

**The Last Days of Father Jordan<sup>1</sup>**  
**September 8, 1918**  
**A Report Written by Fr. Pancrattius Pfeiffer, SDS**  
**Superior General, 1915-1945**

English Translation by  
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*Remember O Lord what has befallen us.*

*We have become orphans, fatherless (Lament. 5,1,3)*

Beloved Confreres in Christ

What we feared and what we did not want to believe has happened. It has pleased the dear God to call to himself our Venerable Father and Founder. On September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, he entered eternal life at 8:00 p.m. well prepared through his life of virtue and sacrifice and the reception of the sacrament of Anointing.

We are still so shaken with the shattering impressions of this happening, that it is difficult to put on paper a detailed account of our beloved deceased. For now, however, it will suffice to briefly review the events of his last days, so that we may realize what we have lost with our Venerable Father and what lessons we can draw for ourselves from it. "*Audi, fili mi, disciplinam patris tui,*" [Hear, my child, your father's teaching] (Prov. 1:8).

### **Preliminary Remarks**

#### **The Physical Health of the Founder**

For a better understanding of the last days and death of our Venerable Father and Founder, some preliminary remarks will be made for the benefit of those who did not know him personally. In general, our Venerable Father enjoyed good health, even though he was not very robust. As we all well know, he only began his studies when he was already at the age for military duty. Since he was well aware of the initial difficulties confronting him and of the importance of a good start, he applied himself to his studies with a zeal and will power that were out of proportion to his physical strength. The immediate result of this was that he ruined his nerves considerably; this had an extraordinary effect on his work throughout his whole life. Last summer he still told us that, during his years of study, the Vicar General [von Kübel] would occasionally ask him how he was. On hearing his reply, "*I'm all right, except for my nerves...*,"<sup>2</sup> the Vicar was to have replied: "*Bonum ex integra causa, malum ex quocumque defectu.*" [Good comes wholeness, the bad arises from any defect whatsoever]. He was warning him to

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<sup>1</sup> The following text was published in: *Fr. Jordan, his Life and Work. The Final Years: 1908-1918* by Fr. Bernward Meisterjahn SDS. DSS XVIII. Rome 2008. English Edition Milwaukee 2009. Original: Pancrattius Pfeiffer, SDS, in *Salvatorianer-Chronik*, (October 1, 1918) Vol. 3, Nr. 2, p. 179-196; cf. *Last Days of Father Jordan*. Salvatorian Spirituality and Charism Series, No. 10. Society of the Divine Savior, Bangalore, India: 2007. Illustrated.

<sup>2</sup> The original words of Fr. Jordan are italicized throughout.

take care of his nerves. Our Venerable Father had said at different times that his nerves had troubled him more in his youth than in later years.

Another effect of his weakened nerves was that pleasant as well as unpleasant happenings made an excessive impression on him. Our † Father Bonaventura of blessed memory was right when he said: “We can’t imagine what our Venerable Father must suffer.” Expansive by nature, one could say of the Founder: *Bonum est diffusivum sui* [it is the nature of the good to share itself] because, when he received good news, he immediately shared his joy with others. It cost him no small self-conquest, when he experienced that others hardly responded or showed no reaction at all. He loved to make simple comparisons. In fact, he reproached me at times in this regard, and rightly so. He would say: “It is like a child that comes running, full of joy to communicate something, and in response gets a pail of cold water poured over its head.” Similarly, this was also the case with unpleasant news. Everything left a deeper impression on the Founder than it did on others. He regarded it as a favor whenever someone helped to lessen the initial impression made on him. Because he knew full well from experience what it is like to work with weakened nerves, he continued to caution until his last days: “*Do not ruin your nerves.*”

The Founder also suffered much from a kind of bronchitis, brought on by repeated illness, so that he easily caught a cold and was subject to laryngitis. His heart was good and the fact that he reached the age of 70, in spite of all his trials and sufferings, can be attributed to that. His digestive system was so weakened over the decades that he had to be very careful with food. One could foresee that these disturbances could end in serious illness. With the passing of time his eyesight was somewhat weakened, but not too seriously, so that in later years he usually did not need eye glasses. During the summer of 1896 when he was in the United States, he disregarded a cold; this might have resulted in the loss of hearing in his right ear; for the next 22 years he could only hear with his left ear. In normal conversation this went unnoticed. But if his place at table was in the middle, he had a hard time conversing with the person at his right. It was the same when he lay on his left side during his illness. Changes of climate greatly affected his nerves; likewise electrical storms with thunder and lightning also had an impact on him, except in his last years.

### **The Delicate Conscience of the Founder**

This, more or less, was the condition of our Venerable Father’s health when he transferred from Rome to Freiburg, Switzerland, in May 1915 because of the war. To better understand his behavior, one needs to mention that he had an unusually anxious conscience and with his tendency to have second thoughts, he had difficulty in coming to a conclusion. He needed to talk things over with someone; when he found one of the Fathers who was well-educated, conscientious, and had prudent judgment, his preference would be to submit everything to him. He then would share his thoughts with his usual question: “*Can I be quiet about that now?*” He needed only to hear a simple yes or no without receiving reasons. If, instead, he had cause to doubt the person’s maturity of judgment or his conscientiousness, then it was self-understood that he could not rely on him. Each one with whom he conferred had to be careful not to lead the Founder into doubt or anxiety. These circumstances created problems in dealing with and tending to necessary governmental issues. With the passing of the years the situation worsened rather than improved. Our Venerable Father was aware of this.

Before the third General Chapter in Autumn, 1915, he consulted a priest of the Society, who was neither a member of the Generalate nor a delegate to the chapter. Subsequently, he decided to renounce reelection as Superior General. In view of his health, the capitulars accepted his renunciation, as is known. There may have been those who believed that our Venerable Father would not have been able to accept such a change. Such persons really didn't know him. With his temperamental nature and

weakened nerves, he could have made some comments; but it can be said that he not only accepted that trial but everything as coming from the hand of God. It was recognized that his physical strength would gradually fail; but that his strength of soul would fail, or that he might refuse to accept a trial from God and even complain against God – for anyone who knew him, this was totally out of the question. He often said: *“I wasn’t able to do this or that.”* And years ago I responded: “Venerable Father could not only do this or that; Venerable Father was able to do much more.” He then replied: *“Certainly, finally one can do everything, but whether one would break under it is another question.”* Indeed, that was another question, but he knew how to accept all that he had to bear.

### **The Founder’s Sense of Divine Providence and His Gratitude**

I lived at the Motherhouse with him since 1889; other confreres also lived with him for years. Everyone of them without exception would agree that he never, absolutely never, uttered a word against God’s all-wise providence. One could well praise him with the words of Scripture: *“In omnibus his non peccavit labiis suis, neque stultum quid contra Deum locutus est”* (Jb 1,22) [In all of this, he did not sin or charge God with wrong”.] It is natural that a radical change in the administration of the Society would affect him more than anyone else —he, to whom the Society meant everything. This would have been the case even more, if he would have had to live together with the members of the new administration. That was one of the reasons why we transferred to Maggenberg: that he would not feel the change too much.

Fr. Jordan, Stalden 145, Freiburg

*Augusto Pontefice accorda ben di cuore l’implorata benedizione apostolica auspice grazie e conforti celesti.* (The Supreme Pontiff willingly imparts his apostolic blessing as a pledge of heavenly graces and consolation.)

Cardinale Gasparri

Our Venerable Father had a natural need to talk with someone, and it did him good if he could do that with an uninvolved Superior. Last year, referring to such a conversation, he said to me: *“I couldn’t bear not to be in good rapport with you.”* That was a *modus loquendi* [a manner of speaking]. There is no doubt that he would have accepted far more difficult things than this, had God permitted it; for, his closing words were and remained to the end: *“May God’s will be done!”* This phrase reveals his natural disposition and his spontaneous way of thinking. As the newness of this changeover began to wear off, I went to visit him every Sunday and feast day. He always looked forward to this, and we experienced pleasant hours together. He was more united with the Society than anyone else could be; and for this reason he also took greater interest in it than anyone else. In addition to the information he received from the various colleges [houses], he appreciated hearing whatever I told him since the preceding visit. In his anxiety, however, he would set limits: *“Now you’re sure you aren’t telling me anything which I shouldn’t know?”* He meant I could share only certain things that I was responsible for. From his side he gladly shared with me what had been told him here and there. When I was about to leave he used to say: *“You gave me a great deal of joy with your visit.”* Father Hilarius [Gog] said the same: that our Venerable Father always thanked him heartily for each visit.

