

**The Spiritual Pact as an Existential and Existentiell Manifestation of Intentionality,
Identification, and Interiority**

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**The Spiritual Pact of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, Founder of the
Salvatorian Family**

TODAY 1.11.91

Feast of All Saints
this Pact was made
between the Almighty and His lowest creature.

- 1) Said creature gives himself totally and for ever to his almighty Creator.
- 2) The creature gives and will give to his Creator, whatever the Creator has given, gives and will give to him.
- 3) The creature, trusting with all his might in the help of Almighty God, and not in man, submits to His reign the whole world, i.e., all persons who now or later live, so that they may know, love and serve Him, and find salvation for themselves.
- 4) The creature will also lead even the irrational creatures to the service of the Almighty.

May God Who gave the will also give the accomplishment!

The creature confidently expects these graces from the Almighty through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the B V Mary:

- 1) The Creator will clothe His creature with great sanctity, above all with humility, so that as far as possible he may be a useful tool of Divine Providence, may faithfully fulfill his promises, and after this life He will receive him into the eternal joys.
- 2) The Creator, in His omnipotence, will assist His creature with a strong arm to accomplish what he has proposed.¹

¹ Francis Jordan, SDS, *Spiritual Diary: 1875-1918*, ed. Fr. Daniel T. Pekarske, SDS, et al. (Milwaukee, WI: USA Joint Committee on History and Charism, 2011), 204-205.

Introduction

On the Solemnity of All Saints in 1891, Fr. Francis Jordan had a transcendent encounter with God that prompted him to compose his Spiritual Pact. This moment permanently affected him, filling him with the certainty that “what he expected from God would correspond to God’s plans.”² Following a decade of spiritual experiences, he discerned what was happening between him and God as an all-inclusive and sanctifying Pact that encompassed not only him but the entire world, even those beings not equipped with consciousness or human communication.³ This Pact cannot be mistaken for a contract, for Fr. Jordan saw himself as a creature utterly subjected to God, and in no position to reciprocate bargains. Rather, the Pact is a “bold statement of fact” about Divine Providence, articulating his entire spiritual perspective.⁴ His lifelong experience had taught him to have complete trust in God, and in recognition of this, Fr. Jordan would not only dedicate himself, but everything and everyone who would ever exist.

As a contemporary Salvatorian, I love and am inspired by the Pact. It made a deep impression upon me when I first discovered it as a candidate, providing a sense of fitting into something that God had long been preparing me to undertake. Yet at the same time, I cannot help but wonder why Fr. Jordan considered its inclusion in his Spiritual Diary necessary. As the founder of a religious order who had embraced the traditional means of self-dedication in the church, religious profession and holy orders, he was already thoroughly consecrated to God. Moreover, such means of grace naturally

² Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 195.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Daniel T. Pekarske, SDS, *God’s Strength Shining Through Our Human Weakness: A Character Study of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan (1848-1918)* (Milwaukee: USA Joint Committee on History and Charism, 2016), 102.

overflow into concern for others, and the restoration of all things in Christ, strongly inferred throughout the Pact, is standard eschatology.

So why did he write it? In order to answer this question, I provide **I)** a brief analysis of his interior motivations featuring the terms *existential* and *existentiell*, offering explanation of what prompted Fr. Jordan to write the Pact in the first place. Yet if I were to limit studying the Pact only to how it articulated his spiritual perspective, this paper would not accomplish its actual purpose. While building on what the Pact meant to Fr. Jordan, my intent is to go beyond that and into what it can mean to Salvatorians today. As such, through analyzing Fr. Jordan's inner promptings from a 21st century perspective, this section serves the additional purpose of laying the groundwork for the possibility of the Pact as a framework for living within and discerning the will of God.

