

We hope that by now all those served by members of our Salvatorian Family can easily identify the founder of the Salvatorians as Fr. Francis Jordan. Born in Baden in 1848, but unable for political reasons to exercise his ministry in Germany, the newly ordained Fr. Jordan journeyed to Rome where in 1881 he founded what would become the Society of the Divine Savior. By the time of his death in 1918, his Society had spread throughout the globe.

In 1890, when the Society was only 9 years old and could boast only a handful of priests, Fr. Jordan accepted responsibility for a huge mission in northeast India. That was just the beginning. Today Salvatorian men and women remain at work in mission areas throughout the world. Today you can find Salvatorians on every continent on earth except for the Antarctic.

Living long before the days of Vatican II, Fr. Jordan wept as he perused the globe and considered the fate of millions of souls who knew nothing of Christ. Fearing that without baptism they would be lost in eternity, he was inspired to send out new apostles to those whom he saw as "living in darkness and in the shadow of death."

Fr. Jordan was a great maker of lists. And it is inspiring to go through his old notebooks where often you can find lists of houses he hoped to found along with lists of peoples and nations he hoped to reach with the good news of the gospel. One such list includes among many other groups Kurds, Eskimos, Laplanders and Hottentots! Now that is a man on fire with the hope that "all may know the Savior."

In this new post Vatican II millennium, we have a different view of the foreign missions. Not only do we have a greater respect for other cultures and civilizations, we no longer believe that salvation is only extended to those who have explicit knowledge of Jesus sealed with baptism. We believe that other cultures and religions possess the "seeds of revelation" and that many unbaptized persons do attain salvation "in a way known only to God."

Nevertheless, this in no way undercuts the missionary impulse of the Church and especially not the missionary impulse of Salvatorians. For we believe that the Catholic religion continues to represent the "fullness of faith." And that unity with Christ and His Church by means of worship and the sacraments is the greatest aid to salvation offered to us by God. Those sons and daughters of Fr. Jordan who go out to preach the good news and offer the consolation of faith to those who do not know Him, continue to realize the final command of the Savior, "Go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

In every age, Christ's command remains relevant and presses upon us. Fr. Jordan was alive to this summons and he passes this urgency on to his sons and daughters. By continuing to walk in his footsteps as we serve the poor thought the world we honor "Jordan and Missions."