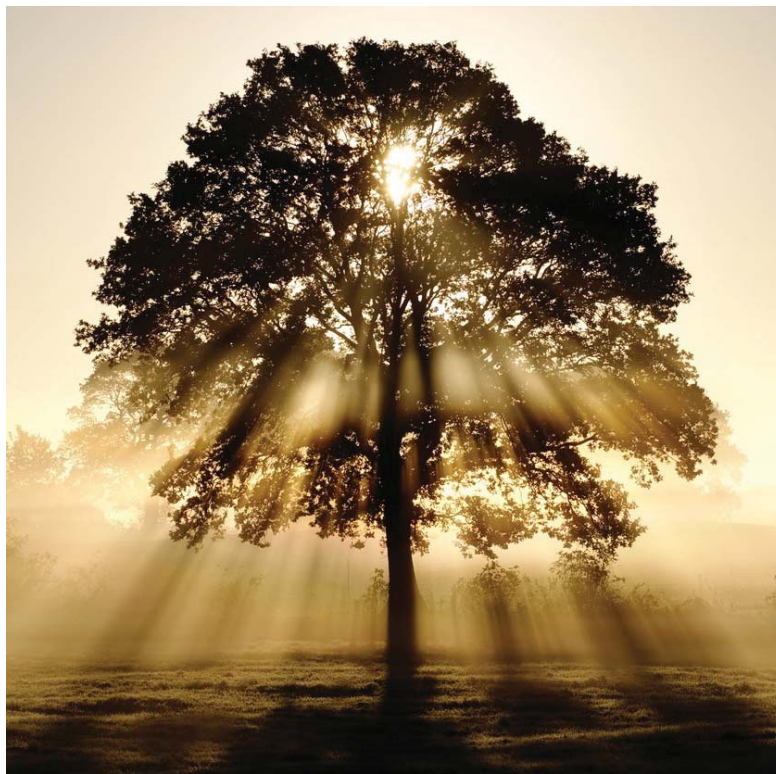


GOD'S STRENGTH SHINING THROUGH OUR HUMAN WEAKNESS

**A Character Study of
Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan
(1848-1918)**

Founder of the Salvatorian Family



by Daniel T. Pekarske, SDS

2016

**CONTRIBUTIONS ON SALVATORIAN HISTORY,
CHARISM, AND SPIRITUALITY
VOLUME ELEVEN**

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A Project of the Joint History and Charism Committee

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Introduction

Steven M. Avella

This work by Father Daniel Pekarske is a labor of love: the final intellectual effort of a prodigious scholar, an exceptional priest, and a loyal Salvatorian. This “character study” is not a biography of the Founder of the Salvatorians, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan (1848-1918). Instead, Father Pekarske synthesizes and summarizes the already considerable body of material about Jordan (much of which he translated into English) and seeks to draw some important conclusions about his life. The story line is familiar: Jordan’s birth, his family life, his vocation to the priesthood, his decision to found an apostolic community, his struggles to achieve this goal, and his death in 1918. As he often did, Pekarske “interrogates” the historical record, asking: What does all this factual data tell us about Father Jordan’s character? “Character” can be an elusive term, but in this study, Father Pekarske uses it as a descriptor of the key elements of Jordan’s mentality, his personal traits, virtues, and faults set against the wider context of his life. By singling out these elements he hoped to provide a deeper insight into the Founder’s intentions, which shaped the community’s early history and purpose.

This work is a variant of the genre of hagiography: a relating of saintly virtues intended to inspire and produce imitation. But unlike some other works, Father Pekarske does not airbrush the complex and contradictory in the life of his subject. In fact, he often points out the very human, fallible, and confusing aspects of Jordan’s life in order to underscore a nearly universal truth about Christian sanctity: God’s power shines through human weakness. He avoids devout legends and portrays Jordan as an inspired and pious priest, a gifted linguist, and a patient man, but also at times introverted, impractical, and simply overwhelmed. This rendition of Father Jordan is not the strong and vibrant image expressed in the famous Ferdinand Seeboeck statue—but rather one of a man radically dependent on the grace of God. Of this condition, the words of Jesus to St. Paul apply: “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor. 12: 9).

Or from the sacred liturgy: “You chose the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to you” (Preface of the Martyrs, Roman Missal).

As he has done elsewhere (cf. Jordan’s *Spiritual Diary*), Pekarske presents this material in a form that will be easily understood by English speakers. His style is direct, even colloquial at times, and sorted out in a rough topical/chronological style that is easy to follow. To stress again: it is not a linear story going from glory to glory to the inevitable triumph of Jordan’s vision. The author emphasizes the contingency of Jordan’s life and the sometimes tortured early history of the Salvatorians. He also hints at changes in Jordan’s own character and plans as he moved along the path to forming a religious community of men and women who would be able to function within the Church.

Pekarske also situates Jordan firmly in his historical context. He notes the sweep of Jordan’s professional life: an arc of history spanning the era between the first and second Vatican Councils and beset by rapid technological, social, economic, and cultural upheaval. Jordan, Pekarske emphasizes repeatedly, was a man of his era and by stressing his historical milieu provides a Rosetta stone for further understanding his words and actions. For example, his love for religious instruction was informed by the church’s “combat with modernity”—its wider intellectual and evangelical response to the secularism and anti-clericalism of his times. It also explains his deep devotion to the pope. As was common of many clerics and laity of his day, especially in the wake of Vatican I, he was a loyal “ultramontane” who believed that Rome was the center of ultimate truth and the command center for apostolic action at home and in the missions. Because of this deep devotion and reflexive obedience to the Roman papacy, Jordan endured long years of mistrust and oversight by querulous Roman authorities who challenged his authority over his community and managed its internal affairs for a long period of time.

He also lived at a time when European nations were re-igniting imperialistic adventures abroad or stabilizing their hold on colonial entities in Asia, India, and Latin America. Spreading the gospel, in imitation of the apostles, was no abstract idea for him and his co-worker, Theresa von Wüllenweber, a co-foundress of the Salvatorian Sisters. The call to a universal mission was embedded in the DNA of Salvatorian identity.

We ponder for a bit the origins of his spirituality—especially his love for the Cross and his desire to imitate the one who was “obedient unto death.” We sense the deep devotion to the Madonna of Sorrows whose doleful statue he viewed every day. His passion for poverty flowed from his understanding of Christ’s own self-emptying on the Cross. Pekarske also poses questions that would not have occurred to earlier historians, for example, how did Jordan relate to women?

Given all this, Pekarske helps us understand even more clearly Jordan’s reliance on Divine Providence—a favorite Salvatorian theme. He wrote frequently in his Spiritual Diary the final words of the *Te Deum Laudamus*: “*In te domine speravi, non confundar in aeternum*” (In you Lord have I hoped, let me never be confounded—*Te Deum*.) When set against his struggles and his perception of the times, this confession of trust in Almighty God is spiritually powerful.

The primary audience for this work is the Salvatorian community, especially those interested in the Society or in early stages of entering the community. This is a final gift to young Salvatorians with whom Father Pekarske worked many years in formation in the USA and Africa. It is also directed to men and women of good will seeking models of faith, hope, and love whom they might imitate. It also reaches out to those who feel themselves to be on the margins of the Church. Here is a man who drank the “bitter cup” of opposition from those who were supposed to help him—and survived.

This text not only invites the reader to absorb its content, but urges him or her to ponder in prayer and meditation the struggles, heroism and stubborn faith of Francis Jordan. This very human and very holy man is worthy of imitation. Faith tells us his loving and devoted heart still makes intercession for his beloved Society. The best of his traits are still to be found in those who have followed his way of holiness and who understand, as he did, that in weakness, God’s power does “infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.” (Eph. 3:20)

Steven M. Avella

June 16, 2017

Birthday of Father Johann Baptist Jordan

Dedication

This lean book offers a thick lens through which to gaze intimately into the soulful person of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. As such, we felt it should be dedicated posthumously to its author, Father Daniel T. Pekarske, SDS.

Those of us who worked with Fr. Dan's almost completed manuscript after his death in September 2016 have had a bittersweet journey bringing it to publication. It has been a pilgrimage of the heart not only toward greater insight into our Founder but also an opportunity to walk closely with Fr. Dan as he strove to articulate how he saw God's strength shining through human weakness in the life of Jordan, the man. There is no question: Fr. Dan deeply loved the Founder and strove to understand him from the inside out. This character study, or "sketch," as Fr. Dan often called it, is the result.

No doubt at times, the reader may find this work a bit provocative. And of course, Fr. Dan would have enjoyed such a reaction. Those of us gifted by lively interaction with the author throughout the months of his writing process found those times intriguing and stimulating. We came to believe that this character study of the Founder is, indeed, a fitting culmination of Fr. Dan's already significant contributions to Salvatorian historical literature. It is in this grateful spirit that we dedicate this volume to him and share it with the Salvatorian world and to those who would like to engage our world mission.

There are many good and kind persons to thank for helping complete this important work as part of our Salvatorian heritage:

- The Publication Coordinator for this Project, S. Carol Thresher, SDS, who carried the gauntlet to its completion with the utmost regard and respect for the author and the Founder.

- The readers who were originally asked by Fr. Dan to critique and review his work: Fr. Steven Avella, Fr. Scott Jones, Mr. Johan Moris and S. Carol Thresher, SDS.
- Our proofreaders Mr. Anthony Scola, SDS, Fr. Michael Shay, SDS, and Fr. Dennis Thiessen, SDS.
- Fr. Michael Hoffman, SDS and Mr. Bobby Pantuso who provided the photos and graphics.
- S. Nelda Hernandez, SDS, who created the visually inviting layout and design of this volume.
- Fr. Steven Avella, who penned the eloquent and thoughtful Introduction.

On behalf of Fr. Dan and the Society of the Divine Savior, please know that I am duly grateful to all who made this publication possible.

Fr. Joseph Rodrigues, SDS
 Provincial, Society of the Divine Savior,
 and

The Joint History and Charism Committee of the USA Salvatorian Family:

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1. A Study in Character

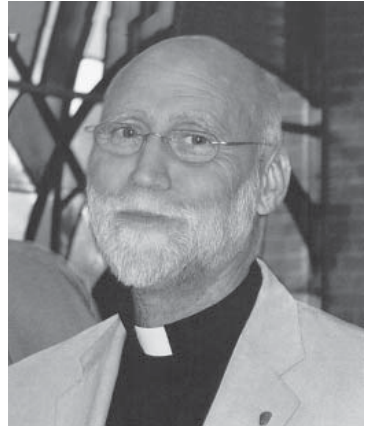
Dear unknown friend,

If you have read this far, please allow me to make some assumptions about you, for every author must make some assumptions about his or her dear readers. Otherwise, the author ends up talking into the sky.

Having picked up this character study of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan (1848-1918), you are most likely a member of what we now call the Salvatorian Family: vowed religious men and women, and lay members, all dedicated to realizing today his vision of the church and its place

in the modern world. Most likely you are looking for “new stuff” about the Founder of our movement. But let me tell you at the outset you will be disappointed. There is not really much important new stuff left to present about Fr. Jordan, especially not in such a short study. What is new comes from a reappraisal of what is old. As in the case of a good meal, much of the enjoyment comes from a fresh presentation. Thus, if for no other reason, your reading may be rewarded by the opportunity to see old things in new ways.

I might also assume that you are a religious priest, Brother or Sister from another congregation, not a Salvatorian. More than likely you are a bookish historian or a bored novice attracted by the cover. You may be wondering how this man’s life and character compare with your own founder or foundress, and what you can learn by getting to know him better. I think you will be rewarded. For Fr. Jordan is a simple, direct,



Father Dan Pekarske, SDS

yet uniquely fascinating man who lived in an often underappreciated yet critical moment in the history of the church.

Finally, I might assume that you are “a regular person.” If so, then you are a person interested in the church and, more importantly, interested in how we simple mortals continue to discern God’s will, how we cooperate with God’s grace to build up the Kingdom here on earth, and how we attain our eternal salvation. You, like so many of the rest of us, are searching. I believe you, too, will be rewarded by reading about Fr. Francis Jordan. But be forewarned. In most ways Fr. Jordan is very much like you and me. He, too, “walked by faith and not by sight.” You will find here no miracles, no awesome visions, no great eloquence or profound teachings. He wasn’t that kind of man. So if you are looking for marvels, move on. What makes Fr. Jordan interesting and worth knowing even today is the simplicity and profundity of his faith. He dared to take God’s word at face value and to live in total reliance on God’s providence. I think you will find that makes quite a story.

Biography vs. Character Study

Biographical studies generally work to answer the questions *what* happened and *when*. A character study is different. It tends to concentrate on finding out *why* something happened and *how*. Previous biographies of Fr. Jordan (and there have been many) proceeded chronologically—born here 1848, studied there, lived in Rome, and died an exile in Switzerland in 1918 due to WWI. The weakness of this approach is that one often loses continuity where parts of his story unfold over a long period of time. Here I will present things more thematically. One issue (e.g., the quest for ecclesial approbation) will be covered in its entirety before turning to the next, even when it means interrupting or compressing the chronology.

The true measure of all human beings is how we endure and overcome the obstacles we meet in trying to realize our dreams and visions. This reveals true character. Notice that I do not say “personality” but “character.” Dreaming up a psychological portrait from stories and scraps of paper left to us over 100 years ago runs the serious risk of telling us more about ourselves than about our subject. But character and the life of virtues lived is far deeper than personality. This is what

I hope to reveal in laying out Jordan's story in this way. This is what I mean here by a character study.



Biographies currently available of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan

To achieve my aim I will concentrate on the great obstacles Fr. Jordan faced in his life. My narrative thread will emerge from tracing selected issues fully and wringing from each all that we can learn about Fr. Jordan's character before turning to the next issue. The main obstacles I will explore are: his low birth into poor surroundings; his struggle to discern God's will; his awkward relationship with women; his relationship to church authorities; his perennial lack of resources, personnel and material; the treachery and resistance he faced from within his own Society; his being misunderstood within and outside the Society; his own physical and psychological weaknesses.

I make no claim that a character study is the best or the final word on Fr. Jordan. Compared to a biography, it leaves much out. It is a very personal sharing of what I have come to know and to appreciate about him. In presenting Fr. Jordan's life here, I gladly set aside as many vestiges of academic writing as possible. I will not encumber you, dear reader, with many dates or footnotes. Nor will I hide myself behind a wall of third person anonymity. I want to talk to you as one person talks

to another, and to share with you what I have come to know and admire about Fr. Jordan.

Earlier biographies tended to emphasize Jordan's virtues and to excuse or downplay his shortcomings. Consciously or unconsciously, those authors were often involved in "saint making." I will attempt to be more even-handed. I will never say anything about Fr. Jordan's virtues independent of concrete facts.

Finally, I might even go so far as to say, dear reader, that perhaps you will not find here a role model for the spiritual life—someone whose path to holiness you could adopt today in the radical way he lived his. Yet the fact that one man, in his increasingly chaotic and secular times, dared to take God's word at face value and to live by it, deserves our admiration. His life continues to prick the conscience, forcing us to ask ourselves whether we take God's word at face value, or rather we pare it down to those elements that fit our preselected lifestyle. That challenge alone makes it worthwhile to get to know Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan better—the single aim of this simple study.

2. Context is Everything

Here is a simple question to start with: Is Fr. Jordan best considered a man ahead of his times, a prophet; is he fully a man of his times; or is he actually a throwback to an earlier age? To answer this seemingly simple question we must consider the all-important historical context.

Because Johann Baptist Jordan was born in the Black Forest Region of Germany in the revolutionary year 1848, biographies have often started there. Others have begun with German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's epic 1870s battle to subdue the Catholic Church within a unified Germany in what is called the Culture Wars or *Kulturkampf*. But I hope that you, kind reader, will forgive me if I begin this study just a bit earlier, on July 14, 1789, the start of the French Revolution.

The cry of the French Revolution, “liberty, equality, fraternity,” was pointedly anti-clerical. At heart, many revolutionaries sought not only freedom from the church, but an end to all hierarchies embodied in the old regime, political, social and religious. Many sought not only to separate crown from altar, but also to completely replace religion with reason. Thus began an epic 200 year-long struggle, during which the Catholic Church was forced to redefine its relationship to a new and increasingly secular political and social world. This process reached its denouement in 1965, when the church renounced any claim to special status within any state, and set forth its sole desire for the freedom to practice its faith openly—the same freedom it defends for all other religious faiths within the state.

Where does Johann Baptist Jordan fit into this centuries long context? Squarely in the middle! He was born in 1848, roughly 60 years after the outbreak of the French Revolution, and he died in 1918, roughly 50 years before Vatican II. He lived his 70 years in the thick of revolutionary

struggle. Thus it would not be out of place here to include a few brief paragraphs laying out some historical dates and movements essential for understanding the subject of this study.

The French Revolution set in motion a great reappraisal of the place of the church and of religion in what was emerging as a new and fundamentally secular society. The chaos it unleashed led to the rise of Napoleon, whose vast but short-lived empire completely overturned the old European world order. His defeat in 1812 occasioned the 1815 Congress of Vienna, which attempted to put the European Humpty Dumpty back together again by restoring the old monarchies. But within 30 years, the spring revolutionaries of 1848 demanded a vastly more participatory voice in society. Fueled by Romanticism, political leaders exploited the popular notion that each “people” had its particular genius and deserved its own place in the sun. This in turn led to the struggle to establish nation states throughout Europe based on language and culture.

To understand Jordan, the two most important of these nationalistic movements were the reunification of Italy (the *Risorgimento*), and the *Kulturkampf*, Bismarck’s attempts to integrate Catholic citizens firmly within the newly united German Empire. Both of these movements came to a head in 1870, just as Pope Pius IX was presiding over the First Vatican Council. With lightning speed the council collapsed, the Papal States were conquered, Italy was reunited, and Pius IX withdrew into his new self-styled role as “Prisoner of the Vatican.”

The task of reaching a final reassessment of the place of the church within the new Italy and within in the modern world was often referred to after 1870 as “The Roman Question”: Would a pope have the requisite freedom to govern a worldwide church without having a secure and independent state of his own? This process of reassessment was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I, and was only finally resolved for Italy in 1929, when Pope Pius XI and Mussolini signed the Lateran Accords. World War II halted any further progress on these matters until Pope John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council and the issue was finally settled in the series of documents it promulgated. These documents redefined the church’s relationship with governments, non-Christians

and with the modern world itself. How's that for 200 years of history in a nutshell!

Germany also endured the throes of unification under Prussia, the strongest of the German-speaking states. Chancellor Otto von Bismarck's problem was basically this: his newly unified Germany was sixty percent Protestant. But on important issues would the remaining forty percent, the ten million German Catholic minority, align itself with the state or with the church? To ensure their compliance, in the decade of the 1870s von Bismarck promulgated increasingly onerous and clearly anti-Catholic measures.

- December 1871: the *Kanzelparagraph* imposed grave sanctions on priests who, during Sunday sermons, dared to speak out on political issues;
- 1873: the May Laws aimed to put the church under state control. Priests had to pass state exams in order to be appointed;
- 1874 and 1875: these laws expanded. All clergy were forced to sign an oath of obedience to the law. Those who refused had their finances blocked. All religious orders and congregations not involved directly in charitable activities were suspended.¹

Needless to say, the church strenuously resisted these policies. Bishops were imprisoned, and locked-out priests, unable to minister within Germany because they refused to take the oath of allegiance, scattered throughout the world. By the end of the decade convents and monasteries were shuttered, many pulpits were empty, and only four Roman Catholic bishops still functioned within the German Empire.

In the end, von Bismarck realized that his anti-Catholic agenda was misfiring. After all, Catholics were also voters, and his Culture War did more than anything to strengthen the *Zentrum* Party, his main Catholic opposition in the Parliament. With the death of his nemesis, Pope Pius IX, and Pope Leo XIII's ascent to the throne of Peter in 1878, von Bismarck saw a greater advantage in enlisting the church in their common opposition to socialism than in fighting to subdue the church. Thus the situation for Catholics in Germany slowly and quietly began to improve.

¹Schelkens, Dick & Mettepenninggen *Aggiornamento? Catholicism from Gregory XVI to Benedict XVI*, Brill, 2013, pp. 37f.

Just how much Jordan's birthplace, the small Black Forest village of Gurtweil near the Rhine River and the Swiss border, was affected by these great world events is open to debate. But there can be no doubt that fallout from the *Risorgimento*, the struggle to unify Italy, and from Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, would deeply impact even sleepy Gurtweil, and would play defining roles in Jordan's outlook on the world and on his life choices.

Just how could events in faraway Italy have any impact on young Johann Baptist Jordan? Keep in mind that in 1870, the year the Papal States were finally conquered, Jordan was 22 years old, a newly enrolled secondary student in Constance, with his heart set on becoming a priest. In fact, all eyes were on Rome when on December 8, 1869, Pope Pius IX convened the First Vatican Council. Even if Jordan could not follow all the Council's lively debates on such questions as papal infallibility, there is no way he could have missed the Council's dramatic adjournment. The outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War on July 19 necessitated the withdrawal of the French troops protecting the pope, and by September 20, Rome itself had fallen into revolutionary hands and the assembled bishops scattered. The conquest of Rome and the Papal States was the final element in the push to unify Italy, and it relegated the pope to the dramatic status of "Prisoner in the Vatican."

Not only did this self-styled martyr status win Pope Pius IX great international sympathy, it forced every Catholic to take a stand either with the pope, or with those forces that would see his power and influence subordinated to the new nation states. This was especially critical in Germany where, after 1870, many like Ignaz von Döllinger, who completely rejected the First Vatican Council's pronouncements on the Immaculate Conception and papal infallibility, breathed new life into the schismatic Old Catholic Church (est. 1724). Bismarck championed these more nationalistic Old Catholics, transferring to them many of the church buildings and ecclesiastical posts previously belonging to the Roman Catholics.

Those who stood firmly with the pope were called "ultramontanes." These northern Europeans looked south "over the mountains" and took their lead from Rome. The central tenant of ultramontanism is its claim

that the church is not only independent of all nation states, but is superior to them all due to its divine institution. As a result, citizens and states, if they desire to follow God's will, are required first and foremost to subject themselves to ecclesial authority, most particularly the pope. The battle lines were clearly drawn.

There is no question where Baptist Jordan stood on this important contemporary issue. He was then, and remained his whole life long, an ultramontanist. In 1886 he would write,

Rome is the center, the soul of Christian life ... it is from Rome that the Catholic world expects the infallible word of truth, and only in Rome can a Christian in a special way strengthen his faith in the presence of the majesty of the Vicar of Christ, the Roman Pontiff. (*Il Monitore Romano*, 1886, p. 13.)



St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, in 1892

This must seem like a great deal of information simply to answer the question, was Johann Baptist Jordan a man of his times? But only against this background can we definitely say “yes.” On the most burning issue of his day, the relations between church and state, Jordan was completely a man of his times—a full-throated and unapologetic ultramontane. And as our analysis of Jordan's life and character continues, his ultramontanism will become a key to understanding and appreciating how he responded to church authorities in his long struggle to give a permanent and effective institutional shape to his apostolic charism.

What does Jordan's lifelong ultramontanist reveal about his character? Clearly as a son of the church he is loyal and steadfast. In 1901, he would insert at the beginning of his Spiritual Diary, "I accept what the Holy Church accepts, and I reject what the Holy Church rejects." And like everyone with ultramontane leanings he was also a romantic, with a somewhat historically naïve vision of the papacy as a supernatural spiritual force for good, placed by God high above all temporal powers. This attitude will also play out in concrete form as we move forward with our examination of Jordan's life and character. His attitude towards the papacy is perhaps best captured in this letter:

Regarding the special veneration of the Roman Pontiff

Most dearly beloved sons,

We must express our greatest veneration toward the Vicar of Christ, the Supreme Pastor and Teacher, Father of all Catholics. Therefore, foster within your very selves and in all others special affection and veneration for the Roman Pontiff. Therefore, defend his rights, inspire in everyone great brotherly love for him. If Christ is honored in the weak, how much more in His Vicar? So be true and loyal sons of the very lovable and venerable Father. (AGS 0100/01/B-114)

Next, a word about Jordan's strong opposition to the allure of rampant nineteenth century nationalism. As we saw earlier, in the chaos left behind by the collapse of Napoleon's Empire, an appeal to the unique genius of "the people" became the foundation of new nation states. This was especially true of Germany and Italy, and it fueled the drive for independence in the many other would-be nation states within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and elsewhere. This nationalism also had powerful roots in the romantic movement of the age.

