



In the  
**Shadow**  
of the **Cross**



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# Editorial



*Rev. Fr. Alex SDS*

## How we are Communicating?

Pope Francis has redefined communications. Communication is about conveying more than facts, figures or opinions. It's about sharing, listening, closeness, acceptance and truth. Pope Francis asks journalists, writers, reporters, bloggers and all those who communicate through social media to put their abilities and gifts at the service of the common good in a perspective of true encounter and exchange. A good communicator is someone who **“builds bridges between persons and communities without exclusion, ‘because the essence of real communication is love’**”. I have tried to understand and gather ten traits of a good communicator from the life of Pope Francis. I feel undoubtedly, he is admired by world for his leadership, communication and humanness.

1. **Simplicity:** Pope Francis has embraced a life of simplicity. His homilies are easily understood by anyone, his words reach those who are in the secular world too. His simple tips to children, youth and families are very practical, inspiring and encouraging. He always communicates in simple terms about love and mercy of God which can be understood by anyone who hears him.
2. **Precision towards reformation:** The Pope has made several radical steps to reform the Church. He has signaled to the LGBT community that they are welcome; he did the same thing with the divorcees and spouses of divorcees. He has transformed a cold and scolding church into a warm and welcoming one. His steps are very precise and clear to everyone.
3. **Doing boldly what is right:** This is an important trait of Pope Francis because his entry focus is an opening door wider so that he and the members of the clergy he leads can heal souls.
4. **Clear vision:** As the Pope, he wants to make the Church as the Church of the poor for the poor. He has instructed Bishops, Priests and the Religious to “be shepherds with the smell of sheep.” His vision is a more pastoral, more open and loving Church.

*“Always do everything  
out of love for God.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

5. **Humility and Humanity:** Pope's humility and humanity trait that we are not often associated with leadership. He is very humble and he has rejected the seat of power and privilege.
6. **Reaching out to Children and sick:** His reaching out to children, the sick and the marginalized is amazing. Young people and children like the Pope for his simplicity of life-style. Here he communicates love of God in a tangible way.
7. **Listen and Communicate:** It is easy to say, but very difficult to apply it to oneself. The importance of listening is to listen with one's heart not only with one's ears. Pope Francis listens to the problems, woes and pains of the suffering people. He has even wept while listening to the plight of the children who were trafficked abused. What a heart would be?
8. **Closeness:** On one occasion Pope embraced a poor man with a disfiguring disease. It was a powerful gesture of life and acceptance which changed the way most of us had viewed him. The embrace was an iconic moment. Pope shows how **"closeness can give dignity back to the people and start a new dynamic of mercy and reconciliation."**
9. **Encounter and Exchange:** There is a need for true encounter and exchange in the digital world. **"Communication must be at the service of an authentic culture of encounter and this applies to the digital world as well."** The Pope affirms that **"the internet is not a network of wires; it is a network of people and therefore, the internet can help us be better citizens."**
10. **Walk and talk:** **"Actions Speak louder than words"** is a popular saying. Pope Francis stands apart from the crowd in this regard. In this daring act of washing the feet of prisoners, women and migrants, he sets an example of reaching out to the poor and needy etc... By doing so he sends out the message of communicating God's love and mercy in any means.

Now it is up to us to be a true presence of mercy and love in the social networks, committed to building a society of fraternity relations with our **"one human family."** Now better to ask ourselves this question: how are we communicating in our life???

## Wisdom Evergreen

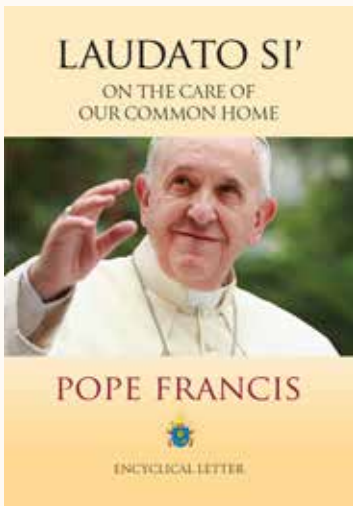
\* A camel does not tease another camel about his humps.





*Dn. A Susairaj SDS*

# THE SPIRITUALITY OF ‘*LAUDATO SI*’



**T**o be human is to be related and to be spiritual. As human beings, we live in our relationships with God, humans and nature. This harmony is part and parcel of our existence. But today, we find no more of this harmony. There exists inhuman conditions and inequality among the human beings. Above all, the earth our common home, on which we live, is crying, because of our anthropocentric attitude, and because of our throwaway culture. We are in a way in need of the spirituality, which respects the humans equally, reverences the nature, sees in it the presence of God, and thus finally establish the harmony. Thanks be to God, here is the encyclical which helps us to establish the harmony.

The long-awaited encyclical letter of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': on care for our common home*, was released on 18 June 2015. The title comes from the canticle of Saint Francis, “*LAUDATO SI', mi' Signore*” – “Praise be to you, my Lord”, and sets the theme for a lengthy addition to Catholic Church teaching that addresses both the environmental challenges facing the world and persistent poverty, weaving the two themes together as aspects of the same spiritual illness facing the world today. The letter is framed as an integrated systems perspective on the material and spiritual challenges, and the need for spiritual solutions. This encyclical letter has 6 chapters and concludes with a prayer for our earth and a Christian prayer in union with creation. Let's see about the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter titled ‘The Gospel of Creation’ where Pope Francis gives the biblical foundation for the harmony in creation. This Chapter begins with a call for a dialogue between science and religion, and the light offered by religious faith on the challenges identified by science ♦

*“Do not rest content until  
all know the Saviour.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

In the first part of this chapter, Pope says that today our relationship with God, with other human beings and with nature has been broken, because of the tyrannical and irresponsible domination of human beings; and so we must return to our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly, and to respect other living beings and all of creation as presented in the bible. Therefore, in the second part of this chapter, pope gives the scriptural evidence for the harmonious relationship that existed between God, humans and nature. He starts with the first creation account from the Book of Genesis: God created human beings out of love, made them in his own **image and likeness (Gen 1:26)**, gave them dominion over His creation (Gen 1:28), and entrusted them with the responsibility of 'tilling and keeping it' (Gen 2:15). **This shows the immense dignity of each person, "who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons.** The Creator can say to each one of us: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you" (Jer 1:5). **We were conceived in the heart of God, and for this reason "each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary'.** But, The wrong understanding of 'dominion' led to the rupture of the harmonious relationship between human beings and nature; and too much tilling but not enough keeping led to unbridled and ruthless exploitation of nature.



