



That all may
know the Savior

Spring 2021

SISTERS OF THE DIVINE SAVIOR

Salvatorian News

*Walk
with us*



The word *pivot* rose to the top of the list of “most overused” in 2020. Still, I feel it best describes what many families, churches, schools, small businesses and yes – even religious communities – did to prevail amid the pandemic.

Our 2020 stewardship update on Page 1 shares a bit about the pivoting we did to carry out the ordinary tasks of our day, and the life-giving ministries that are our reason for being. I dare say we’re stronger for it.

While there’s a sense of relief to turn our sights on 2021, we also feel deep gratitude for the lessons about faith and trust we learned last year. It’s that faith and trust that also underlie the joyous news we share on Page 5: the beatification of our founder, Father Francis Jordan on May 15, 2021. Fr. Jordan’s profound faith and deep trust in Providence guided his steps to fulfill his vision. In much the same way, your faith in our mission and trust in our stewardship inspire your steadfast generosity and friendship. As 2021 unfolds, we hope we can celebrate those friendships in more concrete ways than the past year would allow. Until then, we ask you to walk with us at a distance while we’re holding you close in our hearts.

In our Savior’s name,

A. Beverly Heitke, S.D.S.
Sister Beverly Heitke, SDS
Provincial Leader

Your friendship is among our many blessings

We have all been hearing and reading how the world wants to close the book on the year 2020. It was a memorable year for all the wrong reasons, but 2020 also brought our Salvatorian Sisters many unexpected blessings.

As early as 2018, we began planning our **2020 Celebration for the 125th Anniversary** of the Sisters of the Divine Savior coming to the U.S. Although we canceled all plans for in-person festivities, we moved ahead with plans to commemorate the milestone with a digital time line on our website. You can read heartfelt and humorous stories that revive our 125-year U.S. history on our new website launched last October: sistersofthedivinesavior.org

Rebuilding our website was a major undertaking made more challenging because we couldn’t work face-to-face with our web solutions vendor. Throughout the year-long project, a generous grant to fund the rebuild inspired us to stay on task. The grantor’s total award of \$47,000 also provided monies for our New Membership efforts and our commitment to the Wisconsin Religious Collaborative (WRC). WRC is a group of nine women religious congregations who are embracing the changing dynamic of Catholic Sisters through shared services and cooperative ventures.

Last summer, Lay Salvatorian Bobby Pantuso blessed us with his gift for videography to rescue our diocesan mission appeals. As churches were closing their doors on the pandemic, our sisters were making travel plans to speak in parishes across the U.S. about the needs of our worldwide missions. Those plans soon came to a grinding halt, but our mission message came through loud and clear. Sister Carol Thresher, SDS went on camera to share how even a modest gift can improve the quality of life for people on the margins of society. We shared that video with parishes that had invited us to visit, and people graciously opened their hearts to us.

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A video of Sister Carol Thresher, SDS carried our message to Catholic parishes across the U.S. through the 2020 diocesan mission co-op program.





Companions in Mission

Tom B. knows precisely when his longtime friendship began with Sister Barbara Reynolds, SDS. It was a 1985 gathering of Catholic mathematicians known as the Clavius Group, at Notre Dame University in Indiana. Tom recalls, “She gave a lecture on a geometrical subject close to my heart – ‘Polyhedra in the Fourth Dimension’ – and we’ve been friends and mathematical collaborators ever since!”

While the international Clavius Mathematical Research Group is a tie that binds, Tom and his wife Kathleen’s friendship with Sr. Barbara goes far beyond the subject matter of math.

“She’s also interested in creative ways of teaching and working with students,” says Tom. He served 47 years on the faculty of Brown University in Providence, R.I., where Sr. Barbara spent the 1995-96 academic year collaborating with him on mathematics as a creative process. Tom says, “We share a commitment to student-centered learning and have enjoyed making joint presentations to the Clavius Group over the years.”

Kathleen met Sr. Barbara when she accompanied Tom for a Clavius symposium at Fairfield (Conn.) University in 2002. A year later – in Paris, France – they forged a friendship.

Kathleen retired and moved to Providence in 2002 when she and Tom married. She had worked in consumer research in Chicago and Memphis for a combined 20 years. During those years, she also taught part-time at Chicago’s Loyola University and Christian Brothers University in Memphis. She loved working with “seasoned students,” who often worked full time, many while raising families. She sees herself “in direct contrast to Tom and Barbara, who are particularly good with traditional students.” Kathleen shares, “We have lots of fun arguments about the benefits and limitations of each of those student populations.”

