

The Founding Charism of
Father Francis Jordan

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The Founding Charism of
Father Francis Jordan
Caught between the Tension of Origin,
Change and Adaptation
(1878–1915)

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Preliminary remarks



| Pope Francis with Superior General Father Milton Zonta SDS

In the year 2018, the Society of the Divine Savior and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians) as well as the communities of Lay Salvatorians mark the centenary of the death of their Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan in Tafers (Switzerland) on September 8. At the same time, Salvatorians celebrate his 170th birthday, in Gurtweil (Germany), on June 16, 1848, and the 140th anniversary of his ordination in Freiburg, on July 21, 1878.

Abbreviations: ACST = Archives of the Campo Santo Teutonico, Rome; APS = Archivum Postulationis Salvatorianum (Salvatorian Postulation Archives), in the Generalate's Archives of the Salvatorians (=AGS), Rome; DSS = Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana, Rome, 1972ff; ASA = Archivum Salvatorianum Austriacum, Vienna; SD = *Spiritual Diary of Father Jordan*, New English Language Edition, Milwaukee, 2011. Original texts are adapted to modern spelling.

On the occasion of these three anniversaries, Superior General Father Milton Zonta SDS in several pastoral letters¹ called for a rethink on the origins, the evolution of and the changes within the community: *“Of course many of the apostolic solutions that were useful until now no longer serve in the difficult times of today, in a world that is changing and changes us continually. New situations always ask for new discernment, reflection and new responses.”* Moreover, he wrote two years later: *“On my part, I am confident that the celebration of the next General Chapter, in the year of the centenary of the death of the Founder, will be a unique opportunity to revitalize the Society, from the perspective of the charism Fr. Francis Jordan confided to us.”*²

As a contribution to this necessary process of a modern awareness of the founding mandate, the authors of this study want to show, by looking at the life of Father Jordan, that the original charism of this new organisation, despite all historical changes in structure and external appearance, has remained the same.

This fact will encourage the international community of today to meet the manifold challenges of the present and the future without fear and full of confidence.

¹ Cf. Fr. Milton Zonta SDS, *Giving Witness to the Goodness and Love of God Our Savior*, December 25, 2014, 26 p.; *I Will Make You a Light to the Nations. Illuminate the Present and Envision the Future*, December 8, 2015, 26 p.; *Fruits and Questions of the XIV General Synod*, December 8, 2016, 30 p.; *Finding again the life-giving source. Living the Salvatorian charism with passion and authenticity*, December 8, 2017, 26 p.

² For the first quotation, see Fr. Milton Zonta SDS, *Giving Witness to the Goodness and Love of God Our Savior*, Rome, December 25, 2014, p. 23–24 (point 29); For the second one, see Fr. Milton Zonta SDS, *Fruits and Questions of the XIVth General Synod*, Rome, December 8, 2016, p. 22 (point 14).

Introduction

In the years between 1864 and 1878, the so-called *Kulturkampf* (culture struggle) in the Grand Duchy of Baden (Germany) intensified. The core conflict arose from the fact that the state wanted to claim jurisdiction over and restrict several spheres of competence of the church, such as schooling and education. In addition, the religious orders and the training of priests were affected by new regulations which, among other things, prohibited the acceptance of novices and imposed a state examination (1867), as a prerequisite for a public appointment (priest, youth work, school, etc.), on candidates.³ Faced with these challenges, the Katholikentage (Catholics Days), organised since 1848, chose their themes accordingly, e.g. caritas and missions, the social question, Christian science and art, press and associations, school (Freiburg, 1875), Catholic mission abroad (Munich, 1876).

In this situation of tense relations between church and state, John Baptist Jordan commenced his secondary school studies (1870) in Constance and then went into his theological studies at the University of Freiburg (1874), where he was ordained by Bishop Lothar von Kübel (1823–1881) on July 21, 1878. What is most impressive about this stage of his life is that the young Jordan, despite many practical difficulties and the dire prospects of getting a secure appointment in his diocese, steadfastly remained faithful to his vocation. This conviction he expressed during the holidays after his first Mass in Gurtweil, only a few

³ Cf. Karl-Heinz Braun, *Kirche im liberalen Bürgerstaat. Das Erzbistum von der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zum Ende der Monarchie 1918*; *Kirche im Kulturkampf*, in: Heribert Smolinsky (ed.), *Geschichte der Erzdiözese Freiburg, Volume 1, Von der Gründung bis 1918*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2008, pp. 150–182.

sera puni en ce monde par les
mords et en l'autre par le feu
sergent du purgatoire. Fen.

L'inquiétude sur les distinctions est
une distinction plus dangereuse que
toutes les autres. Fenel. Lettres.

Funda Societatem apostolicam et esto
semper aequo animo in omnibus
tribulationibus! 19 Sept. 1878.

Ubi requies tua nisi totus es in Christo

Quoniam scripturas sequis lege, imo
inrogant de manibus sacra
littera depouatur... Tenenti cadentem
ramum obrepas, et cadentem
faciem praeinerte sarvata susci-
pias. St. Hieron.

| Spiritual Diary I, p. 145

days before leaving for Rome. On September 19, 1878, he writes in his Spiritual Diary (SD): “*Found an apostolic community and be in good heart through all tribulations!*” (“*Funda Societatem apostolicam et esto semper aequo animo in omnibus tribulationibus!*”)⁴

⁴ SD, I, p. 145.