In this process, people forgot the words of the Psalmist, "the earth is the Lord's (Ps 24:1). Therefore, Pope argues that by our presuming to take the place of God, and refusing to acknowledge our creaturely limitations, there is rupture in our relationship with God and nature, and the name of this rupture is sin (LS. 66). Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for others and creatures; for lord rejoices in all his works (Ps 104:31, LS 69). Our only duty is to praise the lord of creation, as the Psalms frequently exhort us to praise God the Creator, "who spread out the earth on the waters, for his steadfast love endures forever" (Ps 136:6). They also invite other creatures to join us in this praise: "Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens" (Ps 148:3-5). A spirituality which

*“Become men of Faith, firm and unshakable in true Faith, Faithful members of Holy Church.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

forgets God as all-powerful and Creator is not acceptable. According to biblical tradition, the earth belongs to God and God alone (Lev 25: 23, & Ps 24:1). As God’s representatives, human beings share in the divine lordship over creation. So, human lordship is the participation in the sovereign lordship of the creator. It is a gift and does not mean a license to exploit creation as we please. It tallies with Jesus and His lordship and sovereignty over creation, which are exercised and expressed not in arbitrary, polluting and destructive interventions but in quietly steady and faithful service. God is on our earth in Christ Jesus to serve his creation and not to be served (Mk 10:35-45).

Hence, dominion has to be understood as compassionate stewardship under a compassionate creator. We have to realize, first of all that, today our encounter with Jesus Christ involves an encounter with Creation and a realization that abuse of it may also be sinful. We need a conversion both individual and collective. We have to be thankful to God for all God’s gifts to us in creation. We have to have a feeling of fraternity and solidarity with creation that Francis of Assisi felt and had a sense of responsibility as conscious and free humans to protect it. We can do this, only when we look at the nature through the gaze of Jesus. Pope Francis, in article numbers (LS 96-

100) explains in simple terms Jesus’ relation with the world around him. It is in looking at the birds of the air, the lilies of the field that Jesus points out to the providence of his loving Father who cares for all of us. The Gospel is full of poetic images that Jesus employs describing the simple things of this world: the sunshine, the wind, the storm, cock-crow, wheat, cockle, seed, fish etc. we can easily detect the love that Jesus had for everything around him which points out to the joy of living.

We have to develop this spirituality of creation, and this should base on a new grasp of God as immanent in creatures, conserving them, coordinating them, blessing them and re-creating them. This spirituality consciously and instinctively sees creatures as part of the earth, and not just as mere beings on the earth. It sees the presence of God in all the creatures and respects them. The reverence given to creatures becomes worship extended to the Creator Himself. Therefore, to praise and reverence God is to remember that we have an obligation to Him as well as to His ‘image and likeness’. It means that we learn to respect and reverence all human beings, especially the least, the lost and the last, and also to lovingly care, nurture, and protect our mother earth. It is part and parcel of this spirituality to work for the radical *reversal* of the existing inhuman conditions and to bring about “a new heaven and a new earth” (Is 65:17), and where “Justice shall roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). This is what is meant by ‘*Laudato Si*’, ‘Praise be to you my Lord’♦



*Mr. Evarist Myrsing  
Nongrim Nongladaw  
Epiphany Church Mawbri*

# THE FOUNDER'S TRUST AND UNSHAKABLE CONFIDENCE IN GOD



## Introduction

Life is a greatest gift from God that we received it once and for all throughout our existence. We must learn to live it aesthetically, meaningfully and happily every moment to its fullest in the family, community and the world at large. It has to be lived not for ourselves but for the glorification of God. At times it makes me to reflect on many things on the existence of the SDS family, the deep spirituality of the Venerable founder and the special Charisma entrusted to him by God. The founding Charism of the Salvatorians is based on the Gospel of **St. John 17:3**. "THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE TO KNOW YOU THE ONE TRUE GOD AND JESUS CHRIST WHOM YOU HAVE SENT". As the Mission statement goes; *to Know & to Serve God BY ALL WAYS AND MEANS*. This is the key element of the Salvatorian Life. And the real sense of this mission statement and key elements are simply identified in the Charism as reflected in the Universality of the society as one of the main characteristics of the Salvatorians.



## **Jordana Man who Contextualized the Signs of the Times via his Followers**

Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan is a religious founder and saintly catholic priests, who have sanctified himself and gave the legacy to his spiritual sons and daughters. The pragmatic lifestyles he lived all throughout his life are through his contextualized-spirituality, which is so deeply inspired by God-the Father Jordan, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I would personally take only two aspects as my personal encounter with him during those few years of stay with the SDS religious life. When I learnt deeply about the founder and the tremendous spirituality he had; though numerous but in my life I have experienced them now namely Jordan's Trust and Unshakeable Confidence in God. They are God's Precious gems to the founder, the society and the Church universally.

This apostolate has attracted me more than the clerical and this makes me have a kind of special love to the founder and the society since the Novitiate. I have learned quite a few congregations and their spirituality, Charism and apostolate but this is unique; because SALVATORIAN is the finest congregation in the universal Church, which has a unique Charism as revealed to Father Jordan. I still remember the sessions given to me by my Novice Master - Fr. Sunil Thomas, who is currently the Vicariate Superior. At that point of time, though I was not able to understand very deeply but as of now; I have clearly understood it well especially on the spirituality and zeal

of the founder through his gift in giving an importance place to the International Communities of the Society of the Divine Saviour in the heart of the universal Church and particularly the SDS Family in all the three grades. All these are practically were in my dreams and earnest desires to do it and it really happens as it is in the course of time when Fr. Alexis, the Vicar Superior shared his ideas and keen interests; to make all these dreams in the making to its reality by his gesture of support in every endeavors.