The couple looks forward to seeing Sr. Barbara at math conferences, where they open up their hotel room for daily Mass with a Jesuit colleague from the Clavius Group. Kathleen says, “Sister Barbara is often a reader and thoughtful contributor to our homilies.” Like Tom, she says their friendship with Sr. Barbara extends well beyond the Clavius Group.

“Tom is proud of his association with someone so committed and active in all her communities: academic, religious, in the U.S., as well as in Europe and Africa. He admires her greatly.”

Kathleen enjoys her own common ground with Sr. Barbara. “She’s the oldest of eight children and I’m the fifth of ten – we have similar stories and love sharing them. In this time of pandemic and social limitations, Sr. Barbara and I depend on regular phone conversation



“Our support of Sr. Barbara’s congregation flows from our love for her, and all that she is and stands for.”

— Kathleen and Tom B., Mission Well Charter Members

to recharge our batteries with laughter and newsy updates on our health and well-being. She’s one of my lifelines.”

In 2004, Tom and Kathleen began supporting the Salvatorian Sisters’ special projects to honor Sr. Barbara. As faithful monthly donors since 2013, Kathleen and Tom are Charter Members of the Sisters of the Divine Savior **Mission Well**. After their first year of full retirement in 2019, they decided to make quarterly transfers directly from their IRAs to their favorite charities. Their new strategy allows the couple to strengthen their support for the Sisters of the Divine Savior, while continuing to honor their cherished friendship with Sr. Barbara.



MISSION
WELL

*Take your giving
to a deeper level*

Mission Well is an opportunity to deepen your support for the Sisters of the Divine Savior and our life-giving ministries by making charitable giving part of your monthly budget. The ripple effect of monthly giving helps ensure sustainable funding to:

- care for our retired sisters
- support our sisters serving in the U.S.
- enhance our collaboration with SDS global missions

Learn how you can become a Mission Well member. Go to:
sistersofthedivinesavior.org/mission-well
or contact Lori Graff at
grafl@salvatoriansisters.org or (414) 466-7414.

Celebrating 2021 Jubilarians

Our traditional Salvatorian Family Jubilee celebration in June is postponed until 2022 out of precaution amid the lingering pandemic. We feature our Jubilarians here to honor them in their milestone years of profession. We hope to celebrate our 70- and 80-year Jubilarians at a Mass in September.

60 years



Sister Mary Lee Grady, SDS

Sister Mary Lee Grady, SDS (*Sr. Melanie*) believes “formation of the whole person – mentally, spiritually, physically and emotionally – is essential to grow in one’s personal relationship with God.” That belief guides Sr. Mary Lee in her work on the New Membership Team and as she mentors women who feel called to religious life. It also inspires her love for singing in choral groups, swimming, reading and walking in the quiet of the day.

60 years



Sister Sheila Novak, SDS

Sister Sheila Novak, SDS helped guide the global mission of Salvatorian Sisters when she served as Provincial Leader in the early 2000s. When a door opened to address the plight of women around the world, she stepped right in. Sr. Sheila’s passion to improve the quality of life for women has inspired her ministries ever since, including her work with survivors of human trafficking.

65 years



Sister Patricia Kieler, SDS

Sister Pat Kieler, SDS captures the essence of her work as a spiritual director, saying, “I encourage others to discover God’s footprints in their lives. The most powerful thing is not what I say.” In fact, much of Sr. Pat’s 40-year ministry has involved listening and affirming. She says, “The process of spiritual direction frees the person to be fully themselves. I am blessed to walk with each person and have our lives intersect.”

70 years



Sister Jane Barman, SDS

The call to serve has taken **Sister Jane Barman, SDS** (*Sr. Jane Frances*) from teaching “little ones” to tie their shoes to end-of-life care for aged Salvatorian Sisters. Sr. Jane dedicated 38 years to her education ministry, including four years serving as principal at Milwaukee’s Mother of Good Counsel School. Early on, as a student at St. Joseph’s Grade School in East Bristol, Wis., Salvatorian Sisters were her mentors.

65 years



Sister Dora Zapf, SDS

Sister Dora Zapf, SDS finds it hard to explain exactly why she felt called to religious life. “You are drawn by something, which is eternal. You feel it.” Sr. Dora ministered amid great need in African missions for 12 years. In 1973, she came to the U.S. and served 42 years at the Salvatorian Mission Warehouse in New Holstein, Wis., shipping donations to missions around the world.