As long as our Venerable Father was still able to go out, he accompanied me regularly to visit Saint Bartholomew’s Chapel in upper Freiburg. If I remember correctly, as I was saying goodbye after our last walk like this together, at the end he said hesitatingly: *“Couldn’t you go back with me again for a bit?”*

## The Founder's Last Months

Toward the end of March this year he had such severe abdominal pain that there were fears for a serious illness. He became bedridden already by the end of April. After that, he could get up only occasionally and then with great difficulty to celebrate or simply assist at Holy Mass. At times he became weak to the point of fainting. I prepared a request in which we petitioned the Holy Father's apostolic blessing for our cherished patient. On May 27, the following telegram arrived: "Our Venerable Father was greatly comforted by this." In the meantime I sent the following notice to our members: "I regret having to communicate to you that our Venerable Founder's health condition is very serious. His weakness is such that it is a matter of extreme concern to us." —On May 28 he suffered an especially severe attack, causing us to fear heart failure. For this reason, on the advice of the doctor, he received the Last Sacraments. On June 25, he celebrated holy Mass for the last time; however, holy Communion was brought to him daily. —Because of his over-anxiety, the prayer of the Divine Office was hardly less strenuous for him than the celebration of holy Mass. We spoke with the doctor who then forbade him to pray the Office. There was no other way by which we could have quieted his conscience.

## The Founder's Situation in Freiburg

### Situation at our College

Our college at Freiburg was not in a healthy place, and its rooms were far from the best. Br. Rochus [Mertens], our professional male nurse, was away in the Ukraine serving military duty.<sup>3</sup> With Br. Modestus [Widmer] in charge of the kitchen at our house in Freiburg, we could only consider Br. Alipius [Hansknecht] for nursing assistance. It was he, our brother tailor who had never done nursing service and who could be called to military duty at any time, who looked after our Venerable Father. He did this in a very caring way and our Venerable Father was most content. In Rome Br. Alipius had taken care of our Venerable Father's room and Rev. Father trusted him completely. During our visits he used to say: "*Br. Alipius tries very hard.*"<sup>4</sup> I became sick, too, about this time. I went to the doctor at Freiburg, the same one who was looking after our Venerable Father. He gave this order: "Until further notice, lay aside all work and limit your food to milk and cooked fruit!" In view of the great amount of work to be done, that was most unpleasant. When I arrived home I went to our Venerable Father, who was in bed. I told him the results. He was a bit shocked at first; but then he immediately prayed three times: "*Fiat voluntas Dei!*" [May the will of God be done] —On August 16, we were unexpectedly informed by the German Consulate at Bern that Br. Alipius was called to military service and was to leave on August 19. I went to Bern immediately to see if this could be changed. It was out of the question. Where could we find a male nurse in three days? No one was available because of the war. Then we tried everywhere to find a professional nurse, but in vain. Many were in military service. Furthermore, a contagious flu had absorbed the last possibilities. So we received only negative responses.

### Father Victorin as the Founder's Nurse

Father Victorin [Plieger] volunteered his services until a solution could be found. In view of the situation and the care our Venerable Father needed, the doctor advised us to admit him to a sanatorium

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<sup>3</sup> See his account from Dec. 29, 1935 on the Founder in APS, I, No. 3, 1.2.20.

<sup>4</sup> See his account on the Founder in APS, I, No. 3.1.2.45.

or hospital. We tried various places, but found nothing suitable. The better sanitariums lacked male nurses. Without such help, those who knew our Venerable Father realized there was nothing to do. I told him about the negative outcome of our efforts. He responded with his favorite expression: *"The dear Lord will help."* Meanwhile, our Rev. Father had long since become bedridden, and the nursing care was difficult. Fr. Victorin tells about the period during which he was serving as nurse.

"I had the good fortune to look after our Venerable Father for exactly fourteen days. During this period I witnessed how faithful he was to the Constitutions in the smallest details, although he was very sick. He sent me away twice about 5:30 p.m., saying that he had to be alone with the dear God until 7:00 o'clock. This was the time when we used to pray the Breviary together earlier. In his love for poverty, he did not want to use the regular patient tableware, thinking that he didn't need to have everything so comfortable. When changing underclothing, he almost always asked if I had really given him the oldest. He possessed only two treasures: two small old notebooks, probably with resolutions. He said that they contain only things between the dear God and himself and that I should take care that they not fall into any other hands. When I was packing for the hospital at Tafers, he reproached me for wanting to tear up little slips of paper on which he had written some resolution.

Once he forbade me to make his bed. I said that it would do him good to have fresh bedding. He answered that even in sickness one can practice a little mortification. I responded: 'Strictly speaking, when the nurse is in the room, one is to follow his orders.' Our Venerable Father immediately got up and said: *'How good the dear God is!'* Then he waited patiently until the bed was made. On another day he said, *'Oh, if I could only convert the whole world!'* – I never heard him complain about his illness. Only once he remarked: *'Today I had less pain than yesterday.'* One time when he had to get up during the night, he fell lengthwise on the floor. When I hurried to see if he had hurt himself, he said: *'The dear God is so good to me!'* 'You could fall dead,' I said. *'Oh no,'* he responded, *'it wasn't God's will.'* One morning I told him that another priest was not feeling well. It wasn't too much for him to ask me five times that same day how the other priest was, while he told me twice not to forget to wish him well. I told him that he didn't need to say *'May God reward you,'* each time I did something for him, adding that it is only right that we do what we can for our Venerable Father. I also said that I might not have become a priest, were it not for him. He responded: *'All that you are and have comes not from me but from the dear God.'*"

### **Hospitalization at Tafers**

We continued to look for a practical solution so as to be able to offer everything possible to alleviate his suffering. At 11:00 a.m. on August 24, the Superior of the hospital at Tafers came to tell us that she had received a phone call from our college at Freiburg. They had inquired whether our Venerable Father could be admitted there. She had responded that they [the Sisters] would consider it an honor to accept and care for such a distinguished person, but that they had nothing exceptional to offer. She added that the priest wanted me to be informed about this. I did not know the hospital very well, and at first I was a bit perplexed. I remembered having seen poor and elderly people in front of the house several times, so that I had the impression that the hospital was a house for the poor. On the other hand, the Sisters always made the best impression, and I knew that people were very satisfied with them on all scores. I asked the Sister Superior whether they had male nurses. She replied that the Sisters cared for the rooms and food. She went on to say that for male patients they had a male nurse, who did his work well. She was thinking of an appropriate room. It would not be large, but it would be in a good location and have two windows. She added that it would be best if Father General would come on the 27th of the month, rather than on the 26th.

The parish priest of Tafers was not home at the time so I asked his substitute, Fr. Ernst Guth, what he would think about our admitting Venerable Father to this hospital without shocking others. Fr. Guth agreed that this could be done. In fact, he added that another priest had been hospitalized there, and that the nursing care was most satisfactory. The supervisor said the same and recommended it. On the next day, Sunday, I went to our Venerable Father to see what he would say. He had been informed already and said: "*I would rather go tomorrow than the next day.*" I checked this with the Sister Superior and she agreed.

### The Final Days

Monday, August 26, at 7:30 a.m., the next day, we ordered a car to bring our beloved patient to Tafers. I promised to be waiting at Tafers in front of the hospital. The car arrived already at 7:45. Fathers Macarius [Dicks] and Victorin got out, followed by our Venerable Father. He looked very tired and could walk only with great effort. When he saw the elderly people sitting on the benches in front of the house already at this early hour, he said: "*Now I am among the poor.*" I responded: "Yes, there are all kinds of patients here, but everything will go all right." I was afraid that he would be impressed unfavorably and that, consequently, he would suffer. But this was not the case. He liked the old people. We led him up the steps to the entrance and from there to the first room on the right. His room was directly above that. It wasn't quite ready so, having to wait awhile, he sat in an armchair. The first impression was good. I had brought along the newspaper, *Morgenpost*, of the evening before; it carried official news accounts about the war. To distract our Venerable Father, I asked: "Rev. Father, are you interested in anything about the war?" "*Of course,*" he replied, "*what news is there?*" I read the most important items briefly for him. These were the last reports that he heard about the great World War. In the meantime, everything had been prepared. Fr. Victorin then drove back to Freiburg. Fr. Macarius stayed until our Venerable Father was settled in bed. I promised that I would visit him regularly each evening. He agreed so, after saying goodbye, I left. On my way home I stopped to see Dr. Josef Henzen of Tafers and to register the patient. The doctor promised that he would visit our patient soon and that he would get in touch with our Venerable Father's former doctor, Dr. Treyer, by telephone.

What follows here are the notes which I wrote up until our Venerable Father's death.

**26 August** 6:00 p.m. I visited our Venerable Father. He lies in a pure white bed and is full of praise about the good Sisters and the male nurse. He finds everything excellent. He asked me if he could also receive holy Communion daily here. When I inquired about this, the Sister Superior said that the chaplain certainly would gladly bring him holy Communion every day. I mentioned that if he so wished, one of our priests could come each day to celebrate holy Mass. She responded that ordinarily it would not be necessary. Our Venerable Founder had placed his pocket watch on the bedside stand. I asked him if I should buy a clock for him so that he could see the time easier —how late it is. He answered that it wasn't necessary. Today his pocket watch is of no value. He had had it since 1896. I had received it on the day of my first holy Mass and had given it to him after my return to Rome, since his watch wasn't working any more at that time. —Now we have the date of September 8, 1918, written on the face of the watch, with the hands set at 8:02 p.m. Inside the watch we inscribed: "*In uso Rmi nostri Fundatoris 1896-1918.*" [For the use of our Very Reverend Founder 1896-1918] It is a remembrance of our Venerable Father and witnesses to his love for holy poverty.