### **Personal Spiritual Encounter to Salute Father Jordan's Vision:**

*Firstly*, when I say about TRUST it makes me realized the courage and Jordan's endurance to trust God above all things from the initial stages of the society. Since the beginning of the society particularly when the society had a few members and he sent them off to proclaim the Saviour to the Khasi Hills and the entire North-East India way back in 1890 and now the second coming in 1989 to India as well as in North-east India in 2000 at Shillong. These are like two sides of the same coin which I have pragmatically contextualized in life, because I remember when I prayed to him to help me out in taking decisions to be part and parcel of the International Communities of the Society of the Divine Saviour and to take up the press for my future evangelization by living the Salvatorian call in the International Communities to promote in this Khasi land, our nation and the world at large. I have learned so many things in life but few of them I have realized that I have the gift

of being a good leader, speaker, writer and orator happens only with the Trust and Unshakeable Confidence, which Jordan had an impact on me. Though as humanly speaking I may need to be well prepared in order to have a zeal for saving souls by all way and means, to re-evangelizing the Christian faithful, the broken families, and the youths who are staying aloof from the Light of Christ. Therefore, we have the privilege by promoting through mass media in its various forms and this is true what the founder had dreamt centuries before when he founded the society

**Secondly**, when I reflect about his UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE in God, the immediate answer comes to my mind is that his affirmed faith to evangelize but the need of the hour is to re-evangelize the baptized and those who desire Christ to Know, Love and Proclaim. This was realized in the way God inspired me on the important of the Press as it was done by Jordan himself during his lifetime during Kulturkampf in Deustchland. The founder's vision to read and contextualized with signs of the times also currently paved a way, that through Mass Media the fastest mode of evangelization could be done through the internet and social networking sites. I have to testify this because I could do already the writings and translation works on the lives of few important saints of the Church into the Khasi Language and a few more books on the move to be released in the days to come. In fact, all these things happens in God's divine plan that he has placed the same confidence like that of the founder. I would pray always that in 'Jesus Name' on

whatever needs in my life and works; He provides me everything for materializing everything on time and this is also the powerful intercessions of Jordan who has blessed me and his followers with this UNSHAKEABLE CONFIDENCE in God.

## Conclusion

These two have attracted me most because they are the fruits out of which, I could do things with great trust and confidence in life. I have a great admiration towards the sense of great TRUST, which he had in God and this would apply the same way when I was a scholastic. I was always having in my mind that with the same trust and strong faith in God that through the intercession of Jordan. He will constantly bless us from heaven in strengthening us spiritually to be in a good team and members as future Lay Salvatorians locally and internationally. It is a real progress to see the development and growth of the society's undertaking by the dynamic SDS members; with its numbers growing and redefining its presence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in this part of the continent extending in short time to Sri Lanka, even the Indian Vicariate could sent confreres to other continents in the near future. These are fulfilled by following in the footsteps of the Apostles through his spiritual sons and daughters. I am very grateful to God the Almighty and the saintly Founder for his visions and I am proud to say that as long as I live till my last breath I salute our Venerable Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan and his contributions to the society and the world will reign forever on earth as he blesses us from the above ♦



*Bro. Anil Kumar SDS*

# Our Creed (Faith) Entails Our Deed



***“This is the victory that conquers the world: our Faith.” 1 Jn 5:4***

**O**ur Christian faith is a gift of God that strengthens us in Christ individually and collectively. The same faith leads one to cherish personally and share this gratuitous gift with the others in the community. For this common cause the Catholic Church disposes the Liturgy in which the faith is celebrated and shared individually and collectively. As a result, faith becomes a profound belief in the Risen Christ whom we encounter in the event of the Eucharist, as person of Christ himself who humbled down to the simple form of Bread and Wine that we share in communion. Thus, faith is both a personal act that

needs to be lived and communicated to the world at large. This is very tangible in the words of St Paul (2 Tim 1: 12) “I know Him in whom I have believed”.

There was a story of a peasant which heard in my early childhood, which I feel worth sharing with you now. He was a poor peasant lived in a small village. But it was interesting that he was noted for his daily labour and at the same time his trust in God in his own humble manner. So, everyday on his way to the farm land he would stop at the entrance of the gates of the Church and make the sign of the cross and then would go to his work. And again on his return to home he would stop at the gate of the Church and thank God for the day’s labour and would make the sign of the cross and go to his house. This had been his regular practice of day irrespective of sun, shower or wind. Thus he was faithful to his work and worship.

Well, now what I would like to drive home from this small anecdote is very simple. It is just like the letter of St James which tells the Jewish Christians that if it is the real Faith, it will lead to the faithful living. Therefore, for me **FAITH** is that ties up both my creed and my deed, like the farmer who believed

*“Religious should be as simple as a child, as obedient as a child, humble as a child, faithful as a child, as open as a child and as modest as a child.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

the hand of God in his work and in his work the hand of God. This implies to all of us that we have to give our best in all that we take up and leave the rest to God, just like the farmer, the sowing of the seed was his responsibility, the watering of the seed too was his responsibility but the little green sapling arising from the seed is God’s responsibility. Therefore, Faith teaches us that, once we have done our best, then God will surely do the rest. In this manner faith is simply letting our work in God and letting God in our work just like that of a poor peasant whose work and faith was tied up together.

St James in his letter (Jas 2: 14-18) says that, Faith is the precious gift of God that nourishes us to savour the love of God at all circumstances irrespective of trials, tribulations and triumphs. Because faith without charity bears no fruit, therefore faith and charity each require the other to bear witness Christ like the apostles who fearlessly radiated the word of God across the world. In this regard for us Christians, Jesus is the perfect model of faith because, He was faithful to the Father from the very time he was conceived till the time He was crucified and as a result he was resurrected

*“Live by Faith and act by Faith that will make you happy and content and will enable the Society to do great things.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

from the dead as a perfect model for us to look up to him in faith.

