



September/October 2017

### Thoughts about the Lay Salvatorian - Mission Statement

Dear sisters and brothers,

Maybe you have already read and/or followed the International Joint Charism Commission Identity booklet. There you can find beside others the text of the ICDS mission statement. A short question here: who knows the Lay Salvatorian mission statement or who has heard about or even read it? – No one, only a few? That's a pity because it is such an important and motivating text:

*Lay Salvatorians are sharing the vision, charism and spirituality of Father Francis Jordan and Blessed Mary of the Apostles. According to this they are looking for possibilities to reconcile the social, economic, socioecological and political realities with the demands of Christian faith and life by all ways and means which the love of God inspires. Promoting a Christian atmosphere and attitude, they dedicate themselves to renewing human society through the gospel. As defenders of life, human rights and all creation, they testify to the kingdom of God.*

If we are looking at the first sentence it is very clear and easy to understand because it is that what is valid for each member of the Salvatorian Family. But the following one is much more challenging. "... to reconcile the social, economic, socioecological and political realities with the demands of Christian faith ..." – At the first moment it sounds very big and complicated and hard to reach this goal. What outstanding skills are needed for Lay Salvatorians to fulfill this task? Is that all really possible – or necessary for a Lay Salvatorian?

OK - keep calm, please – it's easier than you would expect. Yes, in the first moment it sounds very challenging but consider the following: Each of us is living in his/her specific surrounding, with relationships to many other people, relatives, friends and also to the environment. Each one is part of it and no one can take himself out of this system. So each one takes part of his/her specific social, economic, socioecological and political realities - as big or as small as they are - and has to find answers to the daily questions of their own reality. Several times I have heard the question, why is this so important for Lay Salvatorians? Why so many words, are less not enough and isn't that really something needed by common people living a simple life? - With all necessary respect, the answer can only be – YES, it's important, more than in the past! As Salvatorians we are called to defend life<sup>1</sup> in all its different expressions, because life is the greatest gift which is given to the earth and to us by God. So in this understanding each of us is called to support this mission the best we possibly can.

It does not matter where or under which conditions you are living. It's about everyone sharpening his/her sensibility about the necessity of an abundant life – or life in fullness. That does not mean that you would have all the things you want and dream about immediately like in Cockaigne<sup>2</sup>. Life in abundance denotes in the religious context a fulfilled life, according to ethical principles. For example you can explore some "poor" people, who have a smile on their face every day and who love their life as it is. On the other hand there are ones from the so called "upper class" who always are very busy and stressed because they have to earn money and/or prestige. Often they are not fulfilled because they are permanently searching to get more and more of things, they do not really need. It's often like an addiction.

1 → Charter of the Salvatorian Family, chapter two: Our mission, paragraph 8. b.

2 → look at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cockaigne>

The lines above do not mean that poverty is the goal of a good life. Much more the goal is to have a life with all the things you really need – and maybe a little bit more, because this is good for the healthiness of your body and soul.

But with this the mission is not finished. We Lay Salvatorians are called *to promote a Christian atmosphere and attitude*. This can become a very special challenge in our world today. The realities in several areas of our world are very, very different even countries or towns. In some places a friendly atmosphere of faith can be found, in another one, one wrong word can be the decision about your welfare or persecution and pain. So it needs always the right balance and effort. And if you meet a person who is in need of the basic needs of life, you will try to fulfill this at first. Maybe some times later the person will ask you, why you did this. Then you can answer, modestly and respectfully.<sup>3</sup> However, Lay Salvatorians try to follow their mission in the spirit of the founder Fr. Jordan. Through his apostolate of charity, he showed us the direction to become everything to everyone.<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis addressed it much more significant as he said: ” ... we do not grow in the love of God by avoiding the entanglement of human relations. For in loving others, we learn to love God, in stooping down to help our neighbor, we are lifted up to God.”<sup>5</sup>

One of the best examples is that easy one, which Jesus Christ by himself suggested: „Come and see ...“ (John 1,46).

If we follow the text of the mission so we are called to protect the life on earth as it is. This does not mean to accept estates of realm with all the bad aftereffects as we know from the past. The words „*renewing human society through the gospel*“ points to this. It's our concern that each one is able to live in freedom and under the protection of the human rights. It is our concern that each one without difference of gender gets at least a basic education and has access to clean water and adequate food. And following this line, it goes without saying that “defenders of all creation” the preservation of a healthy and clean environment is implied. Lay Salvatorians will find the right answer for each kind of exploitation and violence with all ways and means which the love of God is inspiring them.

The words of the Lay Salvatorian mission statement is an invitation to be clever, to be creative and to be strong to renew the human society through the gospel to testify to the kingdom of God.

*Some Questions to deepen this lines:*

- *What is the meaning of an abundant life, what are my real needs; what could be my contribution to others so they could reach an abundant life?*
- *What is my current Salvatorian mission and where do I see myself engaging more in the future to bring the mission statement into reality?*
- *What is an important point of the Lay Salvatorian mission statement for you at this moment and why?*

That all may know the Savior, yours very truly,



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Vice-President of the ICDS

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<sup>3</sup> → look at 1 Peter 3,15-16

<sup>4</sup> → comp. Fr. Jordan Spiritual Diary: 1/29, last paragraph and 1/49 parag. 4;

<sup>5</sup> → Pope Francis (2015): ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS. PRAYER VIGIL IN PREPARATION FOR THE XIV ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS. Hg. v. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Vatican. Online verfügbar unter [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151003\\_veglia-xiv-assemblea-sinodo.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151003_veglia-xiv-assemblea-sinodo.html)