

Feast of Blessed Mary of the Apostles

September Reflection by Fr. Paul Portland, SDS

September 5th is the feast of Blessed Mary of the Apostles, who cooperated with Blessed Francis Jordan in founding the Salvatorian Sisters in 1888. She was a remarkable woman who has inspired generations of Salvatorians. I would like to share two things that I have learned from reflection on her life.



The first is that, while rules and guidelines are important, we can't be controlled by them: we have to leave room for exceptions and the Holy Spirit. I have been on the Society's formation team for many years, and we have always been reluctant to accept anyone who has been in multiple communities. Yet, Blessed Mary of the Apostles had been in two communities before she met Francis Jordan and looked into a couple more. Why? She felt called by the Spirit to be active in ministry, to be involved with men and women working together to bring the goodness and kindness of Christ to the world. Religious communities of women, at that time, were basically contemplative and, while some were involved in ministry such as teaching school, their lifestyle was very cloistered. That is not what she was called to. If our rules or guideline were strictly followed in her case, she never would have been admitted. Lesson: leave room for the Spirit.

Second, Blessed Mary could have become very discouraged, but she didn't: when she couldn't find a community to fit what the Spirit was calling her to, she started a ministry herself, setting up a community living situation for poor, working women, giving them the support needed to survive. That is what she was doing when the Spirit brought her and Francis Jordan together. Lesson: don't give up, be patient, and the Spirit will lead you where you are to go. Her joy can be captured in the poem "Lyric," which can be found [here](#).



As we celebrate the feast of Blessed Mary of the Apostles, let us thank the Spirit, who always accompanies us. Blessed Mary of the Apostles, pray for us!

Fr. Paul, SDS



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