1 | Jordan in Rome:
“At the same time for
a religious reason”

1878–1880

In the spring before his ordination, the seminarian Jordan, in a letter dated March 21, 1878, applied to the principal of the German Campo Santo in Rome, Msgr. Dr. Anton de Waal (1837–1917). He heard him speak at the Catholics Day in Freiburg im Breisgau (1875). He asked to be admitted to the priests' hostel: "*Because next autumn, after receiving my ordination, I intend to go to Rome for some time, at least until next spring, namely to go into the Propaganda, in order to train myself further in languages, especially the Oriental ones.*"⁵ In accordance with this application, Bishop Lothar von Kübel introduced John Baptist Jordan in writing to Anton de Waal, July 28, 1878: "*There will also be another new priest coming to Rome, by the name of Jordan, who is a true language genius, a good gentleman, whom I recommend to your love even now.*"⁶ In consequence, de Waal noted in the Campo Santo chronicle, on October 4, 1878: "*Two new chaplains, Mr. Franz Mutz [1854–1925] and Mr. Jordan, have arrived from Freiburg. [...] As Jordan really is an extraordinarily gifted linguist, though, I believe that he will certainly bring honour to our foundation eventually and that I have to support him as best I can, as he only has a stipend of 800 Mark.*"⁷

By this time, however, Jordan already saw his duties in Rome reaching far beyond the study of languages, as his curriculum vitae of October 28, 1878, written in Latin, proves: "*I hope that I can achieve more soon for the greater honour of God and the salvation of souls.*" ("*[...] spero fore ut Deus Omnipotens servo suo indignissimo concedere dignetur ut ad gloriam Dei et pro salute animarum mox plus operari possim.*")⁸

⁵ Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Pater Jordan (1848–1918) – Gründer der Salvatorianer und Salvatorianerinnen – als Beziehungsmensch*, Vienna, 2012, p. 86.

⁶ Bischof Lothar von Kübel to Anton de Waal, Freiburg, July 28, 1878, in: ACST, photocopy in APS, F 46/5.

⁷ Anton de Waal, *Chronik des Campo Santo 1873–1895*, Lib. 69, s. p.

⁸ ACST, *Curricula vitae (1875–1903)*, Lib. 81, s. p.

From then on, he began concretely planning an Apostolic Teaching Society, for which he expected to find optimal scope in Rome, at the heart of Christendom.

In January 1880, after a year and a half of studying languages in Rome, Jordan, at his own request and “at the

Mission Bishop |
Guglielmo Massaja
(Beirut, April 1880)



*same time for a religious reason*⁹, travelled to Egypt and Palestine, to get to know the local conditions of missionary work. In Cairo and Jerusalem he met, among others, missionary bishop Guglielmo Massaja OFM^{Cap} (1809–1889), whom he also talked to about his founding vision. Jordan wrote about this conversation in his Diary

⁹ Jordan to Bischof Lothar von Kübel, Rome, January 22, 1880, in: *DSS*, X, Rome 1974, Nr. 8, p. 9.

on March 30, 1880: “*In Jerusalem our undertaking first received the church blessing through Bishop Massaja and the Latin patriarch [Vincenzo Bracco, 1835–1889].*”¹⁰ During this stay in the Orient, Jordan secured the support of numerous patriarchs, archbishops and bishops of various rites. Encouraged, he wrote the so-called *Smyrna text*, on July 8, 1880, which contains an initial version of the founding charism, a preliminary structure of the organisation, as well as the following key words: teaching [“docere”], *with speech and writing* [“verbis et scriptis”], *instruct*, [“erudire”], *educate* [“educare”], *so that all recognise HIM* [“ut omnes cognoscant.”]¹¹

After returning to Rome (August 1880), John Baptist Jordan, through the intervention of the Barnabite Luigi Maria Cardinal Bilio (1826–1884), to whom he had previously presented an outline of his ideas, received a rare private audience with Pope Leo XIII (1810–1903), on September 6, 1880, “*at which His Holiness spoke to me about the undertaking and gave me his blessing.*”¹² Jordan saw this as a mandate to abandon his linguistic studies, in order to be able to devote himself completely to the execution of his apostolic endeavour.

¹⁰ Johann Baptist Jordan, *Reise nach Afrika und Asien im Jahre 1880*, in: Josef Brauchle, *Johann Baptist Jordan. Seine Orientreise 1880*, Munich, 2013, p. 145.

¹¹ Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Die Apostolische Visitation im Institut P. Jordans (1894–1913)*, in: *DSS*, XX, II, Rome, 1993, pp. 8f.

¹² Cf. footnote 10, p. 276.

2 | “Now let’s go
to work”

1880

John Baptist Jordan wasted no time, participating in the 27th Catholics Day in Constance (Germany, September 12, 1880), in order once more to consult with several confidants and friends on his project and the pre-conditions for its success. Most crucial, in this context, are the meetings with the merchant Simon Deggelmann (1858–1950), Jordan’s former fellow student from secondary school, whom he admitted about a year later (July 31, 1881) to the third grade (lay-people) of the Apostolic Teaching Society. He also conducted the founder of the pedagogic foundation Cassianeum in Donauwörth, Ludwig Auer (1839–



| Simon Deggelmann

1914), with whom Jordan formulated the first statutes for his organisation in October 1880. The rationale behind the latter’s involvement was the agreement on a future cooperation of the Apostolic Teaching Society and the Cassianeum in the field of publications, which nevertheless came to an abrupt end two years later. In the meantime, however, Jordan had established a publications office of his own in Rome, which published various magazines and theological books in several languages.

A further step, in this founding phase, was Jordan’s increasing interest in missionary work, of utmost importance to him. He had written this clearly as a seminarian to Arnold Janssen (1837–1909), whom he greatly admired: “*You know*

*how important missionary work is to me.*¹³ On December 5, 1880, in a long letter to the founder of the Missionaries of the Divine Word, he reports on his positive experiences in the Orient and the many favourable reactions to the vision of a society, including the blessing even of Pope Leo XIII.¹⁴ In this way he



| The young Arnold Janssen

hoped to convince Janssen to join the Apostolic Teaching Society with his not yet approved work: *"In the affirmative case I would actively support the promotion of your dear house. Rome has been designated as the centre of our Society, so that you would also have support for your various needs. You could send some of your priests, who are quite capable, or students for further training, so that they return to your house again or contribute in*

the missions to the founding of new institutes. This depends very much on whether we join forces and how closely we work together. Think on it before the dear God, maybe you can also do something to help the difficult establishment in the center here, which will then be of great importance."¹⁵

Janssen could not take up this invitation to join forces, although he appreciated Jordan as a person and his work throughout his whole life. The founding charism of the Missionaries of the Divine Word differed from the one of his younger colleague, as Jordan's statement on Janssen's

¹³ Jordan to Arnold Janssen, Fribourg, June 27, 1877, transl. from: DSS, X, No 3.