Jordan worked tirelessly against the forces of nationalism, and in this sense was clearly not a man of his times. But was his stance prophetic or was it a throwback to earlier times? As we shall see, Jordan was not a political person. Everywhere he sent his people he attempted to remain on good terms with local governments for the sake of the apostolate. His rejection of nationalism was based not on politics but on his theology. God had issued a universal call to salvation. God desired that all be saved, and for that reason God had sent his only Son into the world. Each soul

was of infinite value in God's eyes—German, French, Indian, African or Eskimo. Whenever and wherever nationalism obscured or impeded the implementation of this truth or the spread of the gospel, it was to be resisted. In this sense Jordan saw a world without borders. His view was more reminiscent of pre-Enlightenment Europe, the Europe of the Holy Roman Empire, than the new world of nation states. Hence, Jordan was not only **not** a man of his times, but also in this regard he seems to have been a man of an earlier age.

Not even saints can escape the context of their times. Jordan's ultramontanism clearly marked him as a man of his times. This is equally true of his historical romanticism. His fierce stand against nationalism pitted him against the spirit of his times, and much of his institutional vision had more in common with the past than with the future.

Is there any sense at all in which Jordan was perhaps a man ahead of his times, a true prophet? Yes, in Jordan there are sparks and glimpses of a new vision, of a new way of doing things, as we shall see. I would suggest three areas which will be explored more fully in the chapters to follow: 1) his promotion of lay involvement; 2) his openness to the participation of women; 3) his universal vision and apostle-like zeal. These elements are not completely unique to him, and some would only begin to be appreciated and implemented a half century after his death.

The structure of this character study is unique. It is based on the premise that one's true character is revealed by how one faces and overcomes the obstacles to realizing a vision, one's life project. Jordan's life was filled with Himalayan obstacles: childhood poverty, ecclesial misunderstandings, a certain naiveté, internal dissention, severe lack of personnel and material resources, and his own weak health. In what follows, individual chapters will be dedicated to each of these obstacles in a roughly chronological order. Thus we shall hope to see his true character shine forth.

For all its benefits, this way of structuring a study also has its dangers. The reader could end up thinking that Jordan's entire life was nothing but obstacles, void of any real accomplishments. So at the outset, let us be abundantly clear that Jordan was a man of great accomplishments. By the time of his death at the age of 70, he had overcome childhood

poverty and expanded his vision far beyond the limits of his home village to embrace the whole world. By the time he graduated from high school he could write themes in twelve languages. Starting with just two other priests in 1881, at the age of 33, he laid the foundations of a religious movement, blessed by Pope Leo XIII and fully approved by Pope Pius X, that at the time of Jordan's death in 1918 comprised a Vatican-approved religious institute of priests and Brothers (The Society of the Divine Savior) and two congregations of religious women (the Sisters of the Divine Savior and the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother). By 1916, he would have 350+ Salvatorian men and 288 Salvatorian women studying or working for the salvation of souls on four continents. He accomplished all this in the face of significant opposition from within and without, and with practically no material means of support. His unflinching trust was "in God, and not in princes." Despite the pressures of these formidable obstacles, his unbridled apostolic zeal always expressed itself in love and humility.

Let me conclude this first chapter with a story from Jordan's student life in Rome, a story that speaks volumes about the man you are about to meet. On the heels of returning from his 1880 journey to the Middle East, full of zeal, Jordan was busy shopping around his apostolic idea to fellow students at the Campo Santo, a residence for German-speaking student priests in Rome. Years later Fr. Joseph Karl Prill, a fellow student there, remembers having been approached by Jordan and thinking that the plans of this rustic Black Forest priest were superfluous and even unrealistic, even though he found Jordan's priestly and human qualities worthy of high esteem.

In a letter of March 3, 1929, the aged prelate wrote how the following episode had impressed him in an unforgettable way. When Jordan tried to win the young chaplain for his plans, Prill told Jordan,

... in a light tone of conversation, but rather sharply, the remark that he [Prill] didn't think him [Jordan] at all to be the man qualified to found and to continue such a work. At this rudeness Jordan showed himself neither excited nor offended, but answered quite calmly and simply: "Well, yes, God often chooses for the execution of His intentions the most unacceptable human

beings as His passive agents.” This answer hit me deeply making me completely defenseless . . . I had the clear and determined impression that Rev. Jordan was fully determined to serve God’s intentions and he was sure about its success by the help of God, while he didn’t trust his own strength (Letter from Lohmar, March 3, 1929, AGS 0100.01/H1.17.1, quoted in DSS XIV, pp. 101f.).

It is difficult to illuminate the life of someone so self-effacing—someone who insisted that whatever he accomplished was God’s doing and not his own. Yet such is the man whose character we are about to study more closely: Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan.

3. Poverty is Our Mother

Let us now begin our project in earnest: to uncover the character and charism of Johann Baptist Jordan, later to be known as Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross,² by examining closely the obstacles in his life and how he faced, endured, or overcame them.

Gurtweil, Germany, located in the Black Forest, a short walk to the Swiss frontier in a world lighted only by fire. Here, in 1848, was Jordan born, the second son of a family seen by neighbors as “very poor,” though not destitute. His father Lorenz was a stable hand and horse wrangler at “The Angel,” a post tavern in Rheinheim, Switzerland, and his mother Notburga, née Peter, was a domestic servant at the same inn. They were to have three sons in all: Martin (1843), Johann Baptist (1848) and Edward (1851).

Johann Baptist’s grandfather, Franz, had incurred such burdensome debts that by 1848, he had sold all but one of his properties, leaving the family with one, small, thatched-roofed, two-story house together with a barn, a stable and a small family plot, along with the bulk of his unpaid debts. In a settlement Franz made with his oldest son, Lorenz (Johann Baptist’s father), Lorenz received the property, the debts, and the obligation to house and sustain both of his aging parents up to the time of their deaths, as well as his siblings until they were married (*Leibgeding*).

Thus, the household into which Johann Baptist was born and reared, though rural, was far from bucolic. In addition to his mother, father and two brothers, there also lived in the one small house a first

²Jordan was baptized Johann Baptist, and took the religious name Francis Mary of the Cross in 1883. The latter name will be used here to refer to him if the context is his identity as a vowed religious.

cousin, Theodore (1854), raised as one of the boys; Baptist's paternal grandparents; one uncle, Anton; and, occasionally, two unmarried aunts, Magdalena and Elizabeth, and their children, all of whom had the right of residence until other arrangements finally were made in 1881.

With their two salaries and much hard work, Lorenz and Notburga were able to keep up with their own mortgage payments, but they were still saddled with Franz's debts. Things might have worked out had it not been for a tragic work injury Lorenz sustained in 1855. Trampled by horses, his leg was so badly damaged that he could walk only short distances with the aid of a cane and an iron brace. In addition, he sustained a wound to the chest that never fully healed. Clearly, his working days were over. The Village of Gurtweil gave him tasks commensurate with his disabilities (town crier and errand runner), but even these small jobs proved too burdensome, and for the most part he remained at home after his accident until his death seven years later in 1863, when Johann Baptist was 15. Then there was no other choice than for Notburga and her sons to pick up the slack.

One of the few blessings that attaches to childhood poverty is that children generally take their lives as a given. What was set upon the table is what you ate, and you were thankful. The forests and pastures, the orchards and rivers were yours to explore freely (so long as you weren't caught). It is clear from the many examples which he drew from nature (i.e. ants, bees, sparrows, peacocks, grafting) that the natural world left a deep impression on the young Jordan.

By all accounts he was a well-adjusted, outgoing, playful schoolboy, and very bright as well. He was the student on whom the teacher of the one-room parish school in Gurtweil would rely to keep order when he had to step out. And he is said to have raised delighted squeals from his classmates by solving arithmetic problems at the chalkboard with one hand while drawing caricatures of people or animals with a few deft strokes of the other.

Two people outside of Jordan's extended family deserve special mention. The first is Valentine Maier (1837) a simple, quiet, pious, unmarried neighbor who lived across the street and worked at the village saw mill. In his early teen years Baptist spent increasing amounts of time

with Valentine in his small, one-room apartment at the mill. In the quiet that place afforded, Jordan read and discussed with Valentine the lives of the saints and other legends which clearly stirred the young boy's imagination. One can't help but wonder if it was not here that Jordan formed his dashing image of the apostles, willing to go wherever Jesus sent them, and to endure anything, even martyrdom, for the sake of the gospel. The second important personage from these early days was his godmother, Theresia Keller (1823-1904), one of the few financially well-off citizens of Gurtweil. With no children of her own and three step-daughters, she took a special interest in her godson Johann. It was she and Valentine, more than anyone else, who helped to sustain Jordan in his difficult years of studies.

Young Jordan's devil-may-care attitude began to change slowly but surely at age 12 when, between 1860-61, he received in short order the sacraments of Penance, Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Thereafter, he was known to spend increasing amounts of time alone in his forest hermitage coming to terms with his conscience and his new responsibilities as a Christian. A reader interested in mystical phenomena discovers here the one and only such incident we know of in in Jordan's life. It is referred to as the "Incident of the Dove." On the day of his First Holy Communion, April 7, 1861, at the age of nearly 13, Jordan was seen to be restless in church—quite fidgety. The next day when the pastor summoned Jordan for a reprimand, the boy said he couldn't help it. A white dove (which only he had seen) had been circling around his head and later flew up to the sky. Speechless, the pastor decided to keep an eye on this exceptional young man.



Johann Baptist Jordan in his youth

Whatever the importance of this incident, these years 1860-61 can only be called years of deep conversion. With the reception of these important sacraments and with the completion of his primary

education, Jordan was now just shy of 14. The path he most ardently desired to follow eventually led to the priesthood. But his mother, Notburga, whom the world had made a very no-nonsense woman, made it quite clear that there was no money to cover the cost of high school (*gymnasium*), university and, later, seminary. In addition, Jordan could see the tremendous daily efforts she was making simply to sustain the family with an invalid husband at home. (Lorenz Jordan would die on May 19, 1863, when Baptist was 15.) Even as a schoolboy, Jordan could often be found not in the classroom but on the bank of the Schlucht River, a tributary of the Rhine, where barehanded he caught fish to supplement the family table. Thus, after completing school the question loomed, what to do now?

A number of jobs followed in rapid succession: work as a day laborer in the fields, on river diversion projects, and on the Waldshut-Constance Railway. In 1864, he began a two-year apprenticeship with the painter/decorator/photographer Jakob Hildenbrand in the town of Waldshut (population 4,000), an hour's walk from Gurtweil. Jordan made this walk daily. In the Waldshut workshop Jordan specialized in gold leaf gilding, painting, and wallpaper hanging.

Upon completing his apprenticeship he continued to work with Master Hildebrand, but spent increasingly long periods of time traveling about Europe as a journeyman, forming his own impressions of the wider world. The world he traversed was at that time caught in the throes of social and economic upheaval brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

Not all of Jordan's time as an apprentice was spent honing professional skills. There was also an academic component to his apprenticeship, a secondary level *Realschule*, which Jordan attended. In addition, he enrolled in the local Kolping Union, founded to support and to develop the moral character of young journeymen. Although Jordan attended these meetings, he was never known to frequent taverns afterwards or to join in rough company.

Twice, in 1868 and again in 1870, he was called up for military service, but was quickly sent home again as either unfit or unneeded. It is quite possible that his health had been impaired first by his early

life of poverty and hard manual labor, and then further by whatever mortifications he may have undertaken in his youthful spiritual enthusiasm. After his last, 6-week military service in Constance, Jordan returned home fully resolved to pursue his dream of priestly ministry. Neighbors were shocked that he was determined to give up the journeyman trade he had so recently won and turn his full-time attention to studies—at what was considered an advanced age. His mother in particular worried about the toll such studies might take on his health.

In pursuit of furthering his secondary education, three names stand out: Fr. Cajetan Gessler became the pastor at Gurtweil in 1863, and learned for himself how serious Jordan was about his language studies. It was he more than anyone else who opened the doors to Fr. Friedrich Werber a priest in Waldshut who taught religion to apprentices in the Kolping Union. Werber tutored Jordan in Latin and French.

Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS, in the first complete biography of the Founder, relates this story which highlights both Jordan's diligence and his remarkable facility with languages:

Now, whether Father Werber wished to put the talents of his prospective pupil to the test, or whether he wished to put him off, is not known; be that as it may, he gave him a Latin grammar with the directions: "Here you have a book; within eight days you are to learn the five declensions." Every Latin scholar knows that such a thing is impossible. Jordan naturally did not know. He took the orders seriously, applied himself to study, returned at the appointed time, and filled his teacher with no little astonishment at what he had accomplished. It was thus that the instructions began. Werber told later how no assignment was too large for his pupil and no road too long; how when he [Werber] did not appear punctually for the instruction hour, which was a frequent occurrence, Jordan would patiently wait for him, often for hours at a time, studying all by himself either sitting in the room or on the steps. The assistant's sister would then give him some soup, which he accepted gratefully. (Pancratius Pfeiffer, *The Life of Father Francis Jordan* p. 23).

A second private tutor was Fr. Gottfried Nägele, who taught Greek and Natural Science to Jordan and shared with him the realities of pastoral life. It was due to the free tutoring of these fine priests that after one and a half years, in 1870, Johann Baptist Jordan was able to enroll in the sixth level of the Constance Gymnasium.

Before sketching out Jordan's studies at the Constance Gymnasium (1870-74) and then at the University of Freiburg (1874-77), let us stop to see what these early years of private studies reveal about the character of the young Jordan. For these are the characteristics he will continue to employ and develop in pursuit of his ultimate goal: ordination to the priesthood. His short stint in the army must have forced Jordan to face his future straight on. For when he returned home from his billet in Constance he was single-minded in pursuing his vocation—as if he would take heaven by storm!

For him it became all or nothing. Diligence is almost too weak a word to describe his approach to studies. He was laser-focused, diligent and single-minded. He began his vocational journey knowing he had nothing in his own pocket and few resources beyond his godmother and his friend Valentine to rely on for help. He had no great plan to guide him, other than to work hard. His trust was in God alone. If God were calling him to this vocation, then Divine Providence would surely open a way. Jordan would let nothing hinder him.

These were the elements of his character, along with his native intelligence and humble demeanor, which so greatly impressed his private tutors and his later teachers. These attributes won for him whatever assistance would come his way. These same characteristics would shine forth not only in his later schooling but also in his approach to developing his great work four years after ordination: the Apostolic Teaching Society.

Life in the Classical High School of Constance was no picnic. Almost everything in the big city was different for Jordan, except for the poor living conditions he found there, including in the home of the kind Frau Martha Höfler. But it was the type of poor life to which he was accustomed. The teachers in Constance were

much stricter than his kind priest-tutors in Waldshut had been. Life and studies were much more structured, and did not take into consideration an individual's interests or abilities. In addition, he was older than his classmates, who did not ridicule him for his age but marveled at all he had done to pursue his goal of the priesthood. Probably the greatest difficulty in his first year was the fact that Jordan, aware of his academic deficiencies, was never sure where he actually stood in relation to his peers. How far behind was he? One can imagine his great relief in finishing his first year eighth among his 30 classmates!

There was additional good news at the close of that first year of studies when Jordan was awarded the Kurz Foundation Scholarship: a gift of 140 florins each year with his promise to repay 10 florins a year for each year of receiving the scholarship, contingent upon his securing full employment. Jordan enjoyed the benefits of this scholarship for six and a half years, throughout secondary and university studies. He finally repaid his entire debt to the Foundation in 1890.

The remainder of the story of his life in the Constance Gymnasium is much the same as his first year: he struggled but succeeded. His great sorrow was that his professors kept prompting him to give up his pursuit of languages and to concentrate on required subjects, most especially on his great nemeses: geometry and trigonometry. In fact, although he graduated from Constance in 1874 and was accepted into the University, it was on the condition that he successfully retake the mathematics requirement there.

Now it was on to the Grand Ducal Albert-Ludwig University in Freiburg im Breisgau, which boasted 300 students, half of them theologians. Sadly, just as Jordan arrived, new *Kulturkampf* regulations barred the seminary from housing any incoming students. So for Jordan it was more of the same, passing from house to house, spoon and bowl in hand, depending on the charity of others. Jordan's curriculum was filled with courses in theology and his beloved philology. He marveled that his grades at university were routinely higher than he had achieved in secondary school.

As the storms of the *Kulturkampf* raged around the university, most professors feared for their jobs and kept a low political profile. But students took a much more radical stance, forming openly anti-government organizations and meeting off campus. Political life was much livelier in the beer halls than in the lecture halls. Jordan, however, whose existence at the university was dependent on good grades and the good will of the Kurz Scholarship, was slow to associate with such student groups. Yet as it became increasingly clear that strict imposition of *Kulturkampf* rules could quite literally mean that these young seminarian classmates might be forced into exile after ordination, too much was on the line to remain silent. Only then did Jordan join a group that had been formed two years earlier. In the next chapter we shall see in greater detail how these *Kulturkampf* restrictions affected the young Fr. Jordan personally.

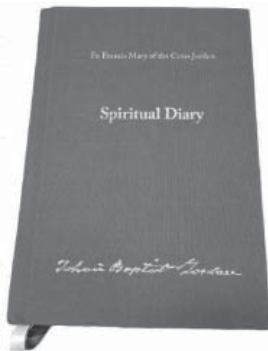
Rather than use his long summer breaks from university to continue his beloved travels as he had previously, Jordan chose to participate in the national *Katolikentag*. These were annual meetings of German Catholic leaders held to discuss the increasingly difficult political/religious situation in Germany, and to plan strategies to combat Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. Jordan's attendance at the 1875 *Katolikentag* in Freiburg and the 1876 gathering in Munich were critical in his vocational development, as we shall see in the next chapter.

The intellectual milieu in which young Jordan lived, prayed and studied one might call "pre-critical." Academic speculation was neither required nor desired. One's professors essentially passed on to their students what they had been taught, and the orthodoxy and accuracy of the transmitted knowledge was paramount. *Aeterni patris*, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical mandating a Thomistic basis to all Catholic philosophical and theological studies, was only promulgated the year after Jordan's ordination, and Pope Pius XII's *Divino astante spiritu*, which allowed Catholic scholars to apply new critical methods to Scripture still lay 65 years in the future. The burning issues of the day were primarily political and not fundamentally theological.

In keeping with his times, there were three pillars to Jordan's spirituality: Eucharistic devotion, devotion to the Blessed Mother and love of

Scripture. Also in keeping with the times, his Christology was definitely more oriented to Good Friday than to Easter Sunday. He focused on the sufferings of Christ brought on by His obedience to God. He would later see this as the model of an apostolic religious life. In all these things, however, Jordan exhibited great moderation. In an age of heightened pietism he was not given to extravagant devotions, and Mary was always praised in relation to her Son.

The most striking element of his spirituality, one that sets him somewhat apart from his age, was his love of Scripture. Perhaps this arose from his mastery of so many biblical languages. Whatever the case, his Diary, his Chapter Talks, and the advice contained in his letters are suffused with quotations from Scripture. He also insisted on the centrality of meditation—not the critical kind of exegesis we so quickly fall into today, but a more Ignatian style. Here one employs the senses and the imagination to enter affectively into the Gospel stories to encounter the living Christ, to pray with him, and to be formed in His image.



*Father Jordan's Spiritual Diary
(2011 English translation)*

How do we know all this about the young Jordan? In addition to the research collecting reminiscences and documents done by Salvatorians shortly after the Founder's death in hopeful anticipation of his beatification, Jordan himself left behind three great sources of information: his letters, his addresses, especially his weekly talks to the Motherhouse community in Rome (1890-1913), and most precious of all, his "Spiritual Diary." The Diary was begun in 1875, when Jordan was a university

student. The last entry comes in 1918, just months before his death. The word "diary" is perhaps not quite fitting as it calls to mind a daily log of events and reflections. Over time Jordan's Diary increasingly takes on the tone of a book of "luminations." It becomes a compendium of inspiring quotes from others he read, in addition to his own insights. Most are undated, making it difficult to assign any given interior reflection to any particular external event.

The earliest entries in the Diary are striking. His fiery admonitions are first directed to the world, and his burning zeal for souls is already universal. “Convert ... Rise up ... Stop defying your God!” he writes. But Jordan aims many more of his exhortations at himself: “Look above ... tear yourself away from the world ... sanctify your body ... watch and test yourself ... ask always, is this what God wants?” In these student years he describes himself as an orphan, lost in the dark or floundering at sea, weary, thirsty, surrounded by enemies, and hated by the world. A bit overwrought perhaps, but not complete fiction given the real pressures of the *Kulturkampf*.

Setting aside for a moment the great drama in these youthful emotions, we already find here his zeal for souls, his ardent desire to be united with God, and his unshakeable trust in God’s promise. On page 7 of the Diary we find the first of over 25 instances of the quote from Scripture which guided his life, *In Te Domine speravi, no confundabar me in aeternum*. “In You, O Lord have I hoped, I will not be forever confounded.”

Jordan spent 1877-78 as a fulltime seminarian for the Archdiocese of Freiburg at the Seminary of St. Peter in the Black Forest. Finally he had a place to lay his head. The days of moving from house to house and living from the charity of others was for the moment over. With secure lodging, three meals a day, and a strict but gently regulated life of prayer and study, Jordan flourished. All this is attested to in his Spiritual Diary. We could say that the theme of this year was his journey to surrender himself, wholly and entirely to God, for God’s glory and for the salvation of souls.

Johann Baptist Jordan was ordained to the diaconate on March 16, 1878, and to the priesthood on July 21 of the same year at St. Peter’s Seminary by his local Ordinary, Bishop Lothar von Kübel. Though he desired to celebrate his First Mass at the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, Switzerland as a special tribute to the Blessed Mother, The Lady of the Dark Forest, he changed the venue in deference to another newly ordained classmate. In the end he celebrated his First Mass not in his home town of Gurtweil, but a short distance away across the border in the parish church of Döttingen, Switzerland. The *Kulturkampf* Laws, which required newly ordained priests to swear an oath of primary allegiance to the state (something Jordan could never do), disallowed

him from performing any public ministry on German soil. In the days that followed his First Mass he celebrated the liturgy in Gurtweil behind locked doors in the castle convent of the Sisters of the Precious Blood. This community had been forced to leave the village in 1873 when the convent was suppressed by the government.

We have followed the young Jordan for 30 years, from his birth in 1848, to his priestly ordination in 1878. We have seen him mature from a somewhat carefree prankster into a serious and focused young man. Many things contributed to this transformation: the pressing realities of his family poverty, his father's untimely injury and premature death, and certainly the grace of God through it all. We have seen his adult character begin to emerge: diligent, focused, single-minded. We have also caught glimpses of his future spirituality: hunger for personal holiness, zeal for souls, universality, and trust in Divine Providence. But there were still many more obstacles to come. Poverty was merely the first.

4. Oh, that I might save all!

By 1878, at age 30, Johann Baptist Jordan had achieved his first goal of becoming a priest. But immediately another question loomed: what kind of a priest would he be? How and where would he exercise his priestly ministry? Though perhaps few of us have had to face the obstacle of such poverty as Jordan faced, all of us have at some time or another faced the question of what to do with our lives—what might God be calling us to do? This struggle for vocational discernment was the second great obstacle in Jordan's life. As we shall see, Fr. Jordan had a much clearer idea of what needed to be done in the world than of precisely how to do it. This chapter focuses on the first half of the question: discerning what God was calling him to do.

What options were available to this newly ordained German diocesan priest? Due to the restrictions imposed by the *Kulturkampf*, Jordan could not exercise public ministry in Germany—not without taking the oath of loyalty and thereby capitulating to the state in its war against ecclesiastical authorities. Thus, government-sanctioned diocesan parish ministry was out of the question. This left the prospect of exile and incardination in a foreign country, or lying low while preparing himself for future ministry within the Archdiocese of Freiburg once the *Kulturkampf* restrictions began to ease. In consultation with his local bishop Lothar von Kübel, it was decided that Fr. Jordan would travel to Rome to continue his language studies (ancient as well as modern), with the idea that when the coast was clear he would return to teach languages at the archdiocesan seminary. Thus it would seem that his path was set.