80 years



Sister Rita Faust, SDS

Sister Rita Faust, SDS (*Sr. Frederick*) got her start in 30 years of teaching at Mother of Counsel School in Milwaukee. She served in a variety of places and a variety of ministries in the years that followed. Deeply grateful for each and every call to serve, Sr. Rita says, “Whenever I go from a place I leave something of myself, and take something of that place with me.”

Go to: sistersofthedivinesavior.org/jubilee-celebrations



You can send Jubilee greetings c/o:

Mission Advancement Office • 4311 N. 100th St. • Milwaukee, WI 53222 or missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org

A gift to support our mission is a meaningful way to honor a Jubilarian. You can mail your donation to the address above, or donate online: sistersofthedivinesavior.org/donate-tribute

In Memoriam

Sister Rita Barman, SDS (*Sr. Rosalima*) found many ways to reveal the beauty in the world around her until her death on August 20, 2020. Her 63 years professed as a Salvatorian Sister also offered many ways to channel her creative spirit, such as engaging her students in creative projects during her 17 years of teaching.

Sister Louise Rausch, SDS (*Sr. Felice*) was professed 71 years as a Sister of the Divine Savior when she died on September 12, 2020. The breadth of her ministries during those years — as a teacher, beautician and ESL tutor — gives testimony to how she modeled “all ways and means” to bring the goodness and kindness of Jesus to all.

Sister Kathleen Dooley, SDS understood the special gift of clinical pastoral care saying, “I sure don’t have all the answers, but I can be there in time of need.” In her ministry of presence, she also embraced the rich ecumenical aspect of working with clergy from other faith traditions. Sr. Kathleen was professed 53 years when she died on December 29, 2020.

Sister Marilyn Wegener, SDS was a lifelong learner and shared her love for learning in 38 years as a grade school teacher. She also loved the outdoors, nurtured from childhood chores on her family’s northern Illinois dairy farm. Sr. Marilyn’s love for nature stayed with her until she died on January 5, 2021. She was professed 72 years.



Read more about Sisters Rita, Louise, Kathleen and Marilyn here:

sistersofthedivinesavior.org/in-memoriam



Easy reading

Every month, our **eNews** includes a timely prayer, and makes it easy to send your special intentions for our Apostolate of Prayer Ministry. We also feature news tidbits and share photos or videos about our Sisters.

To sign up, visit sistersofthedivinesavior.org and scroll down to **Subscribe to our eNews**



Tip Have You Remembered?

Many friends have remembered to include the Sisters of the Divine Savior in their estate plans. When you update your will, trust or asset beneficiaries, please consider such a gift and designating it for a ministry that is especially meaningful to you.

You can include the following legal language in your will or trust: “I bequeath ____% of my estate to Sisters of the Divine Savior, located at 4311 N 100th St, Milwaukee, WI, 53222.”

For more information, contact Lori at (414) 466-7414 or graflf@salvatoriansisters.org or visit

sistersofthedivinesavior.org/planned-gifts

Father Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan

We'll celebrate the day we call him Blessed

On May 15, 2021, the Basilica of St. John Lateran in Rome, Italy will be the site of the beatification of our founder, Father Francis Jordan.

Fr. Jordan's path to beatification began in 1943, when documentation of his life and works was sent to the Vatican for review. After Fr. Jordan received the title, "Servant of God," Salvatorians helped spread his reputation of holiness with more and more people around the world. In 2011, Pope Benedict XVI published the Decree on the Heroicity of His Virtues and declared Fr. Jordan "Venerable." The next step – testimony of a miracle – would need confirmation before Fr. Jordan could be approved for beatification.

John Baptist Jordan was born on June 16, 1848, in Gurtweil, Germany, a small town in the Black Forest area. He traveled throughout his homeland for work as a laborer and painter-decorator. In his travels, Jordan saw how government constraints on the Church – known as the *Kulturkampf* – discouraged people from practicing their faith. It strengthened Jordan's faith even more, and on July 21, 1878, he was ordained to the priesthood in Freiburg, Germany.

As Fr. Jordan pondered how to combat the growing void in spirituality and religion, he sensed something more for his future. In September 1880, he met with Pope Leo XIII and outlined his vision to found a society devoted to teaching of the faith.



The Pope gave Jordan his blessing to proceed.

On December 8, 1881, Father Jordan and two others professed private vows as members of the Apostolic Teaching Society. Soon, Therese Von Wüllenweber joined them. The new foundation grew in members and sent missionaries around the globe. Together with Fr. Jordan, Therese would co-found the Sisters of the Divine Savior and lead the congregation as Mother Mary of the Apostles for 19 years.