¹⁴ Jordan to Arnold Janssen, Rome, December 5, 1880, transl. from: DSS, X, No 20.

¹⁵ Cf. footnote 14.

suggestion to join him clearly shows: *“I have a calling from God myself for a foundation [...] and therefore cannot readily subject myself to a plan conceived by men, a plan whose basic principle I don't know.”*¹⁶

Jordan's conception of his founding charism, as is expressed even in the programmatic name of his Apostolic Teaching Society, was more comprehensive in all respects. Especially when it came to the integration of women and laypeople as apostles of a new and modern time, in the job of propagation and as supporters of pastoral care.

¹⁶ Statement by then Seminarian Josef Hartmann, Würzburg, to Fr. Pankrätius Pfeiffer, 20.09.1930, transl. from: APS, H, 15/11.

3 | “The chariot
is now
set moving”¹⁷

1880–1881

¹⁷ Jordan to Ludwig Auer, Rome, May 23, 1881, transl. from: *DSS*, X, No 28.

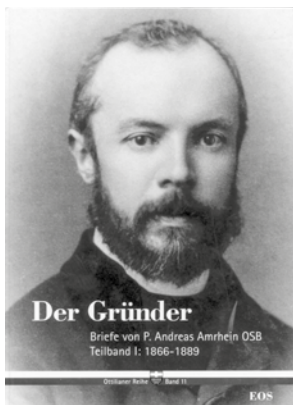
From October 1880, Jordan at home and abroad recruited diocesan priests or candidates for the priesthood for his Apostolic Society. The first to commit were Josef Hartmann (1854–1937, Dingolstädt, Germany), Josef Schorderet (1840–1893, Fribourg, Switzerland) and Gerard Roelofs (1821–1885, Zwolle, Netherlands). Furthermore, Jordan met the Turin youth chaplain Don



| Don Bosco in the year 1887

Giovanni Bosco (1815–1888, Becchi/Castelnuovo, Italy), who promised him his support in the organisation of the lay work, and Piotr Semenenko (1814–1886, Dolistowo, Poland), one of the founders of the Resurrectionists, with whom he exchanged views.

It was new during this phase to receive many requests for admission into the Apostolic Teaching Society. Among the persons seeking contact was the Benedictine priest Andreas Amrhein (1844–1927, Gunzwil, Switzerland), later founder of the Missionary Benedictines of St. Ottilien, who sent a request to John Baptist Jordan for information on his missionary plans: *“I would like to give preference to the missionary society that would embrace my project most completely and have the most funding for its execution, be it Mill Hill or Steyl or the Apostolic Teaching Society or any other.*



| Father Andreas Amrhein OSB, about 1882/1883

For this reason, I wish to get to know the respective societies and then to choose."¹⁸

Meanwhile, the great number of new foundations was eyed skeptically by some bishops, as for instance by Father Jordan's former protector Bishop Lothar von Kübel, or the Regensburg Bishop Ignaz von Senestrey (1818–1906), who, in a letter to Abbot General Maurus Wolter OSB (1825–1890), remarked: "*It seems remarkable to me that in our time the founders of orders, or whatever I should call them, multiply so manifold, male and female – Janssen in Steyl, Jordan in Rome, Schorderet in Freiburg, now also Amrhein in Reichenbach!*"¹⁹

These reservations were due, among other things, to the fact that Jordan promoted his work at home and abroad from Rome and attempted to engage the best people. This raised the criticism of removing able priests from their home dioceses. The diocesan priest Bernhard Lüthen (1846–1911) can serve as an example. He was editor of several religious education journals for the publishing house of Ludwig Auer in Donauwörth and left the latter after Jordan's repeated insistence, as he stated in his memoir: "*I left the Cassianeum, the place that had grown very dear to me, in order to follow Father Jordan. I was interested in the plan of Father Jordan. My thoughts can be found in Ambrosius [a pastoral journal for priests]. Probably he [Father Jordan] recognized that, due to my literary activities, I had some connections in Germany that could become useful to the new work. I did not feel a calling, though, as I told him too. You also have to get involved, he said, i.e. with the inspiration of grace. The thought of leaving the Cassianeum*

¹⁸ Andreas Amrhein to Abbot General Maurus Wolter, August 23, 1883, in: Matilda Handl OSB/Cyriell Schäfer OSB (eds.), *Der Gründer – Briefe von P. Andreas Amrhein (1844–1927)*, St. Ottilien, 2010, Vol 1, letters from 1866 to 1890, p. 251.

¹⁹ Cf. footnote 18, p. 267.

came suddenly, as if from above. It was on July 22, 1881, that I took leave of Donauwörth.”²⁰

Despite the initial criticism, Jordan’s persistent endeavours brought their first successes in April 1881. In Italy, he approached the bishops of the country with the flyer *Precibus quas*, which portrayed the Apostolic Teaching Society in succinct form. Shortly afterwards, in May of the same year, the Society’s first parish groups were formed in Rome, Mantua and other Italian dioceses. They were followed by the Benedictine abbey of Ottobeuren (Germany) in July. These initiatives formed the *third grade* of the Apostolic Teaching Society, which took care especially of the promotion of laypeople. At the same time, the family journals *Monitore Romano* and *Der Missionär* appeared in Italy and Germany, and the programmatic brochure *Die Apostolische Lehrgesellschaft* [The Apostolic Teaching Society] was written and published by Lüthen.

