

Video about the Pactum of Blessed Father Jordan

Part One - Fr. Peter van Meijl, SDS

Father Jordan gave his “*heart document*” an unusual name, namely the Latin word “**Pactum**”, which means in English: treaty, covenant or contract. The good Father was of course inspired by the biblical books of the Old Testament, by Noach, Abraham and Moses and the prophets, who all had a **covenant** with their God. The term “**pactum**” is only used in the *Spiritual Diary* and in none of other Jordanian writings like his letters, talks, constitutions.

By studying the **Pactum** of Father Jordan in his *Spiritual Diary* I was particularly impressed by its date: November 1, 1891! All Saints Day!

1891: 10 years of hard work, of laying the fundamentals of his *Apostolic Teaching Society* in the year 1881! The fundamentals of the **second** degree of his apostolic work (the so called academics!); the fundamentals of the **third** degree of his movement (the lay people, man and women in the parishes) and on December 8, 1881 the foundation of the **first** degree: man and women dedicating themselves completely and wholehearted to this new, apostolic and missionary work: go to the end of this globe, to the periphery, and: **teach, talk, tell** the good story, learn, explain, discuss and write!

I would like to mention here still **another important pastoral and spiritual** event in that year! I quote from the book, **page 18-19!**

“On September 20, 1891, Brother Felix Bucher was ordained a priest. He traveled June 27, 1892, to the USA where he worked beneficently as one of the first pioneers of the American Province. Four years earlier, between January 15 and March 5, 1887, Father Jordan had carried out an exorcism on that brother. Father Jordan and his young and praying community had experienced the strength of the Almighty God over the power of Satan and over the poor Brother Felix. “The fight against the satanic spirit was repeated two more times. That has helped the Society much”, wrote Father Jordan to Therese von Wüllenweber February 20, 1887¹. The satanic manifestation against the Society in the time of January/February 1887 had convinced the diocesan priest and theologian Lorenz Hopfenmüller (later Father Otto), to enter the new institute as he declared as the seventh and final point in his brochure on the Society. After his healing, Brother Felix began the studies of philosophy and theology and was ordained a priest September 20, 1891.

¹ Letter of Father Jordan to Therese von Wüllenweber, February 20, 1887 in DSS X, No. 205. In *Letter Dialogue Between Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan and Mother Mary of the Apostles 1882-1907*, by Sr. Miriam Cerletty, SDS (Studia de Historia Salvatoriana, 1.2, 1997), the letter is translated as follows: “The battle with the demoniac spirits repeated itself twice more. It has been to the advantage of the Society” (p. 37).

I ask myself: Was not his day of ordination for Father Jordan a visible sign of God the Almighty who is stronger than the power of evil? Did Father Jordan feel himself to be an 'instrument' of that Almighty God while he, with the official permission of the Vicariate, was healing the poor Brother through the rite of exorcism? Was Father Jordan not obligated to make a pact with God the Almighty to protect himself against the power of Satan and to ask the Lord for help for his further apostolic activities? Because of his experience with Satan, Father Jordan, in his *Pactum*, called God *Creator omnipotens* (God Almighty), designating God as partner and helper against Satan." (end of the quotation)

Finishing my input about the *Pactum of Father Jordan*: What role can it play in our lives? In our communities? My answer is. THE SAME FUNCTION AS IT HAD IN THE LIFE OF BLESSED Father Jordan! I quote again from the book, **page 68**:

"This pact had in his personal and apostolic life the role and significance of a *révision de vie* (life review), like an examination of conscience or "an instrument of a total surrender of the years 1891-1915" (Sister Carol Thresher, SDS). Father Jordan not only knew the proverb of Cicero² "*pacta sunt servanda*" (*pacts have to be kept*) but he renewed his *Pactum* regularly. He also tied each renewal of his apostolic zeal or an aspect of his spiritual life to a special religious event³. For instance, Father Jordan made on July 25, 1888, some resolutions in memory of the 10th anniversary of his first Holy Mass to spend more time to prayer.

How the *Pactum* functioned in Father Jordan's life becomes apparent by his renewal over a period of 25 years. Five exact dates, with day, month and year (except for one entry) are listed on page 202 of the Diary. Father Jordan was primarily motivated by pastoral and spiritual concerns faithful to his vision and undertakings as Founder, faithful to his friendship with the Almighty God in the *Pactum*. A look at each of the dates will clarify the context of the renewal", which is absolutely energizing!

Dear Salvatorians all over the world! It is worthwhile to jump into this unique text, which I friendly called: "*The Story of a never-ending song of trust!*".

Video about the Pactum of Blessed Father Jordan PART TWO: Sr. Carol Thresher, SDS

² Cicero, *De officiis*, 3, 92.

³ Father Jordan made July 25, 1888 some resolutions in memory of the 10th anniversary of his first Holy Mass to spend more time in prayer. See Father Peter van Meijl SDS, *Historical-Critical Biography on Father Jordan*, Chapter 18; Paragraph "Man of Prayer".

I've been blessed to be involved in ongoing formation work around the Salvatorian world. The focus of that ministry has been our Salvatorian charism. In that process, I have discovered the immense richness of what we have come to call Blessed Father Jordan's *Pact with God*. This precious document can be found in the Founder's first book of his *Spiritual Diary* page 202-203. I want to take this opportunity to encourage you to take time to locate this hidden treasure and begin to journey with the richness that it can evoke in your own Salvatorian life and vocation. If you are not a Salvatorian, I would encourage you to discover how Blessed Jordan's words touch into and enrich your own covenantal relationship with God. From this perspective, I believe that Blessed Francis Jordan's *Pact with God* is indeed a spiritual classic that can become a wisdom document for you and for all God's people.

