

motherhouse of the Fathers, written on the statue (in the courtyard near the garage), dedicated in 1925 to the Divine Savior by Fr. Pancratius: «*Ego Deus Tuus Salvator Tuus*» («I am your God and Your Salvation»). It is also interesting to know that the same words are written in Italian on the statue of the Savior on the roof of the Jesuits, which can be clearly read from the terrace of the Motherhouse of the Salvatorian Fathers: «*Io sono la Tua Salvezza*», which means in Latin «*Salus tua ego sum*»; in English «*I am Your Salvation*», and in French «*Je suis Ton Salut*». It would be quite interesting to conduct a deeper historical study.

¹³ Sister Justine MBUYI, *The concept of salvation in the Context of John 17: 3*, in *Salvatorian Key Elements*, Part II, p. 46-53.

¹⁴ SD I, 1.

¹⁵ SD I, 19.

¹⁶ SD I, 61.

¹⁷ SD I, 58.

¹⁸ Today's world has nearly become a sort of village because of globalization and secularization; the latter tries to impose its own values on everyone. At the same time we will observe resistance from nations, peoples, and tribes, in order to save their own local values (localization). Instead of a conflict between those two (globalization & localization), we should engage in an open dialogue between globalization and localization, which we call «glocalization».

¹⁹ Yves CONGAR, *Cette Eglise que j'aime*, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1968, p. 90.

²⁰ Bernard SESBOÛÉ, *N'ayez pas peur! Regards sur l'Eglise et les ministères aujourd'hui*, Desclée de Brouwer, Paris, 1996, p. 14.

²¹ SD II, 63.

²² Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our Founder – a Prophet*, p. 55.

²³ Jozef Lammers, *Elements of the Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 451.

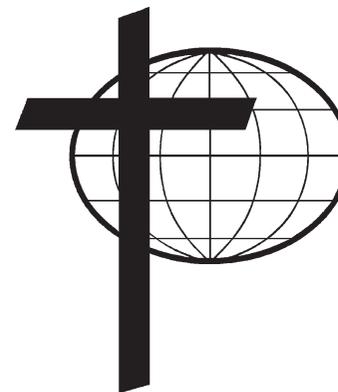
²⁴ Mario AGUDELLA, *Vocation, Salvatorian Key Elements*, Part II, p. 54-58.

²⁵ Antoni KIELBASA, *The Path towards Church Approval*, in *The Salvatorians in History and Today 1881-1981*, p. 109-129.

²⁶ SD I, 84.

²⁷ *Exhortations and Admonitions of Father Francis Jordan*, translated by Father Winfrid HERBST, Third English Edition, 1998, Chap. 30, §4-9, *Apostol*

OUR SALVATORIAN VOCATION



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

addressed to the Ephesians: «Therefore, I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called.» (4: 1).

Closing Prayer:

Our Lord and God,

It is your will that everyone be saved and
that all know the truth.

We beg you to send laborers into your vineyard,
so that they may proclaim your Work courageously,
and that your Word may arrive in all corners of the earth.
Then humankind will know the only true God and Him
Whom he has sent, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

(Footnotes)

¹ The biblical references (in French) are taken from the “*Bible de Jérusalem*”.

² *Spiritual Diary I*, 82.

³ *SDI*, 83.

⁴ Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our Founder – A Prophet*, 1985, p. 86-87.

⁵ *Charter of the Salvatorian Family*, Chapter I, para. 1.

⁶ Willibrord MENKE, *Exhortations and Admonitions of our Ven. Founder Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan*.

⁷ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of Salvatorian Spirituality*, in *The Salvatorians in History and today 1881-1981* (translated from German), Matha Prints, Bangalore, 2008, p. 451. He refers to a talk of our Founder during the General Chapter of January 13, 1899.

⁸ *DSS I*, p. 21.

⁹ Peter VAN MEIJL, *Our Founder - a prophet: “Unser Christsein wird Heute nur in zweierlei bestehen: im Beten und im Tun des Gerechten unter den Menschen. Alles Denken, Reden und Organisieren in den Dingen des Christentums muß neugeboren werden aus diesem Beten und aus diesem Tun”*.

¹⁰ Jozef LAMMERS, *Elements of Salvatorian Spirituality*, p. 443-448.

¹¹ YVES CONGAR, *Vaste monde, ma paroisse*, les Editions du Cerf, Paris, 2001, p. 33 (first edition in 1966).

¹² *About the development of our emblems*, Rome, Salvator Mundi, 1979, p. 18-20. This motto is probably from Fr. Pancratius PFEIFFER because we also find it in the

lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light» (Mt 11: 28-30).