**27 August** Our Venerable Father was having his meal when I arrived. He said nothing. When I asked him how he was, he answered: "*Better.*" And, whether he was tired? "*Yes!*" I noticed that he did not seem to be fully conscious, and so said nothing. He stopped eating and dozed off. I remained sitting at his bedside for about ten minutes. He was breathing heavily. His features were peaked. Suddenly, he

awoke and without saying a word wanted to get out of bed. I said: “Not yet, Venerable Father; the doctor has forbidden Venerable Father to get out of bed.” He paid no attention to my words, and I had to hold him back with force. Somewhat later, I tried to talk with him again; but he gave no answer. The nursing Sister was concerned about his condition. Gradually, he seemed to be more present. At the end he gave me his blessing but without saying a word. Pastor Johann Zurkinden from Tafers visited him every day.

**28 August** Today again, I couldn’t talk with our Venerable Father. He had just awakened from a little nap and, thinking that it was morning, he was asking if someone would be bringing holy Communion to him soon. I tried to explain this. When I asked him how he was, he answered: “*If it continues to go on like this, things will soon be better.*” —At the end he sent me off with the words: “*May the dear Lord bless you.*” He gave me his blessing and I took his hand. He began repeating his usual ejaculations: “*O Jesus, I love you! O Jesus, I love you!*”

**29 August** 11:30 a.m. Since the Sisters had told me that our Venerable Father is better in the mornings than in the evenings, I decided to try to visit him in the future in the morning. Today, when I came at 11:30 for my usual visit, I found him remarkably stronger. He repeated again and again: “*The dear God is so good.*” It was very hard for me to accept that he had to be in a strange house and to see him being cared for by others rather than by his own. I couldn’t hold back my tears, and I said: “Venerable Father, that things had to come to this!” He looked at me and said: “*Remember this: God’s ways are not our ways, and his thoughts are not our thoughts.*” A little later, he added: “*We need to let ourselves be guided by Providence and take care not to cross it. Many have lost patience and have stopped along the way. A solution will finally be found for those who persevere.*” At the end, he took my hand and thanked me for the visit.

I asked our Venerable Father again whether he liked this place. “*Yes, very much,*” he replied. Then he went on to say: “*The Sisters here are so good. But one can never be sure about them. They look in even during the night to see if everything is all right.*” Meanwhile, the nursing Sister had come in. She told me: “Last night, Venerable Father got out of bed, which is very dangerous for him.” So I said: “Venerable Father, the doctor forbade you to get out of bed.” His response to this was: “*You can forbid for a long time, if one is not aware of what one is doing.*” After Sister left the room he became very anxious; he was wondering now what to do if he gets out of bed without knowing it. I tried to calm his fears but apparently without success, as I remarked: “Venerable Father, you never suffered this before; you are no somn...” Finding the word inappropriate, I stopped. “*You are right,*” he said, and completed the expression: “*no somnambulist,*” which means, no *somno ambulans*, [no sleep walker]. That quieted him, and he never tried again to get up. He asked for Fr. Macarius, his advisor who had helped him resolve various doubts; but he added immediately: “*Only if he can come from Freiburg without neglecting his duty.*”

**30 August** noon, 11:30 a.m. Our Venerable Father, though not fully conscious, remarked: “*I feel much better.*” Gradually, he became more alert and said: “*Give my greetings to all!*” Later he added: “*If you write to America ...*” He couldn’t say more. I asked: “Shall I send greetings and blessings?” He responded: “*Yes.*” After a little while he inquired: “*Is there any news?*” “No,” I said, “we haven’t gotten any letters.” He mentioned that he was very thirsty. I gave him something to drink and repeatedly moistened his lips. He was concerned that his dry mouth would cause him difficulty in consuming the sacred Host at Communion, and that consequently he would fail in due reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. It was difficult to talk him out of this. Finally, he became more quiet. He also thought that he should receive Extreme Unction again, since this illness was different than what he had had earlier. I relieved him of this concern, too, and he was satisfied.

**31 August** noon, 12:00. Our Venerable Father was a bit stronger today. I was feeling quite exhausted and so, only to converse with our Venerable Father, I said: “I worked the whole morning on the next

issue of the *Chronik* and jotted down some thoughts about our studies. The *Chronik* is a lot of work. On the other hand, if I would not write it I would have to write two or three times as many letters.” To this our Venerable Father responded: “*Not three but ten times as many. It was a good idea to begin the Chronik.*” — As usual, I helped our Venerable Father with his meal. He accepted it with appreciation and thanked me much. As I was about to leave, the Sister Superior said to me: “The individual Sisters like to take care of Father General. Each one is happy if she can do something for him. They take the various tasks away from each other. And each one is also hoping for a word from him. I can’t let all of them go to him; he wouldn’t have any more rest. They would also like to know what he is always praying. It seems that he has sensed that, because now he prays more in Latin. The Sisters understand a little here and there. For example, he often uses the word, *peccare* [to sin] — I replied: “Yes, our Venerable Father is a man of prayer. Whether he is praying in Latin because of the Sisters, I cannot say.” Many Latin prayers are very familiar to him, for example the words: *nolo peccare* [I do not want to sin]. Actually, our Venerable Father used this phrase very often. For him it was the cornerstone, and an unshakable one. It was unthinkable for him to do anything that he regarded as impermissible before God. In his apprehension he may have gone too far at times in this and may even have run into opposition with his collaborators. In such cases, not infrequently one heard that final word: “*They can cut my head off.*” This is the key for understanding his saying: *Nolo peccare*. [I do not want to sin]<sup>5</sup>

**1 September** Evening, 6:00. Today is Sunday. This morning it was my turn to help out, so I visited our patient only in the evening. Our Venerable Father was sleeping when I entered the room. He didn’t hear me come in. I left without disturbing him. I met the doctor on the way and I told him that our Venerable Father was sleeping. “That’s the best that he can do,” he said, “he needs rest. There is no hope for recovery. It is only a matter now of easing his suffering”

**2 September** Noon, 11:30 a.m. Our Venerable Father was breathing heavily. I sat at his bedside. The nursing Sister is very sensitive. I don’t have to ask her to leave. She does so as soon as I come, so that I can be alone with our Venerable Father. Then I sit at his bed, and we look at each other without saying a word. Today, after a long silence, I asked: “Venerable Father, is there any desire, any wish, that I could fulfill for you?” “*Oh,*” he responded energetically, with a deeply happy expression and extending his hands as one does when saying, *Dominus vobiscum*. [The Lord be with you] *What should I still desire in this world? I no longer interfere with business matters. Dominus dedit, Dominus abstulit, sit ...*” [The Lord has given, the Lord has taken, blessed be...] He lacked the strength to complete the sentence. His words, “*I no longer interfere with business matters,*” almost hurt me. Our Venerable Founder truly never interfered in my business. In all his dealings with me since I came into office, he was so modest that I often was ashamed. At times, in fact, he said to one or the other: “*I have to talk that over with Very Rev. Fr. Vicar General!*” But then, when we met afterwards, he generally said nothing or, if he did, it was in such a way that one could only be edified.

**3 September** 11:30 a.m. Our Venerable Father was suffering greatly. As for myself, I am feeling like the Sister Superior, who said to me: “I can’t remain at his bedside, because my tears come immediately.” Our Venerable Father was gazing steadily into my eyes. As he noticed how his condition was affecting me, he said: “*The dear God will make everything turn out right. Others will come, they will remember our suffering and continue our work.*” I started to cry. He looked at me for a long time without saying a word. Then, completely unexpectedly, he said: “*I forgive everyone who has ever offended me, and I ask pardon of all whom I have offended.*” With that, I asked pardon from my side.

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<sup>5</sup> Father Jordan often urged his members, and himself in his Spiritual Diary, to sacrifice themselves “*usque ad effusionem sanguinis,*” [all the way to the shedding of one’s blood], that is, martyrdom, rather than sinning.

Later, I heard from the parish priest that he had read something to our Venerable Father that dealt with an incident very similar to this. Our Venerable Father had understood it and had applied it to himself. With his anxious nature some little remark could often cause him to worry, and it would not leave him in peace until he had talked it out with another. This happened frequently, even during recreation. Each time he had to restore peace to his conscience, whether the moment was appropriate or inappropriate. He had to have an answer to his question, "*Can I be quiet [about that]?*" A yes spoken not only once but twice, and even three times, was often not enough for him. Our Venerable Founder would then say: "*You have to have patience with me. The dear God has permitted it this way now*" (that is, his anxiety). At times, too, he could reproach a person who, according to his judgment, did not have sufficient patience.

