

## – BLESSED FRANCIS JORDAN –



Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan – founder of the Salvatorian Family – was born as John Baptist Jordan on June 16, 1848, in Gurtweil, Germany, a small town in the Black Forest area of the southwestern part of the country, just a few miles from the border of Switzerland. Even in his youth, Jordan was known to be a devout young man who often spent time in private prayer.

While working as a laborer and painter-decorator traveling throughout his homeland, Jordan became keenly aware of the difficult spiritual situation of the people in his homeland. Because the Church had been limited in its mission by the government (in what became known as the Kulturkampf) people were turning away from God and the practice of their faith. This only strengthened Jordan's faith and he began to sense a call to the priesthood. On July 21, 1878, he was ordained a priest in Freiburg, Germany, and because he had a talent for languages, his bishop sent him to Rome, and later to the Holy Land, for advanced studies. Jordan became fluent in many languages, including Syrian, Aramaic, Coptic, Arabic, Hebrew and Greek.

But Jordan was sensing that something else was in store for his future. He began thinking about ways to combat the growing disinterest in spirituality and religion. In September 1880, Jordan met privately with Pope Leo XIII in the Vatican, where he outlined his plan to begin a society devoted to spreading the teachings of the faith. The Pope gave Jordan his blessing to begin creating such an organization. On December 8, 1881, Father Jordan and two others professed private vows as members of the new foundation. They were soon joined by Therese von Wüllenweber, now known as Blessed Mary of the Apostles since her beatification in 1968. Membership in the new foundation grew, structures changed, and missionaries were sent out to all corners of the globe. In time, Father Jordan's and Mother Mary's communities evolved into the three branches that make up the Salvatorian Family: the priests and brothers of the Society of the Divine Savior, the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, and the International Community of the Divine Savior (Lay Salvatorians). The name "Salvatorian" comes from the Latin word < Salvator > meaning "Savior." With a bold, unique and forward-looking vision within the Church, Salvatorians – men and women, religious and laity – work together in mission to bring the Gospel of the Savior to all people throughout the world. Father Jordan and Mother Mary fostered within their followers an unshakable trust in Divine Providence – that God would be with them and guide them in their variety of ministries. That trust remains strong in us still!

The Motherhouse of the Society is just down the street from St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The Motherhouse of the Sisters is nearby, atop one of the great hills of the city. Globally today, more than two thousand Salvatorians – priests, sisters, brothers, and lay members – work to continue the mission of Father Francis and Mother Mary: "To proclaim the goodness of kindness of Jesus, the Savior, by all ways and means the love of God inspires." Fr. Francis Jordan died in Tifers, Switzerland, on September 8, 1918, and was buried in the local church. In 1956, his body was transferred to Rome and is now entombed in a special chapel in the Motherhouse of the Society. On March 19, 1999, Pope John Paul II visited the community and prayed at the tomb of Father Jordan. In 2011, the Vatican published the Decree on the Heroicity of His Virtues and declared Father Jordan "Venerable." On June 19, 2020, Pope Francis declared that a miracle in Brazil, gained through the intercession of Father Jordan, was authentic and his beatification was approved. As of May 15, 2021, he is "Blessed Francis Jordan." His feast day will be celebrated annually on July 21, the anniversary of his ordination.

### **The Miracle**

Expecting a baby in 2014, a young couple in Jundiá, Brazil, was informed by several medical doctors and specialists that their unborn child was suffering from an incurable bone disease (skeletal dysplasia). Being members of a group of Lay



Salvatorians, the parents began to pray through the intercession of Venerable Francis Jordan, inviting other members of the Salvatorian Family to join them. The child was born completely healthy on September 8, 2014 – the Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Mother, and the anniversary of Fr. Francis Jordan’s death. After the required canonical procedures had been successfully completed, the Holy Father – Pope Francis – declared that this miraculous healing was worked by God through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan and his beatification was approved and scheduled for May 15, 2021, at the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome.

### **A Prayer for the Intercession of Blessed Francis Jordan**

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, you called Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan to be your apostle, to make God known and loved by all people everywhere, using all the means your love inspires. You filled him with universal apostolic zeal, with a deep trust in God’s loving providence, with a profound spirit of prayer, with a sincere devotion to Mary, Mother of the Savior, and with the courage to follow you, even into the mystery of the Cross. Grant also to me the grace to proclaim the Gospel in this spirit, and make me an effective apostle in today’s world. Through the intercession of Blessed Francis Jordan, I pray to you for my special needs ... (pause to include your personal intention). I make this prayer through you, my Savior, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen.

From the writings of Blessed Francis Jordan: “If we want to accomplish great things, we must have great trust. Human misery is so great that we can do nothing without the grace of God. When we are separated from the help that comes from above, when we have little or no trust, what will we be able to do for those who cannot even pronounce the name of Jesus without God’s grace? How much less will we be able to do great work for God’s glory? We are convinced that we hope for everything from God, so also we must have unshakable trust in God. In any misery, we look to God from whom we await our help.” (In a talk to the community, June 1894) “I want to tell you my deepest desire: that all of you endeavor always, more and more, to deepen in love of the Cross. Study the Cross and suffering, study the sacred Scriptures in order to know the sublimity of suffering and to become convinced of this – that the works of God flourish only in the shadow of the Cross. Become lovers of the Cross. You know that our dear Savior saved the world through his Cross. Why would we then choose another way?” (In a letter to the Sisters, 1898)