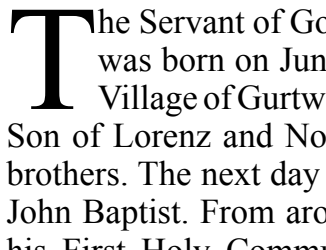




**Decree of Heroicity of Virtues  
of Francis Mary of the Cross  
Jordan**



**T**he Servant of God, Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan, was born on June 16, 1848, into a poor family in the Village of Gurtweil near Waldshut in Baden, Germany. Son of Lorenz and Nothburga, he was the second of three brothers. The next day he was baptized and given the name John Baptist. From around the age of 13 when he received his First Holy Communion, a longing for the priesthood was planted in his heart. From that point on his joy grew at receiving Communion, going to Confession, praying and reading spiritual books. This was reinforced when, at the age of 16, he lost his father.

After completing elementary school, John Baptist worked first as an unskilled laborer and later as a painter/decorator. After pursuing this trade in various cities, at the age of 20 he finally decided to follow his deepest calling to the priesthood. He began by taking private lessons and then entered secondary school in the city of Constance. Once completed, he entered upon a three-year program of studies in Theology and Classical Philology in Freiburg im Bresgau (1874-1877). At the same time he threw himself rather impetuously into the study of many modern languages.

At a time when he felt particularly close to God, he saw how greatly the Church in Germany was suffering under the Kulturkampf laws, and the great danger facing the people of Europe: the loss of their faith. This vision prompted him to live entirely with and for God, and to make his life's work the salvation of mankind.

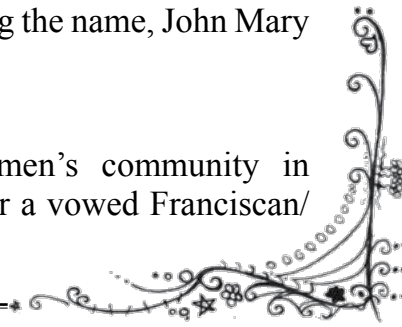
While preparing for Holy Orders in the seminary of St. Peter in Schwarzwald, a question began to stir deep within him: was he being called to found an apostolic

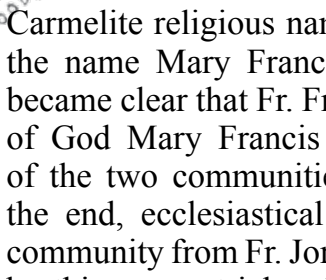
movement? In response he struggled even harder to know God's will and he strove after holiness with ever greater determination. As in the Freiburg years, now too he lived through periods of inner darkness and desolation. But he also experienced moments of deep happiness in receiving Holy Communion. He devoted himself extensively to spiritual reading, meditation on Scripture, and prayer.

After his priestly ordination on July 21, 1878, he was sent by his bishop to Rome where he studied Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, Arabic and Hebrew. During a brief stay in the Holy Land and Lebanon he grew increasingly certain that he was being called to found an apostolic movement. He was deeply moved by the words of the Gospel, "This is eternal life, to know You the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3). After returning to Rome, his plans received the blessing of Pope Leo XIII and he began his enterprise.

His aim was to gather into the Apostolic Teaching Society (later the Catholic Teaching Society) diverse groups of Catholic Christians living in the world: especially parents, teachers and formators who transmit the faith, also academics who should defend it, and finally even children. At the same time he wanted to found communities of men and women who would live according to the evangelical counsels and would be prepared to be sent anywhere. These communities soon took the form of religious orders. He consecrated himself to God in the Basilica of St. Peter in Rome on Passion Sunday, 1883, taking the name, John Mary Francis of the Cross.

To begin work on the women's community in Rome he selected as the first superior a vowed Franciscan/





Carmelite religious named Petra Streitl, to whom he gave the name Mary Francis of the Cross. After two years it became clear that Fr. Francis' calling and that of the Servant of God Mary Francis were incompatible. The life styles of the two communities could not be harmonized. So, in the end, ecclesiastical authorities separated the women's community from Fr. Jordan. Fr. Francis was not discouraged by this severe trial and in 1888 he founded a new Sisters' community with Therese von Wuellenweber, known today as Blessed Mary of the Apostles.

