

“Social Media.” Although this term may be unique to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the idea of social media is as old as humanity. It refers to the various technologies we humans use to communicate with one another: cave paintings, drums, smoke signals, semaphores, posted letters, telegraph and telephone. Today it refers more specifically to things like blogs, Twitter, Facebook, and God knows what else is coming down the pike.

Fr. Francis Jordan, the Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior was born in 1848, and he established the Salvatorian Family in 1881. It is difficult for us to imagine the world in which he grew up and began his apostolic work, a world lit only by fire. As a young man he worked laying track for the first railroad in his region. And the house where he lived in Rome for most of his adult life would not have electricity until after the turn of the century.

The heart of Fr. Jordan’s charism was to employ all ways and means, “that all might come to know the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom God had sent.” What ways and means did Fr. Jordan have in mind? What were the “social media” of his day he hoped to employ? Although the printing press was already a very old technology, by Fr. Jordan’s time small presses had become quite affordable, and printing magazines, books, small pamphlets, holy cards and vocation recruitment materials was a powerful means for him to communicate his message.

Fr. Jordan quickly embraced this technology and so began a long history of Salvatorian publications in many languages throughout the world. Here in the United States involvement with printing began by members adding inserts to German language publications. By 1909, the family-oriented publication Manna was published entirely in English. It became Catholic Youth in 1954 and lived on until 1966. Savior’s Call began in 1923, and after a number of name changes is still printed as The Hope Newsletter.

But with the inexorable rise of hot media (radio and television) which boomed in the 1950s, the attractiveness and effectiveness of print media declined sharply. Now with lap tops and digital phones we have entered a whole new world of social media. What would Fr. Jordan have made of this revolution in communication? He would have embraced it as one more new and powerful means of making God known. He would have added it to his arsenal of “all ways and means” of making the Savior known and loved.

Today, like many other orders, parishes and dioceses, Salvatorians are struggling to harness the power of the new, constantly evolving, social media. It is not easy, but in their attempts to tweet and blog and text, these Salvatorian men and women are proving themselves to be true sons and daughters of our Founder Fr. Jordan.

You will find Salvatorians in print, on the radio, on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube and more...

“Through all ways and means that the love of Christ inspires.”