The origins of the *second grade*, which consisted in the scientific branch of the organisation, can be located in the year 1881. On a list, John Baptist Jordan had noted the names of thirty-three academics from several countries. These had promised him their cooperation and support. And for them he published the journal *Nuntius Romanus* [Roman Messenger].

The official founding date of the Apostolic Teaching Society was December 8, 1881. On this day, the priests Bernhard Lüthen and Friedrich von Leonhardi (1847–1924, Zittau, Germany) took their vows in front of Father Jordan in the Chapel of St. Brigitta of Sweden in Rome. And thus the *first order* of the organisation was launched.

²⁰ Cf. footnote 5, p. 128.



| The Meeting in Munich (August 1882)

••• 1882 the young priest John Baptist Jordan met with the priests (from left to right) Friedrich von Leonhardi, Bernhard Lüthen and Msgr. Ludwig von Essen in Munich to form the base for the future collaboration. That 'meeting of the four' was so important that a photo was taken. Jordan, still wearing the habit of a diocesan priest, was the founder of the new Society which should have three grades of collaborators. All people were called to proclaim the message of the love of God (new evangelization) and to collaborate in one of the three grades. •••

4 | „Una questione
di principi“

1882–1883

In the beginning, the small community around Jordan lived in Santa Brigitta, an apartment house on Piazza Farnese, Rome, while its founder strove for church approbation of the statutes through the Roman Cardinal Vicariate. Cardinal Vicar Monaco La Valletta (1827–1896) let Jordan know that the rules submitted were “*too extensive, almost a second church, and that the means were lacking.*”²¹ Besides, the new work did not belong to his authority’s jurisdiction but was the responsibility of the *Sacra Congregation Episcoporum et Religiosorum* (The Sacred Congregation of Bishops and of Religious, SCEE+RR). The SCEE+RR subsequently commissioned an expert to pass judgment on the manifestos and various catechetical publications of the Apostolic Teaching Society. In June 1882, this consultor, the Dominican priest Raimondo Bianchi (1831–1885), submitted a negative report, which was then passed on by the SCEE+RR to the vicariate. The latter obtained the opinion of its own consultor, the Jesuit priest Valeriano Cardella (1820–1891), which, in contrast to Bianchi’s verdict, turned out more balanced and mild. Building on this new assessment, Cardinal Vicar La Valletta, via his secretary Monsignore Count Augusto Barbiellini, again transmitted a list of questions to Jordan which referred to individual problems and also suggested solutions: “*It would be best to split the first order into two separate societies, namely into monks and nuns, similar to Franciscan monks (1st order) and Franciscan nuns (2nd order) or other orders and congregations.*”²² Due to this and other difficulties²³ with the Roman authorities in the approbation of his work, John Baptist

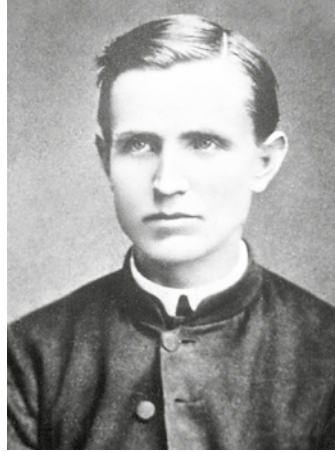
²¹ Jordan to Ludwig Auer, Rome, December 19, 1880, transl. from: DSS, X, I, No 21.

²² Questionnaire of October 24, 1882, pp. 2f., No 4, in: APS, E, 25/5a-b.

²³ A detailed description of the examination of the Apostolic Teaching Society through the Roman authorities between 1880 and 1884 can be found in: Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Die Apostolische Visitation*, in DSS, XX, I, pp. 222–306.

Jordan entered a phase of rethinking the structure and the future of the Apostolic Teaching Society, albeit without letting the original charism be changed.

External signs of these new considerations within Jordan himself was a change of his baptismal name John Baptist into the religious Francis Mary of the Cross, the donning of a grey habit, and the private taking of the three traditional religious vows, on Passion Sunday 1883. Moreover, he ordered Bernhard Lüthen to come from Munich to Rome, gave him the religious name Bonaventura and admitted him to the noviciate.



| Bernhard Lüthen 1881

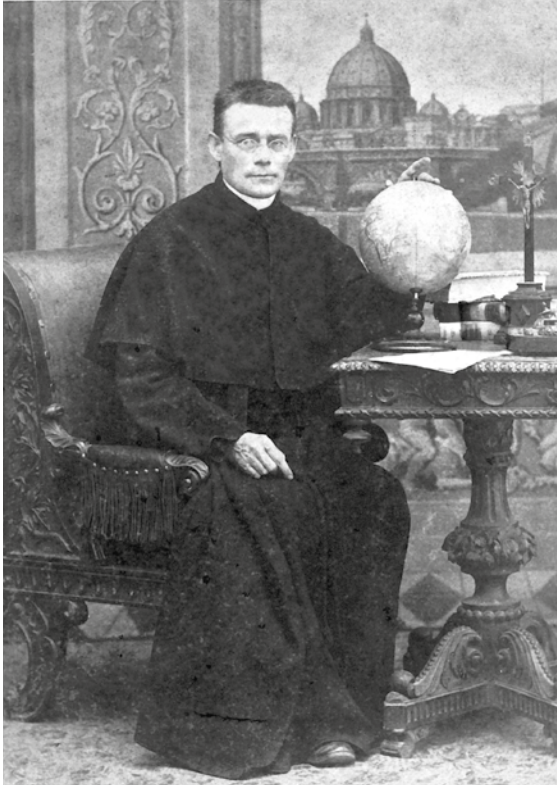
Through this and other visible changes, Father Jordan enabled young candidates

to flock to Rome, enter his growing community and become active apostolically.

