



## RECOGNITION OF THE MIRACLE ATTRIBUTED TO THE FOUNDER



Our hearts were filled with joy, when we were informed that the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on 19 June 2020 received Cardinal Angelo Becciu, Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, in audience and authorized the same Congregation to promulgate the decree regarding the miracle, attributed to the intercession of our Founder, Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan.

This step closes the process on the miracle and opens definitely the way towards the beatification of our beloved Founder. As soon as the Holy See will determine the date and place of the beatification ceremony, they will be announced.

A press release, prepared by the Generalate and an official picture of the Founder, chosen by all members of the Salvatorian Family, were sent to all its members, as well as to different Church entities, directly related with our Founder and the Salvatorians. (Protocol AVB – 127) Many of them made use of the materials to publish it on their respective websites, Facebook-pages, Instagram etc.

### From Father Francis Jordan

*“Why are you afraid to take up the cross  
which leads to the kingdom?”*

*In the cross is salvation, in the cross is life...”*



## SDS VARIA



### History of the cause of Fr. Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan

Now that we have arrived at the point that the way towards the beatification of our Founder definitely is open by the authorization by Pope Francis of the promulgation of the decree regarding the miracle attributed to the intercession of our Founder, it is worthwhile to give an overview of the long way that brought us here. This article wants to give us an insight in the many efforts that were done during the whole process, which not always has been easy.

In his speech to the members of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of that Dicastery, celebrated in 2019, Pope Francis said: *The many beatifications and canonizations that have been celebrated in recent decades mean that the Saints are not unreachable human beings, but are close to us and can support us on the path of life. In fact, they are people who have experienced the daily toil of existence with its successes and failures, finding in the Lord the strength to always rise again and again, and to continue on their journey.* In his discourse, he also emphasized that every Saint is the incarnation, at a given moment in history, of “an aspect of the Gospel”, of a “Word of God” and that the processes for beatification and canonization are not only a technical and canonical reality, but also a spiritual one.

In this context, we can surely say that the process for beatification of Fr. Francis Jordan has been always present in minds, hearts and prayers of all generations of Salvatorians, both religious and lay, as well as in the lives of those with whom we work. Throughout the years lots of people have spread the knowledge about the person of our Founder, prayed for his beatification and through his intercession and encouraged others to do the same, at the same time promoting his values, virtues and characteristics of his personality. Many showed deep interest in the beatification process, got involved personally in conducting it, helped and supported the postulation in different ways. The deep faith and participation of these people deserve highest praise.

On 3 January 1878, during the year of preparation for his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Francis Jordan wrote in his Spiritual Diary: *“For you the first and most important thing should always be to become holy and pleasing to God, so to live and so to die. Become great before God, not before the world!”* (SD I/31) We can say that he remained always faithful to this resolution, striving for personal holiness and growing in his relationship with Jesus the Saviour. Many people who met him during his earthly life considered him a holy person.

Already six years after the death of the Founder, his successor, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer, sent a Salvatorian, Fr. Camillus Mohr, to Gurtweil with the task of gathering testimonies about the early years of John Baptist Jordan as well as about his family. Fr. Pancratius used this source of materials when he wrote his biography of the Founder, published in 1930. Subsequently, preparations for opening the cause for beatification were begun. In 1935 the Superior General sent a circular letter to all the Salvatorians, expressing his wish that both Fr. Francis Jordan and Fr. Bonaventura Lüthen should be declared blessed and asking everybody to respond to the attached questionnaire concerning the life of the candidates, their practice of Christian virtues and realization of religious vows, fame for holiness, graces received and possible miracles through their intercession. Fifty-two persons responded with their answers.



On 6 June 1938 **Fr. Dorotheus Brugger** was appointed as the first postulator, and his nomination was confirmed by the Congregation of Rites on 6 June 1941. Fr. Dorotheus was born on 6 August 1877 in Lindau in Germany, entered the Society in Rome on 16 October 1891 and made his profession on 4 October 1893. On 9 June 1900, he was ordained to the priesthood. He was superior at Hamont and then ministered in the United States as superior and provincial. In 1927, he was elected to the Generalate and for many years served as consultor, treasurer and secretary.

At that time, the procedures of the process for beatification and canonization were determined by the Code of Canon Law of 1917. The competent office of the Roman Curia, which dealt with beatifications and canonizations and which also had the task of regulating the exercise of divine worship, was the Sacred Congregation of Rites, created by Pope Sixtus V in 1588. In 1969, Pope Paul VI divided the Congregation of Rites, creating two congregations: one for Divine Worship and another for the Causes of Saints.