Finally, I said: "Venerable Father, I have to go now; the Fathers are waiting for me." He sent me off then with his blessing and added: "*Go, duty comes first.*"

**4 September** 11:30 a.m. As usual I was helping our Venerable Father with his meal. He stopped and said: "*I have to be helped like a child.*" Then he added: "*A Domino factum est istud et est...*" [This is done by the Lord and it is...] He could not say more. Frequently, he would suddenly be seized with severe pain. He prayed then: "*My Jesus, I love you!*" and, "*Everything as God wants it!*"

**5 September** Fr. Hilarius, who visited our Venerable Father this morning, was shocked when he saw him. He thinks our Venerable Father will not live to see his name day (Oct. 4). I went to see him as usual at 11:00 o'clock and I saw how he was suffering. When I asked him how he was, he answered: "*A night of suffering and a day of suffering.*" I gave him something to eat. It was very hard for him. The meat, especially, caused him difficulty. "*Is there still meat?*" (on the plate), he asked repeatedly. I replied: "Only a little." He said: "*I can't swallow; it chokes me.*" To my response: "Oh no, just a little courage!" he retorted, "*You have no idea what this is like.*" Finally, he said: "*I can't anymore.*" And he sent me off, saying: "*God bless you and all!*"

**6 September** Fr. Clemens [Sonntag] visited our Venerable Father this morning and reported: "Venerable Father looks very bad. Had he been in a ward, I would not have recognized him among many." I had confessions today and was just about to say goodbye to the parish priest before visiting our Venerable Father, when the Sisters sent a message to come immediately, because the Reverend Father General was very bad. We hurried over at once and found him bathed in cold sweat and trembling in his whole body. He couldn't speak. He was breathing rapidly and looking around anxiously. The Sisters were just about to give him his food when the attack came on. To us it seemed as though he was not fully conscious, and we thought that death was imminent.

I asked: "Venerable Father, shall we pray the prayers for the dying?" "Yes," he answered. The blessed candle was lighted, and I began the prayers. Later, the parish priest relieved me. I then held our Venerable Father's hand. It felt very warm. In the meantime Fathers Hilarius and Clemens, who had been immediately notified, arrived. (A short time before, Fr. Ogerius [Bartsch] had left for Germany, and Fr. Bernardin [Jung] was away serving as military nurse in Munich). A little later, our members from the college at Freiburg arrived. The Sisters had phoned them.

Around 2:00 p.m., he revived a bit. He regained consciousness and the trembling stopped. I decided to move into the hospital and to stay with him. The Sisters thought that was good, despite the fact that each one really wanted to care for him. At the very beginning they had said: "We consider it an honor to receive Father General into our house and to serve him." Now, one could hear them asking among themselves: "Sister, who has won this grace for us?" After our Venerable Father quieted down, I asked his blessing for all his spiritual children and all our benefactors. He gave his blessing but said nothing. Eventually, he dozed a bit but also began to perspire. When he was a little more alert, he prayed: "*God is so good! May his will be done!*" Later, when he was somewhat better, one of the nursing Sisters

asked him for a prayer when he would be in heaven. He answered: “*Sister, it is the mercy of the Lord if we get to heaven, the mercy of the Lord.*” —

I was sitting at his bedside and said: “Venerable Father, today is the name day of Fr. Magnus [Wambacher]; I sent him a greeting from you.” “*And congratulations,*” he added. He went on to say: “*Fr. Magnus is a faithful soul.*” Our Venerable Father always deeply appreciated those who held out with him in difficulties. Around 9:00 p.m., the confessor (who is also the supervisor, Fr. Alois Schuwey) came. Our Venerable Father went to confession. I accompanied Fr. Schuwey out and was talking with him, when a Sister came and said that Rev. Father asked that he return to him for a moment. He went back into the room, but came out again soon after and left. Then I went into the room to our Venerable Father. He was peaceful, but he didn't say anything.

**7 September.** Saturday: I stayed with our Venerable Father through the night. He was perspiring profusely and couldn't close an eye until midnight. Outside it was thundering and lightning, and the rain was beating heavily on the window panes. Our Venerable Father took no notice of it. I raised him a little and gave him a teaspoon of water. The nursing Sister came in around midnight. Our Venerable Father had to take a little something. Turning toward me then, he said: “*I didn't want to disturb you.*” I replied: “But, Venerable Father, I was sitting here in this easy chair; it wouldn't have been any disturbance at all. I was afraid to disturb you, Venerable Father.” After midnight he dozed off. His breathing was rapid. The Sister Superior came about 4:00 in the morning. She wanted to be there for him when needed. She had stayed up the whole night, so as to be at hand in case of emergency. A little later the nursing Sister also came. We thought it best to let our Venerable Father rest and not to give him holy Communion this time.

At 5:30 a.m., I celebrated the Sisters' community Mass. When I returned to our Venerable Father, he was wide awake but was unaware that it was morning and that he had not received Holy Communion. Already some days earlier, the doctor had detected phlegm in his lungs, which would soon cause him difficulty in breathing and bring on the death rattle. Actually, this was the situation now. Our Venerable Father had no sputum; neither did he have the strength to cough it up. The general consultors came early to relieve me. The Sisters had given me a room, just above that of our Venerable Father, so that I could rest a little. Being unable to rest, I returned to our Venerable Father's room and began to write a few lines about him. Reverend Fr. Schuwey had asked me to prepare a statement and some data. The text appeared after the death in the *Freiburger Nachrichten*<sup>6</sup> and was then sent to our individual houses.

While I was sitting at the table writing, our Venerable Father was restless because of the phlegm. When he felt a little better, he looked over at me. He had no idea what I was writing. I remembered that our Venerable Father had celebrated his First Holy Mass in Switzerland, but I had completely forgotten the name of the place. I went over to his bed and said: “Venerable Father, I'm just writing something for the Society. Where did you celebrate your First Holy Mass?” He named the place without the slightest hesitation; but he spoke so softly that I couldn't understand it. He repeated it twice, but in vain. Then I asked: “Is the first letter 'st' or 't'?” Our Venerable Father couldn't respond anymore and I didn't want to insist. So I wrote Stettingen. Since there is no such place and the needed correction was overlooked because of the information that followed, the newspaper corrected it to Wettigen. But the actual name of the place is Döttingen.

During the course of the day, the general consultors and the local priest visited our Venerable Father. So did the Sisters. Everyone noticed that his condition was worsening and the general impression was that death could come at any hour. Our Venerable Father was suffering terribly from thirst, but he could take nothing except a little water and a few drops of wine. Frequently he prayed ejaculatory

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<sup>6</sup> See *Freiburger Nachrichten*, Friday, September 13, 1918.

prayers, even when he was only semi-conscious. As he became more quiet, I tried to have a few words with him. It was almost impossible. – Since a foreign language sometimes impressed him more, I tried in Italian. I took his hand and said: “Venerable Father, *come sta?*” “*Bene,*” he answered immediately. [How are you? Fine.] “*Posso mandare dei saluti ai confratelli italiani?*” [May I send your greetings to our Italian confreres?] “*Tanti, tanti, tanti!*” [Many, many, very many!] he responded. – After a little while he made the remark that he is losing a lot of time in bed. I answered: “Venerable Father, *questo è l’apostolato della sofferenza.*” [This is the apostolate of suffering.] “*Sì, è vero,*” he replied; “*l’apostolato della sofferenza. La sofferenza è una grande cosa.*” [Yes, it is true; the apostolate of suffering. Suffering is a great thing.] —He wanted to say more, but his strength gave out and his words were no longer understandable.

Our house at Freiburg had sent a letter to our Venerable Father addressed to me; it was the last that he was to receive. I recognized the handwriting to be that of Fr. Bartholomaeus [Königsöhr]. Since I could guess the contents of the letter, I opened it. I then said to our Venerable Father: “Rev. Fr. Bartholomaeus thanks our Venerable Father for the good wishes for his name day. Your personal greetings gave him great joy.” It seemed that our Venerable Father understood, so I asked him: “May I send him the blessing which he is asking from you?” —Our Venerable Father didn't answer, but he made a movement with his right hand, as if he wanted to give the blessing. Fr. Bartholomaeus also received the last lines written by our Venerable Founder. That had been on August 18, when I had visited our Venerable Father in Freiburg. At the time I had said: “August 24th is the name day of Fr. Bartholomaeus. May I send him your good wishes?” — “*Of course,*” he had responded, “*but his joy will be greater if I write to him myself.*” I wanted to discourage him because, having been in bed so much, he was very weak. He wouldn't give in. He got up, sat down and wrote on a visiting card, which I first had to search for in the drawer. Since these are the last written words of our Venerable Father, I have reproduced them here as a facsimile.

I wanted to be present personally and at any cost during our Venerable Father's last hours and especially at his departure from this life, so I remained with him again the coming night. His breathing became more difficult and the death rattle increased. On the ceiling over his bed was a loop with a handgrip. This was very convenient for him. As soon as he wanted to change position — and that was the case now almost every five minutes — he could grasp it and with a little support turn himself. It was surprising how much muscle strength he still had. He didn't close an eye through the whole night, but he perspired so profusely that his hair was wet.

I observed that breathing was more difficult for him when he was lying on his back or his right side, whereas he breathed more calmly lying on his left side, although he remained on this side for just a few minutes. This surprised me and I mentioned it to the doctor the next day. He said that possibly the left lung was functioning much better but that, when the patient lay on his left side, he probably felt more constricted, and so could not remain very long in that position.

