

# THE LIFE OF FATHER FRANCIS JORDAN



**Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan**, 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 and he 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 was known to have a talent for languages, he was sent to Rome by his bishop for advanced language studies. He became fluent in 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 witnessed the Profession of Vows made by his first followers. This marked the beginning of the *Society of the Divine Savior*. After working several years with **Therese von Wüllenweber** (now known as *Blessed Mary of the Apostles* after her beatification in 1968), they founded a community of women in their shared cause, and on December 8, 1888, Jordan witnessed her Profession of Vows. She was known in the community as Mother Mary. This marked the beginning of the *Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior*. Together, the members of their communities became known as "**Salvatorians**" – from the Latin word < *salvator* > meaning "Savior." The original plan of Father Francis and Mother Mary was to bring lay men and women into the work and mission of their community as well, but this didn't fit the vision of the Church at the time, so it wasn't permitted. Only after the completion of the Second Vatican Council was the dream of Father Francis and Mother Mary fully realized when, in the early 1970's, the first *Lay Salvatorians* made their formal commitment. Finally, the **Salvatorian Family** was complete.

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. Today, more than two thousand Salvatorians around the world continue the mission of Father Francis and Mother Mary: "***To proclaim the goodness of kindness of Jesus, the Divine Savior, by all ways and means the love of God inspires.***"

Fr. Francis Jordan died in Tavers, 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. Soon he will be known as "***Blessed Francis Jordan.***"



*The miracle attributed to Father Jordan's intercession is declared authentic. The beatification of our Founder is set. We await a date and place for that beatification to take place.*

The following announcement was posted publicly on our websites on June 19, 2020:



**VENERABLE FRANCIS JORDAN**

Soon to be called  
"Blessed Francis Jordan"

## **GREAT NEWS FROM ROME**

Today, June 19, 2020, Pope Francis has officially approved the promulgation of the decree acknowledging the miracle attributed to our Founder - Fr. Francis Jordan.

The miracle: A young couple who were expecting a baby in 2014 in Jundiá, Brazil, were informed by several medical doctors and specialists that their unborn child was suffering an incurable bone disease (skeletal dysplasia). Being members of a group of Lay Salvatorians, the parents began to pray through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God Francis Jordan, and they invited other members of the Salvatorian Family to join them in prayer.

The child was born completely healthy on September 8, 2014, the Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Mother, and the anniversary of Fr. 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 Father Jordan.

Today's declaration by the Holy Father opens definitively the way to Father Jordan's beatification. As soon as the date and place of the beatification are announced by the Holy See, we will announce it.

This artist's rendering (*newly-done*) will be the official portrait for Jordan's beatification:



Soon to be known as:

***"Blessed Francis Jordan"***

# LEAVING HOME ...

Because of World War I, in May 1915, Father Jordan and other German-born Salvatorians left Rome to live in Switzerland. The Italian government could no longer guarantee their safety had they stayed. This was a difficult move for the Founder.

The Salvatorian Sisters in Rome were able to remain there until early 1918, but then the Generalate and German Sisters had to move from Rome to Meran, then to Vienna, then to Stockern, and back to Meran. It was only in 1923 that they returned to Rome.

*Final photos from the life of Father Jordan –*



What has – unfortunately – become a lasting portrait of Fr. Jordan is the photo taken of him on the rooftop of the Society's Motherhouse in Rome, shortly before they left for Fribourg, Switzerland. His serious composure in the photo suggests how painful this was for him. He didn't know it then, but he would never return to Rome.

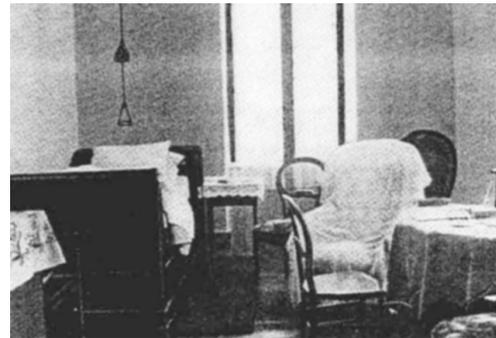


A late-in-life photo of Father Francis Jordan.



**Dr. Treyer**

**Treated Fr. Jordan  
in his final days**



**The hospital room in Tafers where  
Fr. Jordan died.**



Father Jordan lying in state.