Fr. Jordan, however, harbored other ideas. While still a seminarian, in the pages of his Spiritual Diary, Jordan had admonished himself to move forward with his cryptic “undertaking” (*das Werk, opus, institutum*). He gives only vague hints as to what form this work might take (i.e., that it be a

Catholic Society, that it might be composed of clerics, that its membership might have grades). For the first time in September 1879, he refers to it as “an apostolic society” by which he seems to mean a society whose members pattern their lives on the first apostles’ zeal for souls. Does this mean Fr. Jordan traveled to Rome under false colors; that he was agreeing to language studies but all the while intending to distance himself from the archdiocese? No, we cannot say that, since his ideas for some kind of “undertaking” were still only vague possibilities.

What motivated Fr. Jordan even to consider this special work? Here I think we are safe to say he was motivated by his zeal for the salvation of souls. To understand the urgency he felt, we must review the theology of salvation that predominated in the church at that time—definitely a pre-ecumenical age. In Jordan’s time there was no question. In fact, the First Vatican Council had solemnly defined that outside the church there was no salvation. Salvation required that the Word of God be preached, that it be freely accepted, and that it lead to baptism and visible incorporation into the One Holy Roman Catholic Church. No other Christian communion (since all others were either heretical or schismatic) could assure an efficacious baptism or the valid administration of the other sacraments. The fate of all those who died without visible incorporation in the Catholic Church was damnation—being eternally cut off from God.

Early and often in his *Spiritual Diary*, Jordan quotes the saints lauding the beauty and the infinite value of each individual soul “so beautiful that one would willingly die a hundred times to save just one” (SD I/169).³ Coupled with this insight Jordan seems often to have surveyed the globe with its ever expanding graphic revelation of pagan lands, and he suffered deeply that so many millions “sat in the lands of darkness and the shadow of death.” Certainly God could receive no greater glory than one’s selfless efforts to bring about the salvation of souls.

³Editor’s Note: Fr. Dan often went back to Fr. Jordan’s original language in the *Spiritual Diary* and retranslated an entry. Fr. Dan did this in order to highlight the point he was making. As a result, some of the SD quotes are not a literal transcription of Fr. Dan’s own published translation of the same source in the New English Language Edition, 2011. Since the meaning of these quotations remains the same, we have left them as they appeared in the original manuscript.

Doubtless Jordan's travels in France and Germany as a journeyman, and his later travels as far as Italy as a secondary school student, were eye-opening. Imagining his tours of Europe one might be tempted to think of *Belle Epoque* Paris or the highly cultured Berlin of Liszt and Brahms. But as a mere student or itinerant craftsman, Jordan's view of life came more from the bottom of society than from the glittery top. What he most likely experienced in his travels were the effects of the great dislocation brought about by the Industrial Revolution. Cottage labor had been crushed by mass production; people flocked to overcrowded cities desperate for work; and those lucky enough to find employment were often sorely oppressed by the owners of mills, mines, and factories. All this culminated in the rise of socialism and in what would be called for the rest of the century "the Social Question."

Along with this rapid dislocation came the breakdown of long-standing institutions: family life, civil society, public and private morals, and the relationship between the church and her children. Village-based, active participation in the life of the church plummeted; the sacraments went unadministered; and new generations of children were left to grow up with little or no knowledge of the faith. How different from his home village of Gurtweil, still steeped in its ancient traditions! And what of the souls of these displaced persons? How many of those laborers, adults as well as children, fed into or spewed out of the maw of the new industrial society would be lost to eternity?

Press on relentlessly, so the youth of every nation possible receive a good Christian upbringing, even if you must spill every last drop of blood for the honor of God....

God will support you, even when your undertaking seems impossible. Oh, how many children fall prey to ignorance, devoured by hellish spirits, like blossoms on a frosty night in May. Lord Jesus, have mercy on them.

So many people are kept from the good because they encounter obstacles, spiritual or physical, from within or from without. People are like wanderers who, discouraged by obstacles, regress more in one day than they had progressed over a longer time with great courage. (SD I/58-59)

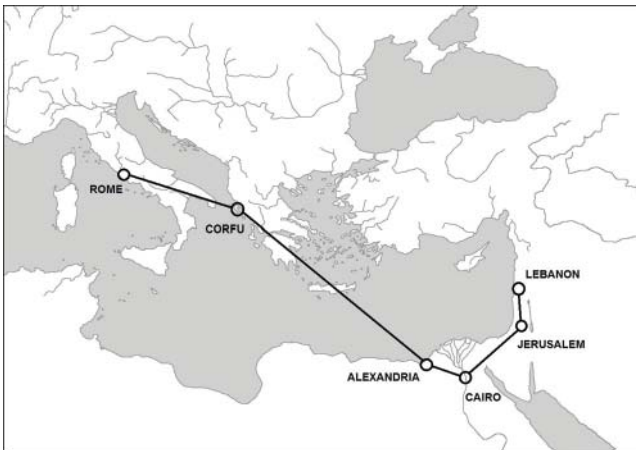
If the salvation of souls was Jordan's founding impulse, it remained a mystery, hidden even from him, precisely what form his efforts would take, and what his role would be in achieving this goal. Should he live a secluded life of prayer and contemplation? Should he join one of the many vibrant new apostolic societies? Should he strike out on his own? As it turned out there was nowhere better to survey the landscape of new Catholic initiatives meant to address the Social Question than the annual *Katolikentag*. First convened in 1848, these lay-led assemblies of Catholic intellectuals along with other "movers and shakers" met to interpret the signs of their times from the Catholic perspective and to suggest solutions. One was scheduled to convene in Freiburg in the summer of 1875, and the next would be held in Munich in 1876. Fr. Jordan would attend both and would make there some very important connections.

At the Freiburg *Katolikentag*, Jordan met Canon Josef Schorderet and his assistant Johann Evangelist Kleiser. They, in turn, introduced Jordan to their press apostolate, the *Pauluswerk*. These press apostles saw Catholic publications (newspapers, magazines and books) as the future of evangelization and catechesis. They were known to boast that: "If St. Paul were living now, he would be a journalist!" At Schorderet's request Jordan the university student went first to Paris in an ill-fated attempt to find a suitable location for Schroderet's dream of an International Catholic News Service. He then spent the later part of that summer and the next going door to door canvassing for subscribers to the *Pauluswerk*. In time, poor health forced him to stop. But this contact with Schroedert and Kleiser gave Jordan a firsthand look into the challenges and the rich possibilities the press apostolate could offer in the battle for souls.

Jordan also attended the Munich *Katolikentag* of 1876. There he made other important contacts: Ludwig Auer, founder of the Cassianeum in Bavaria (about whom we will hear more), and Arnold Janssen, founder of the missionary Society of the Divine Word in Steyl in the Netherlands. (Janssen would be canonized in 2003.) Jordan and Janssen shared with each other their respective assessments of the needs of the times, and their visions for the future. Despite his zeal for souls and his gift for languages, which would certainly have served a missionary well, Jordan felt uneasy about signing on to Janssen's project. His Divine Word priests and

Brothers were completely dedicated to the foreign missions. But Jordan saw an equally great and crying need to rescue souls in the European homeland, and instinctively avoided restricting his vision to the field of the foreign missions. Nevertheless, the two founders would maintain a life-long bond of mutual respect. Slowly but surely a vision was forming in Jordan's heart: to save souls—all souls—everywhere—in the zealous spirit of the apostles.

The next steps, his relocation to Rome and his journey to the Middle East, would be decisive for the young Founder. Jordan had visited Rome once before in 1874, between his gymnasium and university studies. There he had met Msgr. Anton de Waal, then rector of the *Campo Santo Teutonico*, a residence for German and Austrian student priests in Rome. De Waal welcomed Fr. Jordan to *Campo Santo* again in October 1878, and noted in his diary, "I think that sooner or later he [Jordan] will be an honor to our foundation." (De Waal would play an important and ongoing role in Fr. Jordan's life and work.) Now, with the permission of his bishop and under the watchful gaze of Msgr. de Waal, Fr. Jordan began three years of language studies, first at St. Apollinaris and later at the Sapienza with the generous assistance of the Columban Häußler'sche Stipend. There he excelled in Arabic, Syrian, Armenian, Coptic, Copto-Arabic, Hebrew and Greek.



Father Jordan's 1880 route through the Middle East

His projected third year of studies, 1880, turned out quite differently than Fr. Jordan had anticipated. An opportunity for travel to the Middle East suddenly arose when the *Propaganda Fide*, the Vatican's central missionary arm, tapped Jordan to deliver an important missive to the Apostolic Delegate for Egypt and Arabia. His trip would last from January 21 to August 14, and take him from Corfu to Alexandria where he discharged his mission, on to Cairo, Jerusalem, Lebanon, and back to Italy. He shared with Bishop von Kübel his three reasons for traveling: practical training in languages, "to learn about missionary conditions, and also for a religious reason."

Had they found time to discuss his reasons further, it is most likely that Jordan would have revealed to his bishop the true nature of this "spiritual reason." For already a week before his departure he had written in his *Spiritual Diary*,

Your vocation is to found. That is morally certain. But pray very much – very much, and meditate; and never be attached to any earthly thing or be influenced by the judgment or the talk of men. Follow the advice of only a few devout Servants of God, turn only to God and to His saints. (SD I/151[†])

Clearly, Fr. Jordan's "spiritual reason" was to further confirm his moral certainty to found, and to garner advice and strength for the work that lay ahead. Most likely Bishop von Kübel would once again have attempted strenuously to dissuade Fr. Jordan from his intention to found something new. But by the time the bishop received his letter, Jordan had already begun his journey.

Jordan wrote detailed notes on his journey to the Middle East, and a second more polished version which he hoped to publish. His travelogue describes in some detail the people and places he visited and makes two things quite clear: the depth to which his founding idea had taken hold of him by the time he had begun his travels, and the freedom with which he spoke to and enlisted the encouragement and blessing of "a few devout servants of God." Most notable among these was the Vicar Apostolic of the Galls in High Abyssinia (today's Ethiopia), the Capuchin and later appointed Cardinal, Guglielmo Lorenzo Massaia. He took a sincere fatherly interest in Jordan and in his planned undertaking. Jordan also

names other high ecclesiastical personages with whom he shared his vision of a new foundation, and cites their eagerness immediately to be enrolled in his new undertaking.

Rarely does Jordan offer insight into how the people and places he visited affected him at the spiritual or emotional level. (He even leaves unremarked the death of his traveling companion Dr. Johann Ferdinand Börger, perhaps the closest to a peer and true friend Jordan ever had.) The more heartfelt entries in his Spiritual Diary he addresses to God (SD I/152^f-157^f). Although he could speak and write with great emotional effect, he seldom puts his own feelings into words. For example, setting his Spiritual Diary on the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem held great meaning for him. Yet readers are left to imagine the emotional texture and impact it and other such gestures had for Jordan.

More than anything, Fr. Jordan desired to know and to do God's will. The rough outlines of the divine will were manifested in many ways: in what he studied, in what he experienced during his travels and in his discussions with others. But for Jordan, prayer was always the main vehicle for discerning God's will. Jordan was first and foremost a man of prayer, both rote prayers and intimate personal prayer. Beginning in his great year of conversion at age 14 we find him stealing off to the woods alone, to his little hermitage, to pray. On the eve of his ordination in this Spiritual Diary he establishes a schedule of prayer, allotting eight and a half hours daily to prayer and meditation. Throughout the Diary we find such entries as this which bring together his intense life of prayer and his desire to do something great for the salvation of souls:

Oh Father, grant that I might die for You and for the souls
purchased so dearly.

Oh most loving Father, see, they sit in the shadow of death,
ignorant of You.

Lord, save them, since for You all things are possible.

Oh Lord, Oh Father, Oh God and Creator,

Should those who wander the horrible pagan night not know
Your goodness and mercy?

Ach, my Creator and God,

my soul is parched, thirsting for Your glory and for souls.

Oh, Lord, Almighty One,
strengthen me when the cold north winds again blow through
my heart.

For You know that when you withdraw your help from me then I
sink powerless to the ground.

Strengthen Your unworthy servant that I may fight loyally for You
till death.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
Ach, see how your precious holy bride [the church] is
calumniated, persecuted and struck down.

Jesus Christ, accept me as Your instrument, and use me as
You please.

See, with Your grace, I am ready to die for You. (SD I/12)

Yet he shuddered at what he saw as the real possibility of being misled—being tricked by the devil “posing as an angel of light.” He knew instinctively that zeal alone does not guarantee that an impulse truly comes from God. His criteria for discernment seem simple and clear. First, that what he proposed for the salvation of souls was not in itself sinful. Second, that his initiative was not self-aggrandizing; rather, that all glory would redound to God. Third, that his initiative would meet with the approval of higher church authority. This third criterion in great part explains the bold efforts he put into sharing his vision with various bishops and patriarchs during his journey through the Middle East.

Unlike today’s more democratic idea that God’s Spirit is at work in each of us and is discerned in a mutual process of sharing, for Fr. Jordan, God authenticated the divine will from the top down. In the end, the divine will was not so much discerned as it was accepted and obeyed. One might think or feel that God wanted this or that, but until church authority confirmed that view, one could not know for certain. This certitude flows downward from the pope to the bishops, from the bishops to the priests, from the priests to the Christian Faithful, and in religious life from superiors (most especially from a congregation’s founder) to their subordinates.

What can we adduce about Fr. Jordan's character from how he tackled the obstacle of his vocational discernment? Clearly, the central motive informing his discernment would seem to be his unbridled zeal for the salvation of souls. Jordan had read the signs of his times and had assessed these twin needs: the re-Christianization of the European homelands and the evangelization of pagan lands. It was also increasingly clear to him that this effort should somehow enlist the gifts of all the Christian Faithful at every level of society. The conviction that he was to do something great for the salvation of souls came to him straight from God in prayer. Time and again Jordan took what he saw and felt to the divine crucible of prayer where God's will was made known to him. Jordan was first and foremost a man of prayer.

Sadly, God's will is not always made clear to us in every respect. In Jordan's case God seems to have spoken more clearly about *what* he was to do than precisely *how* he was to do it. It remained unclear precisely what form this endeavor was to take. Although the written record contains a great deal about vision, we find only hints and shreds of an organization. Nor do we know whether he ever actually modified his vision, his proposed *institutem* or *societas*, based on what he heard from others. The thorny question of precisely what kind of an organization Fr. Jordan envisioned for implementing his vision is the topic of the next chapter. Was it to be a movement, a pious union, a press apostolate, a religious institute, or even perhaps something completely new and different? We shall see.

5. Now the Work Begins

Despite his young age, Fr. Jordan had made a penetrating and compelling analysis of the signs of his times. The salvation of souls required nothing less than engaging all the Christian Faithful in an all-out effort to re-Christianize Europe and to take the light of the gospel to pagan lands. In this way, “all would come to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom God had sent” (Jn 17:3). Instruction would be their chief tool. Members would reach out to all people everywhere, using all the means the love of God inspired. The spirit of this endeavor would be apostolic—the same zeal that emboldened the first apostles to go wherever they were sent and to suffer whatever came their way. This, in a nutshell, was Jordan’s vision. But a great question remained: what concrete form would this vision take?

Among the various revolutions set off by the Second Vatican Council we find this mandate in *Perfectae Caritatis*, the 1965 Decree on the Renewal of Religious Life: “The appropriate renewal of religious life involves...a continuous return to sources of all Christian life and to the original inspiration behind a given community.” This call to renewal set off in every religious family, including the Salvatorians, a storm of historical research and reflection that continues to this very day. Thanks to the work of many, our generation has a clearer picture of the Founder and easier access to his Spiritual Diary, his Chapter Talks, his letters and the early Statutes and Constitutions, than any generation before. This adds to the confidence with which we can identify Fr. Jordan’s founding charism. But things get much more difficult when we ask precisely how he intended to bring this vision about. What institutional form would it take?

From the way Fr. Jordan seems almost effortlessly to shape-shift, to discard one approach to implementing his mission and to assume another,

we can see that for him the means was always secondary to the ends. If one approach proved unworkable he would quickly try another. Therefore, great care must be taken not to confuse his oldest apostolic plan as the most authentic. As a case in point, there exists an undated document (c. 1878) referred to as the draft of a “Catholic Society.” After a series of apostolically oriented quotes from Scripture he writes:

Found a Society uniting men and youths. Fired and led by love for God and for the souls of their neighbors, and leaving the world and all its attractions and adhering to God alone they will teach innocent and highly moral pupils of all peoples, nations and languages in sacred and secular subjects and lead them on the way to perfection, so that they may be salt of the earth, which will salt well.

Goal: the honor of God and the salvation of souls: thereby sanctifying themselves and spreading, strengthening, and defending and protecting the Roman Catholic faith among all the peoples of the earth. (DSSII, 13f)

So much for vision. Turning to organization, Jordan lists the pope himself as the rector of this society. He owns all its property and determines its particular missions. The members report to one of twelve local directors elected from the various language groups and approved by the pope. Members (“men and youths”) join for life and must be willing even to shed their blood if necessary. They are not bound by the traditional vows of poverty, celibate chastity or obedience, but by a vow to work for the aims of the society as such.

This earliest attempt at putting flesh on the bones of his original vision is heavily ultramontane and clearly somewhat naive. But in less than two years, Fr. Jordan in a letter to Bishop Massaia proposes a second structure. He formulated this version while in Smyrna, Turkey in the summer of 1880.

The purpose of this society is, with divine grace, to care not only for personal salvation, but by the same grace, all over the world, where the greater glory of God demands it, to follow the command of Our Lord Jesus Christ: “Go forth and teach all nations.” That demands, by teaching and education, by instruction in word and

print, being engaged even to the point of exhaustion so every intelligent creature will increasingly know the true God and the one He has sent, Jesus Christ, and that he will live a holy life and save his soul. (DSS XX, II, 8-9; translation *Familia Salvatoriana: Joint Bulletin of the SDS Generalates* No. 1, December 8, 1984)

Although here the purpose of the society remains much the same, the structure is now completely different. Gone is any reference to the pope. Instead we find three grades of membership. The First Grade is comprised of priests from all Catholic rites as well as lay men who, following the example of the apostles, leave all things to dedicate themselves fulltime to proclaiming the Good News. And for women, there are Sisters who, being joined by similar statutes, educate the girls. The Second Grade is made up of scholars who, without giving up their stations in life, use their special expertise to refute attacks and to defend the truths of the church. The Third Grade is by far the largest: laymen, laywomen and even children who live in the world and spread and defend their faith before others. Both the Second and Third Grades were to have their own periodicals.

This is a second incarnation of Jordan's plan, the one he presented to Pope Leo XIII in a private audience on September 6, 1880, shortly after his return to Rome from the Middle East. The papal blessing of this plan opened the door for Jordan to say, "Now the work begins." He then approached various high ranking cardinals and other church leaders to explain his project and to receive their blessings. In doing this he met some support as well as some resistance. The names of those who supported his efforts he added to the list of both Eastern and Western Church authorities who had encouraged him earlier.

Next Jordan undertook the search for cooperators, and where better to look than at the September 13, 1880 *Katolikentag*, held in Constance. There, in addition to meeting many old friends, Jordan made the acquaintance of writer and publisher, layman Ludwig Auer. In 1875, to shore up his attempts at resisting the encroaching secularization of education in Bavaria, Auer had established the Cassianum, a publishing and printing house, in Donauwörth. By 1878, he had won a great readership in Bavaria and beyond with his instructional periodicals:

Monika for Catholic families (1869); *Ambrosius* for priests and pastors (1876); *Guardian Angel* for children (1875); *Notburga* for domestics (1877); and *Raphael* for young adults (1879).

Quickly the idea of a merger arose. Jordan's enterprise would benefit by gaining a foothold in Germany, and Auer's would gain the capacity to spread his message to a world-wide audience. But, as with so many great ideas the devil lay in the details, and by 1881 negotiations came to a rather acrimonious end. Nevertheless, even these dark clouds had a silver lining of sorts. Not only did Jordan's contacts with the Cassineum introduce him to Fr. Bernard Lüthen, who would later become his closest, life-long collaborator, Fr. Jordan also learned to reject any future attempt at merging or grafting his apostolic initiative with any other ... a conviction he held to for his whole life. He felt that doing so jeopardized the integrity of his special charism.

All the while he was negotiating with Auer, Fr. Jordan was also working to realize his own dream for the Apostolic Teaching Society. He worked to introduce the Third Grade in various Italian parishes and began advertising his broader apostolic intentions. In 1881, employing the formidable writing talents of Fr. Lüthen, he was able to launch the Apostolic Teaching Society's flagship publication *Der Missionär* for German speaking countries. Earlier that same year he began publishing *Il Monitore Romano* for the Italian public and *L'Amico dei Fanciulli* for Italian children. In 1882, he began *Nuntius Romanus*, the scholarly publication for the Second Grade. In 1884, he inaugurated the Angel Sodality for children with its own periodical magazine *Manna für Kinder*. He also began a rudimentary seminary in Rome for young men desirous of the priesthood who shared his apostolic vision.

In July 1881, he was able to convene a meeting of potential members of the First Grade in Ottobeuren, Bavaria: Fr. Bernard Lüthen, Fr. Karl Alban Friedrich von Leonhardi, Fr. Hermann Koneberg, and Msgr. Anton Ludwig von Essen. Though attracted to Fr. Jordan's undertaking, von Leonhardi and von Essen also harbored their own agendas: the former took a special interest in furthering the Swedish mission, and the latter hoped to establish a house for training German missionaries in his parish in Neuwerk, near the German border with the Netherlands. Despite their



*Early meeting with possible collaborators (left to right)
Fathers von Essen, Jordan, Lüthen and von Leonhardi*

differences they were able to elect officers, agree on some basic statutes, and divide up responsibilities.

Jordan, Lüthen, and von Leonhardi met again at Jordan's lodgings at Santa Brigida in Rome, and there, on December 8, 1881, they officially inaugurated the First Grade of the Apostolic Teaching Society. The two diocesan priests bound themselves to Fr. Jordan by private vows, Lüthen for three years and von Leonhardi for life. At this juncture the all-male First Grade looks remarkably like an association of diocesan clergy, nothing new or particularly unique in the long history of the church.

All attempts to recruit more priests for the Apostolic Teaching Society continually ran into problems. Bishops, facing their own shortage of clergy, were reluctant to release them. And serious questions remained unanswered: to whom would these priests owe their primary obedience, to their local bishop or to Jordan? How could they embrace poverty especially if they were bound by law or by filial duty to support family members? Including within their vows the clause "as far as was permitted by the duties of their office," merely papered over significant difficulties. How, for example, could a Patriarch or high level ecclesiastic who had signed on to Jordan's endeavor promise obedience to Fr. Jordan as Director General of the Apostolic Teaching Society? Thus, Jordan's dream of filling the ranks of this new undertaking with members of the diocesan clergy did not look promising. Finally, the template of an association of diocesan clergy was completely shattered in September 1882, when Baroness Theresa von Wüllenweber professed her vows as the first and only female member of the First Grade of the Apostolic Teaching Society.⁴

When in March 1882, Roman authorities began taking a closer look at what Jordan was doing, many serious questions arose. Why were they calling themselves "apostolic," a term usually reserved to indicate close association with the Holy See? What new or unique ministry were they bringing to the church? In terms of canon law, what precisely was this

⁴Adding even more complexity to this picture, in 1882, Jordan had taken under his wing the sponsorship of a female religious community led by Thekla Bayer (see Chapter 6). Yet these Sisters were not incorporated as members of the First Grade. They remained a kind of adjunct organization which might in time have its own three grades.

group? With men and women members, clerics and laypeople, it was said to resemble a “Noah’s Ark”! It certainly did not fit into any of the categories for religious life authorized by the Vatican in mid-century, a time of great regularization and consolidation. What exactly was the relationship among these Three Grades? Behind these structural questions lay even deeper concerns. Von Leonhardi’s surprising departure in January 1883, would raise a further question: could apostolic zeal alone provide the glue to keep Jordan’s initiative together? Did all of this rely on Jordan alone? With such heavy reliance on one single leader, could such an initiative survive his passing?

Except for listing some of these Roman concerns, and the appointment of a Visitor, the documentary record is silent on exactly what prompted Fr. Jordan eventually to transform his vision of Three Grades into a proper religious community, whereby the First Grade became the First Order of priests and Brothers of the newly renamed Catholic Teaching Society; the Second Grade became the Order of Religious Women; and the Third Grade become benefactors/cooperators somewhat like a Franciscan Third Order. There are no signs of coercion or of internal struggle. The transformation was simply announced without any fanfare as a *fait accompli*.