In August 1942, the Holy See agreed that the diocesan informative process should be introduced in Rome, where our Founder lived for almost 37 years, rather than in the diocese of Fribourg in Switzerland, where he died. The tribunal held its first session on 30 December 1942. Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer gave an extensive testimony during nine sessions of the tribunal, held from 22 May to 13 July 1943. As not all witnesses were able to come to Rome, additional rogatory processes to collect testimonies were celebrated in the dioceses of Fribourg, Passau, Paderborn, Vienna, Rio de Janeiro, Olomouc and Green Bay. In total 105 persons gave their testimony about the life and practice of virtues of Fr. Francis Jordan, among them 69 Salvatorians and 17 Salvatorian Sisters.

This phase of the process ended in 1949 and all the acts were submitted to the Congregation of Rites. At the same time, in the years 1945-1956 a separate process was held in Rome, during which the writings of Fr. Francis Jordan were studied in order to confirm that they did not contain anything that could impede the process for beatification. In addition, another canonical inquiry held in Rome and Fribourg in the years 1951-1955 confirmed that the Founder did not receive any illegitimate public veneration.

During the VIII General Chapter, held in Rome in 1953, Fr. Dorotheus presented his report on the progress of the beatification process. The Chapter unanimously enacted an ordinance concerning spreading the knowledge about our Founders' life and virtues and encouraging people to pray through his intercession. It also decided that the mortal remains of Fr. Francis Jordan should be transferred from Tafers to the Motherhouse in Rome. This decision was implemented three years later.



Fr. Dorotheus Brugger died on 3 November 1955. On 16 November, the then Superior General, Fr. Bonaventura Schweizer, appointed **Fr. Michael Dürr** as his successor. The Congregation of Rites confirmed this appointment on 5 December 1955. Fr. Michael was born on 31 May 1909 in Mittelbuch in Germany. He entered novitiate in 1930 in Heinzendorf, made his profession on 12 September 1931 and began his studies, which he continued in Rome. After ordination to the priesthood, which took place on 19 July 1936, he was sent to Brazil, where he worked as teacher, superior and formator, and in the years 1947-1953 he was the superior of the Brazilian Province. In 1953,

he was elected as general consultor and general secretary. In 1970, after finishing his work as postulator, he became chaplain at the Salvatorian Sisters' community in Merano and served there for 8 years,

then he ministered in a children's home in Zussdorf near Ravensburg until his health started to fail. He died on 7 November 2001.

All the materials of the earlier proceedings, after the necessary translations, were ready in April 1956, and eventually, on 18 June the *Positio* of 560 pages was submitted to the Congregation. Now it was the role of the General Promoter of Faith to prepare his objections - the so-called *Animadversiones* - to the content of the *Positio*. This document was presented after five years - on 5 June 1961 - by Fr. Ferdinand Antonelli OMF.



On 14 May 1970 Fr. Donald Skwor, Superior General, appointed **Fr. Leonard Gerke** as the new postulator. The Congregation confirmed this appointment on 26 May. Fr. Leonard was born in Allendorf (Germany) on 24 October 1911, made his religious profession on 28 August 1932 and after studies in Lochau and then in Rome, he was ordained to the priesthood on 17 July 1938 in Rome. His first assignment was the ministry at St. Peter's Basilica, where the Society took care of the baptistry and the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. Then, in the fall of 1939, he went to England in order to teach at Christleton Hall in Chester. Shortly after the beginning of World

War II, he was confined and had to move to Canada. When released, he taught again in England and then for six years ministered in Macao, China, as superior and formator, continued for two years as formator in Rome, and then again as professor in Chester. In 1961 he joined the USA province and worked as teacher and spiritual director at the Salvatorian Seminary in Lanham. He did his doctorate in theology at the Catholic University in Washington. From 1967, he served in Rome as general consultor and general mission secretary. He died on 3 October 1973 in Rome.



