

INPUT FOR PERSONAL OR COMMUNAL REFLECTION

6. Father Francis Jordan, a blessed with a limitless trust in God and his providence

by Fr. Hubert Kranz SDS, Talon, 1 October 2020

From the letter to the Philippians:

“There is nothing I cannot do in the One who strengthens me.”

(Philippians 4, 13; in SD 17 times partially or completely quoted)

Fr. Francis of the Cross Jordan:

“Do not despair, the Lord will help you to realize your goal. Place everything in His hands, trust firmly in Him, hope and await all from Him.”

(SD I/211)

“Oh Jesus, Oh my Saviour, You know what I intend and what I want; I can do all things in You who strengthen me.”

(SD II/9)

A penniless new priest from a Black Forest village in a Germany that is shaken by the battle between the German state and the Church, with no real prospects for the future entertains the idea of founding a universal, missionary teaching society that is accessible to everyone in the Church; at first, this sounds like an unrealistic crackpot idea. But Fr. Jordan recognises his vocation in it. With great faithfulness and self-giving, he carried this thought through his whole life, even with suffering and sacrifice. This can only be explained by a great inner certainty that God wants this work and that He is the one who must carry it out (cf. GT I, 112-114).

Only an immense trust in God, constantly nourished in prayer, can produce such perseverance. Trust in God becomes the ‘game changer’ in Father Jordan’s life, as they say in English; that is, something that gives life a new, unexpected turn. Why is that? Because trusting in God, one cannot entrench oneself behind one’s own spiritual fears and fortresses, but because one then also reckons with God’s working and feels and sees things that would otherwise be suppressed by my own know-it-all attitude, by my need for security and by my need to want to have control over my own life. But that is the very nature of trust, that you relinquish control. Father Jordan puts it this way: “We will receive graces in proportion to our trust (holy doctors of the church).” (SD II/54)

This provokes the question of whether I really believe that God’s ways are good for me and that I can really do God’s works if I only want to and commit myself to them.

In the end, the question of trust in God becomes the question of one’s own vocation. Am I living what God is calling me to do?

Questions for further reflection:

- Do I believe that God wants to do something special with my lifetime - be it a long or a short one?
- Can I get involved in new thoughts and ways or do I prefer to play it safe on the way of the tried and tested, the known, or perhaps even the entrenched and rigid?
- Do I trust that God wants to lead me on His path or am I simply unsettled or defensive when confronted with new and unfamiliar things and thoughts?

Prayer:

“Good and caring God,
grant me an open and willing heart,
that will allow me
to ask about your divine will.
Strengthen my trust in it,
that Thy ways are good
for me and for the salvation of all people.
Give me the courage, the wisdom, and the strength to go
where You want me to go.
Amen.”