For his time, Fr. Jordan's vision was bold: men and women, religious and lay, working together as equals to bring the Gospel of the Savior to all people everywhere. Today, more than 2,000

The Miracle

In 2014, medical specialists informed a young couple in Brazil that their unborn child had an incurable bone disease, skeletal dysplasia. The couple, who were Lay Salvatorians, invited fellow Salvatorian Family members to pray with them through the intercession of Fr. Francis Jordan. On September 8, 2014 – Feast of the Birth of the Blessed Mother and anniversary of Fr. Jordan's death – their daughter was born completely healthy. After verifying all canonical requirements, Pope Francis declared a miraculous healing worked by God through Fr. Jordan's intercession. This official decree completed the process to open the path for beatification.



priests and brothers, sisters, and lay women and men carry out that mission in a variety of ministries on six continents. They are known as the three branches of the Salvatorian Family: the Society of the Divine Savior; the Sisters of the Divine Savior; and the International Community of the Divine Savior, or Lay Salvatorians.

Fr. Francis Jordan died in Tafers, Switzerland on September 8, 1918, and was buried in the local church. In 1956, his body was moved to Rome and entombed in a special chapel in the Society Motherhouse. On March 19, 1999, Pope John Paul II visited there and prayed at Fr. Jordan's tomb. On June 19, 2020, Pope Francis declared the authenticity of a miracle through the intercession of Fr. Jordan. It was the final step on his path to beatification, and on May 15 we will call him Blessed.

Francis Mary of the Cross Jordan
Beatification - May 15, 2021
Basilica of St. John Lateran - Rome, Italy

Our many blessings *continued from page 1*

For the first time in its 20-year history, our **2020 Woman of Faith Award** presentation was a virtual event. While we couldn't serve up Salvatorian hospitality at a reception, our livestream coverage offered an opportunity for Carla Del Pozo's loved ones in Peru to see and hear her reflect on how her faith inspires her work to enrich others' lives through mentorship and spiritual direction.



For the first time, we livestreamed our annual Woman of Faith Award presentation with Sister Beverly Heitke, left, and 2020 award recipient Carla Del Pozo.

The worldwide shutdown last March also coincided with our second annual "Turn the Page" book events for **2020 Catholic Sisters Week**. Another generous grant enabled us to provide copies of books focused on the struggles of immigrants and the realities of systemic racism. Our book events still happened, but with far fewer attendees. Our conversations on these difficult topics have only just begun, and we hope to revive our "Turn the Page" book discussions when everyone feels safe to gather together again.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of 2020 was your generous response to our needs, especially in the face of personal loss wrought by the pandemic. You did not allow fear and uncertainty to overshadow your faith in our mission, love for our sisters and our ministries, and trust in our stewardship of your gifts.

SDS Mission Advancement Office

4311 N. 100th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53222-1393

414-466-7414

missionadvancement@salvatoriansisters.org

Lori Graff, CFRE, *Director of Mission Advancement*

Jan Penlesky, *Director of Communications/PR*

Kaitlin Seebruch, *Mission Advancement Associate*



Last spring, your generous gifts strengthened our bridge of mercy by helping to build new classrooms at our Salvator School in the DR Congo.

Last spring, you helped us fulfill a promise to children enrolled at our Salvator School in Democratic Republic of Congo. With 35% admissions growth since 2015, the school was bursting at the seams. Today, it's bursting with hope, thanks to your gifts that are helping to fund a new computer lab and science lab. The building project offers expanded opportunities for learning, and more importantly, the possibility for young families to break through the curtain of poverty and dependency through education.

Weeks before Christmas 2020, we shared about the remarkable life of Salvatorian Sister Georgene Faust. Her dedication is just one example of how our sisters adapt our ministries to serve the needs of people we come to know in the neighborhoods where we live and the parishes where we worship. We quoted Sr. Georgene as saying, "I just do whatever needs to be done." We felt her words struck a chord with you, seeing how you opened your hearts to support our ministries in the coming year.

It is humbling for us to realize that despite the pandemic, the year 2020 blessed our sisters' community with a greater number of gifts from a greater number of donors than 2019. Among them were 74 first-time donors, again, more than the previous year. In 2020 we also received four planned gifts totaling more than \$60,000. We are deeply grateful to all our Apostolic Circle members who leave a legacy of love and generosity beyond their lifetime, by naming the Sisters of the Divine Savior in their will.

We never take your generosity for granted, but we know the passion for mission we celebrated in 2020 could not endure without the faithful support of your prayers and gifts. With trust in God's providence, we will continue to grow our mission for tomorrow and give thanks for your friendship that will make it possible.