

Societas Divini Salvatoris

Il Missionario

*Shout! Without ceasing.
Like a trumpet lift up your
voice!*

(Is 58:1)

*Called to be Apostles
for our times*





Called to be Apostles for our times

Mater Salvatoris community periodical, n°2

Editorial.....	3
The Salvatorian Call and God's project.....	4
Assisi.....	9
The Ministries of Acolyte and Lector in the Spirit of Fr. Jordan.....	11
Lockdown photo chronicle.....	13



A word of thanks to the medical personnel on a banner at the Motherhouse

Source: - Coronavirus, Roma come non l'avete mai vista (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RtzEs8gzOc&t=31s)
 - Image at the top of the page: World day of Prayer for Vocations 2020 theme picture
<https://vocazioni.chiesacattolica.it/datevi-al-meglio-della-vita-cristus-vivit-143/>
 - On the next page: Pope Francis during the Urbi et Orbi special blessing on March the 27th
<http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/events/event.dir.html/content/vaticanevents/en/2020/3/27/uniti-in-preghiera.html>

Editorial



The whole world is going through a difficult time; everything seems to stop with this pandemic of the new coronavirus. This time is marked by a feeling of despair, fear and a confused spirit clouded with existential interrogations, especially in the countries most affected by this pandemic.

From this event which bruises the soul, the Church in its prophetic role raises the moral remembering the words of the Savior to Peter: "*And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.*" (Lk 22:31-32). While the streets of the city of Rome are deserted, filled with a sinister silence, Pope Francis invites the world to turn his gaze to its Creator by a spiritual communion in prayer and the breaking of the bread, by his exhortations and his blessings *Urbi et Orbi*. In this time of disarray, the world can only find rest in its Creator, as Saint Augustine says: "*... our soul is restless as long as it does not rest in you*".

To achieve this goal our world needs men and women who dedicate their lives to this apostolate. On this fiftyseventh day of prayer for the priestly vocation and consecrated life, it is the duty of each of us to carry out the will of the Lord on this fact: "*The harvest is great but the workers are few. Pray therefore to the master of the harvest to send out workers for his harvest.*" (Lk 10: 1-9).

We should remind ourselves as Salvatorians to stand firm and muster the same willpower that marked our Founder, being a model of faith and trust in God. Despite the great difficulties he experienced in his vocational journey, he said to himself: "*In You, Oh Lord, have I hoped, I will not be confounded forever.*" (Ps. 31)

Fr. Charles Mushitu sds



The Salvatorian call and God's Project: Reflection on the second song of Isaiah

¹ Listen to me, you islands;
hear this, you distant nations:
Before I was born the LORD called me;
from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.

² He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.

³ He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."

⁴ But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing at all.
Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand,
and my reward is with my God."

⁵ And now the LORD says—
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant
to bring Jacob back to him
and gather Israel to himself,
for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD
and my God has been my strength—

⁶ he says:
"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."



How can we understand our vocation as Salvatorians? Who is the initiator of the Salvatorian vocation? Why be a Salvatorian? These are the questions that make us think of the songs of the servant in Isaiah without forgetting the key Salvatorian bible verses (Jn 17,3; Mt 28,19-20; Mc 16,15; Dn12,3). The aim of this reflection is to discover the Salvatorian vocation in the second song of Isaiah. The text will be divided as follows:

1. **Initial Mandate** (Is 49,1b-3)
2. **The Failure of the Servant, and an Expression of Unchanged Trust in God** (Is 49,4)
3. **A Repetition of the Call, Mission and Divine Trust** (Is 49.5-6)

These points show how vocation is not something one has for him/herself. But rather for a project that God has for his people.

It is true that in this passage we will see the servant speak and explain what his vocation was like. He speaks about the message he was commissioned to spread in the first song (Isaiah 42). Now it is he who speaks in first person, presenting the credentials that legitimize his mission as the prophets do in narrating their vocation. Meaning to say that every prophet has the story of his/her vocation. In like manner every Salvatorian can think about his/her call, using the following questions: How was my vocation born? Which were my motivations that led me to the decision to become a Salvatorian or Salvatorian? The servant of which Isaiah speaks no longer has a royal physiognomy; rather it is prophetic as the first three verses underline.