**8 September, Day of death:** About 5:00 in the morning, I said to our Venerable Father: “Today is the Nativity of Mary. I'm going to celebrate holy Mass now, and I'll make a special memento for you.” With a very weak voice, he responded, “*Yes.*” After Mass the Sisters came as a community to visit him. (He had not been able to receive holy Communion after Mass because of the phlegm.) The Sisters felt sorry that they had been able to do so little for him and had not been permitted to do night duty. They asked for his prayers and for his blessing. Our Venerable Father promised to meet their request. During a High Mass celebrated by Fr. Hilarius [Gog], the parish priest asked all present to pray for our Venerable Founder. These were his words: “We recommend to your prayer the most Reverend Father Jordan, Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior. Reverend Father is in our hospital and is seriously ill.” After Mass, according to its custom of singing for the sick, the choir sang the *Salve Regina* for our Venerable Father. During the course of the morning, the general consultors and I agreed how we would

change off with one another. We made out that Fr. Clemens would stay with our Venerable Father from 1:00-4:00 p.m.; Fr. Hilarius [Gog] from 4:00-6:00 p.m.; and I from 6:00 o'clock on. As for the night, we wanted to see first what our Venerable Father's condition would be like towards evening. If he should improve, Fr. Hilarius should remain with our Venerable Father. The consultants stayed during the afternoon and, because the matter was urgent, they copied the article that had been written the previous day about our Venerable Father.

I went back to Maggenberg and rested from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. I returned at 6:15. Our Venerable Father's breathing was very labored and he really looked gaunt. Fr. Hilarius found his condition very preoccupying. The Sisters were of the same opinion. I decided to stay with him during the night. Fr. Hilarius returned to Maggenberg for the customary prayer and devotions before the Blessed Sacrament in exposition. The doctor came about 7:00 p.m. Our Venerable Father was awake but took absolutely no notice of those present. Up until now, he had always recognized the doctor. The doctor took his pulse and noted that it was stronger than it had been in the morning. He gave him an injection. Our Venerable Father took no notice.

As we stood at the bedside, I asked the doctor: "Will our Venerable Father have much pain?" "No," he answered, "not in this condition." — "But, if he were conscious?" — "Probably, then. If he were conscious and had enough strength to cough up the phlegm, he would be able to breathe better." — I added that I was giving him a teaspoonful of water now and then during the night. He commented: "It's necessary that you be very careful with that, because he could choke." In response to my question about our Venerable Father's condition in general, he said: "Death could come at any hour." He was referring to his lungs, which are full of phlegm — especially, his right lung. After exchanging a few more words, he said goodbye and left. That may have been about 7:30 p.m.

Our Venerable Father was lying on his back, his eyes fixed as it were in the direction of the crucifix. His arms lay limp on the blanket. He was breathing heavily but he neither stirred nor took notice of anything. Not wanting to tire him with my talking, I sat down at a table near the right side of the window and began to write a notice to a newspaper representative about the serious condition of our Venerable Father.

I had just written half of the address when, all of a sudden, our Venerable Father stopped breathing. I looked around. He didn't move. I rushed to his side and called: "Venerable Father!" He began to breathe again but stopped almost immediately. There wasn't the least movement. His fingers and forehead were almost cold. His eyes were still fixed in the direction that they had been. Appalled, I rushed to the Sister Superior's room nearby, calling: "Please come immediately, I think our Venerable Father is dying." She hurried with me into the room and said at first sight: "He is dying." While she was lighting the candle for the dying,

I called our Venerable Father again: "*Venerable Father, what is happening?*" He started to breathe again, but was always looking in the same direction and without making the slightest movement. I gave him absolution and, extremely excited, began to pray the prayers for the departing. (Proficiscere) The other Sisters and the male nurse had arrived in the meantime and knelt around the deathbed. At just about the same moment, the parish priest from Tafers came into the room, still expecting to make his daily evening visit to our Venerable Father. Since it was very difficult for me to lead the prayers, I handed him a second booklet so that he might lead the prayers in German. He began at once. I took hold of our Venerable Father's hands and called again: "Venerable Father!" He took one more breath and was dead. The Sister Superior closed his eyes.

All of this happened within about five minutes. Our Venerable Father's clock indicated two minutes after eight. We could do nothing but weep.

## After His Death

Two Sisters left at once for Maggenberg to call Fathers Hilarius and Clemens. They had just begun their evening recreation. When the doorbell rang, both said at once: “Our Venerable Father is dying!” They went out only to hear the news: “Venerable Father has just died!” Then they hurried to the deathbed. We couldn't say a word. The remains of our spiritual Father said everything. —After we stood there for some time and had knelt and prayed, we left the room so that the body could be prepared to be laid out. We sent the most urgent telegrams, after which our two general consultors returned to Maggenberg.

About 9:30 p.m., the body was laid out, except for the flowers which we didn't have yet. The remains of our Venerable Father were placed in the middle of the room. The male nurse had combed his hair and shaved him. If there were persons who had not known our Venerable Father's condition, they would have thought that he was sleeping and having a beautiful dream. Everything was removed from the room except the crucifix and the two pictures: that of the suffering Savior and the other of the Sorrowful Mother. A priedieu was placed at the right and at the left. The windows were closed. The Sisters gradually withdrew and left me alone with our Venerable Father. Everything was quiet in the house. Outside, it was raining.

Being alone with our Venerable Father, a thousand feelings overcame me. He lay there so tranquilly; a holy peace seemed to be poured over him. Was his soul already at the throne of God? And if the dear God would let him see the Society now, what would he think of it? What would he be thinking about each member? About me? I experienced myself as indescribably poor and miserable. Feeling like I ought to awaken him, I took his hand. How great, how wise his words seemed to me now: *Nolo peccare!* How uniquely fitting was his prayer: *Everything as God wants it!* I thought about his repeated phrase: *Can I be quiet about that now?* It seemed as if he was directing this question to me at the moment, and that I was unable to risk an answer. I reflected on his two spiritual families, on the many dangers within and without. Then, thinking about myself, I said [to him]: “You could be quiet if we would possess your virtues. Venerable Father, pray for us, otherwise you cannot be quiet!”

I celebrated holy Mass for our Venerable Father at 5:30. All the Sisters from the three communities were present; they offered both Mass and Communion for our Venerable Founder. Immediately after, they went out to look for flowers. They felt they should be only white. I accepted that, thinking: *Manibus date lilia plenis* [Give lilies with open hands]. Anyone who knew our Venerable Father would agree that the Sisters' insight was correct. In an hour or so, our Venerable Father's body was eloquently set up amid an array of white flowers with palm branches at his head and on each side. His chalice was in the center at his head, as the photograph shows.

Little by little, hospital patients began to come – mostly the poor, the elderly, invalids leaning on their crutches. One cannot help but recall the Savior's words: “*Voca pauperes, debiles, claudos et caecos et beatus eris*” [Call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, and you shall be blessed] (Lk 14:13). The children from the orphanage also came in groups, accompanied by the Sisters. Barefooted they knelt around the coffin, praying the rosary, and they sprinkled our Venerable Father with holy water. The childlike prayer of the little ones rose up always more urgently and ardently to the Savior:

O dearest Jesus, be so good,  
 And let your very precious blood  
 Flow into that all-purging fire  
 Where poor souls have but one desire:  
 To bear their pain, so as to be  
 In heaven with You eternally!  
 Let the children's prayer not be in vain:

Relieve the poor souls' anguished pain!  
 And take to heaven still today  
 The holy souls for whom we pray!

Those who witnessed this were moved and said to themselves: "It had to happen like this." Actually, everything seemed to have been arranged by Divine Providence in keeping with the spirit of the deceased, and according to the words of the Apostle: "*Quod stultum est Dei, sapientius est hominibus: et quod infirmum est Dei, fortius est hominibus.*" [God's foolishness is wiser than men and God's weakness is stronger than men] (1 Cor. 1:25).

The children were not afraid in front of our Venerable Father. Actually, he seemed to be sleeping rather than dead. They pressed around him and were glad to kneel at his side and be able to pray there. The sister of the inspector took a child in her arms. She gave the child a green twig that had been dipped in the holy water, so that the little one had the joy of sprinkling our Venerable Father's remains. It was all so moving that one could not help but say: "Reverend Father, how great you are in the midst of these little ones!" "*Ex ore infantium et lactentium*" — "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings come the praises of God!" (Ps. 8:2)

The villagers came to pay their respects to the deceased, about whom they had heard. When they saw our Venerable Father, more than one said: "One would think that he is sleeping, not dead." As for ourselves, at intervals we had to interrupt our prayer at the side of our beloved departed. Telegrams had to be sent out, the announcement of his death as well as a report needed to be prepared, and arrangements had to be made for the funeral. For the "*Freiburger Nachrichten*," we prepared the following death notice:

It has pleased the Lord of life and death, in his provident love, to call to himself into eternity today, the feast of the Nativity of Mary, at 8:00 p.m., in the hospital at Tafers, after having received the Last Sacraments and after having been strengthened through a special blessing of the Holy Father, His Servant, our unforgettable spiritual Father and, for many years, our Superior General, Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior and of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior in the 71st year of his self-sacrificing life. The burial will take place on Wednesday, September 11, at 9:00 a.m., in the parish church at Tafers. The Office of the Dead begins at 8:30 a.m. Tafers (Switzerland), September 8, 1918. The Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior presently located in Tafers. R.I.P.