Section **II)** builds from this vantage point, accentuating how we are to live in the world by providing an exposition of Salvatorian universality as *being in love with God*,⁵ that we may more firmly relate to the Spiritual Pact as a core articulation of who we are as Salvatorians.⁶ This section emphasizes living within an overall state of receptivity wherein which discerning the will of God becomes possible to actualize, leading into **III)** a point-by-point Lonerganian-themed analysis of the Spiritual Pact as an expression of

⁵ Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *Method in Theology*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 235. – also see footnotes 11 and 26. Universal due to the limitlessly unique ways that God loves all beings, and aligning with our charismatic availability to go anywhere and do anything whatsoever that the love of God inspires us to undertake (Cf. International Charism Commission. “Charism, Mission, Spirituality, Identity.” In *Salvatorians: Men and Women, Religious and Lay* (Society of the Divine Savior – USA Province Archives, 2001), 2. – also see footnotes 12, 16, and 46), Salvatorian universality is synonymously understood as “being in love with God” (Lonergan, *Method*, 235) throughout this paper.

⁶ Such an undertaking is admittedly speculative, and Fr. Jordan was not a systematic thinker. He saw himself very much in the spirit of the apostles, and was just doing what he believed the Holy Spirit was prompting him to do. Nonetheless, whether he was or was not aware of the type of analytical processes taking place in his interior life that I subject him to in this reflection, we can still learn much about the impulses that drive the most authentic spiritual seekers among us in an uncompromising quest for the proliferation of personal and universal sanctity. As a result, we can likewise demonstrate how to articulately utilize the Pact in a manner that increases our own spiritual potency as his spiritual sons and daughters.

intentionality, identification, and interiority. Here I describe how to use the Pact to discern ongoing decisions we will make throughout our lives, who we will make them with, and how we will embody personal holiness in bringing them to fruition. Though this is a paper primarily written for Salvatorians, the principles explored herein can be applied by anyone.

I) *Existential and Existentiell*

Fr. Jordan's desire to articulate and live out his Pact stems from a deeper, more ungraspable place than most vocational discernments, where we discover our *existential* place in the church and world. As our spiritual forebear he accomplished this, yet as author of the Pact, his motivations were arguably more *existentiell*. For Rahner, *existential* "refers to an element in man's ontological constitution precisely as human being, an element which is constitutive of his existence as man prior to his exercise of freedom. It is an aspect of concrete human nature precisely as human."⁷ This means uncovering and actualizing who we are most meant to become, which Fr. Jordan realized as priest and founder of the Salvatorians.

Existentiell, however, is more ethereal. This term "refers to the free, personal and subjective appropriation and actualization of something which can also be spoken of in abstract theory or objective concepts without such a subjective and personal realization."⁸ This means a personal appropriation of a condition for the possibility of a thing which

⁷ Karl Rahner, SJ, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, trans. William V. Dych (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1976), 16.

⁸ Rahner, *Foundations*, 16.

can be operative without knowing it is operative, that does not have to be objectified in order to be active, and becomes conceptually available to consciousness if appropriated.⁹

This concept of appropriation accurately points to what Fr. Jordan was trying to actualize – a hidden *is-ness* that is more fundamental and beyond our capacities to respond to God, even in our ordained and/or professed vocations. In other words, his vocation itself was not enough for him, for Fr. Jordan was impelled to apprehend the condition for the vocational possibility of all that exists and would exist. This is why the Spiritual Pact itself exists in the first place, for it can be implemented as a means of going beyond what can be readily known about our vocations and tapping into *being itself*, in the hopes of finding, understanding, and articulating our commitment.¹⁰ This state of being itself is the foundation upon which we will discover and discern the will of God, where we gradually become adept at discerning particular decisions we will make. As a means of understanding how we can utilize the Pact to do this, we will now examine Salvatorian universality, presented here as being in love with God.¹¹

II) Salvatorian Universality – Being in Love with God

For Salvatorians, *universality* stems from a commitment to unceasingly work toward and proclaim salvation “to all people, everywhere and at all times, and to do this through whatever ways and means the love of Christ inspires.”¹² This is a *we/me* proposition. On one hand, we are to prioritize spiritual activity for the benefit of other

⁹ Rev. Dan Pekarske, SDS, 2016, personal communication to author, May 26.