This gave rise to another criticism of the the new institute by Father Bianchi OP. The name Apostolic Teaching Society appeared presumptuous to him and only appropriate to the Apostolic See itself. According to him, this was a basic Roman issue, “*una questione di principi*.”²⁴

As a consequence, Father Jordan heavy-heartedly changed the title *apostolica* [apostolic] for *catholica* [catholica] in October 1882, in order not to further hamper a possible

²⁴ Cf. Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, Die Apostolische Visitation im Institut P. Jordans (1894–1913), in: DSS, XX, I, Rome 1993, p. 277.



| Father Jordan
with globe

approbation. In July of the following year, he wrote a text, however, in which he explained his understanding of the term *apostolic* as meaning *universally* orientated and once more confirmed his founding charism: “*With no rule that I have written have I received as much heavenly solace as with this one.*”²⁵

This treatise²⁶, originally written in Latin, must be considered as a key to the core and soul of Jordan’s foundation:

²⁵ Jordan to the Roman community, May 31, 1901, transl. from: DSS, XXIII, p. 496.

²⁶ DSS, I, pp. 33f.

Statue of Father
Jordan on
the terrace of
the present
refectory of the
Salvatorians in
Rome with a
view of Saint
Peter's square
(probably before
December
1941)



„*D*early Beloved,
teach all nations, especially the children,
to know the true God
and him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ.

I charge you in the sight of God and Jesus
who will judge the living and the dead
by his coming and his kingdom:
proclaim the word of God,
be urgent in season, out of season,
rebuke with all patience and teaching.

Go, and with perseverance
speak all the words of eternal life
to the people.
Announce and write the heavenly doctrine
to all without respite.
This is the will of God, dearly beloved,
that all people may know the eternal truths.

I beseech you not to falter
from announcing the whole
of God's purpose,
so that with St. Paul you can say:
I am innocent of the blood of all.
Do not cease, day or night,
to admonish each and everyone,
even with tears.
Overlook no useful opportunity
to announce
and teach the doctrine
of God to all,
both publicly
and from house to
house.²⁷

This example probably shows
most clearly how Father Jordan
reacted to compelling outer
circumstances with necessary
alterations and adaptations
and at the same time adhered
to his founding charism.

Father Francis Jordan in his
speech of March 11, 1898:

*"Nostra vocatio haec est,
ut operemur, ut omnes
cognoscant Deum verum
et quem misit, Jesum
Christum!"*

(DSS, XXIII, p. 225)

In English translation: "Our
vocation is to strive that all
come to know the true God
and Jesus Christ whom He
has sent!"

(DSS, XXIII, English edition,
p. 195)

²⁷ Cf. *Constitutions of the Society of the Divine Saviour*, Rome, 1984, pp. XIIIff.

5 | “Belonging to this
society ever
more firmly”

1883–1888

A further challenge for Father Jordan's work and his founding charism was the search for and the inclusion of suitable women as *Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society*.

His colleague Father Bonaventura Lüthen introduced him to the former nun Amalie Streitel (1844–1911) who, together with three other women, came to Rome in March 1883, receiving the name Francis of the Cross and beginning her noviciate.

In the beginning, she made a favourable impression on Father Jordan, as she brought a long experience as an educator, nun and Mother Superior. But, inspired by her earlier Franciscan and Carmelite spirituality, she tried to convince Father Jordan of her idea that he was called to renew the Franciscan ideal of poverty. For the time being, he succeeded in restraining her reformist zeal. However, she felt more and more misunderstood by him and began an internal and external struggle for the realisation of her calling.²⁸

The subsequent confrontation on the nature of the founding charism resulted in the demand of the new person in authority – Cardinal Vicar Lucido Maria Parocchi (1833–1903) – for the separation of the sisters from Father Jordan in October 1885, without giving an opportunity to the founder to clarify the situation.

This loss for his organisation was a hard blow for Father Jordan, who for a while even questioned his calling as a founder, but it did not keep him from undertaking another attempt at establishing a new community of sisters.

²⁸ Cf. S. Ulrike Musick SDS, *The Inclusion of Women in Father Jordan's Foundation Vision*, in: *The Situation of Women in Church and Society* (Studia de Historia Salvatoriana, vol. 8, section 10/2), Milwaukee, 2003, p. 1–32 (first appeared in German: *Studia De Historia Salvatoriana*, Sectio 10/2, Nr. 2, Rome 1996, pp. 7–62). See further S. Ulrike Musick SDS, *Die Einbeziehung der Frauen in das Gründungsanliegen von Pater Jordan*, in: Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Pater Jordan als Beziehungsmensch*, pp. 175–207, p. 192.

This time he paid special attention to calling a female collaborator to Rome who did not want to fulfill her own ideas, but who put her sense of mission at the full disposal of his founding charism. His choice fell on fifty-



| Therese von Wüllenweber at 35 years (1868), Castle Myllendonk (Korschenbroich, Mönchengladbach, Germany)

five-year-old Therese von Wüllenweber (1833–1907), who had supported his work in Germany since 1882 and whose innermost desire it had been since then to “*belong ever more firmly, until death,*”²⁹ to the Catholic Teaching Society. Taking the name Maria von den Aposteln (Mary of the

²⁹ Cf. footnote 5, p. 121.

Apostles) in late November 1888, she completely internalised Jordan's founding charism, making possible conflict-free growth of the Catholic Teaching Society and its female branch: *"In Rome we were permitted to stay for three days to visit the holy places. Then, on November 27, 1888, our Reverend Father, Father Jordan, introduced us – Sister Ursula and myself – to our new apartment in Tivoli. The same evening I went to meet the four other sisters at the station. Reverend Father presented me with the holy rule, which I received kneeling. And he said: 'If you do this, you will become holy.'"*³⁰

As early as 1890, the first female missionaries travelled to Assam (India) with the Fathers and Brothers of the Catholic Teaching Society. And, in 1893, a mission station was opened in Ecuador (South America), where the sisters were active in separate apostolic fields.

This fortunate development was only possible because Father Jordan, while applying changes to his work, remained faithful to his founding charism, and because he ultimately surrounded himself with personalities who also saw their personal calling in it.

