

Fr. Francis Jordan, founder of the Salvatorians, worked for almost 25 years in one small office in the Roman motherhouse. His office was very simple... a desk, a chair and a foot-high statue of the Blessed Mother into whose hands he often placed notes with his most urgent petitions. His only "luxury" was a large globe of the world. When you visit the motherhouse today, you can still see this well worn artifact over which the Founder often brooded long into the night.

One unique dimension of Fr. Jordan's "charism," the spirit he passed onto his spiritual descendants, is his insistence that ALL must come to know the Savior. Some founders of religious orders had special concern for one country. Others, like St. John Bosco enjoyed making a difference for street children. But Fr. Jordan's vision extended to the whole world, to every land and nation.

Fr. Jordan did much in those early years to ensure that his Society would be universal and international. He accepted members from every country and language group without exception—Germans, Sicilians, Hungarians, Poles, Belgians, etc. In addition to mastering Latin and Greek, he insisted that each of them learn at least one other contemporary foreign language. He sponsored a yearly "Festival of Languages" during which his seminarians demonstrated their new language skills with songs and speeches. At times, his motherhouse must have sounded like a second Tower of Babel!

Fr. Jordan was also quite open to accepting new apostolates in many different countries. His first large mission was in India, but within 20 years his Salvatorian family was already at work in North and South America, Europe and Asia. It was his dream that by its very existence in so many places his Society would proclaim that God's saving message was addressed to people of every race, language and way of life.

Of course, it was a struggle to instill this international vision and to keep it burning brightly. People, being what we are, prefer working among our own. We find diversity uncomfortable. And since there are plenty of problems here at home, why look abroad for more work? But Fr. Jordan was implacable. Salvation was for ALL. We are sent to ALL. As he wrote in his Spiritual Diary in 1894, "As long as there is one person on earth who does not know God and does not love Him above all things... as long as God is not everywhere glorified, you dare not allow yourself a moment's rest."

Last year, on the Jordan Awareness poster, behind Fr. Jordan's head is the globe representing his international spirit. Circling the globe, there are children flying through space and wearing the costumes of many different countries. This emphasizes a second dimension of Fr. Jordan's outreach: his concern for children. He was so troubled when children failed to receive proper religious training either in the cities or in the countryside. How he feared for their salvation!

In response, he developed an illustrated catechism for children. He instructed his inner city parishes in Vienna to reach out to underserved, what we would call today "at risk" children. He staffed a reformatory in Switzerland, and in his many periodicals aimed at children and families he promoted the "Angel Sodality" to encourage children to pray and to live a virtuous life.

Today, Fr. Jordan's spiritual descendants work to keep alive his international spirit and his special love of children. We minister in 45 countries on every continent except Antarctica. Our formation houses, even here in the U.S.A., have become increasingly international with men from Asia, Central America and Europe. And we continue to reach out to children, the most vulnerable among us, especially to those caught up in the horrors of human trafficking. In these and in many other ways, this generation of Salvatorians tries to stay faithful to the vision of our Founder.