¹⁰ As Father Jordan’s spiritual progeny we are to subject ourselves to equally rigorous discernment processes. Such discernment will be applied throughout section III), where finding, understanding, and articulating our commitment respectively aligns with intentionality, identification, and interiority as mentioned in the Introduction to this paper.

¹¹ Lonergan, *Method*, 235. Also see footnotes 5 and 26.

¹² International Charism Commission, *Salvatorians*, 2. Also see footnotes 5, 16, and 46.

people. On the other, we must be inspired by the love of God to do this, for we cannot give away a spiritual experience we do not possess. As such, our commitment denotes how we must be changed in order to live out our vocations, so that all our thoughts, words, and actions “thrust to self-transcendence, in (an) actuated orientation towards the mystery of love and awe”:

Since that thrust is of intelligence to the intelligible, of reasonableness to the true and the real, of freedom and responsibility to the truly good, the experienced fulfilment of that thrust in its unrestrictedness may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality, absolute goodness and holiness. With that objectification there recurs the question of God in a new form.¹³

For the purposes of articulating Salvatorian universality as being in love with God, what question of God is being referred to above? I propose it is simply this: *How are you loving me?* This question entails how the love of God is embodied in us, and how it overflows and will continue overflowing into ministerial activity. The fact that when God answers this question it is both revelatory and clouded means that while our answer will provide clarity in an immediate and even ongoing sense, it is not definitively answered all at once and for all time without any further discernment being necessary.

As finite beings subject to infinite God, we can only know a little at any given time. For instance at the time of this writing, God has revealed that I am called to be a priest chaplain and theology teacher. As to how long this will remain the case my discernment remains clouded, for no one can accurately predict the future with certainty, and to attempt doing so would run contrary to the fact that God is the Object to whom we are subject. God is in charge, and we are not. Salvatorian universality manifests in the vast universe he has created, and not in the nanosized realms of our unquestioned

¹³ Lonergan, *Method*, 254.

preferences and prejudices. The question of how God is loving us will therefore recur in new forms many times throughout our lives, as we continue discerning how to live out and implement our universality.

No matter how it recurs, the answer to the question of God represents “the objective of the pure desire to know,”¹⁴ embodying a desire that “is the prior and enveloping drive that carries cognitional process from sense and imagination to understanding, from understanding to judgment,” and “from judgment to the complete context of correct judgments that is named knowledge.”¹⁵ It is therefore evident that for Lonergan the love of God is not merely affective but all-encompassing, including attributes such as intelligibility, truth and reality, and experiential fulfilment in discerning the will of God, even when it at first seemed inscrutable. This process is not fixed but ongoing, happening not all at once, but dynamically recurring throughout our entire lives.

Accordingly, in seeking to be vastly more impactful in living out his commitment to God, the Pact is the divinely inspired result of Fr. Jordan reaching into the profoundest depths of his own being as a metonym for being itself, and to the best of his capacity articulating how our unrestricted experiential interchange of being in love with God is what it actually means to be Salvatorian. By giving answer to the recurring question of how God is loving us, the Pact brings us into a state of being that transports our intellects through their creative, comprehensive, and discerning powers. This ontology is further realized as a state of universality¹⁶ wherein which everything we are and will be naturally

¹⁴ Bernard Lonergan, SJ, *The Lonergan Reader*, ed. Elizabeth A. Morelli, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 198.

¹⁵ Lonergan, *Reader*, 199.

¹⁶ As in footnotes 5, 12, and 46, this universality is always informed by proclaiming the Gospel to everyone, everywhere and always, through all inspired and discernible ways and means. International Charism Commission, *Salvatorians*, 2.

flows into ministry, for this “pure desire” to understand is “all-inclusive” in how it manifests through ideas and activity as an outpouring of love from our experience of God.¹⁷