Pray at all times in the deepest humility and with the greatest confidence. Let nothing keep you from it, said Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. Father Francis Jordan for example was indeed an icon for us to imitate him in his faithful living of our Master Jesus in a unique way. We see Fr Jordan as a powerful communicator of faith in Jesus to the young Salvatorians. It was very tangible when he used to insist upon the prayer with strong faith, which binds us all in the perfect union in Christ. Therefore, everyday is an opportunity for me and for all of us to turn towards Jesus Christ in faith and encounter him in our prayers and in the Sacraments. Thus we shall rediscover the Faith that we live in Christ as Salvatorians.

Finally, we see the world today in deep turmoil and unstable due to the communal violence and many other social and ethical issues which hamper the peace and cause bloodshed at the cost of many innocent lives. At this crucial time the apostolic letter of the Holy Father *Porta Fidei* insists that world is drastically in need of the people of faith and credible witnesses who are enlightened in mind and heart by the word of the Lord to pray and foster the peace and security of all in grace and mercy of God. Thus may our faith in Christ lead us and guide us to foster harmony and equality of all through our faith entailed by faith.

***“Faith doesn’t make sense that’s why it makes miracles”◆***

# General Inspirational Thoughts

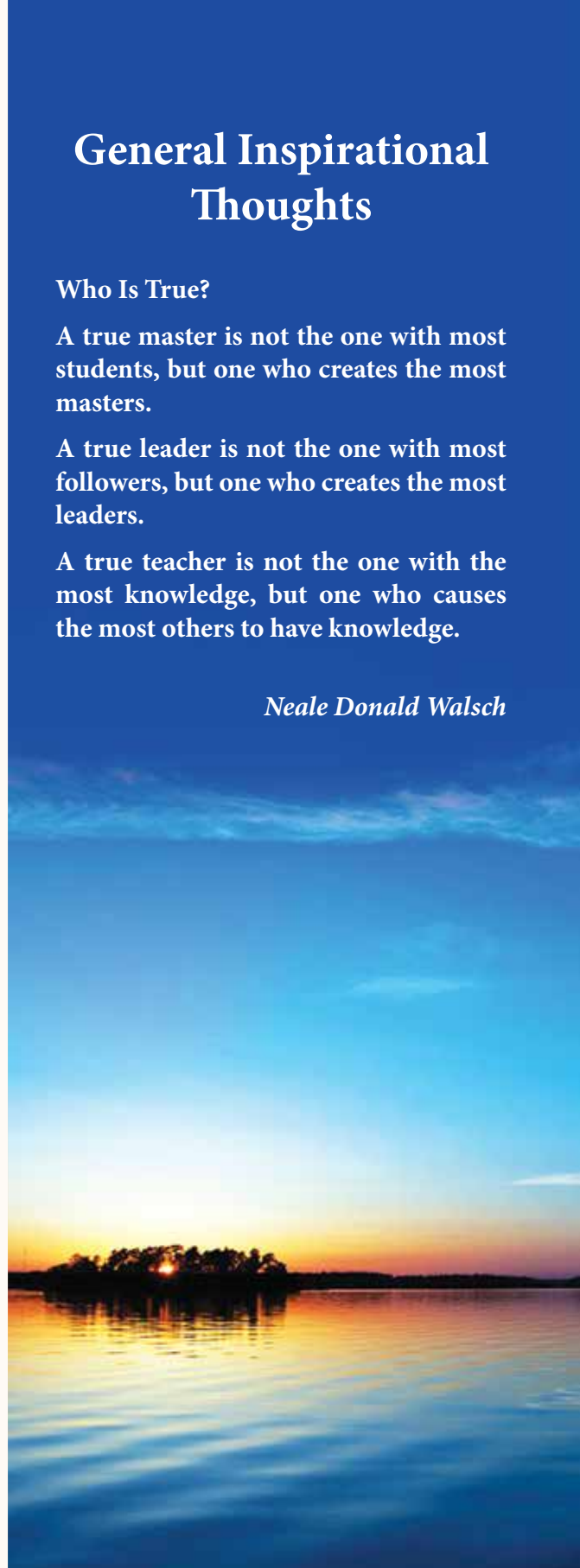
## Who Is True?

**A true master is not the one with most students, but one who creates the most masters.**

**A true leader is not the one with most followers, but one who creates the most leaders.**

**A true teacher is not the one with the most knowledge, but one who causes the most others to have knowledge.**

*Neale Donald Walsch*





*Bro. Ksankupar SDS*

# Traditional Priesthood Among The Khasi



**T**he Khasi tribe is one of the existing indigenous tribes in the Northeast India. It has its own established principles on social kinship, relations and faith in the supreme Deity. Religion plays a vital role among the Khasis especially in the ancient days. Faith has an upper hand in day today activities such as spiritual, social, cultural, politics and even ecological. Faith is manifested and made perfect through sacrifices offered to God the Creator who is invoked in various forms. Persons responsible to perform rituals and offer sacrifices were priests or *lyngdoh/langdoh* in the local colloquial. Hence the central idea that I would like to highlight in this article is the understanding of the concept of priest or priesthood according to the Khasi tradition. As mentioned above that religion

plays an important role in the lives of the Khasis, undoubtedly priests becomes the center point of ceremonies, functions, rituals sacrifices and also in some occasions and places has a sovereign role on the day today lives of an individual, families among the Khasis. The word for *priest* in Khasi is *lyngdoh or langdoh* which I will refer in my writings henceforth.

### **Etymology of the word *Lyngdoh/langdoh*:**

The Khasis in general refer to the priests as *lyngdoh/langdoh* both in the indigenous religion and by those converted to Christianity as well. The word *Lyngdoh* is derived from the two Khasi words, that is: *lang* and *doh* ‘Lang’ means *together* and ‘doh’ means *flesh*. So in gist, *Lyngdoh* or *Langdoh* means the one who gathers flesh for the purpose of sacrifice. Besides the *Lyngdohs*, there are persons also called *Soh-blei* or *ksoh-blei* and *Soh-sla*, or *ksoh-sla* literary means the one who clings to God and the one who clings to a leaf. What do we mean by these two words *soh-blei* and *soh-sla*? Priesthood in the khasi understanding is divided into two categories; a) Socially the khasis follow the matrilineal system from ancient days and are divided into various clans or *kur* that bears a particular name. The birth of a clan is always attributed to the first mother whom, is fondly called as *ka iawbei* or the oldest mother. She is looked