His successor, **Fr. Aloysius Filthaut**, was officially appointed on 1 May 1974. The Congregation approved the appointment on 5 June. He was born on 24 February 1912 in Menden (Germany), made his profession of vows on 8 September 1936 and studied first in Rome and then in São Paulo in Brazil, where he was ordained to the priesthood on 22 June 1941. He taught in Jundiaí and then philosophy and theology in São Paulo, served as formator, superior, local and provincial treasurer, and eventually in the years 1956-1959 as provincial superior. In 1959, he was elected as general consultor and secretary and moved to Rome, where he also served as general archivist. In 1971,

he returned to Germany where he was provincial secretary, until he moved to Rome again to take up the task of postulator. In 1979 he returned to Germany, where he first served for two years as the chaplain of the Salvatorian Sisters in Horrem and then as hospital and sisters' chaplain in Cologne. He died on 23 October 1986.

In this period, the postulation focused on gathering historical materials, organizing the archives, and on the academic research, which would help in gaining better knowledge of the person of the Founder and in furthering his cause for beatification. The Society entered in the period of post Vatican II renewal and the process of preparation of the new Constitutions was initiated. In 1971, the International Historical Commission was established, with the primary task of gathering and editing historical sources regarding the person of Fr. Francis Jordan and the history of the Society. The work of this commission, which continued for over 40 years, bore fruit in 24 volumes of *Documenta et Studia Salvatoriana* and made a significant contribution to the renewal of the Society and to the work of Fr. Francis Jordan's postulation.



On 15 January 1979, the Superior General, Fr. Gerard Rogowski appointed **Fr. Timotheus Edwein** as the new postulator. He was born in Berlin on 30 April 1915, entered the SDS novitiate in 1936, made his religious profession on 8 December 1937 and began his studies in Klausheide. During World War II, his formation was interrupted by the period of military service and captivity in Russia. He continued his studies in Passau and then in Fribourg in Switzerland. He made his perpetual profession on 11 March 1949 and was ordained to the priesthood on 24 July 1949 in Fribourg. He ministered as teacher, formator and superior in different houses. He was also a good retreat master. In the years 1969-1975 he was the Provincial of his unit.

In 1982, Fr. Timotheus managed to finish the response to the objections of the General Promoter of Faith and prepared the new *Positio* on the introduction of the Cause, which he submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In 1983, the new Code of Canon Law was promulgated and new legislation concerning beatification and canonization causes was presented. The Apostolic Constitution “*Divinus Perfectionis Magister*” and the “*Normae servandae in inquisitionibus ab episcopis faciendis in causis sanctorum*” introduced a profound reform in the procedure of canonization causes. As a result, some important adjustments had to be made in the beatification process of our Founder. It was requested that the *Positio* on the life and virtues of Father Jordan be prepared with an extensive, critical, documented biography, under the guidance of a Relator assigned by the Congregation. Fr. Timotheus spared no effort and managed to write a voluminous Founder’s biography (DSS vol. XIII-XVII.I), covering his life up to 1909. Unfortunately, he was not able to finish his work as he passed away on 9 April 1986.



After the death of Fr. Timotheus Edwein, **Fr. Peter van Meijl** was appointed as the new postulator on 22 November 1986 and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints confirmed his appointment on the same day. Fr. Peter was born on 22 October 1946 in Valkenswaard (The Netherlands). He entered the Salvatorian novitiate in Passau in 1965 and made his vows on 8 September 1966. After finishing his philosophy and theology studies at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, he made his final profession on 10 December 1972 and began his pastoral ministry at the Salvatorian parish in Grevenbroich (Germany). He was ordained to the priesthood on 2 October

1976. In 1981, he returned to the University in order to prepare his doctoral dissertation in Church history. In the meanwhile, he also served as superior and rector of scholastics at the Salvatorian Formation house in Heverlee-Leuven, Belgium. In his dissertation, which he defended in 1990, he presented an important part of the history of the Society: the period of the Apostolic Visitation conducted by Fr. Antonio di Gesù Intreccialagli OCD 1894-1913. After his work as postulator, he served as parish priest of St. Michael’s Church in Vienna (2002-2016). He continues his activity as historian, researcher, writer and archivist of the Austrian Pro-Province.

In Rome Fr. Peter continued the work of his predecessor, preparing the documented biography of the Founder for the *Positio*, according to the new norms for the processes of beatifications and canonizations. He devoted himself to a thorough historical research on the life of Fr. Francis Jordan and on the history of our Society. During his systematic preliminary archival research, he was able to collect many valuable source materials, which had not been available earlier and turned out to be very important for a better understanding of our early history and of the original vision of Fr. Francis Jordan. He also made an important contribution to spreading the knowledge of the Founder and his veneration.