In the words that the anonymous servant pronounces in first person narrating and justifying his mission, the pattern of the prophetic vocation dominates. This vocation also characterises Jeremiah: *"Before I formed you in your mother's womb, I knew you; and before you came out of your mother's womb, I consecrated you and made you prophet of the nations."* (Jer 1,5) His destined ministering the word met with an objection from the prophet: *"And I replied: Alas, eternal Lord, I cannot speak, since I am only a child"*. (Jer 1,6). Thus every Salvatorian should be able to explain his/her call, how it has developed and to identify concrete Salvatorian elements which are present in his/her vocation.

*The plan that God has for each
Salvatorian is to make known to all
nations the one true God and Jesus
Christ the Savior for the salvation of all
without distinction.*

The servant speaks in first person, as in various stories of prophetic vocations (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos). Already from the beginning he sees himself placed within a universal horizon through the grace of his vocation. The call can be traced back to the roots of one's existence. The word of God is a sharp sword turning the servant into an arrow, a weapon for reaching those who are near and far. (Is 49,2) Likewise Salvatorians are sent both near and far (Mt 28,19-20). As mentioned previously concerning vocation, it is God who has the plan because He is the initiator of the call for a special mission. The plan that God has for each Salvatorian is to make known to all nations the one true God and Jesus Christ the Savior for the salvation of all without distinction. Therefore the called person is considered as an instrument that God uses for the realization of his project. As God says: *"You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will manifest my splendor"* (v3).

Moving to the second point, doubts or fear often arise in the face of God's call, as the person feels insecure about accomplishing the mission. The servant admits in this passage his failure, expressing at the same time his unaltered trust in God. Certainly, it is not easy to respond to God's calling and there are always doubts. Yet it cannot end there for a Salvatorian because God, who called everyone and for whom nothing is impossible, is always near to help bring the mission to a good end. Although the servant had doubts about not being capable, he acknowledges the edifying presence of God in verse 5: *"for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD and my God has been my strength."* When God speaks again in the last verse, the song comes to a climax. The servant sees his mission extended far beyond the borders of Israel, to the point of becoming universal: *"I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."*

In conclusion, we should not be afraid to share with others about the beginning of our vocation, about the failures we had to overcome and how God is always close to his servants so that they can carry out his project. On the following pages some of the members of our community present some personal reflections on their vocation. Besides looking back on the initial call that led one to choose religious salvatorian life, it's also interesting to see how one's vocation matures over time. After all, God's call does not end at the gates of the seminary, on the contrary: it's just the beginning!

Cl. Ruphin



My vocation is like that of the prophets, beginning at a very early age. My mother used to tell me that when I was little I used to pray for people, pronouncing a word which remains unknown even to myself: "TIRITHINCHI OR CHIRICHINCI OR TIRINCHINCIN". According to my mother it was like the doxology of my prayer, which nobody but God could understand. Some years later I heard an internal voice calling me to sacrifice my life for the service of others. That's why after my graduation I was looking for a congregation in which I could commit myself according to my vocation. I got to know the Society of the Divine Savior through a book, reading about its charism and spirituality.

Ever since I met the Salvatorians, there are so many elements which have become part of my vocation. The main one is what I found most attractive in the Salvatorian mission: "*to proclaim the message to all people everywhere and at all times and to do this in any way and by any means the love of Christ inspires us*". I take these words as the beginning of my call. God called me to proclaim the message to all peoples. When I see these elements, I feel the joy that reigns in my heart because I did not choose the wrong congregation. However, I cannot ignore the failures in my vocation. One of these is the difficulty to live with people whom I have not chosen to live with. Reconciling myself with the different cultures, characters, habits and ways of thinking was very difficult.

Fortunately, thanks to the prayer and formation I received, I'm able to understand better community life and live well with my brothers. Now I understand and accept the change of a program without problems and I can overcome it. I can put together the idea and reality thanks to the themes that I have already reflected on, such as tradition, doubts and anarchy. I feel happy about the Salvatorian life because I have faith in the help of our Lady Mother of the Savior and all the leaders of the Society, as well as in the daily help of my brothers.