³⁰ *Diary Mary of the Apostles (1875–1907)*, translated from the German and edited by the Study Group 'Mary of the Apostles' (Studia de Studia Salvatoriana, vol. 10, section 2/13), Rome, 2010, II, p. 1 (p. 61).

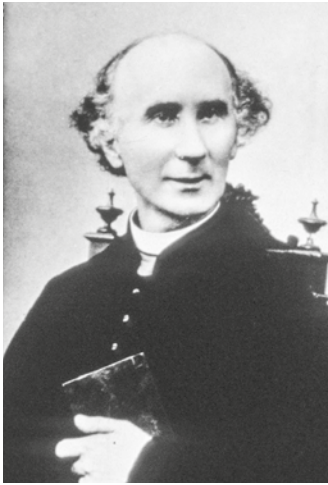
6 | „Regolarizzare
l'esistenza giuridica
e la direzione“³¹

1886–1894

³¹ Declaration by Cardinal Vicar Lucido Maria Parocchi of October 12, 1885, in: *DSS*, XX, I, p. 332, footnote 242: “Regulation of the juridical membership and leadership.”

The separation of the first sisters' community from Jordan's work entailed another development in 1886. It stood in connection with the wish for diocesan approbation of the Catholic Teaching Society.

At the end of 1885, Father Jordan wrote in a letter to an unknown person: "We are doing well and we hope for approbation soon, which can happen any day, if the constitutions are in order."³² He referred here to the rules set



Georges Jacquemin
in his late years

down in 1884, which were available already in printed form.³³ He was all the more shocked when, February 27, 1886, he learned of the approbation on trial for three years (*ad triennium in experimentum*) of a twenty-seven-page hand-written text³⁴, which derived not from himself but from the spiritual director (*director spiritualis*) of the Streitell Sisters, Georges Jacquemin (1853–1920).

Thanks to an oral complaint by Father Bonaventura

Lüthen and twelve other Catholic Teaching Society members against Jacquemin's unwarranted initiative (Passion Sunday 1886) to the responsible Cardinal Vicar Parocchi, Father Jordan was commissioned to write his own new rule.

³² From a letter by Fr. Jordans to an unknown recipient, Rome, December 26, 1885, transl. from: DSS, X, No 197; cf. DSS, XX, I, pp. 336ff.

³³ *Regula et Normae Communes Primi Ordinis Societatis Catholicae Instructivae (Speciminis Causa)*, Rome, 1884, in: DSS, I, pp. 29–44.

³⁴ *Constitutiones Societatis Catholicae Instructivae*, Ms, in: DSS, II, pp. 309–334.

Jordan submitted two double pages, tied together with a red thread, which held only seventy-three lines of his new constitutions. Even though this short rule could not be regarded as a finished statute of the work and constituted the opposite to the much more detailed rules of Jacquemin, Jordan's rule outline was approved by Cardinal Vicar Parocchi on June 5, 1886.

This gives a clear indication of the personal understanding Father Jordan had at the time of his calling as a founder. No one but himself was able to safeguard and represent his founding charism. For this reason, he also could not take the already approved constitutions of Georges Jacquemin for his own. Instead, he risked not receiving diocesan recognition, using a highly unconventional and very sketchy depiction of his own ideas. Yet he did so because he saw no other way by which Cardinal Vicar Parocchi



| Sister Francis Streitl
(1844-1911)

would consider his new short rule as better, or at least as an equivalent replacement for the already accepted constitutions.

Something similar happened in Father Jordan's relation with Arnold Janssen, Andreas Amrhein, Franziska Streitl and others. He had the feeling that they distorted his charism and work. In contrast to these personalities, Father Bonaventura Lüthen and Mother Mary of the Apostles saw their personal calling made possible and realised in the founding charism. Both of them stayed faithful to

the Founder Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, and he to them, until the end of their lives.

In this context, we may also mention an informative letter by Father Jordan to the former missionary Bishop Guglielmo Massaja on the latter's anointment as a cardinal, in 1884, which bears testimony to a special apostolic connection between them: *"Your anointment has caused an extraordinary motion in my soul and woke that pleasant memory in me that ties my thoughts, my life, the whole Apostolic Teaching Society to Your Most Illustrious and Reverend Excellency. But not as a friend to a friend, but as a son to a caring and loving father. And indeed, when I consider that Monsignore Massaja was the first bishop encouraging me to act, by strengthening me with his blessing at the holy sites of Jerusalem; when I remember that Your Excellency (as You expressed it Yourself in a highly valued letter) regards the works and projects of the Society as Your own work, I have to recognise in You a truly loving father."*³⁵

The approbation of the Catholic Teaching Society and the public relations work carried forward by the journals published by Father Jordan magnetized young priest candidates from around the world. In the first two decades (1885–1904), the number of members of the organisation increased,³⁶ which Jordan, on the one hand, considered a sign of divine approval of his foundation, and on the other confronted him with new, existential challenges.

With the soaring numbers of candidates, the financial problems of the community increased as well. Questions as to appropriate board and lodging became ever more pressing.

Moreover, Father Jordan had to unify the new community in his spirituality and teach it in his charism and the ob-

³⁵ Jordan to Guglielmo Kardinal Massaja, Rome, August 10, 1884, transl. from the Italian original in: DSS, X, I, No 179.

³⁶ Cf. graphical depiction of the number of members, in: DSS, XX, I, pp. 394f.

jectives of his work. Soon ideological, national, cultural and human tensions arose, however, which again led to resignations and negative rumours about the Teaching Society in Rome.

Parallel with this development, the Founder strove for the *Decretum Laudis*, the first stage of a papal approbation, from the SCEE+RR, as he had taken over the Assam mission in Northeast India.³⁷ At the synod of Allahabad, in February 1887, the bishops of Northern India made the suggestion to the *Propaganda Fidei* to establish a dedicated Apostolic Prefecture that should cover the area of Assam and also the principalities of Bhutan (Himalayas) and Manipur (Eastern India). As a consequence, the Congregation turned to the Franciscans, the Barnabites, and the Spiritans with requests for an eventual take-over. All of them declined, though Jordan, who probably had heard of the negotiations, applied for taking over the mission, which was finally granted him in 1889.

