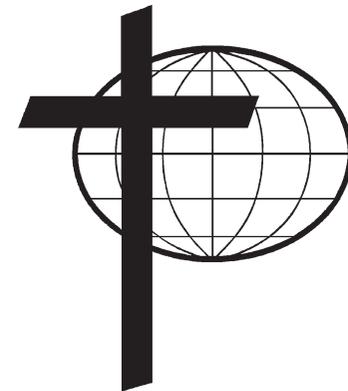


**SALVATORIANS:
DEFENDERS OF LIFE
IN FULLNESS**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

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

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

Prayer of the Salvatorian Family

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CLOSING PRAYER

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

Burning Torch

(Adapted from Fr. Jordan’s Spiritual Diary)

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

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

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

SALVATORIANS: DEFENDERS OF LIFE IN FULLNESS

Instructions:

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

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

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

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 5*

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

*Charter of the Salvatorian Family
Article 8b*

Setting the Context

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

“The Story of Hermann”

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

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

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

"Changing the Face of the Mountain"

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

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

physical and spiritual sorrows.

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

S. Justine Mbuyi Mashila SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 2

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

"Salvatorian Spirituality: A Vast and All Embracing Concept"

F. Arno Boesing SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 1

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

YOUR PERSONAL SALVATION HISTORY

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

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

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

TAKING A STAND FOR LIFE

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

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

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

Spiritual Diary I, 156

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

Quoted by Father Jordan

Spiritual Diary I, 192

Avoid material injustice also as far as possible.

Spiritual Diary III, 15

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

People everywhere are finding life:
salvation!

God’s kingdom is spreading worldwide!

“*Yearning*”

Mother Mary of the Apostles

1875

RELECTIONS BY OTHER SALVATORIANS

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

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

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

S. Carol Leah Thresher SDS

Salvatorian Key Elements

Part 2

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

It is necessary to free people from all their

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

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

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

Changing the Face of the Mountain

Daily Reflections on Visioning for the Future

Leadership Conference of Women Religious USA 2006

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Regarding these stories:

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

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

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

Biblical Roots

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

Daniel 12:3

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 158a)

“This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly,
untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed,
breaking every yoke;
sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the
oppressed and the homeless;
clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your
back on your own.

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

Isaiah 58: 6-9

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

Sirach 4.28

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 154)

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

Parable of the Judgment of the Nations

Matthew 25: 31-46

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

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

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

Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

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

John 10:10

But during the night,

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

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

Acts 5.19-20

(cf. Spiritual Diary I, 158a)

WORDS OF FATHER JORDAN AND MOTHER MARY

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

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

Jordan’s Prayer to God

Spiritual Diary I, 13

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

Jesus Christ Himself.

Spiritual Diary I, 55

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

Spiritual Diary I, 61

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

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

Spiritual Diary I, 137