As a result of the decision of the 1999 General Chapter in Graz, Austria, the postulation office in Rome was restructured. **Fr. Michał Piela** was appointed as new postulator for the cause of Fr. Francis Jordan on 3 June 2000 and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints confirmed this appointment on 6 June.

Fr. Michał was born on 26 May 1958 in Lipowa, Poland. In 1977, he entered the Salvatorian novitiate at Bagno, Poland, made his religious profession on 8 September 1978 and after philosophy and theology studies at the Salvatorian Major Seminary in Bagno he was ordained to the priesthood on 31 May 1984 in Krakow. After a period of pastoral ministry, in 1987 he began his studies in Church history at the Catholic University of Lublin, which he concluded with the doctoral degree. From 1991, he taught Church history at the seminary in Bagno and from 1994 also at the diocesan Major Seminary in Legnica. In 1994, he was appointed the dean of studies at the previous mentioned Salvatorian Major Seminary. After finishing his work as postulator, he continued his academic career as professor at the Pontifical Faculty of Theology in Wrocław, lecturer and writer.

At the same time, Fr. Stephan Horn was appointed as vice-postulator. Fr. Stephan was born in Isny, Germany, on 7 September 1934. After entering the Society, he made his religious profession on 1 May 1955. He was ordained to the priesthood on 29 June 1960. In 1966, he earned his doctorate in theology at the Munich University. In the years 1972-1978, he was an assistant to Prof. Joseph Ratzinger at the University of Regensburg. In 1979, he earned a post-doctoral degree (habilitation). In the years 1981-1986, he was a professor of dogmatic theology in Augsburg and from 1986-1999, he was the head of Chair of Fundamental Theology at the University of Passau. For many years, he has been a member and president of the group of former students of Joseph Ratzinger, as well as a co-founder and a leadership member of the Joseph Ratzinger - Pope Benedict XVI Foundation. After finishing his task as postulator, he continued this activity.

After five years of work, the new *Positio* on the life, virtues and fame for holiness of Fr. Francis Jordan, including a vast documented biography, was finished. After fulfilling additional formalities requested by the Congregation, this four-volume work of almost 4000 pages was officially submitted on 14 December 2006. At the meeting on 5 June 2007, the Historical Consultors of the Congregation gave their positive opinion concerning the quality of the documented biography. Now the *Positio* was waiting for the study of the Theological Consultors.



On 13 March 2009, **Fr. Stephan Horn** succeeded Fr. Michał Piela as the new postulator for the cause. The Congregation confirmed his nomination on 2 April 2009. The appointed Theological Consultors of the Congregation studied the *Positio* and held their meeting on 22 January 2010. After the postulator had clarified the doubts of one of the Consultors, they gave the unanimous positive opinion concerning the heroic practice of Christian virtues by Fr. Jordan. This same opinion was expressed by Cardinals and Bishops, members of the Congregation, during their Ordinary Session on 11 January 2011. Pope Benedict XVI officially declared on 14 January 2011 that Fr. Francis

Mary of the Cross Jordan had exercised the theological, cardinal and related virtues to a heroic degree. The Pope authorized the Congregation to publish the Decree on the Heroicity of Virtues. This way the process on the life and virtues of Fr. Francis Jordan, which had started in 1942, came to a conclusion. The decree was officially promulgated by Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, at the Society's Motherhouse on 19 March 2011.

With the approval of the heroicity of virtues, a candidate for beatification receives the title of the “Venerable Servant of God”. However, as we know, for the actual beatification of a person who was not a martyr, a miracle through their intercession is required. Our Founder has always enjoyed the fame for holiness and the people have prayed through his intercession. Since 1921, approximately 500 cases of graces received have been recorded by the postulation office in Rome.

The required miracle must be proved through the appropriate canonical investigation, a separate process, called the process on the alleged miracle. What has to be proved is both the scientific inexplicability of the healing (or of another event) and it being a result of the prayers through the intercession of the candidate for beatification.

In 2001, a thorough study of the records of the graces received through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan was initiated, and eventually a case of healing from cancer, which had taken place in the United States in 1975, was selected for further canonical examination. The diocesan inquiry was held in the diocese of Savannah, Georgia, in the USA in the years 2006-2007 and 2009-2010. An additional, rogatory process in the diocese of Orange, California was held in 2007. The proceedings were supervised by Fr. Józef Musioł, vice-postulator. All the material was sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, where, after preliminary formalities, it was studied by the appointed doctors. However, eventually it was not accepted as a scientifically inexplicable cure.