upon as the holder, sustainer and dispenser of all spiritual life and activities of the clan. She is the nearest one to God whom she clings for the benefit and well beings of the clan. Hence she is known as the *soh-blei* or in other word the real priestess of the clan and her status are inherited by the youngest daughters’ generation after generation. b) Sacrifices were offered in any fitting place in the houses, in the fields, by the river side, on top of a mountain etc., but always performed on a place well prepared and inlaid with plantain leaves or the leaves of *dieng-sning* (Khasi oak), consequently as the *soh-blei* commissioned someone to prepare the altar and to cover the required place with leaves she is also known as *soh-sla*. c) As mentioned the female priest inherits the status of priesthood in possession of full sacerdotal authority but doesn’t perform the rituals herself instead, one of the male members of the family or clan preferably her brother who is the *kni* or uncle, in his absent her son or her nephew. Here comes the true meaning of the word *lyngdoh* or *langdoh* the one who gathers, offers and divinizes the sacrificial meat. Unlike the Hindu or other traditions, in the Khasi tradition the ceremonial acts in the family or in the clan defers from that in the kingdom or state. For the community or state rituals and sacrifices a separate priestly clan is destined known as *kur lyngdoh*. All rituals and sacrifices within the family or clan are not done by the priest in the usual understanding, instead; it is performed by the head of the family or the head of a clan, who is recognized as the agent of the service known as *Kni* or a maternal uncle.

*“You do your work with good intention that you do everything for the glory of God.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

Apart from the sacrifices and ceremonies within the clan, there are common sacrifices that can take place either in a community, village or in a state level. In such occasions, it is the right and duty of the Lyngdoh or priest chosen and commissioned by the high-priestess or lyngdoh-sad from the priestly clan or kur lyngdoh to perform the needed sacrifices.

**The Duties of Lyngdoh (Priests & Priestess) among the Khasis:** The main duty of a *Lyngdoh* is to perform sacrifices on behalf of the family, clan, community, village or state. The means, modes and methods of sacrificing and the gods to whom they sacrifice vary from Kingships (*syiemship*) to kingship. Apart from all these, one peculiar



and more interesting part in which we find agreement in all ceremonial acts performed by the Lyngdohs, is that it must be assisted by a priestess, called ka *Soh-blei* or ka *soh-sla* or simply ka *lyngdoh*. This *Soh-blei* or *soh-sla* is usually the mother or sister, or niece, or some other maternal relation, of the presiding priest. We can recall that the mother is the actual priestess who is vested with all rights and duties of priesthood. She in turn delegates her brother or son or nephew to perform the actual rites in her name for the family or clan and in the case of the community, village or state sacrifice the high priestess or the lyngdoh-sad does the honour of choosing the presiding priest from her priestly clan or kur-lyngdoh. Meanwhile the prime duty of the priestess is to collect all the necessary articles required for sacrifices to be performed by her agent priest the lyngdoh. Based on this fact we can conclude that without the presence and assistance of the priestess, any rituals or sacrifices cannot be formally or legally performed or take place.

Sacrifices were performed during times of war and peace, prosperity and famine, marriage and initiation in birth and death, in building and erecting etc., or as a sign for the success in tribal or state legal action. Hence sacrifices become the binding and leading force for the khasis in day today life. Undoubtedly such duty falls on the shoulder of priests. The mode of offering varies from place to place and state to state for instant sacrifice to the priestly-god or *U Lei Lyngdoh* alias *u Ryngkew*, the means are a pig and a cock, together with the usual accessories. While in the state of



*Khyrim* of Nongkrem, sacrifices are also offered to the goddess of the state or *ka Lei-hima*. According to the division of the state, community or clan sacrifices were offered to various deities. And the means of offering to the goddess of state are a goat and a hen, powdered rice (u kpu), a gourd of fermented liquor and the leaves are not of plantain but of the *dieng-sning* (Khasi oak) are used during the ceremony. Besides performing religious duties like offering prayers and sacrifices, the priest also act as judge with regards to the offences committed against social law, custom and of marriage, casting out of evil spirits which he alone has the right to do so.

**Lyngdoh or Priest for Ever:** In the Khasi tradition a Lyngdoh is chosen for life. Nothing can change him or take away his position, except death. When he dies, a funeral rite is performed in a very grand manner. Since priests were appointed more than one in the state or raid according to the size of the state, the last rite for the death priest is performed by one of the appointed priest. After this the priestly clan elects a new priest who will continue the sacred duty. The newly appointed priest rather has to perform elaborate preparations and sacrifices. After performing his ablutions and rite in the house, he is led to the Shillong peak (Lum Shillong) along with

*“Work for the Glory of God  
and Salvation of souls.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

his clansmen and meanwhile dancing on the road, on their journey to the peak. On reaching the peak, they spread the leaves of a tree called *ka ‘la phiah’* on the ground for the sacrifice. Here a goat and a cock, including branches of the *diengsning* or Khasi oak are offered in sacrifice. This ceremony is offered by the newly appointed Lyngdoh to the *Lei Shillong* (God of Shillong). Here, the ceremony is not yet over, on the following day, again, the lyngdoh and his companions armed with sword and shield, a fly-made of goat’s hair (*symphiah*), being held on one hand; a quiver of arrows being slung on the back, a plume of black and white cock’s feathers (*u thuya*) fixed in the turban. To say, the Lyngdoh and clansmen traditionally used the accessories of the Khasis for the dance. This dance is attributed in honour of *U Lei Lyngdoh* or the priestly deity. It can be also compared with that of the Roman priest Salus or (priests Salii), the twelve leaping priests of Mars who bear twelve shields, dressed in a warrior costumes and dancing by leaping around the city during the month of March in honour of god Mars. Since chosen for life, alyngdoh performs all his priestly duty with out most care and precision to avoid any reverse result in his performance. He is very much revered with great love and affection till the end of his life by the clansmen who takes pride in his sacred duty and by all the people who are under his authority.

