



conclusion of the Year of Faith should not end the celebration of our faith-life, rather it should help us to understand our faith more deeply, live it more authentically and proclaim it more confidently.

The Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, states that “if we need to

understand what faith is, we need to follow the route it has taken, the path trodden by believers.” The Encyclical Letter portrays Abraham as the universal father in faith. But the Salvatorians in particular can look up to our venerable Founder Fr. Francis Jordan as a model and example of our faith sojourn. The life of Fr. Jordan was wholly built on faith. It was the guiding principle of his life and the cause of his vitality and charisma as a Christian and founder of a religious congregation. If we strip him off from his rock like confidence on God, he would be insignificant as a founder. His unflinching strength and indomitable spirit amidst the towering difficulties is attributed to his childlike faith in the providence of God. He often exhorted his followers to “live by faith” because authentic faith is always transformative, through which we become more Christ-like in our encounter with others. As Jordan says, “if you live by faith you



will also look quite differently up on the happenings that occur”. Therefore the call to be a Salvatorian is rather a call to be rooted in the firm faith in the providence of God. I would like to enumerate some of the important dimensions of the faith-life of our venerable Founder.

The Faith that Trusts :-The most crucial element of saving faith in the biblical sense is that of personal trust. It refers to a fiduciary commitment by which one puts his life in the hand of God. Faith is something we have as a gratuitous gift (Eph 2:8-9), while trust is something we do as the result of faith. Trust is faith in action. It is the manifestation of our faith in our thoughts and actions. Trust in God allows us to develop an intimate and personal relationship with God. Proverbs 3:5 provides the classical verse regarding trust: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not rely on your own insight.” This verse sums up the Biblical teaching on trust. First, it is the Lord in whom we are to trust not in ourselves and our plans and certainly not in the wisdom of the world.

Unshakeable trust in the providence of God was a classical quality of Fr. Jordan. This is the second most prominent trait



in his life after his spirit of prayer. One might lose count of the times he had said, “In you, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be confounded.” One of the most appreciated and distinct characteristics of Jordan was this interdependence between his daily life and his trust. His whole life was moved and animated by his great trust in Divine Providence as we read in his Exhortations and Admonitions “Be careful not to trust in yourself, nor in the help of man, but in God.” Trust in God found in the life of our Founder played an inevitable role especially in his vocation to priesthood, the foundation of the Society, the spread and growth of the Society and in times of trials and sufferings. One knows little about the Salvatorian way of life unless we understand the role of trust in the providence of God. Fr. Jordan was strongly convinced that it was providence which led him in actualizing God’s plan through his humble life.

The legacy of our Founder is the legacy of trust in Divine providence. It is the great heritage which he has left for his sons and daughters. He says, “I would like to leave you a special heritage...and this heritage is great confidence in God.” He looked up to the providence of God in times of joys and sadness and considered it as the treasury of all hope and courage. Having experienced the grandeur of the confidence in God he exhorts his followers; “Again and again I tell you, put all your trust in the Lord!” Anyone who trust in God will not sink down, rather he will accomplish great things for the glory of God.



Faith and Prayer:- Prayer absolutely depends upon faith and accomplishes nothing without faith. Therefore faith is indispensable for true prayer, Mt 21:22 says, “whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith.” However true prayer has nothing to do with personal interests rather we are to pray in faith for what we need to do God’s work in God’s way in the world through us. Jesus at Gethsemane prayed in great agony not to accomplish his will but the will of his Father. Therefore Jesus is the one who teaches us about faith and prayer.

Fr. Jordan was a man of prayer. It is testified by Fr Pancratius who says; “From the depth of this life of faith arose the spirit of prayer”. The whole life of our Founder can be summarized as “one who prayed without ceasing.” Prayer was not a tool for him to accomplish needs and desires for his personal glory but it was a mindset, a disposition to the will of God. Prayer was a mystical experience for him; hence we find him often in his prayer saying “you know it! I cannot say it! Oh if only I could.” He believed that “prayer is the biggest power

in the world.” Many people testified after looking at him being lost in prayer, “look how a saint is praying.” His spiritual diary contains the word “pray” innumerable times. He could withstand the numerous trials, disappointments and sufferings only through the power of prayer. In his biography of our Founder, Fr. Pancratius puts it: “If Father Jordan did not succumb under the heavy load he was carrying and if the work he called to his life did not come to a sad end, we can give no clear explanation than that his prayer served him and his work”. He had experienced the power of prayer and therefore he recommended his followers “to be men of prayer”. His ardent prayer life was the offshoot of his great faith in God in whom he found the cause of his being and existence.