Cl. Ruphin



One of the most important vocational experiences I had happened in a dream. I was in an airplane ready to take off, together with other people for whom I felt responsible. Back in the cockpit, I realized that it had suddenly become an auditorium. I interpret that airplane as a symbol for my vocation. The auditorium indicated that there was still much to learn. In fact, after entering the seminary, I had many opportunities to open up and purify my vocation. For example, it took me a long time to really live the call to trust totally in God and not relying solely on my own strength. I also learned to discern my vocation in the daily plan: "What are you calling me to do today, Lord?" Furthermore, during the five years in the seminar I have experienced several times the profound joy of fully living my vocation, but also the bitter sadness of being stuck in my weaknesses. However, every day I thank God for my vocational journey, for all the peaks and the difficult moments, because everything is grace.

Cl. Stefaan



I heard God's call when I was a child. I began to join several groups at my parish, and I even attended some vocational retreats in the Major Seminary of the dioceses. Years later, I started my studies at the university; there I left aside my religion and began to live my life just like everybody around me: studying, singing and spending time with friends in parties. In other words, I had all that I thought I should have. However, my life at the university stopped abruptly, as an illness forced me to be quarantined.

During this time, and through some dreams, I had some vocational experiences. In one of the dreams I was inside my parish church. It was in ruins, and I didn't know why, but I felt very sad to see it like this. I saw some people taking a Crucifix, which was highly revered in the city, out from the rubble. As they carried it by me, I could hear a very agitated and painful breath, and a voice telling me: "help me rebuild!". Then my legs felt like butter and I could not stand, but someone dressed in white came up to me, held me and said: "Don't be afraid!"

For me, the ruins of my parish church represent the whole Church, a Church that needs builders. I associate the broken voice of the image of the crucified Christ with those who do not know him yet, and with those who suffer because they do not have a pastor with them to accompany them. The words "don't be afraid" are an invitation to accept God's call.

After that, I decided to start my priestly formation; seven years have passed. It has not been easy, but despite all the struggles, difficulties and my limitations, I have learned to live God's call with great joy every day, and to say "Yes" every morning. I can only thank and glorify Him for His patience, and for the challenges He gave me for the last 7 years; they have helped me to strengthen my vocation and to trust Him infinitely.

Cl. Adrian



It has been quite some time since the moment I entered the Society of the Divine Savior. It is not big in term of number, but it is long enough for me to stop for a while to look back and reflect upon the journey of my vocation. Before becoming a member of the Salvatorian community, I had a very strong desire to be a missionary and I also felt that I am called to the religious life. However, I was uncertain about it. Then, I decided to enter the Salvatorian community with the intention to experience community life and to clarify my desire to become a religious missionary.

Now, after nine years of living, studying, and discerning my vocation in the Society of the Divine Savior, I see a lot of positive changes in myself regarding my intellectual, physical, and spiritual life as well as my vocation. The passed years, during the different stages of formation, gave me a chance to understand myself better and helped me to experience the religious community life and the Salvatorian spirituality. They also rendered me great opportunities to cultivate, nourish, and purify my vocation. Although there were times in which I wanted to give up my vocation because of different challenges, difficulties, and doubts, with the grace of God, the support of the community, and the help of other people, I was able to overcome these challenges and to continue this journey. In fact, these difficult times made me grow even stronger and more certain about my vocation. Now, as a temporary Salvatorian, I am happy with this vocation and the decision that I made, even though it is just the starting point of a lifelong journey.

Cl. Joseph

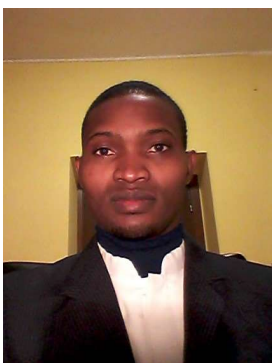


Being part of the Society of the Divine Savior is first of all a special gift that God has given to me on this earth so far. I have experienced a colorful and meaningful life: the people I live with, the people I meet every day when I go out, the apostolate I do... All are of great help to live out my vocation as a Salvatorian.