Francis gathered around himself many spiritual sons and daughters. He envisioned his motherhouse in Rome as a "School for Apostles" where many new apostles would be formed. He assumed responsibility for the difficult mission in Assam, India and opened many new houses in Europe and the Americas, endeavoring to form them in his spirit. In 1893, he gave his religious orders the names "Society of the Divine Savior" and "Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior."

In 1915 the First World War forced the generalate to relocate to neutral Switzerland, and following the decision of the third general chapter, Fr. Francis transferred the administration of the Society to his future successor, Fr. Pancratius Pfeiffer. After a difficult illness Fr. Jordan died on September 8, 1918, in a small home for the aged in Tafers near Freiburg in Switzerland.

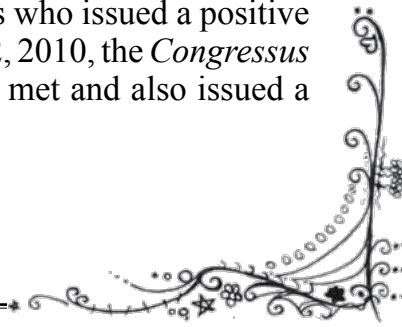
From his youth, God had filled this Servant of God with great joy in receiving Christ in the Eucharist. Holy Mass and Eucharistic adoration would remain the source of his life-long apostolic zeal. His confreres often found him absorbed in prayer. He drew great consolation from his love

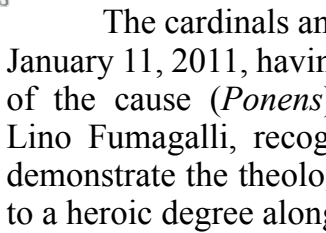
of the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Savior and Queen of the Apostles. He was a great lover of evangelical poverty and had an unshakeable trust in God along with profound humility. He loved the cross. He was always obedient to the faith of the Church and to the teaching of Church authorities even in the most difficult times. He showed concern for his spiritual sons and daughters like a true father and was increasingly able to extend forgiveness in extraordinary ways.

The image of the Servant of God Francis Mary of the Cross inspired apostolic holiness. He is the model of an apostolic missionary, filled with the desire to lead all to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World. In his universal vision of the apostolate he wanted to promote a renewal of the faith and at the same time to contribute to primary evangelization. In all areas of life and culture he wanted to proclaim Christ and to witness to the Gospel “using all the ways and means the love of Christ inspires.”

Because of the Servant of God’s reputation for holiness, something which was recognized both during his lifetime and especially at his death, a diocesan Informative Process was initiated in Rome from 1942-1943. Thereafter, formal inquiries were made in the dioceses of Freiburg in Switzerland, Passau, Paderborn, Vienna, Rio de Janeiro, Olomouc and Green Bay (1943-1949).

On December 14, 2006 the “Positio on Virtues” was submitted to the Historical Consultors who issued a positive verdict on June 5, 2007. On January 22, 2010, the *Congressus Peculiaris* of Theological Consultors met and also issued a positive result.

A decorative flourish in the bottom right corner of the page, featuring a stylized vine with leaves, small flowers, and a star-like element.



The cardinals and bishops at their regular meeting on January 11, 2011, having heard the report from the presenter of the cause (*Ponens*), His Eminence Most Rev. Msgr. Lino Fumagalli, recognized that the Servant of God did demonstrate the theological virtues and the cardinal virtues to a heroic degree along with the other associated virtues.

After the Cardinal Prefect whose signature appears below accurately reported all these things to the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI. His Holiness accepted and ratified the decision of the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints and on the date listed below declared: it is clear that the Servant of God, Francis Mary of the Cross (known in civil society as Johann Baptist Jordan) Founder of the Society of the Divine Savior as well as the Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Savior, possessed to a heroic degree the theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity towards both God and neighbor, along with the cardinal virtues prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude and other attendant virtues.

The Holy Father has ordered this decree to be published and be entered in the files of the Congregation for the Cause of the Saints.

Roma, 14 January, 2011

