



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2021

CONTACT: Sue Kadrich

414-258-1735

**BEATIFICATION CEREMONY SET FOR SALVATORIANS' FOUNDER
'Venerable' Father Francis Jordan soon to be called 'Blessed'**

Milwaukee, Wis. – The Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, Italy will be the site of the beatification of Salvatorian Founder, Venerable Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan. The ceremony will take place on May 15, 2021.

Fr. Jordan's path to beatification began in 1942, when documentation of his life and works was sent to the Vatican for review. After Fr. Jordan was bestowed with the title "Servant of God," Salvatorians helped spread his reputation of holiness with more and more people around the world.

In 2011 Pope Benedict XVI officially announced that Fr. Jordan "lived a holy life," acknowledged the "heroicity of his virtues" and declared him "Venerable." The next steps – testimony and confirmation of a miracle – were needed before Fr. Jordan could be approved for beatification. On June 19, 2020 Pope Francis declared the authenticity of a miracle through the intercession of Fr. Jordan.

The Miracle

In 2014, medical specialists informed a young couple in Brazil that their unborn child had an incurable bone disease, skeletal dysplasia. The couple, who were Lay Salvatorians, invited fellow Salvatorian Family members to pray with them through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan. On September 8, 2014 – Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Mother and anniversary of Fr. Jordan's death – their daughter was born completely healthy. After verifying all canonical requirements, Pope Francis declared a miraculous healing worked by God through Fr. Jordan's intercession. This official decree was the final step on his path to beatification.

"His beatification will reaffirm for the universal Church that the pursuit of holiness and salvation is only possible when we overcome our differences and place our trust in the unconditional mercy and providence of God," says Father Jeff Wocken, SDS, who leads the USA Province of Salvatorian priests and brothers headquartered in Milwaukee.

The Salvatorian Story

John Baptist Jordan was born on June 16, 1848 in Gurtweil, Germany, a small town in the Black Forest region. For his work as a laborer and painter-decorator, he traveled throughout his homeland. In his travels, he saw how government constraints – known as the “Kulturkampf” – discouraged Roman Catholics from practicing their faith. It only strengthened Jordan’s faith, however, and on July 21, 1878 he was ordained to the priesthood in Freiburg, Germany.

Fr. Jordan pondered how to combat the growing void in spirituality and religion. In September 1880, he met with Pope Leo XIII and outlined his vision to found a society devoted to teaching of the faith. For the times, Fr. Jordan’s vision was bold: men and women, religious and lay, working together as equals to bring the Gospel of the Savior to all people everywhere.

The pope gave Jordan his blessing, and on December 8, 1881 Fr. Jordan and two others professed private vows as members of the Apostolic Teaching Society. Eventually, Therese Von Wülleweber joined them. Together with Fr. Jordan, she would co-found the Sisters of the Divine Savior and lead the congregation as Mother Mary of the Apostles for 19 years. As Fr. Jordan’s followers grew in numbers, they were sent as missionaries around the world.

Fr. Jordan died in Tafers, Switzerland on September 8, 1918 and was buried in the local church. In 1956, his body was moved to Rome and entombed in a special chapel in the Society Motherhouse. On March 19, 1999, Pope John Paul II visited and prayed at Fr. Jordan’s tomb.

The Salvatorian Family

Today, more than 2,000 priests and brothers, sisters and Lay Salvatorian women and men carry out Fr. Jordan’s mission in a variety of ministries on six continents. They are known as the three branches of the Salvatorian Family: Society of the Divine Savior Priests and Brothers; Sisters of the Divine Savior Congregation; and International Community of the Divine Savior, or Lay Salvatorians. Fr. Wocken explains, “Fr. Jordan valued universality, inclusiveness and collaboration as essential to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel throughout the world.”