*“Have positive, firm and decisive  
principles in the spirit of the order.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

### **Lyngdoh in the Administration of Social Private Affairs:**

Apart from his pivotal act and role of performing sacrifice, Lyngdoh also ministers certain private affairs like, when two people have made an incestuous marriage, that is, marriage within the clan or *kur* since marriage within the clan is taboo and unaccepted act. The parties at fault are taken before the Lyngdoh by their clansmen, who requested him to offer sacrifice in order to remove the injurious effects of the taboo or *sang* of such a connection from the kinsfolk. As a matter of offering, a pig is sacrificed to 'Lei Lyngdoh' and a goat to 'Ka Lei long raid'. The parties at fault are then out casted. Lyngdoh also administers in such cases like the casting forth of evil spirits or *ka jingbeh ksuid* from persons or families, or community. And in number of cases of evil spirit like *shwar, Taroh* which is mostly prevalent in the Jaintia Hills tormenting a person or family, sacrifices and intercessions of a priest is very much considered importance.

### **Parallelism with Catholic Understanding of Priesthood:**

Without looking into details, let us glance only just at the peripheral level on the parallelism of the understanding of priesthood from two levels, that is, from the Khasi perspective and the Catholic way of understanding. The understanding of priesthood both in the Khasi and the Catholic faith is so similar yet much different, so close yet beyond reach. In

*"Work for the Glory of God and  
Salvation of souls."*

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the indigenous religion priesthood stems from the priestly clan, members male and female alike share the same status. In necessity a member mostly male is elected and appointed to function as minister in sacred duties. The selection to the priest is not by right but by choice of the clan and approval of the priestess. The priest functions solely in the name of the priestess who makes all necessary arrangement for the religious offerings. He is chosen for life and stands bridging the people and God. He utters words at times that only god can comprehend while offering supplications of the people to God. He, at the same time reveals the mind and will of God to the people through the medium of sacrifice and divinization, keeping in mind all the time that he is only the agent of the real entity the priestess. The priesthood, however limited it might be, in the indigenous religious tradition is a foundation for understanding the priesthood that of Jesus Christ and Him alone.

Through baptism a priestly clan is born the Church and all male and female share in this common priesthood. In necessity, members mostly male are chosen from this priestly clan to administer, to perform and to intercede in front of God for the people and to convey god's word and will of God to the people. One is not elected by right but by grace of God and approval

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of the sacred clan, keeping in mind that all the time he functions in the name of the real Head Priest the Christ, who, He is the real the only and perfect priest of all time. All former priests are figures and the later one only His agents or ministers. The letter to the Hebrews presents an elaborate discourse on the priesthood of Christ (Heb 3:1-ff; 4:14-ff; 9:11).

He is the priest, prophet and shepherd and exercises them vibrantly during his time. Analysing both we see great similarity between the indigenous priesthood of the khasis and that of the Church. At the same we see great difference between the two; for instance priest in the Khasi understanding, functions in the name of the female priest who like him is a finite and fragile being in need of all divine assistance, while a priest of the Church shares his priesthood with the divine himself who is the source and climax of everything. A khasi priest stands in between God and man, while a Catholic priest stands in the place of God (Alter Christ us). A Khasi priest deals and functions through signs and symbols, while a Catholic priest through the reality of the word and Sacraments of God. Still in general as finite beings, we cannot reach out to God by ourselves. We need *uba la*

*ksoh da u Blei*, literally meaning, one who has been grasped by God, one who has been revealed as chosen by visible signs through particular rites using *u klong u skaw* (the ceremonial gourd). He is a *lyngdoh sohblei*, the chosen one who reaches up and grasps and holds on to God. He is the one who can ensure the right relationship between all creatures including all human beings with God and the inter-subjectivity among the people. Recently, the Khasi people at large felt the loss of Late Rev. Fr. Sylvanus Sngi Lyngdoh, SDB and much more than that a great legend Khasi priest who said that,

*“Without Ka Niam (religion), there is no human existence worth its name,*

*Without ka duwan ka dupat (altar), without ka knia ka khriam (sacrifice),*

*Without sharing or eating from the altar, there is no religion or ka niam;*

*Without the priest, there is no altar.”*  
(Unpublished commentary on the letter to the Galatians)

### **End Notes:**

Gurdon, P.R.T, *The Khasis* (New Delhi: Cosmo Publication, 1987).

Jala, Dominic, “Priest in the Khasi Tradition”, *Oriens Journal for Contextual Theology*, 1 (2010) 60-77♦

*“Become men of Faith, firm and unshakable in true Faith, Faithful members of Holy Church.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*



*Cl. Aldori Mawa SDS*

# Novitiate: A journey that enthused our FAITH



I am glad that I got this opportunity to share some of my experiences on behalf my co-batch mates, Pradeep and Aviral during our stay in the Philippines as novices. First and foremost I would like to thank God for all the blessings that he showered upon all of us, and for our society and its members who always see far and beyond about our society's growth, especially in the international level. I also thank Fr. Hubert Kranz who was our novice master, who helped us in all the ways possible. We had a wonderful time with him. I am grateful that I got such a nice and wonderful place to live in, I felt at home very much as if it was my home town, because of so many reasons which I would like to tell but it's a long story to express about in a few words. In the novitiate house we

did under take a lot of responsibilities, apart from works, games and some activities outside like doing our Apostolate which I personally liked the most, but one thing which I would like to mention here is about the class which we all had during our novitiate programme, and also that shaped our life for bright future.

First of all I came to know more about the society (Salvatorians) at large, starting from our Venerable Founder himself to the events that are happening today. Secondly, the modular classes which we had together with other co-novices from many various congregations in and around Tagaytay City, helped us to have and to experience a different way of life. Learning a new culture and language but sharing the same faith in Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, the

apostolic works that we were engaged in such as: prison ministry, spending time with abandoned special children run by St. Mother Teresa congregation (Brothers of Charity) and medical mission in Mindoro Island. All the experiences were inspirational and mission oriented for our life. Fourthly, which is the most important one is about my/our community where we stayed together, it was such a peaceful and co-operative community though we were very much different in nationality, language and identity but I am proud to say that we had only one identity in the community that is Salvatorians identity and Salvatorian culture.