On 15 October 2014 **Fr. Adam Teneta** was appointed as postulator, succeeding Fr. Stephan Horn, who reached the retirement age. The Congregation confirmed the appointment on 7 November. Fr. Adam was born on 6 May 1972 in Siemianowice Śląskie, Poland. He entered the Society in 1991 and on 8 September 1992, he made his religious profession. After studies at the Salvatorian Major Seminary at Bagno, Poland, he was ordained to the priesthood on 30 May 1998. After ordination, he studied Church history at the Catholic University of Lublin, and subsequently worked as provincial consultor and secretary of the Polish province in Kraków (2003-2006) and taught at the Salvatorian Major Seminary in Bagno (2000-2006). Afterwards he moved to Rome to work at the postulation office helping with the

cause of the Founder and doing preliminary research in view of the possible opening of the beatification process of Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer. He also served in the capacity of the superior of the Motherhouse and director of the general secretariat. During the XIX General Chapter in 2018, he was elected as vicar general of the Society.

Shortly afterwards, the postulation office received information of another grace received through the intercession of the Founder, which could be considered as a possible miracle.

On 24 January 2014, a couple from Jundiaí, Brazil, found out with joy that they would become parents. Due to difficulties during pregnancy, the mother underwent a number of tests. After medical examinations, doctors told them that their daughter would probably suffer an incurable skeletal deformation. At this difficult moment, they decided to pray through the intercession of Father Francis Jordan, together with the group of Lay Salvatorians to which they belong, as well as with some other members of the Salvatorian Family. The baby girl was born in perfect health on 8 September 2014, feast of the Nativity of Mary and the anniversary of the Founder’s death.



Both the physicians who took care of the baby and her mother, and other doctors who were consulted, were of the opinion that this case could not be explained by science.

After gathering the required documentation, Fr. Francisco Sydney de Macedo Gonçalves SDS was appointed as vice-postulator and the diocesan inquiry on the presumed miracle was opened on 11 November 2015 in Jundiá, Brazil. During working sessions of the tribunal, 14 witnesses gave their testimony, and the inquiry was officially closed on 12 August 2016.

All the acts were sent to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. On 16 March 2017, the judicial validity of the diocesan inquiry was decreed. After translating the material into Italian, the *Summarium*, including all the information about the extraordinary healing was composed and submitted to the Congregation. It was approved on 13 June 2018.

On 6 June 2019, the Medical Board of the Congregation discussed the case and approved the healing as one, which cannot be explained by science. Then the postulator prepared the *Positio* on the miracle and submitted it for the study of the Theological Consultors of the Congregation. The appointed Consultors met on 5 December 2019, and after discussion expressed their opinion in favour of approving the



inexplicable healing as a miracle through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan. The same positive opinion about the miracle was expressed by the Cardinals and Bishops, members of the Congregation. The process was concluded with the decision of Pope Francis of 19 June 2020, when he authorized the Congregation to publish the decree on the miracle attributed to the intercession of our Founder.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI said during an audience for postulators: *Saints, if rightly presented in their spiritual dynamism and historical reality, contribute to making the word of the Gospel and the Church's mission more credible and attractive. Contact with them opens the way to true spiritual resurrections, lasting conversions and the flowering of new saints. Holiness sows joy and hope, it responds to the thirst for happiness which people can feel even today.*

Fr. Francis Jordan offered his life to God, overcoming difficulties with his infinite trust in Divine Providence, and with great apostolic zeal, he pursued the idea of involving all people in the mission of the Church, so that everybody may know, love and serve Jesus Christ the Saviour. In this, he presents the attitudes and values that are important and necessary for the Church today. He offers a proposal of Christian life and apostolic commitment valuable not only for his spiritual sons and daughters, members of the different branches of the Salvatorian Family, but for all. At the same time, pointing to Christ as the Saviour and the source of fullness of life, he encourages all to take a personal path to holiness, to know Jesus more and better and to have a personal relationship with Him.

Let this time, when we start direct preparations for beatification, be for us an opportunity to deepen our reflection on the heritage of our Founder in the context of our present realities, so that we may become ever more faithful to our Salvatorian charism and identity. Let it also be an occasion to continue our prayers through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan and for making his message and values known.