The universality of *being* refers not only to “all that is known,” but “all that remains to be known.”¹⁸ There will always be more to learn and experience, and we are to ceaselessly continue responding to and growing within the love of God as he shows us how to exist in the world. This love changes us, equipping us to be more than we are. For example, sometimes God calls us into a ministry placement that seems to be a perfect fit which magnifies our interpersonal and professional strengths, and at other times leads us in a direction that does not initially make any sense whatsoever. We may have to dig very deep to discover hitherto unplumbed depths from which to respond to what God desires of us. When we do this we consciously communicate with God as beings who reside in his love. As a result our hearts expand, and we personally demonstrate Salvatorian universality, allowing the question of God to recur in new forms throughout our entire lives. God takes the lead, and we respond in love to the one in whom we live, move, and have our being.¹⁹

Accordingly, now that we have analyzed Fr. Jordan’s interior impulses as author of the Pact and provided a means of understanding how it articulates our universality as Salvatorians as a state of being in love with God, what remains is to describe how it shows forth our *intentionality*, *identification*, and *interiority*, all of which are to be

¹⁷ Lonergan, *Reader*, 200-201. Though I concur with Lonergan’s stipulation that “the objective of the pure desire is the content of knowing rather than the act,” that only reinforces the point I am making regarding relevant action as described. We can neither think, speak, nor act without at least somewhat actualizing “being (as) the objective of the pure desire to know” (ibid, 200). However, when such being-ness becomes established, it cannot help but inform subsequent activity in any rational moral agent.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. Acts 17:28.

applied in a loving service of evangelizing the entire world. Therefore, in the appropriately named tables, a point-by-point Lonerganian-themed analysis of the Spiritual Pact follows.

III) The Spiritual Pact as an Expression of *Intentionality, Identification, and Interiority*

Intentionality – *finding our commitment*

<i>Spiritual Pact</i>	1) Said creature gives himself totally and for ever to his almighty Creator.	2) The creature gives and will give to his Creator, whatever the Creator has given, gives and will give to him.	3) The creature, trusting with all his might in the help of Almighty God, and not in man, submits to His reign the whole world, i.e., all persons who now or later live, so that they may know, love and serve Him, and find salvation for themselves.	4) The creature will also lead even the irrational creatures to the service of the Almighty. May God Who gave the will also give the accomplishment! ²⁰
<i>Consciousness</i>	1. Attentiveness to the data	2. Insights into them	3. Judgments that insights are correct or not	4. Decisions to act in conformity with right understanding ²¹
<i>Thematization</i>	1. Adverted to	2. Understood (<i>meaning found</i>)	3. Judged to be true (<i>truth found</i>)	4. Appreciated (both secular and transcendent <i>values found</i>) ²²

²⁰ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 204.

²¹ Lonergan, *Reader*, 491.

²² Louis Roy, OP, *Mystical Consciousness* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 20, 43.

Whether he thought of it this way or not, Fr. Jordan at least intuitively understood that committing our *intentionality* (the manner in which we deliberately show forth purpose), involves a data set, which he initially outlined in his Pact through points 1) – 4) in the table above. By lining up each of his points with Lonergan’s four levels of insight of 1. Attentiveness to the data, 2. Insights into them, 3. Judgments that insights are correct or not, and 4. Decisions to act in conformity with right understanding, Fr. Jordan’s intentionality for the Pact can be revealed in an order of increasing comprehension, with the result of finding our commitment.²³ By this I mean how to discern and act on particular decisions we will make throughout our lives.

The *first* thing to do here is acknowledge our status – God is the Creator and object of faith, and we the creatures are his obedient subjects. This is the datum to which we must be adverted in every conceivable way, and no further movement along the levels of insight is possible without completely interiorizing this basic fact. *Second*, the meaning of the data is that we should be giving ourselves entirely to God, accepting a personal stake in Divine Providence. Understanding this insight gives sufficient meaning to keep moving into judgment, which is where further insight reveals a *third* step.