I would like to share something which I liked most of what was going on during our novitiate program, fraternal talk is one of the events that I liked, closeness developed in course of time, came to know each other better, positive feedback about the person of whom I was talking with, and most of all brotherly love and friendship developed which I said to myself wow!!! That is really interesting. Sharing about the word of God is also one of the events that took place and came to know more about ideas and thoughts of the other person about the same passage, community and personal prayer was very common and we all developed that which I myself found community prayers help one to be faithful of what a religious vowed, and of course one of the thing which Fr. Hubert used to tell us was about absent, because absent was a disturbance to the others and events which I have said before shaped and made us more aware of all what a Salvatorian is all about, and I must say that was a good stepping stone for our journey as young Salvatorians. So before I conclude, I would like to express that as members of this great congregation (Salvatorian) our life must show that we are father Jordan's followers who follow his footsteps and proclaim the Savior in and around us and to all those who didn't know yet ♦

## Lessons from Trees

**Be flexible.** The trees that bend a little to the harmless breeze will later grow to withstand the wild wind. Similarly, if we maintain a degree of flexibility in our viewpoints we will not be broken in any storm of criticism or opposition.

**Value the little things.** Leaves, though they can be small, are vital to the life of a tree. Similarly, expressions of encouragement and appreciation, in any form can go a long way to build the spirits of the receiver.

Do not be intimidated by small beginnings. Mighty oaks do indeed grow from little acorns. Efforts, when enriched with strong motivation and determination, will grow to fruition.

**Do not be afraid of change.** An acorn is unafraid to destroy itself in growing into a tree. Invigorate your life by letting go of the past and pressing forward to something new.

**Practise teamwork.** In forests, individual trees support one another. By interlocking their roots with other trees around them, they are able to stand as a grove against any wind. Do we support each other?

**Develop a value-system.** Trees have extensive root systems. Some trees, such as mesquites, grow taproots that are often larger than the trunk and that can extend down into the ground hundreds of feet to reach vital sources of water. How extensive is your root system? Is it solidly embedded in principles and values?

*Grant M. Bright*



Fr. Alex SDS

# IMV SDS Annual Retreat

*An inward Journey for outward Mission*

**“Strive after perfection and holiness of life.”** Fr. Francis Jordan



The annual retreat for the SDS family for the year 2017 (July) was organized by IMV and preached by Rev. Fr. Adam Teneta SDS, The president of the Postulation Team. He began the Retreat in total gratitude to God for His constant assistance, to Fr. Francis Jordan for his intercession and to IMV for its kindness for the invitation to lead the annual retreats for the Salvatorians (Fathers and Sister) in India. The Retreat was begun by calling everyone to walk with our Venerable Founder and try our best to grow more in holiness of life and one’s own

vocation. The sum and substance of the said annual retreat are the following.

### **Fr Francis Jordan: His ‘Holiness of life’**

From the beginning of Fr. Francis Jordan’s life, we see that he was always striving towards perfection and holiness of life. The first and the greatest experience we found in him was the Experience of his **First Holy Communion** (a dove fluttering around his head), a sign of God’s love and message. Hereon, our founder walked towards the goal of his life **“Holiness of life”**. However, He followed certain heroic virtues to achieve his goal of life and that began the bed lock of his entire life. We notice that his identity and spirituality, vision and mission were striving towards holiness of life in and among the members and the mission of the Societies (Fathers, Brothers, Sisters and Lay Salvatorians). Those who lived with him and who came in contact with him were the witnesses to the virtues life of our Founder. He lived a faithful, confident, simple, humble, holy, obedient and mission centered life. He was always had in mind

and mission of the Holy Catholic Church and promoted the same to his followers (Sons and Daughters).



The members and general chapters in different times have promoted the veneration and the beatification process of our founder on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2011 the church has approved and on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011 promulgated the **Heroic Virtues** of our Founder which is a requirement for his beatification. On 19<sup>th</sup> March 2011, Archbishop Marcello Bartolucci, was invited to our mother house (community) at which he addressed in the Holy Mass that Father Francis Jordan lived a holy and virtuous life saying *“that the servant of God, Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, a priest and founder of the Society of the Divine Saviour as well as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Saviour, practiced to a heroic degree the theological virtues, faith, hope and charity both to God and neighbor, along with the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperament and fortitude and other attendant virtues.”* Thus we are called to imbibe and imitate our Venerable Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan in life, vocation and mission and pray that his holiness of life may bring many more miracles to prove that he was

an extraordinary person. In imitating and saying so, Rev. Fr. Milton Zonta SDS, The Superior General calls that *“We Salvatorians have inherited the spiritual experience of Fr. Francis Jordan, that calls us to be ‘men of God’ (Vocation), who proclaim the Good News of salvation (Mission), from constant deepening and growth in our vocational programming (Formation), collaborating so that the Society is able to continuously revise and adapt its forms of organization (Reorganization), since these are an important means for the realization of our vocation-mission.”*

As we read in the Gospel of Mt 10: 34, 11: 1, ***“Whoever does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”*** Every follower should take up his/her cross to follow Jesus our Saviour all through one’s life through the evangelical counsels. Hence, when someone wants to know about our founder, he/she has to go to the sources namely his life journey, his spiritual diary and exhortations. He always had lived up to his call in following his virtues namely theological and cardinal. After the First Holy Communion experience he felt something different in his life and behaved so. He was faithful to his Christian life faithfully following the rules and regulations of the Society. He was found always in front of the Blessed Sacrament and prayed long hours. Even those who wanted to meet him, had to approach him in the chapel. Many people witnessed that he was a man of prayer and constant seeker of God’s blessings and close son of the Blessed mother.

He centered his life on the Holy Eucharist, he says that **'the Holy Eucharist is the source and submit of my life and calling.'** He always meditated on the word of God and the sacraments. He took Gospel of John 17:3 as the main source of his mission that is *"Eternal life is to know you the one true God Jesus Christ whom you have sent."* He was loyal and faithful to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church and followed very closely. Thus, he was always striving after holiness of his life which made him what he is to us today.