# THE LAST DAYS OF FATHER FRANCIS JORDAN

Throughout much of his adult life, Fr. Jordan had been plagued with stomach issues. Certain foods caused him difficulties, and stressful situations manifested themselves through stomach ulcers. The move to Switzerland in 1915 took a heavy toll on the Founder. Being separated from his homeland and his beloved Rome, he was a man in deep pain.

## - 1918 -

- Toward the end of March, Fr. Jordan began experiencing severe abdominal pains. The doctor diagnosed it as stomach cancer.

- By the end of April, Fr. Jordan was bedridden. He could get up only occasionally to celebrate Mass.

- **May 27** - A telegram arrived from Rome stating that the Pope was granting Fr. Jordan his apostolic blessing.

- **May 28** - After suffering a severe and lengthy attack, Fr. Jordan was anointed.

- **June 25** - Fr. Jordan said Mass for the last time.

- **August 26** - Fr. Jordan was transferred to the hospital in nearby Tafers, under the care of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul.

- **August 31** - Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer (*the second Superior General of the Society*) had a final lengthy visit with Fr. Jordan in his hospital room.

- **September 1** - Fr. Pancratius was told by the doctor, "There is no hope for recovery. It is only a matter now of easing his suffering."

- **September 6** - Fr. Jordan asked Fr. Pancratius and the other priests in his room to pray the Prayers for the Dying in his presence.

- **SEPTEMBER 8 - Feast of the Birth of Mary** - 8:00 PM - Fr. Pancratius, at Fr. Jordan's bedside, noticed suddenly that Fr. Jordan stopped breathing. The Founder took several deep breaths while Fr. Pancratius anointed him. He took one final breath – and he was gone. Fr. Pancratius noted the time on Fr. Jordan's watch which was on the bedside table. It read 8:02.



Francis Mary  
of the Cross Jordan

### PRAYER FOR THE INTERCESSION OF FRANCIS MARY OF THE CROSS JORDAN (1848-1918)

Lord Jesus Christ,  
Savior of the World,  
you called Father Francis 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 mys-  
tery of the Cross.

Grant also to me, his follower,  
the grace to proclaim the Gospel  
in this spirit and make me an  
effective apostle in today's world.  
Through the intercession of your  
servant Father Francis Jordan,  
I ask you for my special needs....

[Pause to recall personal intentions]

I make this prayer through  
Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior,  
you who live and reign with the  
Father and the Holy Spirit now  
and forever. Amen.

*For favors received through the  
intercession of the Servant of God,*

**Father Francis**  
*in gratitude please inform:*  
Salvatorians (in Rome),  
Via della Conciliazione 51,  
00193 Rome, Italy  
*and:*  
Salvatorians  
1735 Hi-Mount Boulevard,  
Milwaukee, WI 53208-1720



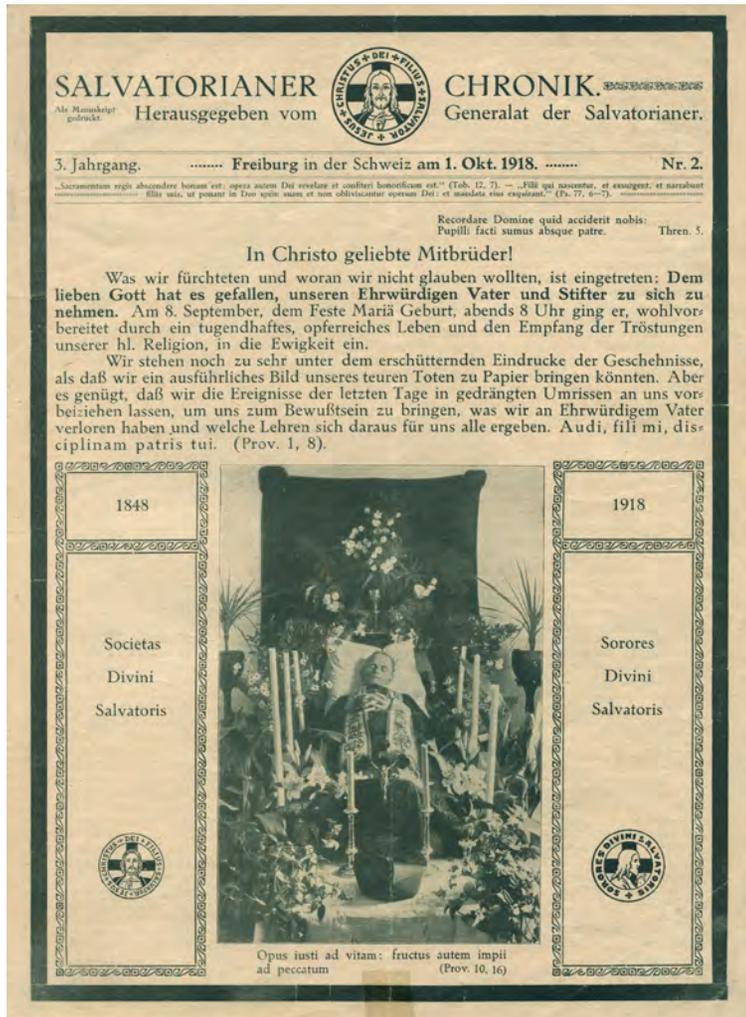
Society of the Divine Savior  
1735 Hi-Mount Boulevard  
Milwaukee, WI 53208-1720