Fr. Jordan professed his religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience on March 11, 1883. He professed these vows to the pope, at the hands of his spiritual director, the Franciscan Fr. Ludwig Steiner. His vow formula follows closely that of his patron, Francis of Assisi:

I promise to Our Lord Pope Leo XIII and his rightful successors obedience, poverty and chastity and I promise with the help of divine grace to devote and offer myself totally to the honor of God and the salvation of souls.

Rome, on Passion Sunday 1883

John Mary Francis of the Cross (SD 167)

I took the habit and the religious name Francis of the Cross and dedicated myself to God on the tombs of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. (Jordan to Cardinal Vicar, March 1886, AGS 0100.01/A-21)⁵

⁵Early documents show that Father Jordan did not consistently use the same signature. At times he writes Johannes M. Fr. de Cruce, or Franciscus de Cruce, or other variations such as Franciscus Maria de Cruce.

As we see, he adopted a religious name (Francis Mary of the Cross), Bernard Lüthen became Fr. Bonaventure, and in May 1883, the Baroness became Sister Mary of the Apostles. All took to wearing religious habits as the political situation allowed. What can explain both this transformation into religious societies, and the fact that it was seemingly made with so little difficulty? Clearly Jordan's undertaking was rapidly becoming unmanageable. Already in dealings with Thekla Bayer, both Jordan and Lüthen had at an earlier point seriously considered establishing a more traditional congregation of women religious. So the idea of a religious community somewhere within his undertaking was not completely new.

Above all, it seems to have been Rome that suggested the change. And for Jordan, when it came to Rome, a wink was as good as a nod. Why? Because for Fr. Jordan, God's will, which demanded a prompt obedient response, was affirmed from the top down. *Roma loquuta causa finita*. Since Rome had spoken, the matter was all but settled. Rome had opened a way towards approbation, and in keeping with his basic spirituality and his strong ultramontane leanings, Fr. Jordan gladly took it. There is no sign of coercion. His undertaking now officially became two religious congregations: priests and Brothers, and religious women. The Third Grade became a rather ill-defined Third Order of cooperators that quickly failed to thrive due to the demands of its older siblings.

In a remarkably short period, from August 1880, when he sent his sketch of the Three Grades to Massaia, until March 1883, when he professed his own religious vows, much had happened. Jordan's attempt to merge with Auer's Cassianeum had failed, his idea for an association of diocesan priests had proven unworkable, and his entire movement with its three grades had become increasingly unwieldy. Ecclesiastical authorities, seeing the value of his endeavor, held out a hand to suggest a way forward, a more traditional way, and Jordan took it. Much still remained to be done in terms of regularizing his new institute: a spiritual and apostolic vision had to be enunciated and passed along to new members; a satisfactory daily life of prayer and study had to be worked out; and statutes had to be written and approved by Rome.

At the very beginning, Fr. Jordan faced this serious obstacle: what physical form to give to his apostolic zeal for souls? We now see the choice he made. What does this choice tell us about his character? Once again we see underscored in this decision Fr. Jordan's deference to ecclesiastical authority. More importantly, we see in Fr. Jordan a tremendous flexibility. He was quite practical. As long as he could do his utmost for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, Fr. Jordan would not insist on following any specific approach. For him, the goal was always primary; the means towards that goal were always secondary. Nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the critical period leading finally to his embrace of traditional religious life as the way forward—the means to achieve his own salvation and God's greatest glory.

6. Rome the Cradle ... Rome the Center

Even before his 1880 trip to the Middle East, having briefly considered and then discarded the idea of Vienna as the center for his new apostolic endeavor, Fr. Jordan chose Rome. Over the years he would give many reasons for this decision: that Christ had directed St. Peter to Rome, that it was the font of authentic teaching, that the pope resided there under siege and in need of support, and that Rome (the Vatican) was free from nationalistic entanglements. When members complained about the ferocious August heat, Jordan made one of his few known jokes: “If we focus on this [the weather] we could ask: why did the All Wise, the Omniscient Providence select Rome as the center of the holy church where everyone converges? Why did God not choose a health resort?” (*Chapter Talks* 1898/12/2). With his ultramontane leanings Fr. Jordan was quick to see the advantages of headquartering in Rome. But there were also serious disadvantages that would become evident over time. Headquartering in Rome would itself become an obstacle to the realization of his apostolic dream.

Almost immediately after returning to Rome from his travels in the Middle East, Jordan’s mentor, Bishop Massaia, arranged a private audience between Fr. Jordan and Pope Leo XIII.⁶ The outcome was very positive. The Holy Father extended his blessing to Jordan’s project, and confirmed that blessing the next day through a message sent from Gabriele Bocali, the pope’s private secretary (DSS XIV, p. 65). Because he was unfamiliar with how things worked in the Eternal City, Fr. Jordan confused this papal blessing of his idea with papal approval of his undertaking—an honest mistake but one that would have serious

⁶This meeting took place on September 6, 1880, just three weeks after his August 14 return to Rome, and just one week before Jordan met Ludwig Auer at the *Katolikentag* in Constance.

ramifications. Additionally, Fr. Jordan used that papal blessing as a springboard for approaching other Cardinals, without always observing the complicated pecking orders among them.

The Vatican bureaucracy had long been and remains even today somewhat of a Renaissance court where power and prestige are measured by one's access to the pope and by one's ability to get things done. Every suitor, every project required its champion, its Cardinal Protector, without whom nothing moved forward. Even with a strong protector, requests were often shuffled from congregation to congregation for years before finally reaching the desk of the Holy Father. In this environment direct conflict between Cardinals was rare. Instead they engaged each other in proxy wars waged by obstructing one another's protégés. This makes it very difficult today to ascertain whether the many obstacles Fr. Jordan faced in Rome were serious defects in themselves, or whether he was merely a casualty of behind the scenes maneuvering.

Many steps are required to launch a new religious congregation. For Fr. Jordan this process would last 21 years, from November 1880 to March 1911! (The Constitutions would not receive final approval until March 1922.) Every new religious congregation begins under the auspices of a diocesan bishop. In the case of the Apostolic Teaching Society headquartered in Rome, that bishop was the Cardinal Vicar of Rome. If approved at this level a new congregation sought the so-called *Brevi di Lode*, also known as the *Decretum Laudis*. Fr. Jordan encountered obstacles at each of these levels. They generally arose from one of three sources: Fr. Jordan's lack of familiarity with the specific canons governing religious life; the fact that Rome itself was in the process of modifying its expectations for what new statutes should contain; and complaints by outsiders and by members within the Society about poor living conditions, inadequate studies, chaotic finances, and generally poor management.

Jordan's quest for episcopal approval began in November 1880, when he submitted to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, Monaco La Valetta, the statutes of the Apostolic Teaching Society which he had drawn up with Ludwig Auer in Donauwörth. Things did not proceed quickly.

La Valetta sent the request to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars (i.e., Religious). The Congregation promptly returned them, saying that approval was within the competence of the local bishop (the Vicar of Rome). La Valetta, however, refused to approve the statutes because they were too broad, “amounting almost to a second Catholic Church.”⁷ In addition, Jordan lacked the resources to sustain his undertaking.

There was another quite specific problem: complaints that the word “apostolic,” which appeared in the new Society’s name, was a term reserved exclusively for the Holy See. Asked to clarify his thinking on the matter, Jordan submitted a 19-point explanation addressed to the pope which included the following:

17) The humble writer named the Society the Apostolic Teaching Society:

1. to express the spirit by which it is inspired and which its members must possess, that is the spirit of sacrifice, poverty, burning zeal, in contrast to the spirit of our age—avarice, egotism and sensuality;
2. to express fearlessness in working for the Holy Faith;
3. to express that the first duty of all who wish to belong to it is to collaborate in spreading, defending and re-energizing religion and in working for the good of souls;
4. in order to express the aims of his Society by this term “Apostolic Society” without circumlocution or secrecy.
(Translation of the Italian published in DSSX ; full reference AGS0100.01/F4.206).

This letter of explanation was delivered by the pope to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars, which in turn gave the whole matter over to the Dominican Fr. Raimondo Bianchi, O.P. for closer study. He submitted a 17-page report with 13 major objections to approving Jordan’s statutes. Based on this report, in September 1882,

⁷This remark is not mere sarcasm. One could rightly ask how the Apostolic Teaching Society’s program of self-sanctification, honoring God and saving souls differed from the aim of the church itself.

Cardinal La Valetta forbade Jordan's use of the word "Apostolic" in the title of his Society. Henceforth, it would be known as the "Catholic Teaching Society." After another unsuccessful exchange of questions and responses between the Cardinal Vicar and the Society, in January 1883, a Visitor was appointed for the Society, the Theatine Fr. Francesco Cirino. Although no notes remain of their meetings, this relationship could have added impetus for Jordan to embrace the change to a religious order just three months later.

By 1885, with the statutes of the Society still in limbo, Cardinal Lucido Parocchi became Cardinal Vicar of Rome. He appointed canonist Fr. George Jacquemin as the Society's "spiritual guide" to assist Jordan in writing an acceptable rule/constitutions. This appointment had devastating consequences. After having wrested control of the Congregation of Sisters from Fr. Jordan's hands (see Chapter 7), Jacquemin quickly wrote and submitted to the Cardinal Vicar a new set of Constitutions for the male branch of the Catholic Teaching Society, which Parocchi immediately approved. Not only did Jacquemin's Constitutions fail to reflect the charism of the Founder; implementing them would have led effectively to the ouster of Fr. Jordan as superior. An emergency meeting between the Cardinal Vicar and Jordan's twelve loyal finally professed members turned the tide. Parocchi backed off. Jordan's four-page draft Constitution of 1886 was approved *ad experimentum* for three years. Armed with this ecclesiastical approval the Society undertook vigorous fundraising activities in Germany.



Msgr. George Jacquemin

Six years after receiving this episcopal approval, Fr. Jordan petitioned for final papal approval. Thus began Jordan's two-year siege of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. He submitted his first request in April 1891, then again in December; then in January 1893, May 1893, and April 1894. Somehow the January 1893 petition appeared

under a new name: *Societas Divini Salvatoris*, Society of the Divine Savior. In some ways this was a great honor to bear the name of the Savior Himself, but a second name change in so short a time threatened to project to benefactors a Society in turmoil. But the name change along with its sobriquet “Salvatorians” was universally well received and it stuck.

The fruit of the 1894 petition for approval was met with the appointment of an Apostolic Visitor, the Carmelite Fr. Antonio de Gesù Intreccialagli. A full ten years later, in May 1905, backed by the positive assessment of the Visitor and the recommendations of 19 bishops in whose dioceses the Society was at work, a *Decretum Laudis* was finally issued, and final papal approval came in March 1911.⁸

One can certainly ask why this process of gaining ecclesiastical approval took so long—21 years in all! Some of the problem arose from Fr. Jordan himself. Recall that, although he was now the founder of a religious society, he himself had never been a religious! He had never lived in community, never undergone a novitiate, never had a superior as such. He had studied the older Constitutions of other communities (especially those of St. Benedict, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Ignatius of Loyola) and like those great founders he viewed his rule as first and foremost a spiritual document intended to inspire and guide the members. In his Chapter Talks (May 31, 1901) he gives us a sense of how intimately he approached writing his rule: “I can tell you that no rule I have written gave me so much heavenly solace as the one I wrote down before the Blessed Sacrament. Tears of bliss overcame me, as if to confirm that this was God’s will.”

Secondly, what may have worked for Benedict in the year 400 and Ignatius in 1550 could not pass muster in the Vatican Congregation for Bishops and Regulars of 1900. This was an age consumed by the desire to regularize church affairs under Roman oversight, religious

⁸Because preparations of a revised code of Canon Law were underway at that time, the Constitutions were approved *ad experimentum* for five years. The Constitutions were finally approved in March 1922, by Pope Pius XI after the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law.

life in particular. In approving new statutes Rome was not looking so much for inspiration as for regularity and legal precision. Nor did it help that, in the many years during which Fr. Jordan petitioned for approval, Rome itself was continually changing its own expectations for new statutes.

A third and final factor that helps to explain the inordinately long time it took to gain approval for his Society was the background noise of complaints being made about Jordan and about his Society, from both within and outside. Scholastics complained that their studies were being abbreviated in order to send them out into apostolates for which they felt unprepared. New foundations were being made too quickly, too far apart geographically, and without enough men and material to sustain them. Outside observers were offended by the shabby appearance poor Salvatorian students made as they shambled in formation through the City of Rome to attend classes at the Gregorianum. And it was an open secret that the wolf was always camped at the door of the House of Divine Providence. The community lived from hand to mouth, its debts grew larger by the day, and its finances seemed nothing less than chaotic. These complaints, especially regarding its finances, triggered the Apostolic Visitation.

What is an apostolic visitation? The closest thing to it in secular society is receivership. A judge orders that a failing company with some prospects of success be put under new management until its finances can be straightened out. Although Fr. Jordan remained Founder and *de jure* Superior General, he could do nothing without the express approval of the Visitor. No money could be spent, no foundations opened or closed, no transfers or appointments made, no changes or exceptions to the rule authorized without his prior approval. In all things Fr. Jordan was answerable to the Visitor. This was a great humiliation for the Founder. It weakened him in the eyes of the church, the world, and of his own members. Yet he had no choice but to accept it.

In discussing the merits of the visitation most commentators see it as a mixed blessing, but primarily positive. To right the ship, the Visitor immediately worked to stem the flow of red ink by forbidding the Society from accepting any student who could not finance his own

education. In addition, no expenditure of over 500 lire (\$100) could be made anywhere within the Society without the express approval of the Visitor. Strict adherence to these rules saw the debt retired within 10 years. But the number of aspirants fell sharply, and the pace of opening new foundations also fell.

The fact that the Apostolic Visitor, Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli, came from a Carmelite background also had a profound effect in shaping the Society. Fr. Jordan always insisted that his foundation was in equal parts active and contemplative. The Carmelite charism, however, is fundamentally contemplative and monastic. So when it came to matters of discipline (the habit, Divine Office in choir, and granting exceptions) the Visitor stood firmly against variations. Observance was to be strictly the same in all the houses and communities within the Society. It was joked that observance was to be so universal that a member should be able to fall asleep in one house, wake up in another, and not realize that he had been moved during the night! Needless to say, in apostolic communities working in such diverse locations as Rome, India, Vienna, Brazil, and the American Northwest, this one-size-fits-all approach imposed serious hardships and led to some unnecessary defections.

The argument is made that Fr. Jordan was such a disaster when it came to finances and management, that without this lengthy visitation his Society would never have survived even through the first generation. Yet is that true? What do we actually see? When there had been no way forward, Jordan graduated from the university and was ordained a priest; he actually did go on to found a religious society. Within fifteen years he had gathered 66 priests, 33 Brothers, 88 professed students and by 1898 a congregation of 86 Sisters. These members were active on four continents. Fr. Jordan would insist that none of this was his doing. It was the work of Providence. Once he was assured that a certain apostolate was willed by God, he undertook it, heedless of the limits he faced of personnel and material. Somehow things prospered. As he wrote in his Chapter Talk of December 10, 1897, "If you plan your steps only according to human cleverness, you can never rely on extraordinary help, and you will never achieve great things!"



Ein Blick auf Assam.

*Painting by Brother Aegidius Roeder (1865-1928)
illustrating the work of all the Salvatorins in Assam, India*

Fr. Jordan knew that those young men and women being sent to new foundations would suffer, just as the original apostles had suffered. Yet if they persevered, their efforts would be crowned with success by Divine Providence. God had promised it. Was Fr. Jordan actually such a hopeless manager and financial disaster as the Visitor underscored in his report petitioning Rome for the Society's final approbation? Or was his apostolic spirit such that he let nothing stand between what he took to be God's will and responding to it with whatever resources he had at his disposal, however limited?

In the beautiful Chapter Talk of May 5, 1899, Fr. Jordan speaks of the four bitter cups from which an apostolic person may be forced to drink. Much attention is given to the fourth cup, suggesting that it refers to the Apostolic Visitation:

The last, if God should pass it to you, is when even those appointed by God to support and guard you, even the church authorities, lay obstacles in your path. This is the fourth and most bitter! But God can insist that you drink this cup also.

Less attention is given to the third cup:

A third cup an apostolic person must drink ... is one prepared for him by good people when they misunderstand him, his plans, and his intentions, when as a result of this people believe they are doing something good when they obstruct them [his plans]!

Is it possible that the Apostolic Visitor so misunderstood Jordan's charism and his plans that he preserved the Society with human cleverness but in so doing eclipsed the founding charism of the Society—total reliance on Divine Providence?

Fr. Jordan had many good reasons for choosing Rome as the center for his apostolic undertaking. But one can wonder whether a different venue would have produced less scrutiny and fewer obstacles, not to mention forestalling a record breaking twenty-year long visitation. Nor did it help that Fr. Jordan's working relationship with the Visitor was strained. Though Fr. Antonio always expressed great admiration for Jordan the man, for his piety and his good intentions, it is doubtful that he ever really understood him. He saw Jordan as the Superior General, but failed

to appreciate his vocation and status as a founder. There is very little correspondence between the two men due to the fact that Fr. Antonio much preferred working with Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS. In fact Fr. Pancratius became Fr. Antonio's *de facto* point man within the Society, conveying orders and checking back with him on their implementation.

So often in his Spiritual Diary and in his Chapter Talks, Fr. Jordan speaks about the need to accept humiliations. In fact he called upon his confreres to love the humiliations God sends. Certainly there was no greater, no more public and longer lasting humiliation for Fr. Jordan than this Apostolic Visitation. It announced to all the world that he was a failure. He could not successfully manage his own creation without assistance from the outside. Even worse, during this prolonged visitation he was forced to sit quietly while the actions of clever men stifled his apostolic dream, practically smothering it in the cradle. Ah, the bitter cup of being misunderstood by good people.

7. Sisters, Sisters, Sisters!

We have already seen that Johann Baptist Jordan grew up in a very male-dominated home surrounded by men and boys—his grandfather (till 1864), his father (till 1863), his older brother Martin and younger brother Edward, and his first cousin Theodore. After his father's debilitating accident in 1855, Johann Baptist's mother, Notburga, assumed full responsibility for supporting and running the household and raising the boys. There can be little doubt that she exerted a strong influence on her sons, providing the love and discipline of both mother and father. The only other women in Johann Baptist's life seem to have been the occasional aunt taking advantage of her right of residence, and his generous and caring godmother, Theresia Keller.

The local parish school which he attended gave instruction to both boys and girls. But at about the age when most boys might have struck up an interest in girls, Jordan had his "conversion experience," which led to his developing his more introverted and spiritual side. During his working life, apprenticeship, and college and university days, he was reported not to have frequented taverns or to have socialized with women of his age. In addition, his classmates and teachers at the gymnasium in Constance and at the university in Freiburg were all men. Among the comments made about Jordan's personality by the seminary rector, apart from his piety and well-known facility with languages, was the remark that he was awkward. One can assume this means socially awkward, even among his male peers.

This trait seems to have stayed with him throughout his life, especially when it came to relating to women. In comments gathered for his beatification in 1940, "An older woman from Germany once asked me, 'what is the matter with your Father General? He gives almost no reply

when you speak to him and he doesn't look at anyone.”⁹ In his biography of Jordan Fr. Pancratius writes: “He was, moreover, extremely reserved on contact with women throughout his life and curt to such an extent that he could at times almost offend even longstanding benefactresses of his work.”(ibid.)

The two women central to Jordan's life were his mother, Notburga, and the Mother of the Savior, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Clearly these relationships were highly idealized. When speaking to his subordinates about the Society, Fr. Jordan almost always referred to it as their mother. Having suffered to feed, clothe, and educate them, surely they owed the Society, their mother, gratitude, love and a persevering spirit. This attitude certainly echoes Jordan's relationship to his own mother. As for the Virgin Mary, the Immaculata, she was always ready to comfort and to intercede. This lofty view of women, albeit very beautiful, left Fr. Jordan in many ways ill-prepared to assess and to interact successfully with the various actual female temperaments he would encounter in his three attempts at founding a congregation of religious women.

How convenient it would be to deal with these three founding initiatives one by one. But events surrounding the establishment of a viable Salvatorian Sisters' Congregation between 1882 and 1888 are so intertwined that they can only be explained together. The three main women involved in these attempts were Thekla Bayer, Amalia Streitel, and Baroness Therese von Wüllenweber.¹⁰ All three had these factors in common: they had heard about the Apostolic Teaching Society through the writings of Fr. Bernard Lüthen in *Der Missionär*, all had previously been members of other religious orders; and they were mature in years (the Baroness in her fifties and the other two in their mid-thirties, as was Jordan). Little is known of Bayer's family of origin, but of the other

⁹(Wambacher, *Summarium*, 1235, p. 279, APS, Rome) quoted in S. Ulrike Musick, SDS, “The Inclusion of Women in Father Jordan's Foundational Vision,” in *The Situation of Women in the Church at the Time of Fr. Francis of the Cross Jordan and Blessed Mary of the Apostles*, *Studia de Historia Salvatoriana* 10/2, Study Group Mary of the Apostles, Milwaukee, WI, 2003, pp. 1-7).

¹⁰Their membership in various religious orders led these women to have multiple names, civil and religious. In what follows I will consistently refer to them by their civil family names: Bayer, Streitel, von Wüllenweber.

two ladies von Wüllenweber came from a titled family, and Streitel from a comfortable middle class background. All had been vetted and welcomed by priests of the First Grade: Jordan, Lüthen, von Leonhardi, or von Essen.

Having been disappointed in their former experiences, each of these women was now eager to begin again to fulfill her dreams of religious life. Lüthen's printed descriptions of the Apostolic Teaching Society outlined a mission so broad that it is not surprising how each woman could imagine this Society would be the perfect vehicle for realizing her vision of religious life. Bayer's community in Johannesbrunn would commit itself to Eucharistic adoration, von Wüllenweber's to the foreign missions, and Streitel's to an epochal merging of Franciscan and Carmelite spirituality to be manifested in a severe penitential life. All these currents came together between April 1882 and January 1883.

April 12, 1882, was the first time von Wüllenweber heard of the Apostolic Teaching Society through an advertisement for *Der Missionär* published in the *Kölnische Volkszeitung*. By mid-May she had already written to its author Fr. Lüthen offering to put her little monastery house the *Barbarastift* in Neuwerk, Prussia, at the disposal of this new Society for its "missionary purposes." Lüthen wrote back enthusiastically, enrolled her as a member of the Third Grade, and promised that Fr. Jordan would soon come to visit her. That meeting took place on July 4. (At that time her pastor and spiritual guide, Fr. Ludwig von Essen, professed his private vows as a member of the First Grade for three years.) On September 2, Fr. von Leonhardi arrived in Neuwerk and on September 5 accepted von Wüllenweber's one-year private vows as a member of the First Grade of the Apostolic Teaching Society. The very next day she donated all her assets in Neuwerk to the Society. All this in just six months!

Meanwhile in Munich, Fr. Lüthen was working diligently with Ms. Thekla Bayer. She too had come to know of the Apostolic Teaching Society through her subscription to *Der Missionär*. She made a good impression on Lüthen, and based solely on this and on the recommendation of a trusted Jesuit priest, he allowed Bayer to profess private vows on June 16, 1882. Precisely where Bayer and her enterprise

was to fit within the overall structure of the Apostolic Teaching Society remained unclear.¹¹ She never became a member of the First Grade as von Wüllenweber had. Nor was she merely a cooperator of the Third Grade. Lüthen seems to have envisioned her group as a kind of contemplative “Third Order” akin to the Franciscan Third Order.

In any case, on August 3, she and her little community were installed at an empty convent in Johannesbrunn in the Diocese of Regensburg, Germany. But trouble quickly arose between her and the local bishop who had had previous unhappy dealings with Ms. Bayer. This was due to two things. First, her insistence that she and her followers be allowed to wear a religious habit – something strictly forbidden under the *Kulturkampf* laws. Second was her insistence that she be able to follow her own “higher inspirations,” without regard to the obedience she owed both the local bishop and the Founder. Already by October 9, the bishop had had enough and ordered Bayer and her Sisters out of his diocese. By October 31, they were on their way to von Wüllenweber’s Barbarastift in Neuwerk where Bayer arrived on December 2.

