



Announcing the Cause for the Beatification and Canonization of Father Joseph Walijewski

On March 19, 2013 an edict will be tacked to the front door of the Cathedral of St. Joseph the Workman, La Crosse, declaring that “anyone who can offer testimony, good or bad, about the Servant of God, must make themselves known to the tribunal so they may give their testimony.”

Bishop William P. Callahan, on the Feast of St. Joseph, will announce the opening of the Cause for Beatification and Canonization of Fr. Joseph A. Walijewski. Dr. Andrea Ambrosi, the postulator for the cause, will travel from Rome to participate.

During the event, Bishop Callahan will explain why he opened the cause and Ambrosi will provide details on how the cause will be processed.

The announcement will start at 3 p.m. at the front door of the cathedral where the edict will be placed. The public and media are encouraged to attend.

A priest of the Diocese of La Crosse, Fr. Jose (as he was known by) spent most of his priesthood serving the poor in South America.

- He founded Holy Cross Parish in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. On his arrival at Santa Cruz in 1956, he was given a machete by Bishop Charles Brown, auxiliary bishop of the Diocese of Santa Cruz. They hacked their way through the forest until Bishop Brown said, “Build a church here and the people will come and build their homes next to it.”

- The seeds Fr. Jose planted provided a rich harvest. Holy Cross Parish, once a jungle church, is now in a highly populated urban center of Santa Cruz, with a brand new church, the pride of Santa Cruz, that was dedicated on Sept. 16, 2012.

- In 1971, Fr. Jose went to Lima, Peru, a region that had been struck by an earthquake. The pastor of a new

barrio on the outskirts of Lima called Villa El Salvador, he built a church and eight outlying chapels for the ever-increasing population. He organized breakfast stations throughout the city that fed 8,000 children a day.

- In 1987, with a \$50,000 donation from Pope John Paul II, Fr. Jose founded Casa Hogar Juan Pablo II (The House of John Paul II) orphanage. He provided the children with a knowledge of Jesus Christ through the sacraments and provided a family structure by having the children live six to seven in an apartment with a married couple who would teach them family skills.

At 76, Fr. Jose turned the orphanage over to a younger priest and moved to Oxapampa, Peru, where he lived in a house with adults who grew up at Casa Hogar. He helped establish a home for the elderly staffed by consecrated women religious and drove into the rain forest on Sundays to celebrate Mass for the small communities of Ashiko Indians.

Fr. Jose died as he wished – while working among the poor. He was taken to a hospital in Lima where he passed away of pneumonia and acute leukemia on April 11, 2006. For more information, go to frjoesguild.org.

The Fr. Joseph Walijewski Guild has been created to help the cause. Anyone who knew Fr. Walijewski, has any photographs or other items that can help the cause or wish to donate funds to offset the costs are welcome to contact the Fr. Walijewski Guild at P.O. 4004, La Crosse, WI 54602-4004.