*(with ecclesiastical permission)*

## BURIAL IN THE PARISH CHURCH IN TAFERS

Because the war was still being waged throughout Europe, it was not possible to take Fr. Jordan's body anywhere. Instead he was buried in the parish church there in Tafers. A section of the middle aisle of the church was opened up, and Fr. Jordan's coffin was buried there.

## NEWS OF THE FOUNDER'S DEATH



The morning after the Founder's death, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer sent a telegram to the community in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin. However, for reasons unknown, it was never received. Because communications at that time were generally poor, and because of the war's frequent disruptions of mail service to the United States, news of the Founder's death did not reach the Salvatorians in the USA until October 14 – over a month after Fr. Jordan's passing. Two notes were received that same day – one from Rome and another from England. Both notes announced Fr. Jordan's death.

**Fr. Epiphanius Deibele** – the Society's USA Provincial, wrote that day:

*“On the occasion of this bitter loss, which has deeply affected all of us, receive the expression of our deepest condolences. As much as we are troubled by the passing away of the Founder, we may comfort ourselves with the thought that our father, who during his life time was so full of concern, now before the throne of God can and will do more for his own. We all hope indeed that all his sufferings and sacrifices will give him splendid compensation. May he have obtained his peace in God and his reward from the Eternal. R.I.P.”*

**Sr. Stanislas Raczowska** – Superior of the Sisters in St. Nazianz, wrote on the following day:

*“Yesterday we received the very sad news of the death of our beloved and venerated Founder. We had heard it already from the Rev. Fathers, and therefore I ordered our houses and schools to make due intercession on behalf of the venerable deceased. At the same time I express my deepest condolences, in the name of all the American Sisters, for the loss we have suffered in the death of the Very Rev. Founder.”*

## ... GOING HOME



### TRANSFER OF FR. JORDAN'S REMAINS TO ROME

On **September 12, 1956**, a 9:00 AM Solemn High Mass was celebrated in the parish church in Tafers, Switzerland. The area where Fr. Jordan had been buried – beneath the center aisle – had already been opened and prepared. At the conclusion of the Mass, the coffin was raised and opened for all to view. For two hours, Salvatorians and many other people from the surrounding area filed past and paid their respects. Fr. Jordan's body (*along with the metal lining which had been in the original wooden coffin*) were then placed in a new wood & metal coffin for transport to Rome.



The new coffin carrying Fr. Jordan's remains was taken by train to Rome, accompanied by the Generalate of the Society.

*(Below)*

On September 15, the Generalates of the Society and the Congregation led other Salvatorians in the praying of Solemn Vespers. On September 29, Jordan's remains were transferred to the second floor of the Motherhouse and placed in the wall-crypt of a private chapel, where they remain to this day.



## POPE JOHN PAUL II AT THE TOMB OF FATHER JORDAN

On March 19, 1999, **Pope John Paul II** (*now Saint!*) came to visit the Salvatorians at the Society's Motherhouse in Rome – just down the street from the Vatican. While there, he prayed at the tomb of Father Jordan for a short time. While nothing official is meant by this gesture, it could be seen as a kind of “nod” from the Church that the Founder is recognized for his holiness. In January 2011, the Vatican published a decree recognizing the “heroicity of virtues of Father Jordan” and he now can be called by the title “Venerable.” Soon, we pray, we hope to be able to call our Venerable Founder by the title “Blessed” and the Church beatifies him. And one day – pray to God! – “Saint.”



*Venerable Father – Francis  
Mary-of-the-Cross Jordan –  
intercede for us as we pray.*