At this point the histories of all three women briefly merge. After the arrival of Bayer and her two Sister companions, life in Neuwerk rocked along. It could not have been easy for the two women, each of whom saw herself as a legitimate superior, to work together smoothly. So it probably came as a general relief when Bayer was called to Rome by Fr. Jordan. On her way to Rome she was instructed to stop in Bamberg, Germany to meet Amalia Streitel, who had also expressed interest in the Apostolic Teaching Society. In Bamberg something happened that even today remains veiled in mystery. Shortly after becoming acquainted, Streitel made “such discoveries” about Bayer which in her mind disqualified her from religious life. She shared these discoveries with Lüthen who agreed, and by April 8, 1883, he wrote to the Bishop of Regensburg that all ties between the Johannesbrunn community and the Apostolic Teaching Society had been severed. Thus, Thekla Bayer falls out of Salvatorian history. And then there were two: von Wüllenweber in Neuwerk, and Streitel installed at the Borgo Nuovo in Rome.

¹¹It seems that before the idea of becoming a religious society was introduced, Jordan toyed with the idea that this women’s branch of his movement would also have its own three grades, etc. He decided against it.

Amalia Streitl is truly the most complicated person in this part of the story. She came to Jordan after 17 years of religious life as a Franciscan at Maria Stern Convent, and a short but intense experience of life as a novice in the nearby Carmelite convent of Himmelspforten. She had found Franciscan life too lax, yet she felt that the rigors of Carmelite life imperiled her health. So she left. Back home as a lay woman she heard through her spiritual director of Fr. Jordan's efforts to found a congregation, now called the Catholic Teaching Society. She applied, met Fr. Lüthen, and by Spring of 1883, found herself transported to Rome as superior of a new women's congregation.

Streitl had grandiose hopes for the Catholic Teaching Society and for its Founder, Fr. Jordan. According to her own "higher inspiration," Jordan was meant by God to fuse Franciscan and Carmelite spirituality, and by reestablishing St. Francis' primitive embrace of poverty, to bring about the reform of religious life in the church. In the end she envisioned all the existing orders embracing this reformation and merging with Jordan. Her contribution to this great work was to support and encourage Jordan on this difficult path. She insisted that she herself should stay in the background and that "as a mere woman" her name was never to be associated with this great undertaking.

Superficially, Streitl and Jordan's spiritual sensibilities coincided in the central importance they gave to poverty and to obedience. But Jordan's followers were to embrace poverty and obedience for the sake of the apostolate. These were always the means to an apostolic end. For Streitl, however, female members of the Catholic Teaching Society were to embrace poverty and obedience for the sake of self-abnegation and mortification. If the daily regimen of one vegan meal per day, sleeping on boards, and walking shoeless had an adverse effect of the health of the Sisters and precluded strenuous apostolic efforts (or even led to an early death), so be it.



*Amalia Streitl as Mother Francis
of the Sisters
of the Sorrowsful Mother*

Jordan, on the other hand, insisted on moderating such mortification so as not to jeopardize one's health or the apostolate. For him, poverty was to be shaped by the apostolate.

Not surprisingly, there was a similar disagreement between Jordan and Streitel when it came to obedience: whether its motive and goal was self-abnegation or apostolic service. Here something even larger was at play. For in addition to whatever obedience Streitel felt she owed to Jordan, her legitimate superior in the Catholic Teaching Society, she also felt guided by her own "higher inspiration." Her particularly feminine spirituality at that time was filled with divine injunctions which she received in prayer, dreams, visions, and portents. Although Jordan may have read about such things in the lives of the saints, this spiritual path was very foreign to him. His oracle, insofar as he had one, was the globe displaying the many pagan lands ripe for conversion. Clearly two such different approaches to spirituality and religious life could not thrive together in one congregation. Streitel could never find peace of mind if she felt she owed obedience both to God revealed in her higher inspirations, and to a superior who saw things otherwise. Separation was inevitable. The only real question was when and how.

Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS, was the first one who attempted to unravel this painful tale in his 1930 life of the Founder. There he suggests that if Jordan had acted more decisively when it first became clear how different he and Streitel were, a rupture between his work and hers could have been avoided. He softens his criticism by citing Jordan's gentleness, his humility and forbearance, his unwillingness to send anyone away who could contribute to achieving his apostolic goal. But one must also remember that of the 30 or so Sisters who had gathered in Rome by 1885, Streitel was really the only one with significant experience in religious life. To whom else's direction could Jordan have entrusted his fledgling community? So it was that Streitel filled the role of Mother Superior, formator, and Novice Mistress. It is precisely to this circumstance that the final rupture can be traced.

From all accounts the young women who gathered around Jordan and Streitel were content, happily making progress in the rigorously

penitential spiritual life their superior outlined for them. But behind the scenes confessional matters were developing that could not be shared openly with the Sisters, and which were soon to throw the little community into turmoil. For Jordan and Lüthen soon discovered that in leaving the Carmelites and arriving back home, Streitel had not sought to be dispensed from her vows as a Franciscan Sister. The only way church authorities could see now to regularize this awkward situation was to depose her from her current offices of Superior and Novice Mistress, and to have her repeat her year-long novitiate in the Catholic Teaching Society before she could profess her vows and resume her former posts.

One can imagine the chaos this precipitated among the Sisters. And all eyes looked to Jordan. Why had he done this? Why had he deposed their Venerable Mother? Why had he replaced her with a Sister who was both unwilling to serve and incapable as well?¹² In the absence of any good explanations, and feeling that their Venerable Mother had been betrayed, many of the Sisters took their concerns to their only outlet: the confessional. One solicitous confessor to whom they turned was Msgr. George Jacquemin, a capable canon lawyer close to the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, under whose aegis Jordan operated. Msgr. Jacquemin not only devised a canonical solution to reinstate Streitel; he also composed a Constitution for the Sisters that immediately passed muster with the Cardinal Vicar. All this happened without Jordan's knowledge or input. Arriving back hurriedly to Rome from a fundraising trip in Germany, he discovered not only that the Sisters' Congregation had been wrested from his control, but that the same fate awaited the men's community unless he immediately severed all ties with the Sisters, and no longer "concerned himself with the ladies." As this was clearly the will of the church, a brokenhearted Jordan submitted without public complaint.

One can scarcely imagine the talk that swirled throughout Rome, that hotbed of church rumor and intrigue. About these days Jordan himself wrote, "I suffered unspeakably, but cannot say everything. God, who

¹²In fact, Jordan had worked tirelessly to solve Streitel's canonical problems in a way that would have avoided her being deposed as Superior and having to repeat her novitiate. But the seal of confession bound him to remain silent in his own defense.

knows all things, will reveal it.” And in another context he mused, “The dear God knows what it was good for.” In fact, despite the personal pain and public humiliation connected to the failure of this second attempt at founding a Sisters’ Congregation for the Catholic Teaching Society, certain good did come. Perhaps the separation was better and smoother coming at this juncture rather than later. In addition, the newly created Sisters’ congregation, now called the Addolorata Sisters, or the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, went on to make a very fruitful contribution to the life of the church in its own right.

What then do these early incidents surrounding the first attempts at founding a congregation of religious women tell us about the Founder and his character? Once again they reveal his complete submission to the will of the church even under the most painful circumstances. In addition, we see some of the difficulties that arose from his approach to working with women. It is also noteworthy how little both Jordan and Lüthen vetted these women. Rather than investigating their backgrounds carefully (not even checking with the local bishop in the case of Bayer) they relied on their own judgment of women, their practical experience with whom was sorely lacking.

Two of the three women attracted to his Society, especially Streitl, demanded much of Jordan’s time and energy. Streitl in particular needed to be involved in decisions, to be consistently affirmed, and meaningfully involved in the evolution of their enterprise. Jordan was wise enough to remain above the fray of daily life in a women’s community, but seemed to Streitl to be too distant and curt ever to gain her trust as a spiritual father. Finally, although Fr. Jordan was clear and zealous about his ultimate apostolic goal, its very universality, its call to enlist all people and to use all ways and means, ultimately attracted people whose visions were actually quite different from his own. These conflicts were only straightened out over time, often at great personal expense.

8. You, his Firstborn Daughter ...

“Culture lag” occurs when a behavior persists even after the reason for that behavior has long since disappeared. One clear example is in photography. Due to the need for very long exposure times, early subjects were especially told not to smile when being photographed since such a pose could not be held and the image would come out blurred. Even after exposure times decreased people still felt they needed to remain perfectly still and not smile. Hence, the dour photos of our nineteenth and early twentieth century ancestors. This culture lag makes it so difficult for us to glean much about their personalities from studying photo portraits of Jordan, Lüthen and Mother Mary.¹³ They appear so staid, so static, so mirthless. But as we shall see in this chapter, especially in his dealings with Lüthen and Mother Mary, Fr. Jordan was quite different than his photographic images suggest.

Therese von Wüllenweber was the first and ultimately the last woman to collaborate successfully with Fr. Jordan in his attempts to establish a women’s branch of his undertaking. Why did she succeed where Bayer and Streitl failed? First, because she was older, in some ways perhaps more mature than the others, and had proven herself through years of patient waiting. Second, because she was essentially attracted to Jordan’s apostolic vision, especially as it related to the missions. She had hopes for her little Barbarastift in Neuwerk¹⁴, but no other agenda. Finally, she

¹³Over the course of her lifetime Blessed Mary of the Apostles (née Therese von Wüllenweber) had various names, civil and religious. To avoid confusion, she will be referred to as Therese, and from the time she was enrolled in the Apostolic Teaching Society (1882), simply as Mother Mary.

¹⁴Today Neuwerk is a district of the city Mönchengladbach, Germany. In 1961 the Salvatorian Sisters purchased the former monastery and the adjacent church and the city named a street “Wüllenweberstrasse” after Therese.

succeeded because she was willing to be completely obedient to Jordan as her spiritual father and Founder. She had no “higher inspiration” to fulfill. This also set her apart from the other women and made her Jordan’s perfect companion.



*Therese von Wüllenweber
as a young woman*

Born into the minor nobility in 1833 (15 years prior to Jordan) in Prussian Germany, the eldest of 4 daughters, Baroness Therese von Wüllenweber grew to maturity in a loving, comfortably well off and very devout Catholic family. From adolescence onward she was attracted to foreign mission work, and sought a religious way of life that would satisfy her heart’s desire. After two discouraging attempts at religious life she returned to Castle Myllendonk, and at the age of 46 she took the brave step of using her inheritance to purchase one wing of a nearby convent that had been suppressed and fallen into disuse since

the Napoleonic conquest of 1802. Encouraged by her local pastor, Msgr. von Essen, who also had a heart for the missions, she hoped to initiate something there in Neuwerk to contribute to the church’s mission effort.

In addition to the uphill battle Therese already faced as a single, older woman trying to start an apostolate on her own, the headwinds of von Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* made things even more difficult. In the new German Empire only those religious women’s communities involved in social welfare ministries (narrowly defined to include care for the sick and elderly) were authorized. As a result, much of her effort had to remain somewhat covert. Her little enterprise in Neuwerk took the name *Barbarastift*, the St. Barbara Institute. Its official purpose was to house orphans and older single or widowed women. She also taught catechism at the local parish and provided opportunities for the neighborhood girls to learn needlecraft and various other household skills. Little came of these

efforts, and certainly none of them fully satisfied her heart's desire to do something great for the missions.

All this changed in April 1882, when her attention was caught by a notice announcing the inauguration of a new initiative headed by a young priest from Baden, Fr. Johann Baptist Jordan. It was called the Apostolic Teaching Society. Straightaway she wrote to Fr. Lüthen, author of the notice, seeking to be admitted to the First Grade of this new Society. She very much wanted to be numbered among those who dedicated themselves full time and permanently to the great work. Such was her enthusiasm that she immediately included in her second letter the offer to donate her St. Barbara Institute for the missionary purposes of the Society. Lüthen answered that as of yet there was not a plan to admit women to the First Grade, but for now she would be enrolled as a cooperator: a member of the Third Grade. Fr. Jordan himself visited the Baroness in early July, and on September 5, 1882, she committed herself for one year as a member of the First Grade of the Apostolic Teaching Society at the hands of Fr. Friedrich von Leonhardi, the third founding member of the Society.

What had changed in the five months between May 1882, when Lüthen wrote that there was not yet any plan to admit women to the First Grade, and September 1882, when Therese was enrolled as the first female member of the First Grade? Even though this decision to enroll a woman in the First Grade would have the most far-reaching consequences, especially in the Society's quest for canonical approval, there exists no documentary evidence between May and September of any discussions among Jordan, von Leonhardi and Lüthen concerning this matter.

As news of this development became public knowledge, it was met by some with a great deal of skepticism. Had this enrollment been a cynical ploy on Jordan's behalf to secure the transfer of the Baroness' property and other financial resources? After all, just one day after professing her vows into the hands of von Leonhardi the transfer documents were notarized. On the part of the public, some odor would always cling to this transaction.

A more magnanimous interpretation of events is also quite possible. In presenting herself for enrollment in the First Grade it became clear to Jordan after their July 4 meeting that Therese possessed all the attributes expected in members of the First Grade: a willingness to commit oneself full time to the cause of the Society for life, and to embrace poverty in obedience to the Founder. Quite possibly it had never occurred to Jordan or to any of the others that a woman would ever come forward with such qualities. Her promised donation was nothing other than a concrete demonstration of her wholehearted commitment, and was quite beside the point. Hence, this was no cynical ploy. It was the embrace of a heretofore unanticipated development. A woman had stepped forward with the requisite level of commitment for membership in the First Grade of the Apostolic Teaching Society. How could she be denied? Jordan was never one to turn away potential cooperators.

One other thing can be said regarding the integration of women into Jordan's movement. Clearly it was not always the case that he had intended to enroll women in the First Grade. There is no indication of this in the earliest descriptions of the Society, although their vigorous activity in the domestic realm as members in the Third Grade is indisputable. Nor were the women in Johannesbrun ever considered for anything other than admission to something akin to the Third Grade. It was not until Therese arrived on the scene that enrolling women in the First Grade was even considered. Her presence forced the issue, and as we have already seen, Jordan was always quick to adjust his structures to further his vision. Yet given the serious repercussions the decision to integrate women into the First Grade would have on the quest for church approval, one can ask whether perhaps Jordan moved too quickly and without fully appreciating the consequences of this action.

As the perceptive reader will recall, by 1882 there existed two separate fledgling communities of Sisters of the Apostolic Teaching Society (which in October would have its name changed to the Catholic Teaching Society). One was in Rome under the care of Streitell, and the other in Neuwerk. Perceiving the danger of the two groups developing with two separate spirits, the years between 1882 and 1885 were marked by various attempts by the Founder to bring the two communities closer together through visits and the exchange of personnel. Despite the best

efforts of all concerned, little seemed to work. The penitential life of the Roman community could not be harmonized with Mother Mary's more apostolic spirit. But in October 1885, after the separation of the Roman Sisters, now called "Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother," everything changed. It was no longer a question of Mother Mary harmonizing her desires with those of Streitel. Now her task was to found anew the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society. The next four years were taken up with planning the Sisters' move to Rome and disposing of the St. Barbara Institute in Neuwerk.

Writers often point to this four-year period from 1885 to 1889, as the time one sees Mother Mary's virtues most clearly: her great patience and her unwavering trust that somehow, through Jordan, God's providence would make a way forward. After years of waiting, the Sister's Congregation was formally re-established on December 8, 1888. December 1890 saw the realization of Mother Mary's great dream to do something great for the missions when the first Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society departed for Assam, India. These same virtues would continue to manifest themselves in Mother Mary's patient waiting for Rome to approve moving the Sisters' Motherhouse and novitiate from nearby Tivoli to Rome itself.¹⁵ This move finally occurred in 1903, after a wait of almost 15 years, during which time the Congregation grew to more than 150 Sisters! Mother Mary died in Rome, universally loved and surrounded by her devoted Sisters on Christmas Eve night, 1907.

As much as these years reveal Mother Mary's virtues, they also tell us something very important about Fr. Jordan's character. His correspondence with Mother Mary from 1884-1889 is taken up with two closely interrelated issues: the founding of a women's congregation in Rome, and the final disposition of the property in Neuwerk. Consider the following excerpts from the correspondence (emphasis added):

¹⁵By the mid-1880s Rome itself was so full of religious women and their motherhouses that the Cardinal Vicar responsible for Rome banned any new communities from establishing themselves there. For this reason when Mother Mary left Neuwerk she opened her first community house not in Rome but in the Diocese of Tivoli, a short train ride from Rome.

- 1883 8/26 I hope at least **within a year** to have a house here for our good Sisters.
Have patience.
- 10/14 I hope that one day we can still erect a really apostolic house in Neuwerk. This is my intent. But patient.
- n.d. I hope to be able to call you to the Holy City **soon**.
- 1884
10/19 May the dear God arrange the affairs at Neuwerk **very soon** in accordance with his holy will.
- 1885 3/9 Pray zealously that the matter concerning Neuwerk will be settled **soon**.
- 4/3 You will probably have to come to Rome **soon**.
- 4/14 I hope that the matter [of Neuwerk] will **soon** be settled.
- 6/27 I hope that the authorization for a foundation in Bavaria for our Sisters will come **soon**.
- 8/29 Unfortunately, I am not yet in a position to settle the matter of Neuwerk. But I hope it will happen **soon**.
- 11/8 [After the separation of the Roman Sisters] It would be imprudent for you to come forward already now. It could be misconstrued [Lüthen writing for Jordan].
- 1886 3/13 The Lord will show us his way, but we must still be patient and pray much.
- 6/19 But patience, still **a little longer!** Surely the matter finally has to be cleared up. The year cannot close without it [Lüthen writing for Jordan].
- 8/15 At last I can tell you that I have almost fully decided to found another community of Sisters ...
I have in mind, if God wills it, to begin the foundation **soon**.

- 10/8 Let us pray that the hour may come **soon** in which the future women's congregation will flourish in the spirit of holy unanimity.
- 11/30 At the present time I cannot do much about the matter of the Sisters. It seems to me to be the design of Providence still to wait for **a while...**
- 1887** 2/20 The founding of the Sisters in Rome is **not far off** any more...
I am hoping for March.
- 4/13 I regret that I still cannot give a definite word regarding the Sisters' foundation which I will establish here or elsewhere...
- 5/19 I long for the day on which I will be able to give you the good news. May God grant that it is **really close now**.
- 9/6 God grant that the women's branch of our Society may also flourish **soon**.
- 12/19 With God's grace, I intend now to take the matter of the Sisters firmly in hand.
By when can I call you away from there?
- 1888** 7/22 I am informing you now that I intend, with the grace of God, to found the Sisters' Congregation **next autumn**, and that you will probably have to leave Neuwerk in fall.
- 10/12 I hope that the matter [of your most longed for desire] will be settled **very soon**.
- 10/31 **Next month**, that is in November, you must leave (for Rome) to begin at last, with the grace of God, the holy work of the Sisters.
- 11/13 **At last** our hope is being realized [Lüthen for Jordan].
- 11/21 Mother Mary departs for Rome.

Read in their entirety (see *Letter Dialogue*) one finds in these letters so much of Jordan’s affirmation, encouragement and wise counsel. But these excerpts also bristle with another emotion as well. What would we call it? Zeal? Impatience? Enthusiasm? Perhaps the best word to describe Jordan in these letters is “impetuous”—hardly the impression one gets from his photo portraits. His apostolic goal is so clear to him that he can fairly touch it. It will come. Nothing can stop it. It will arrive “soon,” it is “not far off,” “really close now,” just “a little longer.” Once Jordan came to believe that something was truly God’s will, then it was as good as done. God would see it accomplished—somehow. And Jordan would act on this belief, a trait that demanded great patience and trust from those around him, and which got him into serious trouble more than once with higher church authority.

The next chapter, which introduces Fr. Jordan’s other great collaborator, Fr. Lüthen, will explore more fully the key to understanding Mother Mary’s success in collaborating with Fr. Jordan: her complete, selfless obedience. She took fully to heart the admonition of Fr. Otto Hopfenmüller who wrote to her on the eve of her departure for Rome:

Venerable Father wishes you to bring the spirit of the cross. In this spirit you will sacrifice your own will entirely.... For this reason, he has to demand in every respect a complete willingness to submit one’s own will to his will as to the will of God. (November 13, 1888).



Letter Dialogue
by Sr. Miriam Cerletty, SDS

9. ... and I his Eldest Son

It is quite possible that Fr. Jordan knew of Fr. Bernard (later Bonaventure) Lüthen even before they met face to face in Bavaria in 1880. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1872, Lüthen was passed over for a parish assignment due to his weak health, and was assigned instead as castle chaplain to the family of Baron von Brenken in Wewer, near Paderborn. Five years later, with the Baron's children grown and his tutoring responsibilities ended, Lüthen accepted the post of editor of the German language magazine for priests, *Ambrosius*, at Ludwig Auer's Cassianeum in Donauwörth, Bavaria. It is likely that Fr. Jordan first came to know of Lüthen and his spirituality through his writings.

One of Lüthen's major concerns in the *Ambrosius* was to address the holiness of priests. He saw priests as critical to Christ's ongoing work of world salvation. Participating in this great work demanded great personal holiness: "a heart like His."

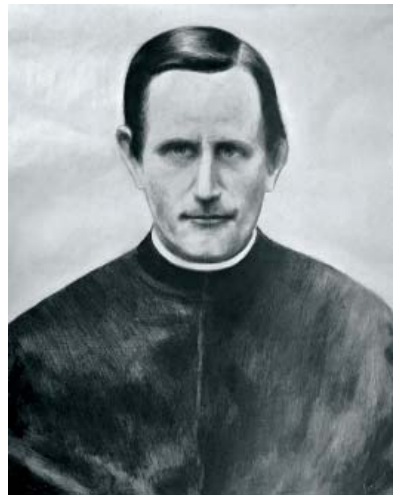
Salvatores mundi. "Saviors of the world." That's what Saint Jerome called us. So, to my [priest] friends, to you Saviors of the world, always live as true copies of the full and lofty ideal of the priesthood. Imitate the first Redeemer and Great Priest who is Jesus Christ! *Tota vita Christi fuit crux et martyrium!* (*Imitation of Christ*). "Christ's entire life was the cross and martyrdom." And so advance to bearing the cross and to the bloodless martyrdom to which the redemption of the world is linked. *Nisi granum frumenti mortuum fuerit, ipsum solum manet*. "Unless the grain of wheat dies, it remains just itself" (Jn 12:24). On to the daily sacrificial life! One cannot grasp deeply enough this concept of the priesthood. You cannot be filled enough with these thoughts. He is the star which must light the priestly career.

Sacrificial life! This term is the touchstone of the true priest. Have you perhaps lost it, my friend? Does it disturb you? Does it make you want to give up? Or does it inspire you? Do you look it straight in the eye with your first voluntary decision [of the day]? Do you increasingly befriend it? Sacrifice or pleasure: that is the divide.

Let us examine ourselves, my friends. What is the path we have walked so far? Have we clearly shown a spirit of sacrifice, day by day? Or are we pulled into diversions, into the company of worldly people, the sort who seeks pleasure in this pleasure-seeking world? Do our hearts crave food and drink, honor and favor, vanity and outer appearances? Or do we really love the silence of the tabernacle, the solitude of studies, the hours dedicated to meditation? Do we sacrifice ourselves to our duty, to the rules of the church, and to the promptings of our good inner spirit? Do we offer ourselves to sinners, to the poor, to the sick, and to the children? (*Ambrosius* 5 (1880) Nr. 1, pp. 1-2)

The greatest impediments to priests achieving such holiness were isolation and burnout under the great ministerial demands and political challenges of the times. But Lüthen had a plan. In addition to his encouraging writings, he harbored the idea of resurrecting a kind of priests' union for mutual support. Nothing concrete ever came of this idea, but a receptive groundwork had clearly been laid for the ideas Jordan would carry with him to their first encounter in Donauwörth.

It is hard to imagine two men more different temperamentally than Jordan and Lüthen. Where one was full of enthusiasm, almost impulsive, the other was cautious; where one was blunt the other was smooth and articulate; where one was a man of broad vision, the other was detail oriented; where one was a night owl, the other an early riser. But as we shall see, where



Father Bonaventure Lüthen

these differences could have kept them from ever working successfully together, they turned out to be wonderfully complementary. Why? In great part because of their shared values.¹⁶ Both were committed to achieving their own personal holiness and to fostering the holiness of priests joined together in some kind of a loose union. (The primary goal of Jordan's institute was always the holiness of its members.) Both appreciated the power of the press to reach out and to transform the world. And, trusting in Divine Providence alone, both men were willing to commit their entire lives to strengthening, defending and spreading the one, true Catholic faith using all the ways and means the love of Christ inspired.