This metaphor reminds us of our Founder's personal life. How many difficulties did he endure from the Church authorities and his own brothers in order to save his lifework? If we study Salvatorian history, we realize that he had to face countless difficulties in all possible dimensions, but he always overcame them with a great Confidence in God.²⁵ The zealous meditation in his Spiritual Diary tells us about all the sufferings of his heart. In February 1878, he wrote: «*Prepare yourself for contradictions of every kind, for whatever physical and spiritual suffering may befall you in carrying out the work; however, trust in God, for whom and through whom alone you should and can accomplish it. Never be cowardly about it, but rather be glad if you may suffer much for your Savior.*».²⁶

D. CONCLUSION

To end, we are proposing two things. On one hand, do a meditative lecture of Mt 5: 16 and compare it to *Exhortations and Admonitions* of our Founder: «*Sic luceat lux vestra coram hominibus*»; «*So let your light shine before men*».²⁷ Our Founder exhorts us to shine by our good example from now onward. Each one of us has to be light, life and salvation for humankind. On the other hand, a meditative thought might help us to discern our particular Salvatorian vocation and try to realize Jesus' dream, i.e.:

- √ To give hope and free people from their chains
- √ To love everyone, independently from his race, language, religion, and culture
- √ To become the way of joy and peace
- √ To struggle against injustice
- √ To give our lives for others
- √ To live the Gospel of salvation and to pay attention to the needy
- √ To become broken bread for others and the wine shed for the salvation of the world
- √ To be salt and light for the world.

To be Salvatorian means to live according to the call of Saint Paul,

OUR SALVATORIAN VOCATION

«Eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God and him whom you have sent, Jesus Christ». (John 17: 3)¹

If God calls a person, it is always for a very precise mission. In the context of our spirituality, this mission is given to a person based on our Salvatorian charism, which makes this vocation given by God visible. Exactly in the light we want to develop the meaning of vocation and charism as a whole, because the one *ipso facto* involves the other. Far from excluding one other, they are complementary to each other.

I. OUR VOCATION

A. INTRODUCTION: SOME KEY ELEMENTS

Each Christian vocation is a free call from God, addressed to a person, whom He entrusts with a precise mission. God first takes the initiative and the called person responds to the call of the *Initiator* of the vocation. The different reports about vocation, which are found in the Holy Scriptures, are tangible proof that God is the *Initiator* of every vocation. The call of Jeremiah is the most explicit example: «*Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you were born, I consecrated you...*»(Jer. 1: 4-6). The Gospel formulates even better this aspect: «*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you...* » (John 15: 16). We would like to underline some aspects of this important theme on vocation:

- √ Christian vocation – in general
- √ The vocation of our Rev. Father Francis Jordan (John 17: 3)
- √ The Salvatorian vocation limited by that of the Founder
- √ Proclamation: what - who?
- √ Jesus as the source of Salvation

I.1.THE SALVATORIAN VOCATION IN THE LIGHT OF OUR FOUNDER

The Salvatorian vocation is located within that of our Venerable Founder, Fr. Francis Jordan. Our vocation should be based on the model of our Founder, who heard God's call, followed Him, and contributed to the building of God's Kingdom in this world. In his Spiritual Diary, he said: *«Put forth every effort and be very zealous to promote the knowledge of truth. Consider these words: 'to enlighten those, who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. In everything, hold strictly to the truth, because God is Truth'»*.² He enriched these words by the founding text of his vocation: *«And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent»* (John 17: 3).³ Thus it is important for the members of the Salvatorian Family to know above all the vocational story of our Venerable Father, as well as to study and meditate on his Spiritual Diary, which truly reflects his vocation – before we talk about our own vocation.

Peter van Meijl said: “In this case, the vocation of our Founder will remain a challenge and a continuous questioning of our Salvatorian vocation.”⁴

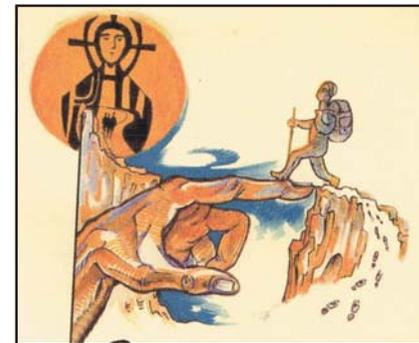
In fact, the first paragraph of Chapter I of the Charter says: *«Moved by a deep experience of God, the situation of the Church, and the reality of his time, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan was filled with an urgent desire that all people know the one true God and experience fullness of life through Jesus the Savior. His vision was to unite all the apostolic forces in the Church to love and proclaim Jesus as the Savior to a world in need of God. He included people from all ages and all walks of life, working together everywhere and by all ways and means.»*⁵

From this paragraph one can deduce the urgency of the Salvatorian vocation, which consists in making God known to the entire world and proclaiming Jesus as the Savior. Furthermore, Eternal Life resides in proclaiming Jesus as the source of salvation and life.

tasks are most important for our Salvatorian vocation in today's world: first of all, to work in order to give life; and secondly to struggle to defend it, denying the culture of death,²⁴ because the Risen Christ is the source of life for Salvatorian apostolic life.