This third step is where we acknowledge the fact that God provides salvation and creates all that is, entrusting to him everyone who lives and will ever live, that they may find salvation. We then arrive at the *fourth* level, where sacred and secular values alike are appreciated as expressions of God’s vast imponderability, and we additionally

²³ It can be argued that all of Fr. Jordan’s points 1) – 4) represent Lonergan’s 4th level of acting in conformity with right understanding. However, the context in which I give them here is in an order of increasing comprehension, where through the row labeled *Consciousness* that features attentiveness, insightfulness, judgment, and decisions, automatically leads into the culminating decision of 4), with the accompanying declaration that the God who gave the will also gives the accomplishment. The row labeled *Thematization* is included to supplement the descriptions of how 1) – 4) are to be integrally understood as they are presented.

commit to him the entire created reality, including non-human life. The manner in which we discern our particular decisions is inseparable from being situated within the context of all life, and finding our commitment and trusting that God will provide all necessary fulfillments of his will leads to *identification* with this commitment as such, which is most fully understood as love for God, oneself, and all others.

Before jumping right into the next table, however, a demonstration of this discernment process is in order. How is God loving us? I again refer to ministry placements, using mine as an example. The ongoing answer to the question of how God is loving me is by forming me as a priest chaplain and theology teacher. Though I would be happy to continue in this direction indefinitely, chances are that the province (or perhaps the generalate) will eventually ask me to consider something different.

When this happens to any of us, we must *first* remember that God takes the lead, and that we have existentially given ourselves over to him through taking religious vows and holy orders. The we/me experiencing of this life is such that the manner he communicates his will to us does not merely recur through our own private insights, but also through his hierarchical representatives in the church. Because of this, even in spite of themselves, we must take them seriously as a means of revealing the will of God to us. *Second*, given that the nature of religious life is to keep giving oneself to God as he continually manifests in and through us, we must be willing to take personal responsibility in providentially manifesting his will in the world. This denotes accepting the need to navigate through any natural circumstances that grace builds upon while God brings us through all accompanying joy and suffering. Sometimes it will be rough.²⁴

²⁴ Nonetheless, we must consider the indispensable value of perseverance: “My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your

Third, there is much more at stake than what we want. God is the creator and savior of everyone and everything, and entrusting to him all that lives or will live involves placing our boots on the ground and fulfilling the greatest needs as they are presented to us. We must judge our steps accordingly, for when we arrive at the *fourth* level of deciding on a course of action, we are not only acting within the realm of religion, but of all life. The church manifests in the world, and whether realized or not, we are embodying sacred values in an increasingly secular realm. Yet the entire world belongs to God, and committing all created reality to him also means we must know how to function effectively and appropriately within it. God trains and qualifies the people he calls, and we have no other choice worth making but to let his best shine through our best, and even our worst, no matter what we decide, or with whom we identify.

Identification – *understanding our commitment*

<i>Spiritual Pact</i>	The creature confidently expects these graces from the Almighty through the merits of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the intercession of the B V Mary: ²⁵
<i>Method in Theology</i>	Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits or qualifications or conditions or reservations. Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfilment of that capacity. ²⁶

faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing” (James 1:2-4).

²⁵ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 205.

²⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 235. As in footnotes 5 and 11, being in love with God is synonymous with Salvatorian universality.

Identification is given here as a sense of belonging with the people in our lives. This is because discernment extends both to our decisions themselves, and the people affected by them. As such, our relationships help us to understand our commitment, for we are made to live in community. We need healthy, loving relationships, and our intentionality (showing forth purpose as in the previous table) is inseparable from the people with whom we identify. As Salvatorians, we authentically understand our commitment of being in love with God when we embrace this fundamental fact. Even hermits live in a communal context, periodically returning to engage their religious brothers and sisters. For Lonergan, responding to God in community meant unrestricted “self-surrender.”²⁷ By invoking the intercession of Mary in a spirit of confident expectation, Fr. Jordan’s self-surrender shows not only the need to recognize being in relationship with the visible persons in our lives, but even those who cannot normally be seen (as in the communion of saints).