We also wanted to inform our American houses. Since a telegram of even only a few words to Cartagena and to Rio cost more than 80 francs, we refrained and sent one only to St. Nazianz. We also sent a telegram to the Holy Father, who knew our Venerable Founder personally.

In order to give our members the best possible picture of our Venerable Father, we ordered a professional photographer and also a sculptor to take an imprint of his face. The sculptor arrived already during the afternoon of the 9th. But the photographer came only around noon on September 10, almost forty hours after the death of our Venerable Father. His features hadn't changed in the least, not even after the sculptor had taken the imprint, though his left eyebrow suffered a bit. The photograph, according to the general opinion, is exceptionally good; it could not be better and is very realistic. The following remarks are appropriate here.

Our Venerable Father was quite tall and broad-shouldered. His hair was graying at the forehead and was very streaked with gray in the back. Before the body was laid in state, we cut some hair from the back so as to preserve it. In his earlier years our Venerable Father had been thin; in his later years he was rather stout. We regarded that more or less as consequence of his ever increasing sufferings. During his last illness he became very thin. This was less noticeable in his face and more so after his death, which is the case when all pain disappears. Because we wanted to save our Venerable Father's

religious habit, we gave him another one. Unfortunately, it was a bit small; this can be seen on his sleeves in the photograph. Before the final blessing, we replaced his cincture and the rosary on it with another. Moreover, we removed the large stole, which can be seen in the photograph, and exchanged it with a simple white and blue one. We wanted to keep this as a remembrance. We also removed his crucifix, which he had in his hands though this can hardly be seen in the photograph, as well as the rosary which was wrapped about his hands.

Among the visitors, who were praying at our Venerable Father's bier, was a retired lady from the city of Luxemburg. She had a small camera. Thanks to her, despite the unfavorable weather, we have a number of pictures which turned out quite well and from which we have kept a few. With these and others here and there, we can put the whole together in some way. For instance, we have these pictures: our Venerable Father's hospital room; the male nurse standing near the bed in which our Founder died; the furniture exactly as it was placed in the room; the closed casket photographed just an hour before the funeral; the outside of the hospital; the picture of the Sister Superior; of the nurse, Sister Aloisia, and a few patients; and the transport of the coffin.

During the nights of September 9, 10, and 11, the Sisters from the three communities changed off to pray uninterruptedly at the bier of our Venerable Father. They regarded this as an honorable duty. They changed at midnight. No one could keep them from doing this, despite the daily workload with which they carried on. The final blessing of the remains was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on September 10. The coffins (one of zinc and one of oak wood) arrived from Freiburg about 6:30 p.m. In order to be able to transfer the coffin later, we needed an official witness for the final blessing. Mr. Joseph Poffet, a high official in the area to which Tafers belonged as well as a friend and benefactor of our Society, came personally to serve as witness for this function. At 6:30, we lifted our Venerable Father into the zinc coffin within the oak wood one. With that movement, one noticed a slight odor for the first time. The coffins fit perfectly, and our Venerable Father looked just as he did on the bier, except that his arms had to be moved in a little. A last look and the zinc coffin was closed! It was carefully soldered shut; this took about twenty minutes. After a few moments the oak wood coffin was also closed. Present for this were Rev. Fathers Hilarius, Clemens, and myself. We placed on it a wooden cross; the corpus was beautiful and white. At the foot of the cross in the middle of the coffin is a copper plate with the following text:

Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan  
 Superior General  
 Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior  
 and of the Congregation of the  
 Sisters of the Divine Savior  
 faithfully departed in the Lord  
 on the VIII day of September A.D. MCMXVIII  
 at 8:00 p.m. at the age of 70  
 R.I P.

It was raining in the early morning of September 11, but by 8:00 a.m. the rain stopped. We anticipated that only a small number of people would gather, especially from Freiburg which was an hour's walking distance. We were greatly surprised when we learned that the Most Reverend Bishop himself had come with his Vicar General, and that a good friend of our Venerable Father was among the laity, namely, State Councilor Python and his wife. The supervisor, Rev. Schuwey, as the master of ceremonies, directed the service. Only our members living in Switzerland could participate; those from other countries could not come, because the borders were closed due to the war. Fr. Gualbert [Burkard] was unable to be present because of sickness. Frater Bonaventura [Schweizer], who was serving as military internist, did not get the needed permission on time, but he had been there on the 7th.

About 9:00 a.m., the parish priest and a number of other priests gathered with the altar boys in front of the hospital to accompany the body. Eight members of the Society carried the coffin: Fathers Hilarius, Clemens, Alcuin [Breuer], Dominicus [Dauderer], Macarius [Dicks], Bertinus [Franz], Victorin, and Brother Masseus [Schoirer]. Brother Modestus and I followed the coffin. Three orphan boys carried garlands. Due to the closed borders, none of our Sisters could come. The Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul from here were present in full number and had a well-merited place of honor on the women's side. School boys and orphans lined both sides of the street from the hospital to the church. Despite the very misty weather, one of Magistrate Joseph Poffet's sons tried to take a picture of the procession.

The photograph shows the choir in the foreground. Between the rows of children marched the singers, a number of priests, the parish priest and the altar boys, the members of the Society with the coffin, Mr. Python with Magistrate Poffet next to him, and then the Sisters, followed by other mourners. Among these were hospital patients, some of whom were walking with difficulty, leaning on their canes. The cemetery can be seen on the right of the photograph, and Tafer's school on the left.

We received permission to bury our Venerable Father in the church at Tafers. The grave is located in the middle aisle of the church. A picture was taken during the celebration of the seventh day (*dies septimus*). I was kneeling at the grave with the parish priest, four Sisters, and three orphans who had brought flowers. Fr. Schuwey wrote a report for the "*Freiburger Nachrichten*" in which he described the funeral.

**Newspaper Report:** "*At the Grave of the Founder of a Religious Society*"

Last Wednesday in the quiet little village of Tafers, a rather unusual event took place. Saint Martin looked down from the altarpiece, draped in black. Black draping also hung at the windows, dimming the bright daylight. Black is the color of mourning.

Two religious families mourned at the grave of their common spiritual Father, the Very Reverend Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, their Founder. These two families are the Society of the Divine Savior and the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior. Two weeks ago their Venerable Father had been transferred from Freiburg to the hospital at Tafers, where he died resigned on September 8. Prolonged suffering consumed all his strength.

Although far from the Motherhouse (in Rome) and cut off from many of his own because of strict border closures due to the war, the dear God still provided a beautiful funeral procession for his faithful servant.

Between two rows of children the funeral procession, taking the long way, slowly proceeded from the hospital to the parish church. The very Reverend Pastor, A. Riedo, from Giffers, as subdeacon carrying the cross, was in the lead. He was followed by the St. Cecilia Association of the village, and a large number of priests from Düringen, Heitenried, Alterswil, Schmitten, St. Antoni, Plaffeien, Rechthalten, Giffers, St. Wolfgang and Gauglera. Freiburg had also sent a large representation in spite of the bad weather. The Capuchin and Dominican priests were represented. No one could be there from the Franciscan Monastery, since this was the time of their annual retreat. Representatives from the St. Nicholas Cathedral chapter were: the most Rev. Propst Esseiva, Canons Schönenberger and L. Wäber, as well as Canon R. de Weck from the Church of Our Blessed Lady. The Most Reverend Prelate and Canon Johannes Evangelist Kleiser, a dear friend for years, wanted to pay his last respects to the deceased. The celebrant, Pastor Zurkinden, with the deacon, the Very Reverend Fr. Schönenberger, walked at the head before the coffin. Following them were the spiritual sons carrying the precious remains of their unforgettable Founder and Superior General of many years in a double coffin of zinc and wood. Because of the atrocious war, only eight priests and two brothers of the Society were able to

accompany their Founder to the grave. No one from the Congregation of the Sisters could attend because they have no house in Switzerland.

Following the coffin were the elderly State Councilor, Mr. Python, accompanied by Mr. J. Poffet, a high official of the area, and representatives of the community and parish council of Tafers. The Sisters of Saint Vincent de Paul, who had cared for the distinguished patient with dedication and love for a short time, considered it an honor to accompany their saintly guest in full number, about thirty of them, to the grave.

The procession proceeded to the church where the diocesan Bishop, Placidus Colliard, and his vicar, the Very Rev. L. Ems were waiting. Many parishioners and friends of the Society had already taken their places in the church. At this point, it is fitting to mention Dr. J. Henzen, who had been the attending physician. Since the clergy had already prayed the Office of the Dead a half hour before the transfer of the body, the funeral Mass began immediately. The deceased lay in state amid burning candles and bouquets of flowers. The Cecilia Association of Tafers felt honored to contribute to the funeral services by singing the Requiem in several voices. After the Mass the parish priest, speaking on behalf of the clergy and of the parish of Tafers, expressed to the members of the Society their condolences and participation in the loss. He stressed the trust in God which had enabled the beloved deceased confidently to overcome all difficulties encountered in his good works. Having never failed in trust in God, he himself could still see the success that the Society had achieved 38 years after its foundation. One could very well apply to him the words of his Divine Master: "I have finished the work that you gave me to do" (Jn 17:4). The parish in Tafers considered it an honor to bury the body of this man of God in its church, at least until the hour when more quiet times would permit its transfer to the Eternal City.

