



SALVATORIAN FAMILY

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Rome, 8 July 2021

On “Salvatorian Youth Formation in the Year of Blessed Francis Jordan” – July 30, 2021

Knowing the responsibility of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so all may inherit our faith and legacy for generations to come, we believe that the youth are the engines of our “boat”. Therefore, youth formation is of vital importance for the future of our Church. Our Constitutions consider the development of the whole person, promoting spiritual, intellectual, psychological, and professional growth (conf. SDS **Const. 603**). Good formation fosters development of talents, decision making, assume responsibilities and maturity in openness to the spiritual, communal, and apostolic life (conf. SDS **Const. 605**). It is the fact that some of our ministries which once in history were very important and became the motivation for youth to join us, are now closed because of the lack of personnel. We lost some of the historical parishes, centers, schools, and seminaries because of the decline in vocations for the Church. This is a challenge not only for us but for many dioceses and religious congregations. In some parts of the world many parochial schools are empty and crumbling, they are no longer the centers for formation and vocation promotion.

We Salvatorians, despite being affected by these challenges in some of our units, are still fortunate to have some vocations in our Family especially in the newer units. Youth formation and vocations promotions are part and parcel for the endurance of Blessed Francis Jordan’s dream. “Our task is education and instruction of youth, also in elementary school where it is necessary” (SD III/24). Wherever we are, we must open the door for the youth to be integrated into our ministries and always be ready to listen to their dreams and expectations.

Since the pontificate of Saint John Paul II, the Youth Movements became a vital energy for the renewal of their faith. World Youth Day (initiated in Poland in 1985), not only gathered youth from the whole world together to experience the value of their Catholicism, but also the sense of belonging to the Church, a sense of the community of God. Also, the sense of sharing one faith, one baptism, one Lord and one mission moves people to take responsibility for the future of the Church. To our Salvatorian Family, the youth have a special contribution to make in our apostolates (in schools, hospitals, parishes, universities, etc.). Our religious formation houses around the world (Poland, Tanzania, Congo, Philippines, Brazil, India, Colombia, Italy, Sri Lanka, USA, Madagascar, etc.) are like “factories without smoke”. They are the promoters of Blessed Francis Jordan’s dream and zeal for making the Savior known to everyone. Once we teach our youth the sense of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, we expect the world to be a safer and more harmonious place for everyone. In many parts of the world, the youth are the victims of the negative impacts of globalization and sluggishness in living their Catholic faith. Salvatorians today should focus as well on ‘how we are responding to a great apostolic concern

of the Church today, which is the youth with their dreams, hopes, and possibilities of a new world which exists, paradoxically, within an abyss of frustrations and insecurities about the future'. The youth are the most victims of unemployment, human-trafficking, violence, drugs, alcoholism, and economic difficulties especially now with the consequences of the great pandemic of COVID-19. Therefore, we need actions with the local and global networks working for justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) which will include the youth.

The Salvatorian charism and mission can proclaim more readily the kingdom of God to each person, family, and institution, if we incorporate the youth in our ministries. Blessed Francis Jordan knew the value of the youth in the Church as they were the first pioneers to join his dream! In his Spiritual Diary he writes: "Press on relentlessly so the youth of every nation possible receive a good Christian upbringing, even if you must spill every last drop of blood for the honor of God" (SD I/58). In the beginning he was entrusted, by Propaganda Fide, to send some missionaries to the missions in Assam, despite their being so young with not much experience, but full of passion and zeal for the salvation of souls. The beatification of Fr. Jordan can be a motivation for the youth in our Salvatorian Family to flourish. They should never be afraid or discouraged to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Christ and His message of salvation.

Fr. Mario Dominic Laizen SDS from UK and Fr. Johnson Vinoth SDS from India will facilitate us in this topic.