Visible or otherwise, in the spirit of Fr. Jordan taking the name of Mary and centrally locating it within his own religious name, she is given here as the heart of what it means to be in love with God. As the Mother of God whose relationships included direct linkage with the Holy Trinity, no one has ever made or could make a bolder demonstration of receiving and showing forth grace than her, and she is the blueprint for unrestricted self-surrender in community.²⁸ Mary’s example of self-transcendence demonstrates moving beyond whatever questions she may have articulated,²⁹ with the result of all of them being answered and fulfilled by her permanent commitment to

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ As in being exclusively human, and not fully divine and human like Jesus.

²⁹ Among other inquiries, the question: “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (Luke 1:34), immediately springs to mind.

communally reside in divine love.

This is how Salvatorians are to understand our commitment, where great confidence in God and the intercession of Mary results in a joyful state of receiving and knowing grace, and to know in this context is to unrestrictedly know love. We thereby experience a broadening of our universality, which first overflowed from Fr. Jordan's apostolic desire to "lead all people towards perfect love."³⁰ The joy he discovered in God, along with "his readiness for constant dedication," led him to a more profound level of commitment, propelling him to write a maxim appropriate to this "New Era" of expansion: "As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love Him above all things, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest."³¹

As a creature of God devoted to Mary and inspired by her example, Fr. Jordan's confident expectation of unconfined, boundless love as articulated through the Pact represents an identification that transcends self, proper to fulfilling our commitment as Salvatorians. The universality that defines us simultaneously demands that we keep our identities open at the top, so that ministerial activity continues unrestrictedly defining us throughout our entire lives. We do this in defiance of an all-too-human tendency to put a lid on who we are at a particular stage in our vocations, when doing so could come at the expense of discontinuing spiritual growth. Our universal Salvatorian charism demands that our hearts remain open, and this love, which prompted our founder to write: "All, Oh Father, all, all, Oh God all, Oh Jesus, all, Oh Savior of the World, I desire most ardently to save all,"³² must be experienced and lived by all of us. We understand this commitment through the decisions we make, by identifying with God in community, and

³⁰ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 201.

³¹ *Ibid*, 201-202.

³² *Ibid*, 202.

as we will see in the following table, through vigorously developing our interior lives.

Interiority – *articulating our commitment*

<i>Spiritual Pact</i>	1) The Creator will clothe His creature with great sanctity, above all with humility, so that as far as possible he may be a useful tool of Divine Providence, may faithfully fulfill his promises, and after this life He will receive him into the eternal joys. ³³
<i>Method in Theology</i>	1. Human/Secular Interiority/other interiority ³⁴
<i>Spiritual Pact</i>	2) The Creator, in His omnipotence, will assist His creature with a strong arm to accomplish what he has proposed. ³⁵
<i>Method in Theology</i>	2. Mystical/Transcendent Religious interiority/transcendence, religion ³⁶
<i>Religious interiority</i> is a furtherance of the <i>other interiority</i> (consciousness that accompanies all human acts and states). Limited meaning and value move toward infinite meaning and value. ³⁷	

Given here as cultivating our permanent life commitments, *interiority* denotes one's inner nature or character. Articulating our commitment refers to the consequent experience of our interior lives as described below. Though we all have inner lives where

³³ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 205.

³⁴ Lonergan, *Method*, 541-542.

³⁵ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 205.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Method*, 591.

³⁷ Roy, *Consciousness*, 42.

we meaningfully encounter God, interiority becomes perfected through 1) discerning and acting on decisions (intentionality), and 2) cultivating a strong sense of belonging with the people in our lives (identification), as an amalgamated matrix toward 3) actualizing the highest possibility of our commitments by being holy and becoming *saints*.³⁸ This is what it means to articulate our commitment, for we are all called to be saints who show forth the love of God and meaningfully communicate about it with other people. We cannot do this without completely offering up our lives in a spirit of *humility*.

Understood here as right self-realization, humility means knowing who we are and who we are not and being at peace with it, for we are all called to be tools of Divine Providence.

Our interiority matures and expands when we recognize our created status, magnifying humility as a result of finding and understanding our commitment. Yet we can only know a little at once, and God finds it hilarious when we tell him our long-range plans. The recurring question of how God is loving us mandates openness to change, for beneath the root of who we are and how we have been called is a deeper, more primordial commitment – namely, to be tools of Divine Providence as aforementioned. We simply do not know how even our permanent commitments will look in the broadest possible scope, and the right realization of humility reminds us of our place – God remains in charge, and we remain his subjects.