There are two points that I would like to share in this reflection that keep my vocation strong and alive, namely the relationship with Jesus and with others. It's important to have a strong personal contact with the Lord all the time. I have been trying to develop this relationship every day and I acknowledge that sometimes I went through spiritual dryness because of negligence. But to me it served as an experience that taught me never to give up easily when surrounded by trials. During the past few years, there have been many people who have helped me in my spiritual growth and I am grateful for that. I am well aware that having a strong relationship with Jesus is the most important one of all relationships.

Secondly, concerning the relationship with others, I grew up with a lot of brothers and sisters. With my fellow Salvatorians I developed a flexible and mature relationship through the formation that I received. I met and got to know many people from different places around the world living in the same mission and vision of our founder Father Francis Jordan. This is marvelous, and makes me feel happy and joyful. Besides, these people have helped me to be a good Salvatorian. All the good things that I have learned from them serve as motivations that keep me strong in my call to go forward. I would say that these two elements serve as basis for my growth in my happiness and joy of being part of the Society of the Divine Savior.

Cl. Gabriel



A call to vocation is God's initiatives, but to respond to that call is another reality that demands our responsibility. It must therefore be a shift from the worldly and egoistic "I" to the "I" that commits itself to an endless "**about-turn**", literally translated as "*I hand myself over to God*", "*I assent to*" and embrace the new community and Spiritual life.

My vocational call was not that easy to respond because of my culture, for no one in my clan has ever been involved in this kind of vocation. All are dedicated to other vocations, so in prayers God gave me the power to overcome the temptations of remaining in my comfort zone. So like Abraham I became a missionary, left everything and moved on to join the Salvatorians. Jesus Christ learned by coming on Earth and letting himself be imbued with the cultural and religious values of those to whom his service was destined. Likewise, a missionary should not begin by teaching but by learning. The missionary arrives to live intensely the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word. It is that spirituality that comes from the experience of God who is a liberator and present on the path of the impoverished.

During my nine years in the formation and studies I have been learning a lot through my prayer life, silence, meditation, sacramental life, community life; and living my vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity. It is not simple but in unity with Christ I live happily. A life of love, solidarity, prayers and brotherhood witness the risen Christ, present among the confreres. The "**I**" is, therefore, constantly united to the "**We**" and the "**We for the Mission**."

Cl. Boniface

Assisi



On February the 26th, having concluded our first exam period at the Gregoriana, we were invited by Fr. Daniele and Fr. Omar to visit the picturesque town of Assisi. Social distance was not yet required, so we crammed ourselves in the two cars and set off to the homeplace of the famous *poverello*. On the parking lot in front of the ancient town, one can already enjoy an exciting preview of the many historical building of Assisi. The Basilica of Saint Claire welcomes the visitors, while on the background the fortress *Rocca Maggiore* quietly reminds of the perilous times Assisi has traversed during its long history (picture above).

As one can expect, Saint Francis has left many traces in the town where he spent almost his entire life. The house where he was born is one the tourist hotspots (picture on the right).



The humongous Basilica of Saint Francis marked the high point of our visit (picture below). Although the splendor of the impressive building unsettled me, it was touching to see many people, young and old alike, pray at the tomb of the great saint.

At lunchtime we went to one of the many restaurants in Assisi, thus concluding our visit with typical Italian food. (On the picture starting from the left, in counterclockwise: Boniface, Lazarus, Adrian, Fr. Omar, Herbert, Joseph, Gabriel.)



The Ministries of Lector and Acolyte in the Spirit of Father Jordan



From a liturgical point of view, the minister is a person who is able to accomplish some roles for the service of God and His Church during the Eucharistic celebration. In the Church, there is a variety of ministries, however, in summary we can categorize them into two main groups. Firstly, ordained ministers such as bishops, priests, and deacons and, secondly, non-ordained ministers such as lector and acolyte. Apart from lector and acolyte, there are, however, many other non-ordained ministers depending on the nature and needs of a particular liturgical community. For instance, in some liturgies there are extraordinary ministers for the distribution of the Holy Eucharist, the ministers entrusted with the Cross during entrance and exit processions, the bread and the wine, the incense, the commentator like in the Zairean form of the Roman rite, and in charge of other liturgical matters etc.