Those who were present were moved to see the diocesan bishop himself doing the final rite of absolution (*Libera*). Everyone rejoiced that this honor was bestowed on the deceased.

After that, the coffin was carried to the vault where the burial prayers were recited. The coffin remained there, so that the long line of the Faithful could sprinkle it with holy water.

After the celebration, St. Martin's Restaurant offered a simple meal to the clergy for the occasion. The Vicar General, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, now Superior General as the Founder's successor, used the occasion to express heartfelt thanks to all present for their very moving participation.

From now on, we will venerate and look after the tomb of this saintly priest and religious. It will be a place of blessings for the people. Faithful Servant of God, may you rest in peace!<sup>7</sup>

### **Homily of parish priest**

The following is the homily which the Very Reverend Pastor, Father Zurkinden, the celebrant of the funeral Mass, had preached:

To all the members of the Society of the Divine Savior, I want to express in the name of this parish and of the priests of Tafers, our heartfelt sympathy and condolences on the loss of your venerable Father and Founder, the very worthy Father Francis Jordan.

At the end of his life one could easily apply to him the words of his Divine Master: 'Father, I have completed the work which you gave me to do.' The work, which he felt called to do was the foundation of a new religious Order with the purpose of strengthening and spread-ing the Catholic faith

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<sup>7</sup> See *Freiburger Nachrichten*, Friday, September 13, 1918, in APS, I, 68.

everywhere. As with every good work, his had to struggle with great difficulties, which could be overcome only with his unshakable confidence in God. Already during his lifetime, Fr. Jordan was able to witness an amazing development of his Society, a proof that God had blessed his undertaking. After hardly 37 years of existence, the Order numbers 37 foundations where his spiritual sons and daughters carry on their beneficent common work in three different parts of the world.

Because of the sad conditions of the times, the venerable deceased had to conclude his holy life — far away from the Motherhouse, like an exile — surrounded by only a small number of his large family. The parish of Tafers feels honored to have been able to offer him asylum during the last days of his life, and to have his remains, at least for a time, in its parish church.

We recommend the very worthy deceased to the fervent prayers of the Faithful.

It is our intention to transfer the remains of our Venerable Father to our burial site in Rome, as soon as circumstances allow this, so that he may rest together with his great spiritual son, the Very Rev. Fr. Bonaventura Lüthen. That memorable saying comes to us: *Quomodo in vita sua dilexerunt se, ita et in morte non sunt separati.* (Just as they loved each other in life, so they shall not be separated in death).

### **Other Testimonies**

I asked the Sisters as well as the male nurse for their impressions of our Venerable Father, and I am publishing here what they have written without any alterations whatever.

Testimony of Sr. Huberta Dehottay,

Superior of the Hospital in Tafers

*“Tafers, September 10, 1918*

*Report about the stay with us of the Very Rev. Father Jordan, General Superior*

An August 26, 1918, at 8:00 a.m., the Very Rev. Father Jordan came to our hospital. When he entered his room he said kindly: *“So this is my new home!”* The room was hardly furnished, so we put in three more armchairs. After a few days, he said: *“My first impression was good - according to poverty. But now, this beautiful furniture!”* During my visits to him, he used to tell me about his life and activities. He especially emphasized how Divine Providence had helped him in times of difficulty. Also how he could not remind his spiritual children often enough to have confidence, and again to have confidence.

Once, he said: *‘Oh, Sister Superior, what really is religious life!’* — One morning, I asked him: ‘How are you?’ The sick patient answered: *‘The night was bad, it was long. The enemy roams about. But with confidence in God we will not falter.’* I couldn't talk with him very much; his reverent expression and his holiness always moved me to tears. During his last eight days, speaking was so difficult for him that one could hardly understand what he was saying, yet he was always happy to lift his hand in blessing.

The other Sisters were greatly edified by Reverend Father. I noticed a happy and renewed striving for virtue among them. Each considered herself blessed to be asked to do some service or night duty for him. In fact, a Sister who takes care of the laundry said to me: ‘I can't express with what joy I'm doing this work; it's as if I'm handling holy things.’

Once when one of them asked the reverend patient on Tues-day, September 3, how he was feeling, he replied: ‘The sufferings are great; with spiritual aridity, even more so; but suffering is love of Jesus.’

On Friday, September 6, the doctor pronounced the patient's condition critical, even dangerous. We immediately informed Father Vicar General [Father Pancratius Pfeiffer]. He stayed in the room with the reverend patient from then. He also prayed the prayers for the dying with the priests. The pain became so intense, that often the patient's whole body was trembling. That evening one of the Sisters said to him: 'When you get to heaven, pray for us, too, so that we remain faithful to our vows.' He added to that: '*And that you carry out the will of God and remain united with Jesus.*' If anyone handed him the crucifix, he would press it tightly to his heart, saying repeatedly: 'My Jesus, mercy.'

On Sunday, September 8, someone said to the dying patient: 'Today is the feast of the Mother of God.' At that, he opened his eyes and smiled kindly. I gave him a little champagne, mixed with water. He tasted it and said: '*That's not good.*' — He died that very day, September 8. We had the happiness of being able to pray at his side for three days and nights. The priests from Tifers came in the morning and evening to pray here. Other people came, too. Many touched their rosary to his body, saying: 'Here is a real saint!' There was no odor in the room in spite of the fact that it was small and low, and the window remained shut. The deceased had been in our midst for just fourteen days. Although we visited him only occasionally he impressed us all profoundly. We remember him as a holy man, who in no way could have any part in worldly principles or affairs.

Attested to by Sister Huberta, born, Marie Joseph Dehottay,

Superior of the Hospital at Tifers, Canton Freiburg, Switzerland"<sup>8</sup>

#### Testimony of Sister Aloysia Bellwald, Tifers Hospital

"When we heard the news that the very Reverend Founder and Father General of the Salvatorians wanted to come to our small and poor hospital we were all pleasantly surprised. Our Sister Superior assigned me as nurse. It seemed to me that this was going to be very difficult, because for 33 years, I had only nursed the poor and mostly uneducated country people. But then, when the patient got out of the car — though his features bore the mark of a terribly painful illness — he looked so kindly and amicably at everyone that my shyness vanished at once.

What shall I say now about the great sufferings that he bore so patiently? As long as I have been doing nursing, I have never seen something like this. His abdominal suffering was the worst that one could ever imagine. And, as he himself admitted quite frankly it never left him, neither by day or night. In very severe attacks the patient would cling to his crucifix, saying: '*My God, everything for you, and in atonement for my sins!*' Or, 'My God, forgive all my sins.'

Another time, in great pain he cried out: '*My God, how I am suffering, nevertheless not my will but yours be done!*' At times, thinking about his spiritual sons and daughters, he prayed: '*My God, bless all my spiritual children. Sustain them and teach them how to struggle, and grant that they all become holy.*' One day, when I asked him also to pray for us in heaven, he responded: '*We gain heaven only through the mercy of God, and in no other way.*' When I wished him a good night, he took care to answer: '*Everything as God wants it! God bless you! And may God bless all of us, for we are all his!*' During his last days, as his pain became always more severe and his whole body was trembling, he doubled his short prayers, praying: '*My Jesus, I belong completely to you, to you alone.*' During his serious illness he would not miss holy Communion for anything, but he was so anxious and concerned that it was difficult to try to get him to take a little food before midnight.

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<sup>8</sup> Translation according original letter in APS, I, 58.

“I was no less edified by the Superior General's obedience. He not only fully submitted to the doctor's orders. He also followed my suggestions. If I gave him something that went against him, exteriorly he showed nothing whatever. He simply said: *‘I will be obedient. Yes, O holy obedience! What worth it has!’* Actually, during these two weeks of the greatest suffering, I never noticed any impatience or imperfection in this dear patient. I considered myself blessed to be able to care for this devoted servant of God. Oh, if only I were able to imitate his exemplary virtue. How I would have liked to continue this loving service, but God decided otherwise. As he lived he died, serene and abandoned to God, at 8:00 p.m. on September 8, 1918. I prayed at his grave, asking him to obtain for me from God, the grace to live the true spirit of my vocation.

Sister Aloysia Bellwald, D. C.

Daughter of Christian Charity of St. Vincent de Paul

Tafers, September 13, 1918”<sup>9</sup>

Testimony of the nurse Jean Stempfel, Tafers hospital

“My Testimony. Through these few lines I am happy to share with you this good Father General's kind words — words that touched me deeply during the time that I was taking care of him. One day, when I had just finished looking after him, he said, *‘May God bless you and grant you many graces.’* On another day when I got him up, he shook my hand heartily and said: *‘May God protect you for the good care that you give me.’* These words brought tears to my eyes. In critical and difficult moments, he struck his breast praying again and again: *‘O Jesus!’* Whenever I was there, he would ask me if it was time for holy Communion. Whenever I was with this good Father General, I was moved to tears over the kind words that he spoke to me. Since then, I have more fervor and pious sentiments. I can add that I am happy to be able to give testimony about such an outstanding and life experience.