The Testing Faith:- Faith by its very nature must be tested and tried. The greatest expression of faith in the whole Bible is “though he slays me, yet will I trust him” (Job 13:15). Trials and sufferings are considered a means to test the genuineness of faith (I Pet 1:6). The time we need faith the most is when things are not going well,

which is the very reason why faith during trials



leads to maturity. The great people of faith like Abraham, Moses, Job etc. had proved their faith in times of trials. A man of shallow faith can’t withstand the demands and challenges involved in the

faith journey. Fr. Jordan proved his worth as a man of faith in God through the many trials and hardships he had undergone. The dramatic separation of the first Congregation for the Sisters was a testing time of his faith in Divine Providence. After this shocking incident he wrote in his spiritual diary; “DIVINE PROVIDENCE CREATED ME” in bold letters. This illustrates his utter faith in God in spite of anguish and trials. In every occasion of great disappointments, he never lost faith in God rather he grew stronger in faith. Thus he says, “in you, O Lord, I have hoped, I will not be confounded forever”.

Faith in Action:-Faith in God does not diminish the necessity of human action; on the contrary people who live in the confidence of faith in God are persons of initiative and are always creative. Faith has got two dimensions: dependence on God and the action arising out of this confidence. St. Augustine says “pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you”. Faith lays the foundation for action because in faith people get the feeling of being supported, which motivates them to undertake untiring tasks for the glory of God.

Jordan was not stagnant because of his faith. He was full of enthusiasm and energy. He understood the active dimension of faith. Therefore prayer and work were two well balanced activities in his daily schedule. Action and contemplation were well blended in his whole life. His actions arose from his contemplation. He considered fidelity to duty as the aftermath of faith in God. Thus he says, “do your

duty. How can you have great confidence in God if you do not do your duty.” All his activities were based on the zeal for souls and directed towards the purpose of the salvation of souls. In all his



activities he never sought personal glory but the glory of God. In his spiritual diary he notes, “always have only God’s glories in sight in all you do”. The many apostolates and foundations he had initiated during his life time in spite of adverse conditions prove his words on divine providence, “I can do all things in you”.

Conclusion- it should be a genuine concern for every Salvatorian to truly possess, guard and propagate the patrimony of our Founder. It is undoubtedly a tenuous effort to crystallize and formulate the spirit of the Founder in the modern Salvatorian life and apostolates. Our present day apostolate and life style should be updated in order to express the spirituality and charism of the Founder more fully, more effectively and more vitally in the context of our time and world. In our mission to save and sanctify the world, the Year of Faith calls us to know the Saviour and proclaim Him to the whole world through our witnessing, compassionate openness to the needs of humanity and selfless love after the spirituality of our Founder.

REALM OF FAITH

Fr. Vara Prasad Rao SDS

O Breath of God! O Life of God!
 What a stupendous Creation of yours Indeed!
 Everything in it is decorated with pristine beauty!
 Man is amidst all stands the Crown of Deity!

Made in the image and likeness of yours!
 Bestowed intellect, reason and will power!
 Given a weapon called Prayer to be with Him!
 What a lovely instrument to be united in Him!

Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity says Qohelet!
 Might be true when we look around!
 Only Prayer can withstand all tribulations!
 Makes us victorious in all our conquests!

True credit in our spiritual Bank Balance!
 True friend, who inspires, encourages and joins in Prayer!
 He is a jewel in our defence of evil!
 No prayer, No salvation for all!

In this year of Faith, grow in Faith, My Friend!
 The Bible teaches you how to be close with God!
 Life is always exciting and more beautiful with God!
 It's high time to unravel God's Benevolence and Plan!

It's a free gift given to all without any cost!
 To know, love, serve the generous Giver of Life!
 It can move mountains, chase any hurdle!
 Restores our friendship with loving God and People!

Faith has rejuvenated my life to the full!
 I got to know my dear Lord and follow Him!
 More ardently and devotedly than ever before!
 Hence, He is my all and He is my Everything!

Give me the ready hand rather than the ready tongue!
 It is not alone what we do, but what we don't do for which we're accountable!
 Prayer can flow through our days carrying our hopes and dreams
 Aspirations into the waiting ocean of God's love!

To the Altar of the Lord



Dn. Johnson Vinod Kumar SDS
Date of Ordination: 28th December 2013 by his Lordship
Antony Amalraj DD, Bishop of Ooty
Infant Jesus Church
Gudalur PO
Pin: 643 212
TAMILNADU



Dn. Probestar Nongsiej SDS
Date of Ordination: 5th January 2014 by his Lordship
Victor Lyngdoh DD, Bishop of Nongstoin
Nativity Parish, Mawkyrwat
South West Khasi Hills (Dist)
MEGHALAYA – 793 114



Dn. Lait Kerdetta SDS
Date of Ordination: 10th January 2014 by his Lordship
Anand Jojo DD, Bishop of Hazaribagh
Catholic Ashram (Transfiguration Cathedral)
Hazaribagh (PO)
JHARKHAND



Dn. J. Stephen SDS
Date of Ordination: 15th January 2014 by his Lordship
Thomas Aquinas DD, Bishop of Coimbatore
Francis Xavier Church
Sowripalayam
Coimbatore – 641 028
TAMILNADU

**“O Lord, guide my ways; I hope in You alone,
You are my hope, my strength, my firmament.
My God, I am Yours! O my Helper!”**

Fr. Jordan



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