Nonetheless, in the document «*Ministeria Quaedam*» of Pope St. Paul VI, on 15 August 1972, the Pope, speaking on ministries, insists only on the two offices of Lector and Acolyte, inasmuch as they are closely related to the two ministries of the Word and the Altar respectively. The presence of various non-ordained ministries in the Eucharistic celebration does not mean every present in a particular worship must have a specific function, but rather it indicates in the first place that liturgy is principally the work of Christ and his Church. Eucharistic celebration is a special occasion in which Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church pray to God. In his *Spiritual Diary*, Fr. Jordan says: «*In all you do, your prayers, etc., act in Jesus, through Jesus, with Jesus, esp. at Mass. Without Him you can do nothing*» (I/125; cf.1/118). These are exactly among the key words of the great doxology of the Preface. In fact, Father Jordan knew well the primacy of the Eucharistic celebration over all other Christian devotions. That is why he insists to do everything in Jesus, through Jesus, and with Jesus, words which J. Driscoll regards as the biggest Amen of the Mass and biggest Amen in the world. Also the document SC came while insisting on the liturgy as the font from which all the power of the Church flows. This is because liturgy is the principal prayer of the Church, in which participants dialogue with God, and His presence in the mysteries celebrated is more lively than we can imagine. Therefore, serving in the liturgy, is a great honor we receive freely from God through His Church. Whoever gets an opportunity to perform a certain role in the liturgy must do it seriously, knowing that he has received that honor not because of his merits but because of the mercy of God.



Adrian reading during Mass

Father Jordan had a profound understanding of the importance of the ministries he received and the roles he had to accomplish in the Church. He firmly acknowledged himself as unworthy to become a servant in the Church but because of God's mercy he could become so in order to work for God's glory and for the salvation of souls. He clearly expressed this idea on 21 July, 1878, the day he was ordained a priest, saying: «Unending thanks to God for all eternity, for having on this day digned to elevate His unworthy servant to the holy priesthood». Walking in the spirit of our Founder, is our duty as Salvatorians. In this context, therefore, we must acknowledge ourselves as unworthy servants as our founder did, to mean that the roles as ministers in the liturgy and above all as missionaries to the world have been given to us by the Church through God's mercy. Our services in the Church worship and outside liturgies, is what clearly express how deeper we understand and live the Charism of our Founder. Every stage in the Church's ministry is very important as it prepares a candidate for the following stage until he reaches the final goal, salvation. If we keep the spirit of our founder Fr. Jordan, we shall become not only good lectors, acolytes, deacons, priests, but above all true Salvatorians who humbly minister in the Church tirelessly for the Glory of God, and for our salvation and the salvation of others.

Fr. Sayon Rukurugu, sds



Front panel of the altar in the large community chapel

Lockdown photo chronicle

Needless to say, things have changed quite a bit during the past few months. Lazarus, Antonio and Herbert have been staying full time at the Motherhouse during the period of the lockdown, helping out where needed. (Selfie on the right shows Antonio with in the background Herbert.)



As the faithful are temporarily not allowed to join the liturgic celebrations, pastoral activities at our community chapel have virtually ground to a halt. During lenten season, the Way of the Cross was limited to the community members (photo below).





Even as the local faithful are currently not able to enjoy the angelic liturgical chants of the Mater Salvatoris community, song practice still continues on Monday afternoon as usual. Other community activities, such as bible sharing, meetings and formation moments remain unaffected by the pandemic. These gatherings usually take place in the library (photo below).



Religious men and women need to be creative to find solutions for today's pressing problems. Hence, since the internet connection does not reach the recreation room, the Netflix movie night was organised in the corridor.



Some more hands-on distraction was also provided amidst all the intellectual in-house labor: the entrance gate needed a new coat of paint.



Holy Mary, Mother of the Saviour, pray for us!



Wood carving sculpture in the small community chapel