Jean Stempfel, Nurse, Tafers Hospital, Canton Fribourg, Switzerland”<sup>10</sup>

### Final remarks

This is what we have to share about the last days and the death of our Venerable Father and Founder. We will begin immediately to prepare a sketch of his rich and self-sacrificing life and will publish it in a brochure. Contributions for this purpose will be greatly welcomed and will be used — if not for the forthcoming brochure — for a complete biography later on. Furthermore, attention should be given to the concluding sentence of n. 18 of the Third General Chapter. If we want to live the spirit of our deceased spiritual Father and give him joy, as far as this is possible, we have to strive to the best of our ability to be living images of a true Salvatorian as he indicated it for us in our holy Constitutions. The one who progresses most in this will be the greatest and the first in his eyes.

This admonition, which appeared in the last number of the *Chronik*, was a great joy to our Venerable Father.<sup>11</sup> He told me during his illness that he had read the whole article in spite of his sufferings. Let us work in this spirit, and let us trust that our Venerable Father — having dedicated his whole life to the service of God and the promotion of his holy cause — will be our powerful intercessor before the throne of God. As regards the circumstances of his death, we note that he did not die in one of our

<sup>9</sup> Translation according original letter in APS, I, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Translation according original letter in APS, I, 60.

<sup>11</sup> See *Salvatorianer Chronik*, No. 1, May 1, 1915, p. 166.

houses, but in the room of a place belonging to others. For this reason, and also for other reasons, we want to mention that it might be good to purchase the building, which is the property of the community of Tifers. Meanwhile, we are having a memorial plate put in the room in which he died with the following text.

† On September 8, 1918, at 8:00 p.m., in this room and on this place, after having been lovingly cared for by the Daughters of Christian Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, and having been well-prepared through a dedicated and saintly life, the Lord called to himself, the very Reverend Superior General Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior and of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior. Tifers, September 1918. The Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior

We believe that we have been able recognize other ways, too, in which Divine Providence watched over our Venerable Father during the last events. His having to leave his own home and be transferred to Tifers just two weeks before his death was totally against our plans. We had to let it happen. There was no other choice. He himself had said: “*God's ways are not our ways.*” – Some of you may know that we have been trying, for quite some time already, in place of our present house in Freiburg (Stalden), to purchase a better house in a healthier location. A follow-up of this project is simply a matter of time. We are hoping that the room in which our Venerable Father died can become our own property and, consequently, more securely remain our property. Pondering all this in the Spirit, we recall those words that our Venerable Father so often used in his fully dedicated life: “All things work together for good for those who love God.” (Rom. 8:28)

Tifers, September 24, 1918

Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer

Superior General, SDS

## Condolences

A very large number of people, priests and laity, have sent messages offering their condolences. It is a great joy for us to see our Venerable Father so greatly honored after his death. He deserved it. Among those that we received are the following:

### 1. From the Holy Father

Father Pancratius Pfeiffer,

Superior General of the Salvatorians, Tifers, Switzerland.

The Supreme Pontiff shares profoundly in the sorrow of the Religious Family of the Salvatorians at the death of their Father and Founder Francis Jordan and wholeheartedly imparts his comforting Apostolic Blessing. Cardinal Gaspari.

### 2. From the Most Reverend Archbishop of Monreale (Sicily)

I send most heartfelt condolences over the loss of your venerated Founder, while assuring you of my intercession for the deceased and prayers for your religious family.

Msgr. Intreccialagli

(Our Sisters were included in both of the above messages; and in both cases, we notified them).

3. His Excellency, the Most Reverend Archbishop of Freiburg

To the esteemed Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior, I express my heartfelt sympathy on the death of their revered Founder and Superior General, Father Francis Jordan. May God now reward him eternally for his great love and zeal for souls, and for his many cares and sufferings. May He grant the Society continuing progress and rich fruits. I am remembering the soul of the departed during holy Mass, and I bless all your sons and daughters who are mourning their Father. Freiburg in Breisgau, September 17, 1918

† Thomas, Archbishop of Freiburg

4. The Most Reverend Bishop of Paderborn

Paderborn, September 16, 1918

I ask your Paternity to accept this expression of my deep-felt participation in your sorrow over the death of the highly esteemed Founder of your Society. Be assured of my prayer for him who has blessedly fallen asleep in the Lord. I consider it a privilege to have known him personally and to have spoken with him. I am also glad that his spiritual sons work in my diocese. May God bless you, dear Reverend Father General, in your great task of directing the Salvatorians in these critical times. With gratitude and respect,

Yours devotedly † Karl Joseph, Bishop of Paderborn

5. The Most Reverend Bishop of Bamberg

Bamberg, September 13, 1918

The Archbishop of Bamberg expresses his deepest sympathy and pledges frequently to remember at the altar the untiring selfless activities and services of the Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior.

6. The Most Reverend Bishop of Speyer

To the esteemed Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior, I express my condolences at the loss of your Founder, Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, and I promise my Memento.

Speyer, September 14, 1918 † Ludwig, Bishop

7. The Most Reverend Bishop of Würzburg

Würzburg, September 16, 1918

Very Reverend Father!

Both the Society of the Divine Savior and the Sisters of the Divine Savior have suffered a heavy loss through the death of their Founder and spiritual Father. Kindly accept my most heartfelt condolences. I will remember the noble deceased at the altar in the holy Sacrifice. With the highest esteem, I remain  
Your most devoted,

† Ferdinand, Bishop

## 8. His Grace, the Most Reverend Abbot Primate of Stotzingen

Monastery of Einsiedeln, September 12, 1918

Very Reverend Father General,

With compassion I received the sad new of the death of your Very Reverend Superior General, Father Jordan. Accept, dear Reverend Father, this expression of my deepfelt sympathy. I understand how painful and great is the gap that is experienced by the whole Society at the death of a highly esteemed Founder. May the soul of this great, noble priest rest in the holy peace of God and receive the reward for his faithful work and his many sufferings. This is my fervent prayer. At the same time, I beg God to richly bless your work, very Reverend Father, and to guide your Society through this difficult time to new blossoming! With sentiments of the greatest appreciation, I remain yours, Very Reverend Father,

Faithfully in Christ, † Fidelis of Stotzingen, Abbot Primate

## 9. His Grace, the Most Reverend Abbot Bossart (Einsiedeln)

Einsiedeln, September 21, 1918

Very Reverend Father General,

Due to my absence from our monastery for some weeks, I am able to respond only now to the sad news of the death of your deeply respected Founder. Please accept my deepest and sincere expressions of sympathy. I had the greatest respect for him whom the Lord has taken to himself. I and all of us here will remember him with special love during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. May he rest in peace and live in God, whom he served so faithfully, and for whom he undertook and accomplished great things! May the dear God bless his foundation! May He sustain and guide it, and constantly increase it (in members) for its own sake and for the good of his holy Church. I am convinced that the blessed deceased will be a great intercessor with God and a protector of his excellent foundation. Since I, too, had the joy and the honor of knowing him and appreciating him in this life, I have also commended myself to his prayer. United with you in sorrow and in prayer, most Reverend Father General,

I am, Devotedly yours, † Thomas, Abbot

## 10. The Most Venerable Archabbot, Raphael von Beuron

Peace! Beuron, September 19, 1918

In the name of the monks of the Archabbey of Beuron, I wish to express to the Reverend Generalate of the Society of the Divine Savior our profound participation in the painful loss through death of your most Venerable Founder and Spiritual Father. The services of this exceptional man of God in behalf of your Society and through it, for the whole Church, are known all over the world and will make his name un-forgettable. May the ongoing development of his Foundation continue to bring forth blessings and increase his heavenly reward. We gladly want to unite with you in spirit and, in keeping with his desire, to pray for the repose of his soul. With an expression of our highest esteem,

Yours, devotedly in Christ, † Raphael, Archabbot

## 11. The Most Reverend Father General of the Jesuits

Zizers, September 13, 1918

Very Reverend Father Superior General,

On the occasion of the death of the Venerable Founder of your Society, I ask you kindly to accept our deepest expressions of sympathy. Though the beloved deceased, who had offered his whole life in untiring service for the Divine Savior and his holy Church, is now surely already united with him, nonetheless we will continue to remember him at the altar, should his soul still need help. May he be a powerful intercessor in heaven for your Society, that it may continue to spread and to bear witness to the Divine Savior to the ends of the earth! Commending myself to your prayers, I remain, with great respect,

Your devoted servant in Christ, M. Ledóchowski,

General of the Society of Jesu

12. The Most Reverend Father General of the Pallottines

Einsiedeln, September 12, 1913

Most Rev. Father Superior General,

Please accept our heartfelt condolences on the loss of your unforgettable Founder, the Most Reverend Francis M. Jordan. He was highly appreciated by myself and our Society. Unfortunately, it was not granted him to conclude his meritorious life in his beloved Rome, where 37 years ago on the feast of the Immaculate Conception, he laid the foundation stone for his richly blessed and fruit-bearing Society. Instead, he was given the feast of the birthday of Mary for his birthday to heaven. We will not forget our beloved venerable Father Jordan.

With sentiments of appreciation, I remain yours, Most devotedly,

Karl Gißler, P.S.M., Superior General of the Pallottines