### **Fr. Francis Jordan: An Apostle who invites others to be the Apostles of Christ**



As we know him that he was fully involved in the apostolic works of the Society in establishing and trying his best to preach Jesus Christ to the whole universe. At first he founded the Apostolic teaching Society and gave it to the church in order to follow the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church. He was always an obedient and loyal son of the universal church. At the beginning he had a lot of difficulties and problems namely the establishment of the Society, economic crises and lack of members. However, He did not lose confidence in God and he was

more enthusiastic to do the will of God in following the footsteps of the apostles. The members, leaders and those who came in contact with him say that he was a man of prayers, confidence and missions. This urged him to keep doing the will of God and working hard to develop the society.

He spoke and promoted about the new evangelization and new way of preaching Jesus the Saviour of the world. Every Jordanian has a mission to begin a new missionary activity which renews the SDS Family at large within the entire Church to revitalize faith and Salvatorians identity, spirituality and mission. Fidelity to the church and the society will depend on our intimacy with the Saviour. This intimacy should enable us to grow in union with the saviour. The new evangelization demands us to become the apostles of prayer. Every Salvatorian is called to be an apostle of the times in following the footsteps of our founder. Therefore, our founder expects every one of his sons and daughters to be the apostles and work for the will of God and for the **'Glory of God and Salvations of Souls'**.

### **Fr Francis Jordan: One who upheld Theological (Faith, Hope and Love) and Cardinal (Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Courage) Virtues**

Father Jordan was a man of faith, hope and love. Though he underwent a lot of difficulties and disappointments yet, he did not give up his faith, hope and love in developing the society. For him hope was one of his basic realities that he never gave up this virtue. He hoped for the best things



to happen in his life and mission. He always hoped and trusted in the divine providence and the intercession of Mother Mary. He followed the decree of virtues seriously and aimed to send members to the world to preach Jesus Christ to all in all ways and means.

We have a duty of carefully living up to the teaching of the Divine Saviour and how much more we ought to take to heart what the divine Saviour said: “My command to you is to love one another” (Jn 15:17). Brotherly love is necessary for us, above all things. Oh, would that all, each one in his own place would strive for this that we love one another in very truth and that we are united in the name of the Lord! The wicked enemy will always look for a chance to destroy brotherly love wherever he can possibly do so. Let us therefore work in opposition to him! Let us take to heart St. John’s admonition: “Little children love one another!” oh keep well in mind! It is so important for the order and the community. We who are in a special way duty bound to follow the holy Apostles, must particularly take to heart what the Divine Saviour commanded namely, love.

Unity among ourselves will be strengthened by means of brotherly love. This obligation even follows from the duty of loving the neighbor. The closer the bonds, that unit the members to each other in intimate relationship, the greater are the obligation of mutual love. We should be of one heart and of one mind, for us in particular this fraternal charity is a specific duty that we are of one. We should be one with the spiritual Father, one with the Superiors and those

placed in authority over you, one among yourselves. Furthermore, brotherly love promotes the happiness of the individual members. Through it the burden, the responsibility inseparably connected with religious life; will be lightened. Oh, how light the obligations really do become when brotherly love reigns in a family!

Venerable Father Francis Jordan vividly mentions about his great confidence in God. His confidence in God really makes him prosper in his life. That is why Father Jordan wherever he goes always feels like that life of a child who knows nothing and is led by the hand of his father. He always felt that he is like a child who is so fragile and needs special care and protection. His confidence in God also really makes him feel that he is nothing in the sight of God. Our Venerable Father also inspires and requests every soul of this young generation to have confidence in God as he had in his lifetime. He tells everyone to put all trust in the Lord for we will not fall even in the extreme difficult circumstances that we encounter in our life. He also tells us that we should have a strong confidence in God which is unshakable by our foes. And if we have the endurance of confidence the society will be powerful and flourish and neither the powers of hell nor those of the world will overcome it.

*“As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love Him above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moments rest.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

Our Founder had practiced theological and cardinal virtues all through his life. In spite of all his difficulties and hardships he kept up practicing *Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Courage*. He calls everyone to keep working for the glory of God and salvation of souls which should be the utmost task of every Jordanian in the world today.

### **Fr Francis Jordan and Mary Mother of the Saviour**

From his youth, God had filled Fr. Francis Jordan, Servant of God with a great desire to be united with Christ in the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Eucharistic adoration would remain the source of his life-long apostolic zeal. His confreres found him constantly absorbed in prayer especially before the Holy Sacrament. He drew great consolation from the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Savior and Queen of the Apostles, whose veneration he wanted to spread. He was a great lover of evangelical poverty and lived in an unshakeable trust in God along with profound humility. He was filled with love of the holy cross. He was always obedient to the faith of the Church and to the commands of Church authorities even in the most difficult times. He showed concern for his spiritual sons and daughters like a true father and was increasingly able to extend forgiveness.

*“Pray Pray Pray Unceasingly.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

### **The Jordanians are called to be like our Founder with vision and mission for the Society and at large for the Church**

The life of Father Francis Mary inspires apostolic holiness. He is the model of an apostle and a missionary, filled with the desire to lead all to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World. In his universal vision of the apostolate he wanted not only to promote a renewal of the faith of those who believe, but also at the same time to promote a new evangelization. In all areas of life and culture he wanted to proclaim Christ and to give witness “using all ways and means the love of Christ inspires.”

He tells us every day of our lives to **BE** holy, faithful, simple, humble and obedient and above all to imitate Jesus Christ the Saviour of the Universe. It is challenging but at the same time rewarding for us. It is challenging and rewarding because, challenges bring changes, changes bring hope, hope brings enthusiasm and enthusiasm brings love (love for God and one’s neighbor), this **‘LOVE’** for the Saviour is rewarding for eternity that’s to *LOVE* and *PROCLAIM* the Unique Saviour of everyone and the world. This had happened in the life of our founder, he faced challenges with hope and enthusiasm that which brought him to love Jesus the Saviour of the world and preach the same saviour to all creatures until all know him, love him and serve him in and through the Salvatorians around the world ♦

*“Live as men of Faith! Do become thoroughly firm and strong in faith.”*

*Fr. Francis Jordan*

# Congratulations!!



Congrats to CI Aldori Mawa SDS, CI Aviral Minj SDS and CI Pradeep SDS



Congrats to Dn Ambrose Lamin SDS, Dn KitbokLong SDS and Dn A. Susairaj SDS



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