At the third deployment of missionaries to Assam, Father Jordan also began preparations for acquiring the *Decretum Laudis*. If the official church, Jordan reasoned, deemed him and his institute suitable to take over such a difficult missionary territory, the same official church must also give papal approbation to him and his institute.

Against the background of the already mentioned existential difficulties and the rumours circulating, with which Father Jordan and his work struggled with during this time, his application for the first stage of papal approbation was critically examined by the newly established Commission for the Study of the New Institutes (*Commissione per lo Studio dei novelli Istituti*) and, for the time being, refused. Instead, a visitation was arranged.

³⁷ Cf. DSS, XX, I, pp. 370–383.

7 | “I only want
God’s will,
nothing else”³⁸

1894–1918

³⁸ Transl. from the remembrances of Fr. Tharsitius Wolff SDS of the 1915 General Chapter, after an audio tape transcript around 1965; cf. Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Wenn das Gehen kommt – Der Rücktritt von Pater Franziskus Maria vom Kreuze Jordan im Jahre 1915 im Lichte des Rücktritts von Papst Benedikt XVI. im Jahre 2013*, Vienna 2014, p. 51.

The apostolic visitor, Carmelite priest Antonio di Gesù Intreccialagli OCD (1852–1924), examined Father Jordan and his foundations from 1894 until 1911. The reservations against the organisation and its governance raised in the process caused lasting doubts and fears for the future in the Founder. He received urgent instructions



Father Antonio Intreccialagli OCD became Bishop of Caltanissetta in 1907 and Archbishop of Monreale (Italy) in 1919.

to have four members instead of two on the consultorium (general council) and to call a General Chapter, at which he would have to stand for election as Superior General by the delegates.³⁹ These commands raised certain insecurities in Father Jordan. From his point of view, it seemed hard to understand why he, as the Founder of the Salvatorians, should stand for election to be their Superior General. This would entail the possibility that he might be voted out of office and the original charism, created by himself, might not come to completion.

What went through his head is shown in a conversation with a confrere at the third General Chapter in 1915: *“The only thing that matters here is the will of God and the intentions He has with me and my foundations. It seems too early to me to let go completely of the Society, and I fear that it would be steered in a direction that I cannot approve. You will perhaps see in time how right I am. I only want the will of God, nothing else.”*⁴⁰

³⁹ Cf. DSS, XX, I, pp. 488f.; DSS, XX, II, p. 255.

⁴⁰ Cf. footnote 38.

Four years earlier, despite the papal approbation of his work (March 8, 1911), the disappointment with the development of his foundation had been so great that he even had thought openly about a new foundation⁴¹ and eagerly had swapped ideas on the subject with others. To Msgr. Anton de Waal, his patron and companion for many years, he had spoken several times of his plan, as can be read in the chronicle of the Campo Santo Teutonico dating May 12, 1911. De Waal noted:

“In a long conversation, Father Jordan once again submitted to me his plans for a new congregation. He had put together fifteen reasons, against which some counter arguments could be found also, which he often estimates too highly, however. I argued that he would be creating competition for his own work, if the goal and the task of the new foundation conformed to the objectives of the Salvatorians. I would agree if he were to found a congregation specially for the pastoral care in Italy, or also specially for the Orient, as in both cases there was an endless field of activity left uncultivated and covered with briar. Of such a restriction, however, he wanted none. The competition he would create for his own creation would no doubt upset many of his people and cause their loyalty to cool. The competition in itself, though, would stoke up new zeal, he



Pralate Dr. Anton de Waal, Rome, in an oil painting from 1915

⁴¹ Cf. footnote 38, pp. 114f.: “ [...] trägt er sich doch mit dem Gedanken, eine andere Gesellschaft zu gründen, weil die erste nicht gerade nichts geworden, aber doch nicht so geworden, wie er sie haben wollte, und man immer noch mehr von seinem Werke abbröckelt.” In translation: He has the intention to found another Society because the first one did not succeed according to his vocation and more and more crumble away from his endeavor.

said. *I brought forth some other arguments and concerns, but in his boundless fervor he thinks to be able to find fresh powers for work in the Lord's vineyard only in the youthful warmth of a new congregation.*"⁴²



| Father Jordan on the occasion of the definitive approval of his Society on March 8, 1911

This proves several things: Until the last moment, Father Jordan struggled with his own original charism and how to deal with it. For one thing, he thought that only he can fulfill his calling through and in his work. Meanwhile, he also accepted that he needed to adapt to external circumstances, in order to secure the continued existence of the Salvatorian community. Yet he was unhappy with these very developments, as he thus

fears a corruption of his original vision. This fear led him for a time to consider a new foundation. He soon had to realise, that most of the problems would not be solved by this step.

At the third General Chapter 1915 in Fribourg (Switzerland), he came to a cathartic insight: *"Until now, I did not recognise it as the will of God that, under the given circumstances and in the current situation of the community, I resign from my office. As I know, though, that people wish*

⁴² Cf. footnote 38, pp. 109f.

it or think it better that I am not re-elected, I desist from being elected again.”⁴³ Through this decision Father Jordan underlined his conviction that he may have been a tool, but not the organisation itself. The latter only came from God himself, whose will he wanted to fulfill all his life. Accordingly, the work would continue without him, as his friend the Jesuit priest Valeriano Cardella SJ (1820–1891), had predicted in 1882: “If the work comes from God, it will grow in time, and from small beginnings we will see great progress.” (“Se l’opera vien da Dio, maturerà col tempo, ed da piccoli principii vedremo grandi progressi.”)⁴⁴



| Father Jordan “with his kind but sorrowful face” before leaving the City of Rome (May 1915)

In May 1915, after the outbreak of World War I, Father

Jordan had to leave Rome and went into exile to Fribourg, Switzerland. At peace and reconciled with the results of the third General Chapter of the Salvatorians, he died in the neighbouring village of Tafers, September 8, 1918. With his last words he once more confirmed his trust that his God-given original charism would continue to exist and develop despite all difficulties and opposition: “God will make everything right. Others will come and remember our sufferings and carry on with the work.”⁴⁵

⁴³ Cf. Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Wenn das Gehen kommt*, p. 63.

