



Father Bonaventura Lüthen

Bernhard Lüthen was born in Paderborn, Germany on May 5, 1846. His brother Charles became a priest and this inspired him to do the same. He was ordained as a diocesan priest on March 15, 1872. He soon founded the first Association of Catholic Mothers in the Diocese of Paderborn. To aid this new ministry he began a magazine called Monika. His literary talents were quickly noticed and he was invited to become editor of the *Ambrosius*, a magazine for priests involved in education and in the direction of groups of laity.

In the Spring of 1881 he met Father Francis Jordan and became fascinated by his ideas for founding a new religious society which would unite groups of priests and laity in spreading and defending the Catholic faith. He wrote a pamphlet on Jordan's work and became editor of *Der Missionär*, one of the magazines of the new Society. In S. Brigida in Rome on December 8, 1881, he made private vows as a member of the First Degree of the Apostolic Teaching Society, later to become the Society of the Divine Savior. In 1883 he received the habit from Father Jordan and took the religious name Bonaventura.

Father Bonaventura was the first and most important of Father Jordan's early collaborators. The new Society needed to make itself and its program better known and with his skills as a writer and editor he was just the right man for this task. In the early years he travelled extensively in the German speaking countries seeking lay collaborators, benefactors, and subscribers for the magazines of the Society.

After some time it became clear that the most important task was the education of young aspirants to the priesthood who were coming to Rome to join the Society in large numbers. In 1884 Lüthen returned to Rome from Germany and, while continuing as an editor, he became Prefect of Candidates and Novice Master. He was gradually able to hand these tasks over to others as the Society grew and he was more and more needed as the trusted representative of the Founder. He wrote a vast number of letters and instructions on behalf of Father Jordan, who knew that he could absolutely rely on his judgment. Until his death on December 10, 1911, he remained Jordan's closest collaborator and advisor.

Father Bonaventura Lüthen was considered by all his confreres to be a wise and holy man and, although his personal religious discipline was severe, the enduring impression he gave was of his "goodness and kindness." As the first disciple and the 'pen' of the Founder, he made a crucial contribution to the administration and expansion of the fledgling Society and to the fulfillment of its task of making the Savior more widely known and loved. His cause for beatification was introduced in 1943.