Although their skills and temperaments complemented one another, theirs was never a partnership of equals. Whatever friendly rapport may have developed over their years of joint struggle, their fundamental bond was that of vowed religious obedience. Jordan always remained the Founder and superior, Lüthen the subordinate, even though he was Jordan's senior in age and years of ordination. In a talk given to the Motherhouse community commenting on the importance of unity, Jordan relates the following:

In the first beginnings of the Society a deeply religious man approached me and asked: "Have you acquired at least one man who lives entirely according to your spirit?"

To this I responded, "Yes, I have one who submits himself entirely to me."

And the other said, "Then the Society is now established." And that was true.

And that man is still in [the Society] precisely because he submitted, and he is Fr. Bonaventure [Lüthen] (*Chapter Talks*, 1899/01/13).

Submission. Religious obedience—discerning and surrendering one's own will to the will of God as it comes from one's superior. All strictly

¹⁶ It is interesting to note that much of the spiritual advice attributed to the Founder (e.g., "Nothing flourishes save in the shadow of the cross,") are found years earlier in Lüthen's writings in *Ambrosius!*

interpreted—perhaps even more strictly than in some of the older orders with more lived experience. This was the glue that bound Jordan and Lüthen together. A letter of Fr. Otto Hopfenmüller to Mother Mary quoted earlier gives the clearest example of the way obedience was understood by those in the founding generation:

Venerable Father wishes you to bring the spirit of the cross. In this spirit you will sacrifice your own will entirely; be ready for every kind of difficulty and hardship; and seek nothing but your own immolation and the greater glory of God in working for the salvation of souls.... For this reason, he has to demand in every respect a complete willingness to submit one's own will to his will as to the will of God. (1888/11/13)

The 1886 Rule and Constitutions of the Catholic Teaching Society contain a beautiful articulation of late nineteenth century thought on religious obedience.¹⁷

Obedience was to be *perfect in every way: in understanding, in will and in execution*. Members were to *let themselves be guided by the superior as a pen in the hand of the writer, knowing that through the superior [they were] guided by Divine Providence itself*. They were not to regard *who it is whom they obey, but the One for whose sake they obey, Jesus Christ the Son of God, who became obedient unto death, even death on the cross*. Therefore, obedience was to be *exact and punctual, with a willing and joyful heart, leaving unfinished even a letter [of the alphabet] already begun, just as if God himself had commanded them*. Moreover, *they were to watch over themselves, lest they resist in word or thought*. (*The Latin Rule of 1886*)

That Lüthen internalized this attitude toward obedience we know from his own retreat diary notes:

Perfect obedience is not discriminating: it is for superiors to discern, the subjects obey.

Obedience: greater cheerfulness!

Reverence for the superior out of faith: to see our Lord Jesus Christ in the superior and to act accordingly.

¹⁷Editor's note: Father Dan credits the now deceased Sister Miriam Cerletty, SDS, with alerting him to this passage.

Jesus at the feet of his disciples! I, the disciple at the feet of his representative, the Venerable Founder?!

To practice perfect obedience.

Obedience (in patience, the will of God! In relation to the superior). (AGS 0100/01-G21)

Jordan laid out for Lüthen and Mother Mary a breathtaking vision of the apostolic work to be done: that all people everywhere come to know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom God had sent; that the one true church be strengthened, defended and spread throughout the world; that we achieve our own salvation and the salvation of many souls; and that we enlist the talents of all, clergy and laity, in this one great effort to the glory of God. This remains even today the common mission of all who call themselves Salvatorian. But more specifically, from 1883 forward, Jordan was the Founder of two particular religious communities of men and women called together to carry out this mission. The twin pillars of these institutes were complete obedience and strict poverty undertaken in imitation of the relationship between Christ and his apostles. For the sake of the mission the members profess poverty and surrender everything material, sharing everything and depending completely on the community. In professing obedience they surrender even their own wills to the direction of their religious superiors.

In his Chapter Talk of December 20, 1895, Jordan compares religious life to a construction project where each member contributes to building a great edifice for the glory of God.

I see a building which the Almighty in goodness and mercy has decided to call into existence. This building is the joy of heaven, the joy of angels, the joy of the holy church and the salvation of immortal souls! Many work continuously at this building. It is and should be a mighty fortress where the shipwrecked are rescued. Many work at this fortress. Many artisans sent by God work continually with great sacrifices to form of themselves, so to speak, the adornment of this holy fortress.

If we take a closer look at this sanctuary, this building, we find three different crews at work. One crew works only on

construction, so that the structure becomes beautiful and solid corresponding to its purpose. A second crew is also at work. But in doing one part this crew tears down the other, or it works according to its own ideas so that when the master builder comes he must tear it down again. The third crew is bent on the complete destruction of this fortress. This crew is hell and the world.

I would like to speak of the second crew whose fault is more often carelessness than malice. Still, no one can doubt these people are not true co-workers. Take any example you want! This or that religious works according to his or her own ideas and seems to do splendid work. But in the end it must all be torn down because it doesn't fit the overall plan. (Chapter Talks, 1899/12/20 Part 1)

The point here is that each worker must obediently follow the instructions of the master builder. What good is it if, when one member builds according to his own inclinations, another must come along later to raze and rebuild that section of the house? No. Each at his post, and each with her special talents must obediently follow the instructions of the master builder, even if one cannot fully grasp how her efforts fit with the others'. Such obedience engenders unity, and unity love, so that together the members will carry one another's burdens.

In fact, even before his movement took the form of religious congregations, radical poverty and obedience were always part of Jordan's vision for those who would follow him as members of the First Grade. This is one of the reasons why his first attempts at establishing his three grades for the movement proved so unworkable. For how could a priest incardinated in a particular diocese (even less a bishop or cardinal) pledge his obedience to the General Director of the Society? How could anyone legally or morally responsible for the care of an aging parent or young sibling transfer his/her wealth to the Society? And how could one man, however enthusiastic, competently direct the material and spiritual affairs of so many? Little wonder the ecclesial authorities doubted the wisdom of Jordan's original structures.

In all these things, Lüthen remains the model Salvatorian, never pursuing his own will but always intent on fulfilling God's will as manifested in the will of the Founder. As the first vowed member of a young Society,

and given his many talents, Lüthen was asked to assume many posts over the years. He was asked to work as a fundraiser, editor, general secretary, novice master, and general consultor. Given his temperament he also contributed unofficially as the one who advised, consoled, affirmed, reproved and steadied the young members, both men and women.

What specifically does this key relationship with Lüthen tell us about Jordan? The Founder had unshakeable confidence that he had been called to this great work by God. He never doubted his ability to discern God's will for himself and for his Society. Thus, he could initiate apostolates and give orders with great self-assurance. He turned to others for a very specific type of advice. Since he was sure of what God was asking him to do, he used others to sound out whether in implementing his plans there was anything "sinful" (self-seeking, unkind, proud) in his approach. With his tender conscience, this is what Jordan agonized over the most. But having ascertained that something was truly God's will, and having sought the advice of others to ensure that it was free from sinful motives, then all he sought from others was obedient compliance.

Herein lies the key to Jordan's successful collaboration with Lüthen and Mother Mary: their total obedience and complete submission to his will. It also explains in great part the failure of his efforts to work with Streitel and with some others. Whereas Lüthen and Mother Mary were completely obedient to Jordan throughout the course of their religious lives, not only did Streitel often question the orders of the Founder, she went so far as to tell Jordan (based on her "higher intuition") what God's will for him really was! Given these stark differences, successful collaboration with Streitel was impossible from the start. The next chapter will reveal in greater detail the difficulties that arose later over obedience between Jordan and many of the priests and Brothers within the Society.

What we can say of Jordan's character was that he was uncompromising. Once assured that a particular course of action was the will of God, he did not look to his subordinates for advice or suggestion, but simply for strict implementation of God's will. Only intervention from above, from ecclesial authorities such as the Apostolic Visitor or from a General Chapter, could cause him to temper his initiatives. This was not because he came to perceive his goals as

opposed to will of the church, but because the means he intended to employ in implementing them or his timetable for implementing them, were not yet fully in harmony with those of the church.

One such case in point was the church's wishes concerning the governance of Jordan's congregations, particularly the men's.¹⁸ Shortly after his appointment the Apostolic Visitor, Fr. Antonio, pressed for tempering the almost absolute administrative power of the Founder by a series of measures: appointing a separate house superior in Rome; establishing a formal consulta to work with the Founder; convening a General Chapter; and breaking the Society into somewhat autonomous provinces. The Founder resisted all of these initiatives, seeing them as inopportune. But in the long run all these initiatives were implemented.

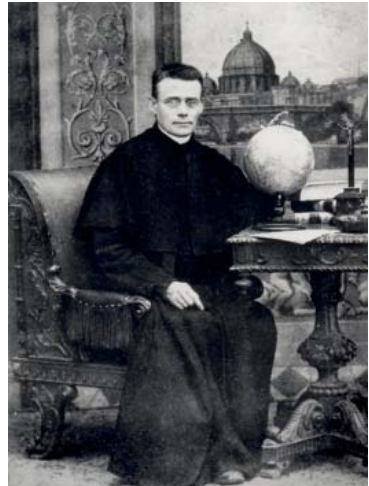
Highlighting Jordan's relationship with Lüthen also reveals what an essentially solitary person Jordan was. Clearly in promoting his vision he had made many contacts. He had many acquaintances and even some mentors, among them Cardinal Massaia and Archbishop Rota. But none of these really rose to the level of friendship or intimacy. This he saved for his relationships with Jesus Christ and his Blessed Mother. It was to them that he turned for strength and solace. Although his entire adult life was spent in groups of one kind or another (gymnasium, university, seminary, language school and later his religious community) Jordan was always *in* the group but never fully *of* the group, as the evangelist St. John would have described the disciple's relationship to the world. Nonetheless, he remained generally upbeat, enthusiastic, unfailingly courteous, and genuinely concerned about the lives of others. Still he remained always the Venerable Father, the Founder and the superior, never a peer or friend. Solitary, yes. He was generally alone with the Alone. But lonely, perhaps not so much. For the loving concern he showed toward others overflowed from the love of God which filled his heart.

¹⁸The new regulations for religious congregations of simple vows published in 1901 by the Congregation for Bishops and Regulars explicitly forbid that female congregations be affiliated with a male institute in a way that the male superior also governs the female institute. *Approbandi Novis Institutis Votorum Simplicium* Article 52

10. Obstacles from Within: Complaints, Attacks, Defections, Depositions

At the center of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan's vision lies the German word "*apostolisch*." Yet this seemingly simple word is open to misinterpretation. In English it is most often rendered as "apostolic" from which the noun "apostolate" derives. But these words are too abstract, too bloodless to capture Jordan's full meaning. A better expression is, "like the apostles." Hence, we might translate his letter to Mother Mary:

Let us strive earnestly to be filled with the spirit of the apostles, to suffer like the apostles, to pray with the spirit of the apostles, to work in the spirit of the apostles. Let us remain intimately united with the Crucified and allow nothing ever to separate us from Him (1884/11/13).



Father Jordan 1890, age 42

Jordan was no exegete, no church historian. His grasp of the lives of the apostles most likely came from the scant accounts found in Sacred Scripture augmented by popular legends and lives of the saints—stories that most likely fanned his boyhood imagination as he read them by firelight in the hut of his Gurtweil neighbor, the good Valentine (see pp. 16-17).

What was Jordan's concept of an apostle? One called by Christ who obediently went anywhere and willingly suffered anything to take the light of the gospel to those living in the shadow of darkness, even to the point

of shedding one's blood. Likewise, the men and women called to Jordan's side were to live and work like apostles. Obedient to the will of the Founder, they were to go anywhere willingly, and to suffer anything for the sake of the gospel. Theirs was to be "apostolic zeal" in the most original sense of the word—the zeal of an apostle.

Almost immediately, and in a very public way, the use of this word to describe his enterprise, the *Apostolische Lehrgesellschaft*, the Apostolic Teaching Society, put Jordan at odds with ecclesiastical authorities. To their way of thinking, the word apostolic referred to the works of the Holy See and was reserved exclusively to refer to the papacy. Needless to say, Jordan's petition to retain the word "apostolic" in the name of his Society was denied. So in October 1882, his endeavor was rechristened the "Catholic Teaching Society." With that, something of vital importance was obscured.¹⁹

Jordan's expectations for those who would join his endeavor were extremely high. Each man or woman in the First Grade (later, all those in religious life) was to be another apostle. Heroism was the standard. Yet from the beginning people were attracted to him for various and sundry reasons, not all of which were apostolic. Many young women were attracted to him and to Streitel for her Olympian embrace of radical poverty. Many poor young men affiliated themselves with the Society primarily as a way of attaining ordination. Early on, as it became increasingly clear that few active priests were willing or able to join his Society, Jordan had begun accepting young men and even boys into his Missionary Institute of Divine Providence in Rome with the idea of training them for ministry. The only requirement seemed to be that they were healthy and of good character. If they could contribute at least something toward their upkeep and tuition, all the better. But not even dire poverty disqualified them.

For those men who stayed in the Society, proper academic formation became a highly contested issue at each of the three General Chapters attended by the Founder (1902, 1908, 1915). Leaving aside the details,

¹⁹In 1893, there was another name change, this time to the Society of the Divine Savior. The new name emphasized the Savior who was being taught rather than the activity of teaching.

the issue boiled down to a conflict between Jordan's desire to get his men out of school and into apostolic work, whereas the scholastics and newly ordained lobbied for more education, particularly the kind of certification (*Arbitur*) that would be recognized by the German Ministry of Education. They argued they were being sent into the field unprepared. Jordan may well have wished to invoke his Founder's privilege to stop the complaints with a call for obedient submission. But he was wise enough to realize this would only suppress the issue without really solving it. Over the years complaints continued to be made, special commissions were formed, and only gradually, as more and more education took place locally within the various provinces, was the matter put to rest.

Another source of conflict arose when Jordan attempted to transfer confreres from one apostolate or one community to another. Some men sincerely felt unequal to what was being demanded of them and demurred. Others were reticent to leave a place they had just built up from nothing. Still others, with zeal often bordering on insubordination, purchased properties or opened parishes without the advanced approval of the Founder (much to the chagrin of the Visitor). Not surprisingly, this chaotic situation led to many defections which were not only painful and demoralizing, but also constrained the Founder from realizing his great apostolic dreams. There were on average ten departures of professed members of the Society each year. From 1886 to 1918, three out of every four professed members abandoned the Society. Twenty died. Of the 330-plus who left, some abandoned religious life entirely, a few joined other orders, and most joined dioceses. One must add to this the loss of the entire first community of Sisters in 1885.

How did Jordan face such losses and defections? Though they wounded him deeply, his attitude was always gentle and understanding. He would have agreed with Lüthen who often remarked, "Human beings are a mystery." He never insisted that a member stay in the Society against his will, and long after they left Jordan often remained on exceptionally friendly terms with those who departed.

One such relationship is highlighted in this letter from Paolo Manna, who left the Society as a scholastic, joined the Milanese Institute for

Foreign Missions (P.I.M.E.) and on his way to his first missionary posting in Burma wrote to Jordan the following:

Most Reverend Father, Milan, August 6, 1895

Before leaving for the missions I have to fulfill a duty and to satisfy a desire. I have to come to Your Reverend Father to receive a blessing and to thank you for the good you did to me during my stay in this Society. That is my duty. The desire then is to be able to celebrate Holy Mass in the chapel of this Institute and to say goodbye to my nephew Frater Vitalis, and to all the confreres whom I know and who are stronger and more fortunate than I and have persevered and will persevere in their holy purpose.

I believed that it was good to inform you with this small letter, as well as to prepare for the celebration of Holy Mass. I will arrive in Rome on the 8th of August at 10:30 a.m. at the central railway station.

Please give me the blessing, forgiving me that much daring.

Your very obedient priest, Paolo Manna,

Seminary of the Foreign Missions (DSS V, p.182).

Not all interactions were so cordial. A most traumatic assault from within came in 1906, in what is generally referred to as the *Presse Affaire*. One deeply disaffected missionary, forcibly returned from India, wrote and published in German tabloids a scathing attack on the Society and on the Founder in particular. Later this critique was publicly seconded by other confreres. In language insulting, exaggerated and cruel, these articles sought, if not the suppression of the Society, at least the ouster of Jordan and his general administration. At the very least young people were to be dissuaded from joining these “dissolute congregations” (both the men’s and the women’s were pilloried). In his life of the Founder, Fr. Pfeiffer summarizes the attacks in this way:

Jordan looks upon himself as a saint, thinks that in all his undertakings he is infallibly guided by the spirit of God, strives at all costs to remain at the head of the Society, does not himself know what he wants; lets his men be quite inadequately educated.... The [foreign] mission taken over by the Society is for Jordan merely a means to an end, namely in order to

make propaganda and to get money and men for his further foundations; new regulations are being constantly introduced; there is a continual driving and rushing from one extreme to the other, a pharisaic sanctimoniousness; a laughable craze for greatness, and blindness to obvious faults; hence, the great number of those who again leave the Society. In spite of all that Jordan is left at his post [since by now he knows how to manipulate the Roman system] (392-393).



1906 news clippings from the German press attacking the Society and the Founder

These attacks paralyzed Jordan, leaving Lüthen along with two other consultants to respond in the press. Privately Jordan made a kind of examination of conscience, reviewing each charge against him in turn and making corrective notes, until the thicket of calumnies became just too dense. As with most media sensations the *Presse Affaire* soon ran its course. The public moved on to the next scandal, and Jordan was left to be consoled by the many church authorities who advised him to close his eyes and ears to everything, since “we are content with you, we are for you.” This he did.

The *Presse Affaire* may have lanced the boil of dissent in the Society but it was far from healed. This became painfully clear at the Second

General Chapter held at the Motherhouse in 1908. “Although at the First General Chapter Jordan had been elected Superior General for life, now to defuse the tense situation and to calm heated natures, Jordan decided to repeat the election” (Węglarz). To the great surprise of many, Jordan could not poll a clear majority of the 30 delegates on the first ballot. Nor on the second. It was only on the third ballot that he was able to garner the 18 votes needed for reelection. Dissatisfied with this result, the dissenters found another way they hoped could bring greater order to the Founder’s lack of support for the India mission and for his seemingly chaotic administration. They drove from office Lüthen along with the three other consultors thought to be of one mind with the Founder. After an intimate partnership of more than 25 years, the loss of Lüthen particularly wounded Jordan.²⁰

The onslaught continued with the discussion of whether or not to subdivide the Society into autonomous provinces. Until now, all 27 communities reported directly to Jordan, and each member wrote directly to him for advice and support. Jordan strongly resisted breaking the Society into provinces. He felt such a move was inopportune. The Society was still too young and both the houses and the individual members still needed the guiding hand of their Founder. After all, he remained their spiritual father. But the Chapter prevailed against him and recommended that seven provinces be established. (The Holy See later reduced this number to four.)

At the Third General Chapter in 1915, held in Switzerland where Jordan and his administration were in exile due to the outbreak of World War I, dissatisfaction with Jordan’s management of the Society again came to the fore. At the urging of his most trusted advisors, Jordan seriously considered whether or not it was God’s will for him to hand over all administrative responsibility to his vicar, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer. And this he did. Although he retained the title of Founder and Superior General, for all practical purposes he had been put out to pasture. His main work for the next three years, until the time of his death, was

²⁰Although on the next day the Chapter voted to bestow on Lüthen “special privileges” and to make him subject directly to the Founder, he eschewed all honors and quietly retreated to the background.

praying for the Society and the Congregation, and encouraging individual members with cards and letters and when they visited him in Freiburg. During their frequent walks Fr. Jordan scrupulously avoided discussing Society business with Fr. Pancrattius. Reading the will of the Chapter, Jordan left him clearly in control.

These obstacles that arose from within the Society greatly jeopardized Jordan's ability to realize his apostolic vision. As it turned out, few members could muster the unwavering zeal of the first apostles and many defected. Of those who stayed many were unwilling to go obediently anywhere and to suffer anything. This became painfully clear in his failed attempts to recruit more members for the Assam Mission in India. This left Jordan stymied and misunderstood. All he could do was to exhort the young confreres. This he did in his weekly Chapter Talks given to the Motherhouse community. There he stressed obedience to superiors, faithfully executing the responsibilities of one's post, unity, love, and bearing one another's burdens.

When it came to the painful decisions issued by the General Chapters at odds with Jordan's will, he was completely submissive. When in session, all administrative offices are suspended, and the Chapter becomes the highest authority in the Society. Simply put: when in session, God spoke through the Chapter. With deep respect for this principle, Jordan tread lightly. He never attempted to force or to manipulate chapter deliberations. He humbly accepted their rulings and executed them quickly and fully.

Certainly one of the most deeply wounding charges made against him during the *Presse Affaire* was his lack of humility. Indeed, he was branded an unbalanced megalomaniac, delusional, a pretentious hypocrite unable to see his own failings. Yet his response to these calumnies, and to the many other obstacles that arose from within his Society, reveals just the opposite. Rather than dismiss the charges made against him he engaged each one in an excruciating examination of conscience. Rather than attack his opponents he suffered their assaults. Rather than intimidate those who chose to leave the Society he respected their freedom. Rather than deride those confreres whose zeal was not equal to his own he accepted their limitations and often brought the most difficult confreres to live with him

in the Motherhouse. Rather than grumble and sow division he humbly accepted even the most difficult decisions of the Chapters.

Many of the most painful obstacles Jordan encountered in his vocation as Founder arose from within his own ranks. Given his tender (some might say overly scrupulous) conscience, he internalized the criticisms of his subordinates and wrestled to discover whatever truth they might contain. What could be more humble than that?

11. The Long Search for Approval 1880-1904

All modern religious congregations start out the same way. A future founder/ress reads the signs of the times and suggests a remedy. Jordan was appalled by the growing materialism and secularism of his day, and by the lack of sound religious instruction. Thus, he thought to bring together men and women, academics, religious and lay to strengthen, defend and spread the Catholic faith at home and abroad, using all the ways and means the love of Christ inspired. In the words of Scripture: “That all might come to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom God has sent” (Jn 17:3).

Once underway, founders seek the approval, advice and protection of their local bishops. In Jordan’s case this bishop was the Cardinal Vicar of Rome.²¹ If an institute could prove it had stable vision, membership and finances, and if it was actually doing the work for which it was called into being, it received approval by that bishop and became an institute of diocesan rite. But local bishops change and bishops can meddle. So it is far better to place one’s institute under the direct care of Rome itself and to become an institute of pontifical rite. This is a simple two-step process. An approved institute of diocesan rite submits a request (*votum*) for approval to the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars (i.e., Religious)²² If the institute has a vigorous, sustainable life of its own, it receives approbation, a *Decretum Laudis*, also known as a *Breve di Lode* (a letter of recommendation). This is then signed by the pope. For

²¹Officially the pope is the Bishop of Rome, but due to his many other responsibilities he entrusts the day-to-day administration of the diocese to a vicar, usually to a cardinal. Jordan worked with four: Cardinals La Valletta, Parocchi, Jacobini and Respighi.

²²Today known as the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life.

Jordan and his Society, this simple process took 30 years, the Sisters' Congregation, 38 years.

Why so long? There are many reasons. First among them was the fact that when it came to Rome and its bureaucratic ways Jordan was not only on unfamiliar ground, he was also a naïf. With his strong ultramontane leaning he never questioned or challenged anything that came from Rome, whether it was from the pope himself, from a Sacred Congregation, or from a lower level functionary. For him the dictum, *Roma locuta, causa finita*, (Rome has spoken, the issue is settled) was simply true. Other troubles arose from the fact he did not always have a clear idea of how to approach or to interpret the Byzantine administration of the Vatican.

Having read the signs of his times and intuited a remedy, Jordan began immediately to canvas for advice and for cooperators. He did this vigorously during his 1880 travels to the Middle East and returned to Rome with a notebook of names of Eastern Rite ecclesiastics who encouraged Jordan and even expressed interest in somehow affiliating with his venture. The most prestigious and supportive of these was Archbishop (later Cardinal) Massaia. Back in Rome, Jordan continued to canvas for support among various cardinals, and with incredible speed secured an audience with Pope Leo XIII just one month after his return to Rome. That private audience, “where his Holiness spoke with me about the undertaking and gave me his blessing” (DSS XIV, 64) Jordan somewhat misinterpreted as a green light for his future plans.