B. BIBLICAL TEXTS

- √ Ex. 3: 1-15: The vocation of Moses and the revelation of the divine Name
- √ Mt 5: 13-16: To be salt and light for the world
- √ John 10: 10: To give life abundantly
- √ John 14: 6: Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life
- √ John 15: 16: God is the first to call us
- √ John 17: 3 : Eternal life is to know God and Jesus, Whom He has sent
- √ 1 Cor 4: 16 : Become disciples of Jesus Christ



C. METAPHOR

Many images can represent the Salvatorian call, which God addresses to us. We thought to illustrate this call by a work made by our former brother, Roumain Inocentiu Fron. We observe a pilgrim who carries a bag with the various burdens of his life. He is walking on God's finger. In the left corner, the Belgian

Salvatorian Family added the Salvatorian emblem of the Christ, probably teaching the following: *«If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and Gospel's will save it»* (Mk: 34-37). The Salvatorian vocation is one of sacrifice, a total giving into the hands of God. The Salvatorian vocational way is a pilgrimage with Jesus, the Master, carrying a light burden, and calling us: *«Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and*

From this perspective, we could conclude saying that the Salvatorian vocation invites every member of the Salvatorian Family to become an «ALTER CHRISTUS, OMNIBUS ET UBIQUE», i.e. to become another Christ, like a good Samaritan for each neighbor. Finally, we are to imitate the prayer of our Venerable Father: «Oh Jesus, Savior of the world, possess me completely! I am yours!»²¹

I.2.3. The vocation to life: Proclaim Jesus as the Source of Life

Who is Jesus Christ for us? What does He mean for me, for you? Our primary apostolate is to make Him known, because: «Eternal Life is that they know You» (John 17: 3). What is His role in the life of the Salvatorian Family?²² All these questions reflect the panorama of the Gospel scenario in which Jesus puts two important questions to His disciples: “Who do men say that I am?” and “But who do you say that I am?” (Mt 16:13-18; Mk 8: 27-28; Lk 9: 18-21). Peter replies for all twelve of them: «You are the Christ, the Son of the living God»

Jesus places Himself before Moses in the continuity of the revelation of God’s name: «I am who I am» (Ex. 3: 15). The reply can be imbedded in this same reality. From God Jesus takes over the word «I am» or God’s name. In the same way as Moses received and transmitted to humankind the revelation of the divine name “I am”, Jesus reveals the divine name of the Father, who transforms men and women into sons and daughters, who are obeying out of love. In the same way as the Hebrew people wanted to live had to obey God’s commandments and hear his voice, also the disciples of Jesus Christ have to hear and obey the words of the Christ, which are «eternal life». As Moses was sent by God to save and guide his people, Jesus Christ was sent by God to give life to humankind. Jesus himself explains the reason for His coming: «I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly» (John 10: 10). This means that Christian vocation in general and the Salvatorian vocation in particular are putting the accent on Jesus as the center and the source of our lives. We have to underline that for the members of the Salvatorian Family “the mystery of salvation” means that God wants to share His own life with us in Jesus Christ.”²³ It is from Him that we got the gift of life, which we, too, have to expand and share. From this point of view, two

I.2. THE INCARNATION OF THE SALVATORIAN VOCATION

I.2.1 Proclamation: Proclaim what? Proclaim whom?

Here it is best to avoid the question which we often ask ourselves: «proclaim what?», and rather ask «proclaim who?». The Good News is not something to proclaim, but someone to proclaim, to live, to witness, to make known in daily life. The Salvatorian vocation does not mean a compilation of a doctrine to know by heart, but a life witness which brings to the world an imitation of Jesus Christ. In order to insist on this basic aspect, our Venerable Father Francis Jordan exhorts his brothers and sisters with the following words: «*May each one of you be able to say, no matter where he may be, what St. Paul said of himself: ‘Imitatores mei estote, sicut et ego Christi’, be imitators of me as I have imitated Christ (1 Cor 4: 16). Thus you will exert great power of attraction. You will arouse vocations; and you will stir the hearts of many to their conversion*».⁶ From now onward, our vocation consists in walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and becoming the most intimate collaborators of His Apostles.