Our interior lives are thereby unilaterally marked with God-given sanctity and especially humility, that our capacity to respond to Divine Providence, keep our word,

³⁸ “Fortified by so many and such powerful means of salvation, all the faithful, whatever their condition or state, are called by the Lord, each in his own way, to that perfect holiness whereby the Father Himself is perfect” (*LG* 11).

and enjoy the beatific vision is assured. As “the foundation of prayer,”³⁹ humility is given preference, for it is the foundation of contemplation – this gift is a grace that “can be accepted only in humility and poverty.”⁴⁰ Building on contemplation, any consequent apostolic activity naturally leads into and is inseparable from human and secular activity,⁴¹ and our humility-based covenantal “relationship established by God within our hearts”⁴² opens us to an interiority that “spontaneously reveals itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control.”⁴³

These interior phenomena express themselves in theory and common sense alike, allowing for the emergence of an *other interiority*, where the “gift of God’s love” becomes its own realm.⁴⁴ In this divinely created space of “prayer and self-denial,” God seems to withdraw us from a typified experience of theory and common sense and into a “cloud of unknowing,” only to intensify, purify, and clarify our experience of him,⁴⁵ finally returning us to our familiar surroundings transformed to carry out divine service. At this level of participation, we become more apt to receive the free gift of grace, that God may assist us in our Salvatorian mission of proclaiming the Gospel to everyone, everywhere, and always, through all ways and means.⁴⁶ Here we experience our charism in its fullness, where the mystical life increasingly moves us from limited meaning and

³⁹ CCC 2559.

⁴⁰ CCC 2713.

⁴¹ This is because “human experience illuminates for us that love is not only supernatural, but is also...familial and civic” and hence secular. “Once that affirmation is made, the elements of love having to do with the supernatural and those having to do with the natural can be distinguished in terms of the restrictedness or unrestrictedness of the dynamic state. This allows for the adjudication of statements” that “seem to compress the two realms into one another.” Dr. Jeremy W. Blackwood. *And Hope Does Not Disappoint: Love, Grace, and Subjectivity in the Work of Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2017), 219.

⁴² Blackwood, *Hope*, 219.

⁴³ Lonergan, *Method*, 541.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 541-542.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 542.

⁴⁶ Cf. International Charism Commission, *Salvatorians*, 2. Also see footnotes 5, 12, and 16.

value toward infinite meaning and value.⁴⁷ We are thereby rendered capable to receive God as “meaning and life in full actuality,” for “meaning and life are completely one only in God.”⁴⁸

Conclusion

The Spiritual Pact reaches out beyond the ecclesiastical realm, deep into the heart of reality where God is directly encountered. As such, it is a potent formula that gives voice to our ungraspable *existentiell* longings that not even holy orders or religious profession can provide, for it articulates not only the thing to which we are called, but the condition for the possibility of the call in the first place. The same impulses that drove our spiritual forebear still exist in the Salvatorians today, who seek to meaningfully live out our universal mission to spread the Gospel in every possible manner of which we are or are not presently aware. Our state of being where our thoughts and words naturally flow into ministerial actions directly leads to a universality where Fr. Jordan’s “New Era”⁴⁹ becomes a renewed era for all of us, always and everywhere, for all time.

In the final analysis this is why the Spiritual Pact exists, for it uncovers the core of who we are as Salvatorians, that we may become the contemplative apostles we are meant to be. Through thereby participating “in the order of the whole created cosmos,” the world becomes irrevocably transformed in the loving image of God.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Roy, *Consciousness*, 42.

⁴⁸ Edith Stein, OCD, *Finite and Eternal Being: an Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being: the Collected Works of Edith Stein*, trans. Kurt Reinhardt (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002), 380.

⁴⁹ Jordan, *Spiritual Diary*, 201.

⁵⁰ Blackwood, *Hope*, 221.