In November 1880 (just three months after returning to Rome from his trip to the Middle East and intent on forming some type of merger with Auer's Cassianum), Jordan submitted a petition to the Cardinal Vicar for diocesan approval. This was denied because his aim was seen as too extensive (a second Catholic Church), lacking clear means and a workable set of statutes. In addition, by March 1882, unidentified voices had already arisen within the Sacred Congregation for Bishops and Regulars over Jordan's use of the word “apostolic” in the name of his undertaking. Despite the 17-point explanation he submitted to the Holy Father through the Cardinal Vicar of Rome, a full investigation was launched. The expert they consulted, Dominican Fr. Raimondo Bianchi, looked carefully into that issue along with all the other aspects of Jordan's plan as they appeared

in his Statutes of 1881 and other writings and interviews. Bianchi's report was by no means favorable. Jordan's tendency to rely on Scriptural and charismatic language in his statutes clashed sharply with Bianchi's more canonical approach.

More troubling to Bianchi was the basic structure Jordan proposed for his Society. To appreciate this, one must recall that from the pontificate of Pius IX onward, church governance was marked by increasing centralization and standardization which climaxed in the promulgation of the 1917 Code of Canon Law. Even by the standards of 1880, Jordan's proposed organization did not fit any of the specific categories sanctioned by the church. His First Grade ("a veritable Noah's ark") was to be comprised of men and women, clergy and lay, bound together by purely private vows. In Bianchi's eyes any such society was clearly already a religious community (a mixed community, which was in any case a canonical impossibility). And even if it had been a possibility, it would still have been required to have statutes, a novitiate, a habit, and all the other trappings of religious life. Yet except for his insistence that the word "Apostolic" in the name of the Society be changed to "Catholic," Bianchi was able to tolerate all these inconsistencies since, as Jordan himself put it, "These are the first outlines, the draft of a great plan" (AGS 0100.01/F4.201). Bianchi submitted his report in June 1882.

Armed with these findings the Cardinal Vicar now posed five leading questions to Jordan, perhaps in the hopes of helping him to achieve a clearer focus on the relationship within and among his three branches.

- What was the actual status of members, their work and their vows?
- How were poverty and obedience to work with members of the diocesan clergy?
- To whom would members give their annual "spiritual accounting"?
- How would poverty and obedience function in a mixed First Grade?
- Wasn't Jordan's actual structure already two religious societies with cooperators?

Finding Jordan's brief responses to these questions unsatisfactory, Jordan's request for approval was again denied with a *dilata* (wait), and the first Visitor, the Theatine Fr. Francesco Cirino, was appointed to assist Jordan in overcoming the defects in his petition. A mere two months later, March 1883, Jordan himself professed his vows as a member of the Society as a religious congregation, *strictu sensu* (strictly speaking).

What should have been a stroll to the finish line, submitting a new request for approval along with statutes modified to fit the requirements of a religious congregation, stalled. Little progress was made between 1883 and 1886 due in great part to public misunderstandings and even some scandal surrounding the Sisters' Congregation. One very promising Sister was killed in a traffic accident and shortly afterwards another Sister attempted suicide. The public turmoil this occasioned along with internal disarray ended with the Streitel Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society being permanently removed from Fr. Jordan's direction in October 1885.

The men's branch also came perilously close to the same fate. Only after a dramatic direct intervention with the Cardinal Vicar by the 12 fully professed members, was Jordan's direction of the Society confirmed and his statutes given episcopal approval *ad experimentum*. It had now become a religious society of diocesan rite comprised of priests and Brothers under simple vows with three attached lay groups: the Academy, a third Order, and the Guardian Angel's Society. Meanwhile, back in Neuwerk, Mother Mary and her one companion now comprised the sole remnant of the Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society.

Much is made about the six months between the Cardinal Vicar's 1882 *dilata* and Jordan's profession of religious vows in March 1883. How and why did Jordan transform his unbounded vision into a more traditional, tightly bound religious congregation? Some have suggested that he was coerced, that Roman officials simply forced him into it. Yet there are no documents from the decisive two months of meetings between Jordan and Cirino either to substantiate or to dismiss this interpretation. From every indication we can say that the plan Jordan had submitted for approval was actually too broad and unfocused ever to gain ecclesial approval. In addition, it left too many practical questions unanswered.

Overall, the approach the church took to Jordan and his idea was very positive. Rather than dismiss him or leave him to flounder, church authorities saw something of great value in the man and his ideas, and at every turn did all they could to assist him. Clearly he needed great help in focusing his vision, finding a suitable canonical form for his undertaking, and implementing all the various facets of a sustainable religious congregation. At each step the church was there to assist him in its uniquely bureaucratic way.

The story of the push for papal approbation is more quickly told. It too is a story of the church's solicitous concern. Between 1892 and 1905, Fr. Jordan filed three requests for the *Decretum Laudis*. Each was met with a *dilata*. There were good and serious reasons for these negative responses: the large number of priests requesting to leave the Society; the unfinished state of his statutes (they lacked any articles on governance); the precarious state of the Society's finances; and the overextension of the members sent to staff the proliferation of houses. Of equal importance, each *dilata* was immediately followed by the Congregation recommending or appointing senior clerics to assist Jordan in repairing these defects. Obviously the church would not have taken such steps if it had not been confident of Jordan's program and his leadership.

Jordan's third request for the *Decretum Laudis*, submitted to the Sacred Congregation in March 1893, was again rejected. But this time, an Apostolic Visitor was appointed, the Carmelite Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli, along with a special consultor/director, Piarist Fr. Aloysius Meddi. Whereas Meddi was appointed to advise the Founder, Intreccialagli wielded almost absolute power to impose any changes he considered of value, or to suppress any of Jordan's initiatives with which he disagreed. Ten years after his appointment, Intreccialagli submitted his own request that the Society be granted the *Decretum Laudis*. Based on his report the decree was granted May 27, 1905. (The Visitor's request to suspend the visitation was, however, not granted.)

For six years after receiving the *Decretum Laudis* nothing much happened. Then in a strange turn of events, in August, 1910, General Treasurer Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, SDS, was approached by Intreccialagli with the

word that now was the time to apply for final approbation. The request was submitted January 25, 1911, and approved March 8, 1911. With this, the Apostolic Visitation also came to an end. The Constitutions gained final approval March 20, 1922, a delay stemming from the promulgation of the new Code of Canon Law in 1917.

The effects of the visitation will be more closely considered in the next chapter. But first a word about the main defects of the Society at this time: defections, incomplete statutes, and overextension. Defections were a real and a very painful dimension of the Society at this time. As Fr. Bernward Meisterjahn points out, between 1892 and 1904, approximately 170 men who had professed vows in the Society either sought dispensation or had died (DSS XVIII, p. 307). In truth, many young men for whom the Society was their only path to ordination had always harbored the intention of finding a welcoming diocese as soon after ordination as possible. Others discovered that the burdens of religious life actually hobbled their apostolic goals. Still others grew frustrated by constant changes in the Society's direction, the imposition of new disciplines (e.g., Choral office), and Jordan's seeming inability to adapt religious discipline to the actual cultural situations in which the far flung confreres found themselves. In response, the Visitor insisted that the Society no longer accept students who could not pay the bulk of their upkeep; that the Society impose a stricter interview process and a more rigorous novitiate; and that the Society more quickly identify and dismiss those who lacked a true religious vocation.

Deficiencies in the Society's statutes are often attributed to Jordan's lack of expertise or interest in canon law. But this hardly seems a fair assessment of someone who by 1894 had reworked his statutes numerous times with expert outside help. A great part of the problem can be traced to the way Jordan perceived statutes as opposed to how the Sacred Congregation viewed them. Using the statutes of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius of Loyola as his guides, Jordan also intended his statutes to inspire and to guide new members. This is one reason he filled his texts with Scripture passages. They covered those practical matters the young Society was actually facing. Insofar as there were as of yet no chapters, no provinces, and no elections, he saw no need for his statutes to look too far into the future and to regulate these hypothetical matters. He felt that his

statutes were good enough for now, good enough for initial approbation. But in the centuries that separated him from Francis and Ignatius the times had greatly changed. What the Sacred Congregation now demanded was as complete a canonical rule as possible, covering every aspect of religious life.

The most common complaint heard both within and outside the Society concerned the overextension of the members: they were not sufficiently trained; they were too young to shoulder the responsibilities of new foundations; too few were sent to succeed at their assigned tasks and they had too few resources. All this was laid at the feet of the Founder. The accepted wisdom, confirmed by the Apostolic Visitor's reports, was that Jordan was a zealous well-meaning religious, but completely lacked the gift of administration. We shall see in the next chapter whether this is an accurate assessment.

What does this long search for ecclesiastical approval reveal about Jordan's character? Docility. Jordan is willing, even eager, to learn and to understand precisely what the church required in his statutes, and what could be done to overcome the defects in his young Society. However disappointing it must have been for Jordan to be told to wait and to wait again, there is never a hint of intransigence or rebellion. And the gulf between his Founder's zeal and mission which he felt was divinely inspired, and the church's insistence on its prerogatives and canonical precision was indeed great. One could almost say that these two approaches were mutually incomprehensible, which makes Jordan's docility all the more remarkable.

12. Bitter Cups

Prior to Vatican II and its call for religious men and women to rediscover their founding impulses, most Salvatorians were content to think that Fr. Jordan had always intended to found the Society of Brothers and Priests and the Congregation of Sisters much as we know them today. But historical research paints a much more complicated picture as the previous chapters illustrate. Needing ecclesial approval, but lacking clear administrative focus, it seems that the church itself suggested that after 1883, Jordan direct his best efforts toward establishing a religious institute of men and a religious institute of women. Only later should he consider developing other adjunct groups (an Academy, the Angel's Sodality and any third order branch of laity). Not only was this structure more compatible with canon law, it would also go a long way toward institutionalizing and thus ensuring the future of Jordan's charism even after his death. Thus, by 1883, establishing and administering religious congregations of men and women became the first and indispensable step towards one day implementing his larger, universal apostolic dream.

Immediately there was a problem: Jordan himself had never been a religious. He had never gone through religious formation, never completed a formal novitiate, never professed public vows, never worn a religious habit, or never lived community life. Like any good diocesan priest he was obedient to his bishop, he celebrated Mass daily, he meditated, he recited the Divine Office, prayed the rosary, sought spiritual direction, made retreats, and recited a regular pattern of prayers and devotions throughout the week. But could that alone be the spiritual basis of a new apostolic religious life?

Initially he was very pleased to have at his side the very experienced Amalia Streitel (later Sr. Francesca of the Cross) to help direct his fledgling Sisters of the Catholic Teaching Society—although serious personal and spiritual differences would lead to a complete and rather scandalous parting of the ways by 1885. Fr. Jordan's right-hand man, Fr. Bonaventure Lüthen, was also a diocesan priest like Jordan. His experience of religious life was limited to brief stays in a few Benedictine monasteries. Therefore, Fr. Jordan's unfamiliarity with the demands of canon law was not the only factor that delayed ecclesial approval. Having no firsthand experience of religious life on which to draw, he was not even sure what to include in his congregations or in their statutes.

After a number of inconclusive soft interventions, the church decided to intervene more forcefully. In July 1884, it appointed a second Apostolic Visitor over the Society, the Italian Carmelite Fr. Antonio Intreccialagli. He was to assist Jordan in three areas: putting his Statutes into proper canonical form, attending to internal discipline within the Society, and providing secure financial footing for the Society's expansion. The powers of the Visitor were extensive. His word was law; his suggestions were actually mandates from which there was no recourse. All assignments and personnel transfers were approved by him; no new foundation or building projects could be undertaken without his approval; no significant amount of money could be spent and no debt incurred without his prior approval. No new community disciplines could be introduced and no exceptions to the common rule could be allowed without his approval. For Jordan as the Founder and Superior General, all major decisions now rested in the hands of another.

The choice of Intreccialagli was in some ways unfortunate. In the first place the personal relationship between the German Founder and the Italian Visitor was never warm. In fact in later years the Visitor much preferred working directly with Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, the General Treasurer, than with Jordan. In addition, Intreccialagli was four years younger than Jordan, and perhaps in seeking to make his own mark in eyes of the Sacred Congregation he was more severe than necessary. It is also possible that he lacked the wisdom conferred by age and experience to direct someone as complex as Jordan. Yet

the greatest drawback to Intreccialagli's appointment was his own Carmelite worldview.

One would be hard pressed to find another religious order whose spirit diverged so greatly from Jordan's own. Where Jordan was apostolic, Carmelites were monastic; where Jordan was innovative, the Carmelites (approved in the thirteenth century) were traditional; where Jordan was universal in his outlook and sought to embrace diversity, the Carmelite Visitor insisted on uniformity. Little wonder the two men often failed to understand or to appreciate each other. From a combination of these differences in outlook and approach arose Intreccialagli's widely accepted evaluation that Fr. Jordan was indeed holy and zealous, but hopeless in administrative matters. And this much is clearly true: Jordan was certainly never a good Carmelite!

When it came to the task of preparing new canonically acceptable statutes for his young Society, things progressed slowly but smoothly. Larger problems arose in the area of religious discipline. Some members complained of encountering too much change—the transformation into a religious society, the introduction of the habit and choral office, and other trappings of religious life. Others complained of not enough change—too few exceptions were allowed for pursuing higher degrees, and too few dispensations were given to adjust community life to local working conditions. And whether the changes were instituted by Jordan or imposed by the Visitor, they all came from Jordan's pen and all were ascribed to him. To many both within and outside the Society Jordan seemed fickle, unsure of what he really wanted, unclear about the very purpose of the Society.

Imposing a Visitor, and thus a second layer of governance above him, severely undercut Jordan's authority. The Visitor often interacted with Jordan as if he were simply another Superior General. He seemed not to appreciate fully Jordan's role as Founder, responsible for implanting his own charism within the members. In addition, the presence of the Visitor opened the door to great mischief. Confreres unsatisfied with Jordan's decisions, or with those of any local superior, felt free to take their complaints directly to the Visitor. Often he did not know the person or the situation well enough to intervene appropriately. Given the

very poor living conditions in the Motherhouse and in other communities, where life was difficult and even food was often scarce, one can only imagine the stream of complaints that came to Fr. Antonio's door. This very awkward administrative situation endured for years.

Yet the greatest challenge was financial. The Visitor concluded that Jordan was simply inept in this area. He had opened too many houses too quickly and without sufficient resources. He had sent men and women into the field without proper preparation. In short, Jordan's zeal had far outstripped his abilities to allocate his resources wisely. Immediately the Visitor felt the need to apply the brakes to Jordan's enthusiasm and to oversee expenditures with an iron fist. Only after working with Fr. Pancratius and applying this discipline for almost twenty years did Rome finally judge that the Society was on firm enough footing to lift the visitation.

Is this appraisal really fair? Was Jordan really just incompetent, or was something else afoot? Here we must again review Jordan's life and accomplishments, and examine more closely the relationship among the pillars of his apostolic spirituality: obedience, poverty, suffering, prayer, and reliance on Divine Providence. These five elements are often treated separately, but to me it seems to make more sense to explore their organic connection.

One of Fr. Jordan's most revealing exhortations was directed to Mother Mary: "Let us strive earnestly to be filled with the spirit of the apostles, to suffer like the apostles, to pray like the apostles, and to work like the apostles" (DSS X, 184). Whatever apostolates Jordan undertook he did so because he firmly believed that just as Jesus had sent his apostles to the ends of the earth, so God was now directing him to go himself or to send his men and women to specific places in the world. If they had little preparation or few resources, neither had the first apostles. Yet they had gone where they were sent and did what they were instructed to do.

Did this often lead to suffering? Yes, certainly—but to apostolic suffering. Finding themselves in situations like the apostles, truly obedient and truly poor, with God as their only recourse, they suffered. But now they had also achieved the conditions necessary for true apostolic prayer: "All my trust is in You, I shall never be put to shame." Only by praying like this,

praying like the apostles, could they hope to be met, healed, and sustained by Divine Providence. For Jordan, Divine Providence was never some happy coincidence, luck, or moment of serendipity. No, the encounter with Divine Providence was always God fulfilling the promises made in Scripture: “Ask and you shall receive,” “Behold I am with you all days.”

Jordan’s confidence in God’s assistance is most clearly expressed in a *Pact*, a document unique in the long history of spirituality. He wrote it in his Spiritual Diary for the first time on November 1, 1891 and again on April 20, 1903.

Pact

between the Almighty and His lowest creature [Jordan],

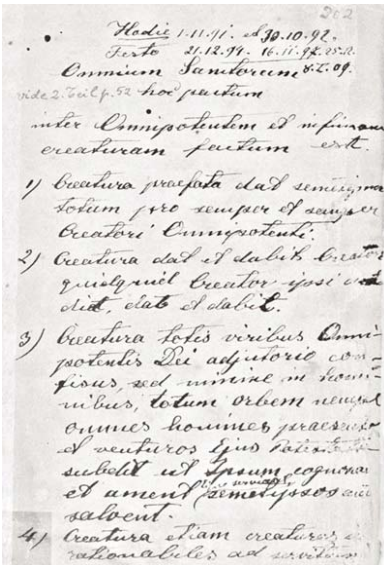
1. Said creature gives himself totally and forever to his almighty Creator.
2. The creature gives and will give to his Creator whatever the Creator has given, gives, and will give to him.
3. The creature, trusting with all his might in the help of the Almighty, and not in man, submits to His reign the whole world, i.e., all persons who now or later live, so that they may know, love, and serve Him, and find salvation for themselves.
4. The creature will also lead even the irrational creatures to the service of the Almighty.

May God who gave the will also give the accomplishment!

II

The creature confidently expects these graces from the Almighty through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

- The Creator will clothe His creature with great sanctity, above all with humility, so that, as far as possible, he may be a useful tool of Divine Providence, may faithfully fulfill his promises, and after this life He [the Creator] will receive him into eternal joys.
- The Creator, in His omnipotence, will assist His creature [Jordan] with a strong arm to accomplish what he [Jordan] has proposed. (SD I/202-204 and II/52-53)



Hodie 1.11.91 et 30.10.92.
 Festo 21.12.91. 16.11.92. 25.12.
 Omnium Sanctorum 8.1.09.
 hoc pactum

inter Omnipotentem et infimam **creaturam** factum est.

- 1) **Creatura** praefata dat semetipsam totum pro semper et semper **Creatori Omnipotenti**.
- 2) **Creatura** dat et dabit **Creatori** quicquid **Creator** ipsi dedit, dat et dabit.
- 3) **Creatura** totis viribus Omnipotentis Dei adiutorio confisus, sed minime in hominibus, totum orbem nempe omnes homines praesentes et venturos Ejus Potestati subdit ut Ipsum cognoscant et ament Eique serviant, semetipsos autem salvent.
- 4) **Creatura** etiam creaturas irrationabiles ad servitium Omnipotentis Dei inducet. Deus qui dedit velle det et adimplere!

The Pact as it appears in the Spiritual Diary I/202-204

At first glance this can feel like a contract between Jordan and God, the creature and his Creator. But this Pact is far from a *quid pro quo*—“if I do this, then that binds you to do that.” For Jordan Part I of this Pact is his unbreakable promise: “I give myself totally and forever ... I give all the Creator has given to me.” In addition he commits himself to work for the salvation of all, so that even irrational creatures will come to serve Him.

Part II of the Pact in no way takes the form of a contract. There is not even the slightest sense of “if I do, then you will....” Without regard to what he had just written in Part I he now says simply: “I confidently expect to be made faithful and useful, and with God’s assistance “to accomplish what he has proposed.”

The Pact is not a gamble, and neither a hope nor a bribe. For Jordan it is a bold statement of fact: I will do this, and I expectantly hope God will do that. This is the foundation of Jordan’s entire spiritual outlook. God has promised. God’s promise never changes, never fails. Therefore, I do trust in God and will never be disappointed. God will rescue me and all my spiritual sons and daughters because God has promised that he would.

In times of greatest trial and suffering, all we need to do is turn to God in prayer, reminding God of God's promise and God will answer. For it is God who has promised.

Jordan's personal experiences early in life clearly reveal this dynamic at work. Though poor, he had obediently pursued what he felt was his priestly calling. At each turn, without resources, without wealthy patrons, he suffered and he prayed. In the end his prayers encountered Divine Providence. Somehow with the help of free tutoring and later with scholarships he entered and passed through gymnasium, through university studies, through St. Peter's Seminary at the height of the *Kulturkampf*, through language studies in Rome, and through his perilous trip through the Middle East.

By the time the Apostolic Visitation was imposed in 1894, having begun with nothing, Jordan's Society numbered 233 members—164 professed (38 priests, 105 theologians and philosophers, 21 Brothers) 33 novices, and 84 aspirants. The Sisters numbered 69 professed members.²³ Salvatorians were working on three continents in more than a dozen communities.

Strict poverty and obedience, suffering, prayer, and complete reliance on Divine Providence had brought Jordan to this point. It had never failed him. All this was the fruit of his supposed "economic mismanagement" which Intreccialagli felt had to be replaced with economic realism. Is it possible that the Visitor, a settled monastic, could not fully grasp or appreciate Fr. Jordan, not only his zeal, but also his radical trust in the Scripture which says, "Sell what you have," and "Ask and you shall receive"?

On May 5, 1899, a full 16 years after the appointment of the first Visitor, Jordan addressed the Motherhouse community in his weekly Friday Chapter Talk:

Still we have the task of becoming like the apostles ... being ready ... "to drink the cup that Our Lord drank." And how should we drink it, where, why, how will we receive it?

... A third cup an apostolic person must drink and which is even much more bitter is the one prepared for him by good people

²³Society numbers from DSSXVI, p. 469 and DSS VII p. 53. Sisters' data from Johan Moris, *Sisters Biographical Data Base*.

when they misunderstand him, his plans and his intentions; when as a result of this people believe they are doing something good when they obstruct [his plans] ... That is the third cup but not yet the most bitter.

The last ... is when even those appointed by God to support and guard you, even the church authorities, lay obstacles in your path. This is the fourth and most bitter! But God can insist that you drink this cup also. (*Chapter Talks* 1899/05/05A)

Like so much that Jordan wrote in his Spiritual Diary and Chapter Talks, there is seldom a clear, unambiguous connection with particular events of the day. Thus we cannot know for certain if the sentiments expressed in this talk corresponded to the visitation, or to some particular difficulty he was facing with the Cardinal Vicar or the Sacred Congregation. It is equally possible that he was giving voice to a feeling that had been growing slowly inside of him for many years. Whatever the case, it is clear that so many of the church's interventions, however well intended, were very painful for Jordan. Here we can see the root of these pains: misunderstandings. Jordan's nineteenth century founder's charism echoed that of his patron St. Francis of Assisi's thirteenth century charism: radical trust in Divine Providence. For Jordan this is promised to those who like the apostles are radically obedient, poor, suffering and deeply prayerful. Just as the church and even his own followers found the Friar of Assisi's message too radical, Jordan's contemporaries in the church and even many within his own Society also found his vision too impractical.

The most vigorously debated question in the history of the Salvatorians is whether the Apostolic Visitation from 1894-1913 saved the Society or sent it off on a course never intended by the Founder. Good arguments can be made for both points of view. Even Fr. Pancratius, in his first history of the Society, admits as much. But even if the question remains unsettled, we can clearly say that the Visitation was a great cross for Jordan and that how he bore that cross reveals a great deal about his character. Thus, the question returns: what does the way in which Jordan faces, endures and overcomes the obstacle of the Apostolic Visitation reveal about his character?

The term that comes to mind is “longsuffering.” Apostolic fire first possessed his heart in 1880, during his trip to the Middle East. Initially his grand vision met with broad acclaim even at the highest levels in the church, east and west. But over the next 25 years, in the process of refining his approach and founding religious congregations that could meet the requirements of canonical approval, misunderstandings grew. Jordan ended up with a Society of men and a Congregation of women that met with ecclesial approbation, but these groups were reduced to a shadow of the universal apostolic movement he had first envisioned. Jordan’s vision had endured a kind of “death by a thousand cuts,” never inflicted through malice but through misunderstanding. Yet the longsuffering Founder endured it all.