You may wish to take time to learn more about the Pact by reading Volume 13 of our *Contributions on Salvatorian History, Charism and Spirituality* which is entitled *Blessed Francis Jordan's Pact with God*. You will find this in electronic format on the USA Salvatorian Family website under Resources. In this book, you will find articles on the Pact by Fr. Peter van Meijl and myself as well as other international Salvatorians.

Now returning to the Pact itself, we see clearly, from its beginning, that the document is written as a pact or contract between God and Blessed Jordan. It is fundamentally relational and in it we hear echoes of the covenant bond between God and the people of Israel. Its words actually speak to a partnership between the "Almighty Creator" and this "lowest creature." Certainly, this is an unequal partnership and the words chosen by Blessed Jordan emphasize that reality while at the same time show how he relies on the bounty of the Creator's gifts. God has given everything that the creature then lifts back in apostolic generosity thus becoming a partner in a cycle of total giftedness. Clearly, God is the source of all gifts and the call of the Pact is for the Founder to live a life that draws all of creation into deeper relationship with the God of life. I believe there is a cosmic sense that penetrates this movement between the divine and human. This is at the heart of Blessed Jordan's experience of God.

This almost overwhelming God-experience which the Pact expresses was foundational for Blessed Jordan. It kept him centered in the deep intimacy of his own personal call to holiness as well as in the goal and mission of his foundation. He came to know intimately this cosmic God who desires fullness of life for all creation and wants its vibrancy to penetrate every corner of the universe, every periphery of society, in sum, all of creation. The 25 plus times Blessed Jordan renews this pact show us how important it was to him. It gave him a sense of direction and courage in times of doubt and intense

questioning on the part of others. It kept him on the right path and became for him an orienting compass.

As I close, let me assure you that I trust that the Pact of Blessed Jordan can come more alive for all of us. It will help us live more deeply into our own personal call to relationship with the God of our life. Yes, we also are called into covenant with the one who gifts us with all we need to live our lives and make a difference in today's world. This is what Blessed Jordan hoped for in women and men from all walks of life who sense a call to be apostles, to be the goodness and kindness of Jesus in the world today.

The video about the PACTUM of Blessed Francis Jordan

Part Three – Mr. Christian Patzl, ICDS

If we look back at Blessed Francis Jordan, today we see a man who lives entirely from God and entirely in God. His written testimonies allow us to discover a man who promised his entire humanity to God, and who did not place any other value in life higher than God. "Have your spiritual conversations with the Savior. Sit down humbly and docilely at his feet and listen attentively to his words," we can read in his 'Spiritual Diary'. Here we do not find a high-striving theology, no pious submission, but the simplicity of an encounter with God, as if from person to person. And further, we can read: "Always listen to the voice of grace and follow it in spite of difficulties."

What we today somewhat unwieldy call a pact or a contract was quite simply a loving YES to a God to whom the whole world belongs, who embraces heaven and earth, - is all-embracing. Quite certainly this was the reason why John Baptist could not limit the aim of his foundations to only one particular apostolate. Likewise, he could not join a current religious movement of that time, because they thought much too "small" for him.

What does this covenant, this loving YES, mean for us today? As spiritual successors of Blessed Francis, we the members of the Salvatorian family continue to live this covenant as priests, brothers, sisters or Lay Salvatorians. With our commitment, our vow, we say "yes" to cultivate and intensify this intimate relationship with God and to follow the Salvatorian way.

It is certainly not given to everyone to live such an intimate relationship with God always openly. Also the cultural and temporal circumstances are different today and in some environments it is often not really appropriate to speak of it. As a priest, brother or sister, it may be easier, but as a lay Salvatorian, you can quickly find yourself in a terrain where you certainly do not want to go. Here it is necessary to learn to have a good sense of the situation at hand, some might say to become elastic in the situation. On the one hand, it is not necessary to always jump right in. On the other hand, it is nevertheless necessary to be clear where it is necessary. And in doing so, we may trust in God, in the same way as John Baptist did.

I deliberately use the first name of the founder here, because we should and must come close to him spiritually. He humbly asks to be allowed to be a fit instrument on God's behalf and to reveal God's love to others. Not for nothing did he write in his diary, "Dive into the ocean of your God's love." For me personally, this pact with God this YES is a deep connection and mystical experience. Describing it is simple and complicated at the same time, but feeling like you are in a surrounding cloud is probably the best way to describe it. And I think it must have been similar for John Baptist, and perhaps for many other Salvatorians who have walked or are walking the same path.

But despite all the spiritual euphoria, let's stay grounded and face reality, because we don't always succeed and everything turns out well. We all are human beings, with ups, downs and also some dark sides. We try to respond to our daily challenges as best we can. We live in a relationship with God - whether we want to or not, whether we are always aware of it or not.

We do not know whether God has hands, because no one can or may even come close to imagining God. But what we can experience again and again is his perceptible nearness, as long as we get involved in the thought of his presence. This happens best in prayer, quite simply in conversation with him. We know from John Baptist that he was constantly in conversation and exchange with God. Witnesses report that he was almost constantly engrossed in prayer. Such closeness and connection to God must grow and rarely happens just like that. It requires courage and a certain openness. Experience shows that it is precisely here that we can trust in God's help and support. He opens the doors and windows, prepares the way for us to come to him. But we have to go through it ourselves and set out on the path.