



Son of Georg Mathias Sarkander and Helene Kornicz Sarkander. Born in a time and place in the midst of the turmoil of the Protestant Reformation. His father died when Jan was still young, and the family moved to Pribor. He married, but his wife died when they were young, and they had no children.

Educated by Jesuits at Prague, receiving a master of philosophy degree in 1603. Studied theology in Austria. Ordained in 1607 at Grozin. Curate at Boskowitz in 1613. Parish priest at Olmütz in 1616. There he became the center of a struggle for the hearts and souls of the local people; he was supported by Baron von Labkowitz of Moravia, but bitterly opposed by the wealthy anti-Catholic landowner Bitowsky von Bystritz.

The year 1618 saw the start of the Thirty Years War between Catholic and Protestant armies. When Protestant forces occupied Hollenschau, Jan was briefly exiled to Poland, but returned to minister to his oppressed parish flock. Polish forces moved into the area in 1620, and battle seemed imminent. Jan visited the field commander, carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance as a shield and chastisement. No battles were fought in the area of Hollenschau.

Siezing the opportunity to brand him a spy, and thus explain the lack of attack by the Polish troops, his enemy von Bystritz denounced Father Jan as a traitor. Jan was arrested, taken to Olmütz, and tortured for a confession, for revenge, and to get him to break the seal of the confessional and supply damaging information about his patron and parishioner Baron von Labkowitz. Sarkander was racked, beaten and murdered, but he clung to his faith and gave his tormentors nothing.