A third cup an apostolic person must drink and which is even much more bitter is the one prepared for him by good people when they misunderstand him, his plans and his intentions; when as a result of this people believe they are doing something good when they obstruct them [his plans] ... That is the third cup but not yet the most bitter.

13. Beloved Sons ... True Daughters in Christ

At the height of the twentieth century's controversy surrounding research on the historical Jesus, one New Testament scholar summarized his position by saying that Jesus had intended to establish the Kingdom of God, but ended up with the church. Likewise it might be said that early on Fr. Francis Jordan was intent on establishing a worldwide movement enlisting all the Christian Faithful to strengthen, spread and defend the Catholic Church throughout the world, but that he ended up with the Salvatorians. Clearly after 1883, Jordan's ideas and his energies underwent a significant reorientation. From being the Founder of a movement, he now became the Founder of two religious congregations, one of men and the other of women. In so doing he also became the spiritual father to many sons and daughters.

Some might interpret this change as a step backwards for Jordan or even as a sellout. Was Jordan abandoning his great apostolic idea and settling for establishing just another religious society? This appraisal would be unfair. Clearly moving in this direction would postpone the full realization of his great dream, but to have any chance of bringing it about he felt he needed both the approbation of the church, as well as his shock troops, his "phalanx" of deeply committed, Sisters, priests and Brothers, to ensure that his vision would one day come to pass, with or without him. Hence, putting the grand design into "temporary abeyance" and concentrating instead on establishing his religious congregations was not a sellout. It became Jordan's next necessary step towards someday realizing his final goal.

The impact of this change was profound and immediate in two ways. It radically reoriented Jordan's own personal energies. At home, he had to spend more and more of his time on the work of formation—setting a

high example to the younger members, rousing their spirits and correcting their faults with weekly Chapter Talks, and making himself available to listen to and encourage his subordinates. Beyond the Motherhouse, no longer were his travels aimed primarily at promoting his idea of a tripartite program of laity and clerics, scholars, and average bread winners. With fledgling congregations to run, much of his travel time was now spent on fundraising and community visitations. He would carry this heavy burden for the next 30 years. His last official visitation/vacation occurred in Switzerland in July 1914.

The second great impact, brought about by Jordan's decision to concentrate on building up his religious communities, can be seen in changes made to the types of apostolates he undertook. There is no doubt that Jordan desired that his idea (and thus his congregations) should take hold everywhere in the world. In 1882, Fr. Bianchi called it "virtually a second church" (see p. 90). Salvatorians were never meant exclusively for one nation or one ethnicity. Nor were they to be limited to one type of apostolic activity. Thus in the earliest stages one sees great diversity in Salvatorian apostolates (e.g., the press, foreign missions, catechesis, home nursing, parishes, and reform schools). But as time went on, ever greater emphasis was placed on planting the Society everywhere.

Often it seemed as if the particular apostolic work in which the members engaged was becoming increasingly secondary. The plan was now to get a foothold in various countries (often beginning with a parish) and from that small beginning as soon as possible to establish a plantation (*Pflanzschule*), a seminary to foster more Salvatorian vocations. Thus the emphasis moved from the apostolates as such to the building up of the religious institutes, which in time would grow to undertake important new apostolates. In short, in many places the apostolate had become planting the Society firmly in a particular part of the world.

Concentrating on Jordan's early idea for a three-part movement enlisting religious and laity (incarnated today as the Salvatorian Family), there is a tendency to neglect the unique dimensions of his new religious congregations. Every religious congregation is established for

a clear, if not unique, purpose: for the *finis societatis*. In the case of the Salvatorians the primary goal is and always was the self-sanctification of the members. Its secondary goal is giving glory to God through the work of saving souls. Like most other religious congregations, the core of Jordan's religious communities consisted in the evangelical counsels: poverty, chastity and obedience, and for Salvatorians, their "Fourth Vow" of apostolic service.²⁴

By now it should be clear that whatever is unique in Jordan's vision for his religious congregations is somehow contained in the term "apostolic." It is not what Salvatorians do that essentially sets them apart, but the spirit with which they do it—the spirit of the first apostles. Readiness to go anywhere and to do anything demanded by one's superior is what would set Salvatorians apart. For Salvatorians the three classic vows, most especially poverty and obedience, were interpreted and lived through the lens of the apostolate. Of course this would involve suffering. But the apostles suffered too, even to the point of shedding their blood.

Those who vowed Salvatorian obedience were to hear in the commands of their superiors the voice of the Lord, who sent the Twelve to the far corners of the earth. Just as the apostles went forth unhesitatingly, without sandals, purse or walking stick, so too Salvatorian men and women who vowed poverty and obedience were to undertake their assignments with great zeal even when these had little visible means of support. If the vow of obedience set the direction of his congregations, then poverty was the glue which on a daily basis united the members. It leveled the playing field. No one in Rome lived better than anyone else, whether in India, Poland, Brazil or elsewhere.

Hence, the pillars of Salvatorian religious life for both men and women were poverty and obedience in the service of the apostolate. These two vows played a dual role. They were both the means for self-sanctification and the means by which Salvatorians went about the work of saving souls.

²⁴For Salvatorians this is not a vow in the strict canonical sense; however, the fourth knot on the cincture of the traditional Salvatorian habit has long been understood as a reference to apostolic commitment and was often called the "Fourth Vow." 1994 *Constitution and General Directory of the Society of the Divine Savior*, 1.3.

In fact, many scholastics, many Brothers, and many newly-ordained priests found these apostolic ideals too demanding. Some left the Society while others remained in the Society but lived what Jordan would call lukewarm religious lives. This was a great source of sorrow for the Founder. At one very low point he contemplated abandoning his Society altogether. Later in life he toyed with the idea of founding a completely new society more contemplative and even more apostolic. His idea was to generate a kind of sibling rivalry. Each group would be intent on outdoing the other in piety and service. In both instances he was dissuaded from doing anything so radical.

It is instructive to see how Jordan interacted with members who were wavering in their vocations, with those who abandoned the Society, and with the troublesome or weak members who continued their lives within the Society. Towards the wavering there is never any indication that Jordan ever pressured them to stay. He was saddened when members sought to be dispensed from their vows and looked for a diocese willing to accept them. But he never obstructed their aims or stood in the way of their leaving. When there was a weak or unruly member, or one who simply could not live at peace within apostolic communities, he generally invited such members back to Rome to live in community with him. His attitude might best be summarized in an entry Jordan made in his Spiritual Diary: “Better to die than not to be gentle” (SD II 66).

Above all, Jordan saw himself as father to the many young men and women who had left everything to join his Salvatorian family. How he addressed his correspondence to them was never a mere literary convention. The confreres he generally addressed as *Geliebter Sohn*, Beloved Son, and the Sisters as *Theure Tochter in Christo*, True Daughter in Christ. And he most often signed himself with some form of *Ihr geistl. Vater in Christo*, Your Spiritual Father in Christ, or *Ibrem Sie liebenden g. V.*, Your loving Spiritual Father.

Due to the fatherly care he showed to his subordinates, many of the confreres who left the Society continued to stay in contact with the Founder. It was not unusual for him to receive them at the Motherhouse. They often wrote to him or came personally to thank him for their early formation and for his fatherly care.

Many former confreres once settled in their new dioceses, wrote with suggestions for possible new apostolates for Salvatorian men and women. For example, Fr. Anton Joehren, who had been a member of the Society from 1883-1886, was instrumental in bringing Salvatorians to the Northwest of the United States.²⁵ Of course there were still others who felt so wounded at having had their own personal plans thwarted, and who blamed this on Jordan, that they remained embittered for life. Some complained privately to Vatican officials while others complained more publicly, as in the scandalous *Press Affaire*. All this hurt Jordan very deeply. It was a deep betrayal since he had always acted like a father towards all his spiritual sons and daughters.

Today, talk of such paternalism might feel uncomfortable. We call our superiors by their first names, Joe or Beverly, not Venerable Father or Reverend Mother. Such fictive family relationships, especially in the “developed world,” are seen to impede true autonomous vocational discernment and lasting commitment. No one is encouraged to join religious life primarily because of a close relationship with one’s superiors or fellow religious. One’s vocation must truly be one’s own. Yet in the nineteenth century, commitment was never seen as some form of personal self-actualization. Rather, one’s confidence to join a religious congregation was born from the belief that God spoke through the superior. That is why one submitted one’s entire will to that of one’s spiritual father. Early on, this was the core of the Salvatorian religious vocation.

Jordan’s self-identification as a spiritual father remained a deep and enduring aspect of his character. As for any parent, these relationships were simultaneously sources of great joy and of deep disappointment for him. One can see this playing out in Jordan’s approach to administration, especially in his long resistance to holding a general chapter and to dividing the Society into provinces. Such changes, he argued, would not only run the risk of introducing elements into the Society at odds with the Founder’s vision by imposing a layer of superiors between himself and the individual confreres; it would also weaken his paternal bond.

²⁵See *The Moment of Grace Part I*, Jerome Schommer, SDS, and Daniel Pekarske, SDS, Society of the Divine Savior, Milwaukee pp. 7ff and 41ff for more on Anton Joehren.

14 ... of the Cross

We have attempted to understand the character of Fr. Francis Jordan by examining how he endured, overcame or sometimes submitted to the many obstacles he encountered in attempting to realize the great apostolic dream: “that all may know the Savior.” So far I have concentrated on those obstacles that came to him from without: including childhood poverty, ecclesial misunderstandings, and defections, to name a few. Now I turn to difficulties that arose from within the man himself—the more intimate obstacles of poor health, fears and insecurities.

One of the first difficulties that arises here is the lack of medical precision available to us from those times. In those pre-psychological days almost every condition, physical or mental, was somehow attributed to “weak nerves.” Today any diagnosis would be much more precise and carefully nuanced. As a case in point, at the time of this writing, we lack a definitive diagnosis of Fr. Jordan’s final illness, although in recent years various causes have been suggested. It is against this background that one must tread carefully, reading neither too much nor too little into the various symptoms that Jordan clearly displayed.

Although Jordan grew up in a poor and crowded household, food was plain but sufficient. As a student in primary school Johann Baptist often helped to supplement the family’s table with fish he caught in the nearby Schlucht River, a tributary of the Rhine River. But in his teens, when he undertook serious studies, his eating habits began to change. Food was not provided in school cafeterias; rather he lived from “the kindness of strangers,” surviving on what a landlady *Hausfrau* (housewife) was able to spare. That, coupled with intense studies, made his mother Notburga fear for his health. The situation became critical

in the summer of 1875, when he was forced by exhaustion to cut short his travels canvassing for the Catholic Press. But by now he was saddled with a life-long complaint of poor digestion.

It is unclear whether Jordan's conditions stemmed completely from scarcity of nutritious food, or whether his penitential attitude also contributed to his poor health. It was a commonly accepted spiritual practice of the times to mortify the flesh. Abstaining from tobacco and alcohol, limiting the size of meals, depriving oneself of small pleasures like butter on one's toast or sugar in one's coffee, custody of the eyes, and avoiding secular entertainments were all seen as steps towards quieting the desires of the flesh and achieving self-mastery. There can be little doubt that as a young man who felt destined for the priesthood, Jordan strictly followed the spiritual practices of the day. This may easily have contributed to his weakened physical constitution. Later, as a formator at the Motherhouse in Rome, he would caution his subordinates against undertaking rigorous mortifications that might have serious consequences for their health later in life. He often extends the same caution to himself in his *Spiritual Diary*. This was also a serious source of contention between himself and Amalia Streitl.

From the time of his adolescent conversion in Gurtweil, Jordan displayed a very delicate conscience. He abhorred the very thought of sin and would go to great lengths to ensure that his conscience was clear. It would not be out of place to describe him as scrupulous, a characteristic that grew increasingly pronounced as he aged. Later, this deep seated attitude would hobble his ability to govern his congregations effectively. After having made a decision he would often second guess himself: had he gathered all the pertinent information concerning a candidate; had all the necessary dispensations been granted, etc. Especially difficult for superiors in distant lands was how Jordan would agonize over complaints of injustice or impropriety that came to him in Rome. He would write repeatedly to those superiors involved in such disputes, and insist that they reexamine the situation to ensure that there was nothing unjust or sinful in their handling of the case. In this way, relatively simple complaints would drag on for years. Many superiors grew frustrated, especially when Jordan put more weight on

an outsider's letter of complaint than on the explanations offered by his own men.²⁶ As mentioned previously, in seeking counsel even from Fr. Lüthen, his most trusted consultant, Jordan was seldom looking for advice or suggestions. He felt strongly that his decisions were firmly rooted in the will of God. His main concern, and the reason he turned to others, was to ensure that nothing about the work he intended to undertake had any breath of sin about it—that it was being undertaken for all the right reasons. Only after he had gained this assurance could Jordan proceed with a peaceful conscience.

Jordan was also punctilious in his religious observance, especially of the vow of poverty. He demanded nothing of others that he did not bear himself. The available sources reveal the times, dates, and destinations of his many solo travels, either for fundraising or for community visitations. One must presume that Jordan traveled under the same rules he set for other confreres: always traveling by third class rail, and if it was required to spend the night outside of a community house or monastery, always to take the least expensive lodgings that would not jeopardize the dignity or the modesty required of a priest.

Nineteenth century travel often involved suffering. Rain, wind, snow, and heat were often Fr. Jordan's sole traveling companions. During his August 1896 visit to the state of Wisconsin in the USA (his only trip outside of Europe), Jordan lost the hearing in his right ear most likely due to heat prostration. One can imagine his reticence to excuse himself from wearing the complete Roman habit even in the blistering hot Midwest weather, so as not to give scandal to the confreres by making exceptions for himself.

Constitutionally, Jordan was what we might call today “a night owl.” In this he was the perfect complement to Fr. Lüthen, who was bright in the mornings but who faded by nightfall. Mornings were miserable for Jordan, who simply could not interact with others until he had finished his community prayers, meditation, Mass, thanksgiving and his morning coffee. Still, he arose at 5:00 every morning to show his fidelity to the

²⁶See *The Moment of Grace Part I*, Jerome Schommer, SDS, and Daniel Pekarske, SDS, Society of the Divine Savior, Milwaukee, pp. 72-76, for an example of this in North America.

house horarium, so that no one in the community could cite him as a reason to excuse himself from its relentless demands.

The fierce summer heat of Rome was a burden for Jordan. He sent the scholastics and others away. Personally he also spent weeks during the summer away from the Motherhouse. In 1898, he notes in his diary: *“In the future never stay the whole summer in the Eternal City unless it is absolutely necessary....”* (SD II/14) When attending to correspondence, his scrupulosity often became a great burden to his secretaries. Letters often had to be rewritten by hand or typewriter two or three times if he was unsure whether his thoughts were stated clearly, or whether his tone was sufficiently respectful. One of his secretaries, Father Magnus Wambacher, later recalled his own discomfort on such occasions. He notes that when he lost his patience, the Founder admonished him: *Be patient, anything out of love of God.*²⁷

Sources clearly reveal more than one occasion when Fr. Jordan was completely bedridden at the Motherhouse for up to a month at a time. He was simply incapable of celebrating Mass and even sought a dispensation from reading the daily Breviary. His condition (again described as weak nerves) was often so serious that confreres feared for his life. Thankfully, he always recovered little by little. He was also burdened by various phobias. The most pronounced and best recorded of these was his fear of lightning and thunder.

Like almost all Catholics of the nineteenth century, Jordan had a very literal notion of the devil at work in the world. He often encouraged his subordinates by reminding them that the more Salvatorians succeeded in their work of saving souls, the more they would find themselves attacked by the devil. This preoccupation with the devil would take its most vivid form in 1887, when Brother (later Father) Felix Bucher, SDS, underwent an exorcism at the hands of the Founder and Fr. Bonaventure Lüthen at the Motherhouse in Rome.

The appearance of phobias, compulsions and weaknesses (mental or physical) do not in themselves disqualify anyone from becoming holy. On the contrary, they represent just one more set of crosses to be carried daily with patient resignation, something Jordan did to a heroic degree.

²⁷AGS 0100.01/I 88 and *Positio* vol.I, Rom 2007: Summarium, Paragraph 1230, Nr. 38.

From the very inauguration of his great apostolic enterprise he evaluated himself as “most unacceptable” for the Lord’s service. He was poor, socially awkward, haphazardly educated, politically naïve, lacking great benefactors, and weighed down with his own burden of personal fears and scruples. But “urged forward by the love of Christ” he undertook what he saw as his divinely inspired mission. In so doing he revealed a deep saintly character. As the Preface for the Mass for Martyrs proclaims, in him we see “the glory of God shining through our human weakness.”

15. Conclusion

In choosing for himself the religious name, “Francis Mary of *the Cross*,” the 35-year-old Jordan could not have imagined the many crosses that lay hidden in his future. But spurred on by his zeal for the salvation of souls and his trust in Divine Providence, he often spoke almost prophetically of his willingness to embrace any suffering for the salvation of souls, “even to the shedding of blood.” This short study has tried to highlight important elements of Fr. Jordan’s character by exploring the way he bore the many crosses he would encounter in his mission “that all might come to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom God has sent.” (Jn. 17:3)

In conclusion, what can we gather from this somewhat kaleidoscopic look at Fr. Jordan? What drove him personally turned out to be the same goals he set for his religious congregations: his ardent desire to be holy and his zealous concern for the salvation of souls. He felt both of these desires so intensely that at times they broke out in scruples and impatience. “Oh that I might save all!” (SD II/12) Beginning with the approach he took to his studies, he was always diligent and single-minded, even to the point of exhausting himself.

When it came to his dealings with people possessing greater knowledge or experience, especially with ecclesiastical authorities, he was deferential to the point of submission. He was well aware that in many practical matters he was unschooled, and he became quite docile towards whoever could teach him. When what he learned from others necessitated a change in his earlier plans he was flexible and open to change, never so much to a change in his goals as to a change in the means for reaching those goals.

When it came to subordinates he could be uncompromising. Although he saw himself as their spiritual father, his paternal love was seasoned

more with high expectations than with affection. His goal was complete and immediate religious obedience, not because what he desired was his own will, but because he firmly believed that what he was demanding was God's will. For him the voice of the superior was to be heard and accepted as the voice of God. Even when others failed in their duties, defected from the Society, or pilloried him and his undertakings scurrilously in the public press, he always attempted to respond humbly and with gentleness. With all his heart he attempted to love all the confreres and Sisters, and to bear their burdens as he expected them to bear his.



Father Jordan in Rome, May 1915

Jordan founded his apostolic movement at the age of 33. He died at the age of 70. For the last half of his life he lived in religious community as the Venerable Father and Founder. He was always social but clearly separate. He was in many ways a solitary man, who saved his greatest intimacy for God in prayer. Following his own directive never to trust in mere mortals, he turned to God alone for direction, for strength and for consolation. This was especially the case during the final Apostolic Visitation when it seemed as if he was

being obstructed by good people who misunderstood his founding charism. Recalling that this visitation lasted for almost 20 of his 35 years of religious life, a time during which he was treated more as a somewhat incompetent Superior General than as a Founder endowed with a unique founding charism entrusted to him by God, one must remark at his long-suffering. For never once did he bridle or show disrespect to the church's emissary.

A true saint must not only possess the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love to a heroic degree; such Servants of God must also possess other virtues to a high degree as well. Far from being a grab bag of characteristics, these virtues must reveal themselves harmoniously throughout life. Humble, docile, flexible in the means he chose

yet uncompromising in his demand for strict religious observance, zealous for souls, committed to personal holiness, trusting solely in Divine Providence, single-minded and long suffering—such was the Servant of God, Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, Founder of the Salvatorian Family.

Although he could hardly have envisioned the precise shape his Salvatorian Family would assume in the century since his death, the words of his undated Last Will and Testament are as revelatory of the man and as applicable to his disciples today as ever.

***Last Will and Testament of Our Venerable Father
Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan
Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior***

Greetings and blessings to all the members!

Father Francis of the Cross bequeaths to his spiritual sons in the Society, living now and in the future, this his last will.

1. As a lasting inheritance foster trust in Divine Providence. It will always care for you like a loving mother.
2. I place in your hands the faithful observance of poverty. It is a treasure of great price and a precious pearl for which, God will demand an account from you on the Day of Judgment.
3. Put all your hope and trust in God alone, He will fight for you like a mighty hero.
4. Woe to you if you put your trust in men or riches.
5. Remain sincere and loyal sons of our mother, the holy Roman Church. Teach what she teaches; believe what she believes; condemn what she condemns.
6. Love one another in the Holy Spirit. Let your love be plain to all.
7. You know I have deeply loved you. I want you to love one another.
8. Sanctify yourselves. Grow and spread over the whole earth until the end of time.

In the name of the Lord, AMEN.

(AGS 0100/01/-105. New English Language Edition of the *Spiritual Diary*, p. 346-347.)

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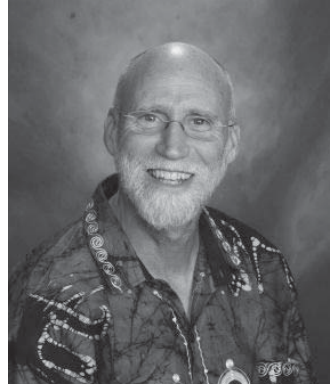
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Abbreviations

AGS	Archivum Generale Salvatorianum, Society of the Divine Savior
APS	Rome Archivum Postulationis Salvatorianum, Society of the Divine Savior, Rome
ASDS	Archivum Historicum, Salvatorianum, Sisters of the Divine Savior, Rome
DSS	Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana, Society of the Divine Savior
SD	Spiritual Diary
SHS	Studia de Historia Salvatoriana, Sisters of the Divine Savior

About the Author

Father Daniel Thomas Pekarske, SDS (1949-2016), was born July 26 in Manitowoc, Wisconsin USA as one of nine children to John and Eunice Pekarske. His Salvatorian journey began as a secondary school student at St. Nazianz Seminary in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin and continued until he entered the Society's novitiate. Then, rather than make his first profession, he opted to leave the Society and join the Peace Corp working in South Korea as a cross-cultural instructor and Hanson's Disease control worker.



Returning to the USA in 1977, he taught at JFK Prep High School (St. Nazianz, WI) and earned Masters Degrees in Philosophy and Theology at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Eventually he went on to earn a Ph.D in Theology from Marquette in 1986. Dan reentered the Society in 1985, completed his studies for priesthood at Washington Theological Union in Washington, DC and was ordained at Mother of Good Counsel Parish, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on July 28, 1990. He later returned to this Salvatorian parish as pastor for six years and finally in his last years as assisting priest

While Fr. Dan excelled as a rigorous scholar, careful researcher and gifted academic author, pastoral work was always a priority in his life. From his early experiences in poor parishes in Eldorado, Texas, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to being a St. Vincent de Paul case worker in Phoenix, Arizona, with elderly and disabled homeless people, he grew into a significant pastoral presence in the lives of many. His honest and

challenging homilies brought new meaning to familiar Scripture passages. He was able to bring laughter to the faces of both teenagers and pre-schoolers but also had an uncanny way of appearing at the bedside of a dangerously ill or dying parishioner/friend at just the right time.

Fr. Dan's Salvatorian contributions are many. From 1999 onward, he served in a variety of formation roles in the USA Province as well as at the Salvatorian Seminary in Morogoro, Tanzania, and Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisconsin. He was a member of the Society's Provincial Council from 2012 until his death in 2016. However, of lasting significance for English speaking Savatorians is the translation work he did on important early historical documents (see below). Fr. Dan was driven to preserve and make available as much early SDS history as possible. He doggedly pursued this goal as a member of both the Society's International Historical Commission and the Joint History and Charism Committee of the Salvatorian Family USA. Rigorous research and careful contextual interpretation guided his own work in this area right up to this, his culminating character study of Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan.

In 2008, Fr. Dan began to experience major health issues associated with bone marrow cancer and kidney failure. He underwent a stem-cell transplant to curb the cancer while also beginning tri-weekly kidney dialysis. While these realities forced him to re-adjust his ministerial activities, they also brought a growing awareness of what was most important in his life. These new insights filled his homilies and imparted a certain urgency to the work he saw yet before him.

In late September 2016, Fr. Dan flew into Milwaukee for meetings of the Provincial Council and the Joint History and Charism Committee. While in the Milwaukee airport on his return trip, he collapsed and remained unresponsive. Taken to a local hospital, he died peacefully on September 27, 2016, due to complications and a compromised immune system.

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