

How often do we hear people say, "Oh, she's a real saint?" Certainly Catholics have a great tradition of revering these special friends of God. By honoring them, we honor the God whose goodness and kindness they have revealed to us with their lives of heroic virtue.

Yes, there are many saints. But the Church in her wisdom raises up certain ones from whom all the people of God can learn something important. Just think of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta. What an example of self-giving love! She was a real contemporary example of holiness that transcended time and nations, from whom we can all learn something.

So how does one become a saint? Today there is a very structured process. It involves three different movements. First, after the death of a holy man or woman, their history is written and their written works are collected and sent to a special Vatican Congregation to be reviewed to be sure there are no skeletons in the closet! If everything looks good, then the person is given the title "Servant of God."

One thing the Vatican looks for is whether regular people still remember and venerate this person. The reputation for holiness of some people fades fast, or never grows beyond a small group of followers. Others gather more steam as the years pass. And that is an important consideration when it comes to officially declaring someone a saint of the universal church.

One other important witness is God. No one can advance past the level of Servant of God without the testimony of a miracle...God's confirmation on the matter. Once this miracle has been confirmed, the Servant of God can be declared Blessed in a process called "beatification." The co-founder of the Salvatorian Sisters, for example, is now Blessed Mary of the Apostles.

Our founder, Fr. Francis Jordan, is already recognized as a Servant of God. His cause is proceeding at the Vatican. His history has been submitted along with the evidence of a miracle, the healthy birth of a child in Brazil who was expected to be born with deformities and live only a short time. Now we are awaiting the decree of beatification. After that, another miracle is required to advance to canonization, the final step in the process to sainthood.

The more widely Fr. Jordan is known, and the more fervently he is venerated, the greater the chance there will be of a second miracle and of his advancing to sainthood. That is one reason why we Salvatorians work to raise awareness of our founder, Fr. Jordan. But even more importantly, we believe that Christians can learn a lot from his life struggles: his unwavering trust in Divine Providence, his steadfast prayer, his unflagging zeal for souls and his insistence that every baptized person is called to live an apostolic life.

We promote the veneration of the saints in the hopes that we will become more like them. Living to celebrate one day the canonization of Fr. Jordan would be a great thing. But living to see the day when increasing numbers of men and women, religious and lay, would incorporate into their lives the passion Fr. Jordan displayed in his life would be greater still!