Fr. Jordan, in one of his Talks of 1899, defines the Salvatorian vocation as follows: «*We are imitating Jesus Christ, we are trying to become like the Apostles, we are making efforts to preach the doctrine of the Apostles and to defend it against all errors – just like the Divine Savior and his Apostles did before us; for this reason we are carrying the cross*».⁷ Therefore, Salvatorian life means to follow Jesus Christ and the example of his Apostles. Right from the beginning of his foundation, Jordan continued to repeat: «All those who are collaborating in this work are leading an apostolic life or are imitating the Holy Apostles».⁸

Based on the foregoing, these questions could illuminate our way of imitating Jesus Christ: «How does the imitation of Jesus present itself today to the Salvatorian man or the woman of the 21st century? Are we aware of the call which the Lord is addressing to us? What are we doing with this call? How are we responding to this call? Do we remain deaf? Do we remain mute? Are we indifferent or do we just give up? In conclusion, with reference to the German Protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who inspired Peter

van Meijl, we repeat: «*To be a Christian today means two things only: pray and act like a just man [and woman] in the middle of other men [and women]. If we wish to evoke a renaissance of the idea, the word, the organization of the Christian universe, this will be exclusively based on men [and women] of prayer, who will be men [and women] of justice*».⁸

I.2.2 The Vocation to salvation is

Proclaim Jesus as the Source of Salvation.¹⁰ How?

Without any doubt, the Salvatorian vocation is Christ-centered, because it is from there that we get our identity and our name «Salvatorian», which comes from «*Salvator*» and means Savior. In the Christian faith, this Saviour is named «Emmanuel», «God with us» or «the Word became flesh». Therefore, our Savior is the perfect revelation of God, the Father, because he says: «*He who has seen me has seen the Father*». (John 14: 9b). He is the Savior, but always in intimate and profound relationship with the Father, united with the Holy Spirit. Our call from God is therefore passing through Jesus Christ, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, this call is being realized in His Church and in the world. The Church and the world are no longer considered enemies. The French theologian Yves Congar expresses this in an extraordinary way: «*Fundamentally the Church and the world need each other. For the world the Church means salvation, but for the Church the world means health. Without this, the Church would risk to get lost in its own purity and isolation. Therefore, it is not that the Church and the world are thrown into history side by side, but body by body. All this is not as if two crowned authorities observe each other out of the corner of an eye, from one easy chair to the other, on the same road, in order to get acquainted – but more likely as the Good Samaritan carrying on his shoulders the wounded whom he will never abandon, because he has been sent; or like the swimmer, who tries to rescue a drowning person with whom he has to struggle, but will never let him drown*». ¹¹ On the other hand, the title of this book already reflects the type of relationship which may exist between the Christian and his world, because the author affirms: «*the wide world is the parish of the Christian*». Consequently, it is in the world *hic et nunc* that the message of Jesus as Savior, as Source of Salvation, has to find and give concrete responses to us, the members of the

Salvatorian Family. For this reason God's call transforms into a call for Salvation. Following the example of Jesus «Joshua», we also become bearers of Salvation for all humankind. Salvation is an urgent demand for us Salvatorians.

The Salvatorian vocation is pushing and encouraging us to adopt the logo of the Salvatorian Sisters: «*Salus tua ego sum*».¹² If Jesus is my salvation, He calls me to be also the salvation for humankind. We may put the words of this logo into Jesus' mouth, when He says to Zacharias: «Today, salvation has come to your house»; in other words: «Today I became your salvation ».

In fact, our Founder's concept of «salvation» is at the core of his vocation and mission.¹³ : Salvation of souls, salvation on an individual and communitarian level. At the beginning of his Spiritual Diary in 1875, we discover his typical way to mark a page: «*OAMDGEASA: Omnia ad majorem Dei gloriam et ad Salutem Animarum* ».¹⁴ Some months after his ordination, he writes: «*Build this work for the glory of God and salvation of souls*».¹⁵ Following the example of Jesus, our Founder desired that we become instruments of salvation for all humankind, for all forces possible. Thus we are called to work for salvation as a way to bring fullness to humanity, to liberate from all that reduces men and women to objects to be consumed. The greatest liberation would be to free humankind from the ignorance of God. «*I think*», said F. Jordan, referring to the priest of Ars, «*that most of the people are getting lost because of the lack of instruction*».¹⁶ He even exhorts: «*Insist on the importance in all countries to impart a good education to the youth, able to take profit from it; struggle for this education to take place, even if you have to shed your last drop of blood for the honor of God*».¹⁷ Salvatorian salvation also has to contribute to the promotion of an intercultural dialogue and glocalization¹⁸, because, as Yves Congar affirms: «*The Church exists and lives in true history, which also means that she cannot free herself from time, weight and thickness, which history imposes. It is not because time is passing, it is because the Church bears God's gifts and realizes them.*»¹⁹ Following the opinion of Bernard Sesboüé: «*The Church is always in solidarity with its time and the culture in which she lives*».²⁰