⁴⁴ Cf. DSS, XX, II, p. 60.

⁴⁵ Cf. Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS, *Von Gurtweil in Baden/Deutschland nach Tafers in der Schweiz*, Vienna 2016, p. 168.

Conclusion

In summary, we can say that Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan carried his original charism unchanged through all external adaptations.

In the beginning, he regarded the calling for the foundation and further constitution of the Apostolic Teaching Society (1881), later the Society of the Divine Saviour (1894), as a mission from God for himself alone, which he knew how to protect and develop through the vicissitudes of time. At the end of his life, he came to the conclusion, that the last and perhaps the most crucial change he had to react to was the challenge of uncoupling his original charism from his own person and transferring it to others. In this way, he gave us the unique example of how to deal with the Salvatorian calling: to accept changes and shape them in accordance with the original charism.

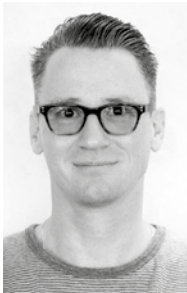
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- p. 6: Pope Francis with Superior General Father Milton Zonta SDS, from <http://www.sds.org/apostleship/from-generalate?start=6> (29.1.2018)
- p. 13: Mission Bishop Massaja Beirut, April 1880, from <http://www.cardinalmassaja.it/massaja/index.php?module=photogallery&gid=1>
- p. 16: Simon Deggelmann, from Erich Caminzind, *Der Frohbotschaft verpflichtet. Die Kanisiusschwester und ihr Gründer Johannes Evangelist Kleiser*, Kanisius Verlag, Freiburg, Switzerland, 1998, p. 92
- p. 17: The young Arnold Janssen, from Sr. An Vandormael SDS, Rome/Belgium, *Diaserie Back to our roots*, 1990, 02-jbj-l-055-a.janssen
- p. 20 top: Don Bosco in the year 1887, from <http://www.santiebeati.it/dettaglio/22600> (access 2012)
- p. 20 below: Father Andreas Amrhein OSB about 1882/1883, from Matilda Handl OSB/ Cyrill Schäfer OSB (Hrsg.), *Der Gründer – Briefe von P. Andreas Amrhein (1844–1927)*, Teilband 1, Briefe von 1866–1890, 2010, Cover
- p. 23: Meeting in Munich, August 1882, from ASA, Vienna, Sign. asa – 01.2.1.6
- p. 27: Bernhard Lüthen 1881, from Sr. An Vandormael SDS, Rome/Belgium, *Diaserie Back to our roots*, 1990, 03-jbj-l-101-B.Lüthen
- p. 28: Father Jordan with globe, from ASA, Vienna, Sign. asa – 01.2.1.7
- p. 29: Jordan statue on the terrace of the present refectory of the Salvatorians in Rome (At Via Pancrazio Pfeiffer) with a view of Saint Peter's square (probably before December 1941), from the Generalate's Archives, Rome
- p. 33: Therese von Wüllenweber with 35 years (1868), from Sr. An Vandormael SDS, *Diaserie Back to our roots*, 1990, 05-mm-ll-189, ASA, Vienna
- p. 36: Georges Jacquemin in later years, from Koller, Carmeline, *Walk in Love. Mother Mary Francis Streitel. Foundress of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother*, Chicago, [1981?], VII+ 272 p. + ill., without page
- p. 37: Sister Francis Streitel, from Koller, Carmeline, *Walk in Love. Mother Mary Francis Streitel. Foundress of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother*, Chicago, [1981?], VII+ 272 p. + ill., without page
- p. 42: Father Antonio Intreccialagli, from Jerome Schommer, SDS, *The Moment of Grace. One Hundred Years of Salvatorian Life and Ministry the United States*, Part I, 1892–1947, Milwaukee, 1992, p. 5
- p. 43: Prelate Dr. Anton de Waal, according an oil painting from the year 1915, from De Waal, Arthur, *Prälat Dr. Anton de Waal. Rektor des deutschen Campo Santo in Rom. Sr. Heiligkeit Geheimer Kammerherr und Hausprälat Apostolischer Protonotar. Lebensgeschichte mit zahlreichen Briefen aus seinem Nachlass und mehreren Bildern*, Karlsruhe, 1937, inner page
- p. 44: Father Jordan at the definitive approbation in 1911, from ASA, Vienna, Sign. asa – 01.2.1.17
- p. 45: Father Jordan 1915, from ASA, Vienna, Sign. asa – 01.2.1.32



Fr. Peter van Meijl SDS,
2015 in Assam/India,
private

During my term of office as parish priest of Saint Michael's Church in Vienna (2002–2016), preparation of pastoral talks led me to the philosopher and author Martin Kolozs. From this relationship arose the idea to study the personality of Father Francis Jordan, the Founder of the Salvatorians. We both were taken with his Founding Charism, wanting to more clearly understand its development and adaptation during his time in Rome from 1878 to 1915. We present to the readers the results of our common discussions and reflections on the occasion September 8, 2018, the 100th anniversary of the death of Father Jordan. Many admirers and followers of Father Jordan will benefit from the handy format and the translation into English!



Martin Kolozs, private

Martin Kolozs, born 1978 in Graz, studied Christian Philosophy in Innsbruck, lives in Vienna. Publications: "Karl Rahner – Innsbrucker Jahre", "Bischof Reinhold Stecher – Leben und Werk", "Zur höheren Ehre – Die Tiroler Priesterdichter Reimmichl, Bruder Willram, Josef Weingartner und Reinhold Stecher". He is chief editor of "Ypsilon".