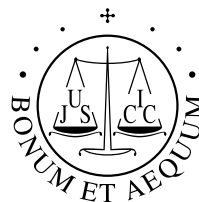


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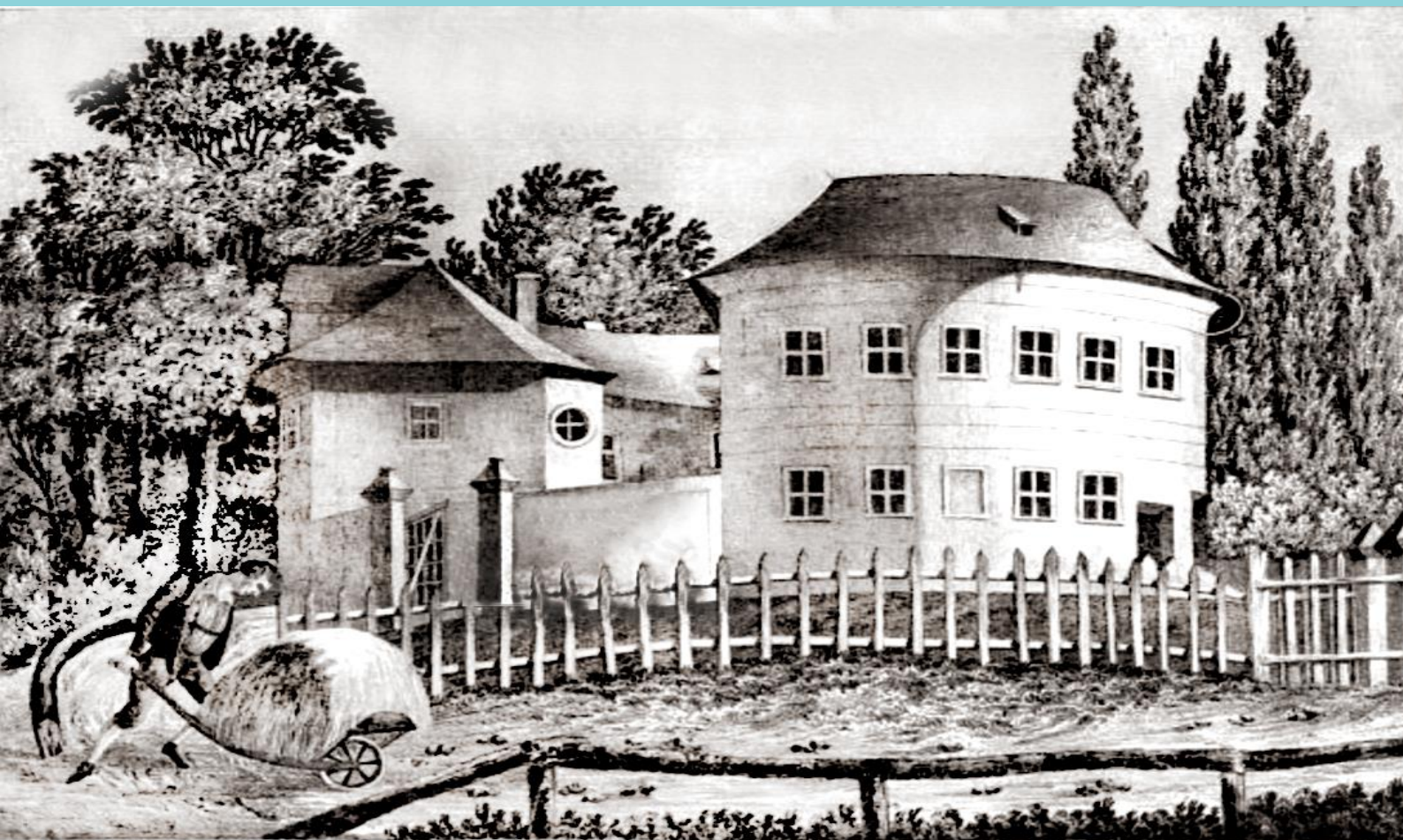


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Chodov

Fortress in Prague – Chodov, birthplace of Blessed Dominik Zavřel, OCist.

Czech Priest Dominik Zavřel O.Cist., Martyr of the Eucharist, Declared Blessed

On Saturday, 17th April 2021, a major event took place in the Cistercian Abbey of *Casamari*, southeast of Rome. The Prefect of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints His Eminence Marcello Semeraro declared six martyrs from the abbey to be blessed. They are **Simeon Cardon, Dominik Zavřel and fellows**. Their martyrdom, and therefore their birth for heaven, occurred on 13th May 1799.



Dominik Zavřel was born in 1725 in the village of Chodov, then in the Hostivař parish, a few kilometres south of Prague. Church of the Beheading of John the Baptist in Hostivař (pictured left), where he was baptized and given the Christian name John, is today an important spiritual centre of the southwestern part of Prague.

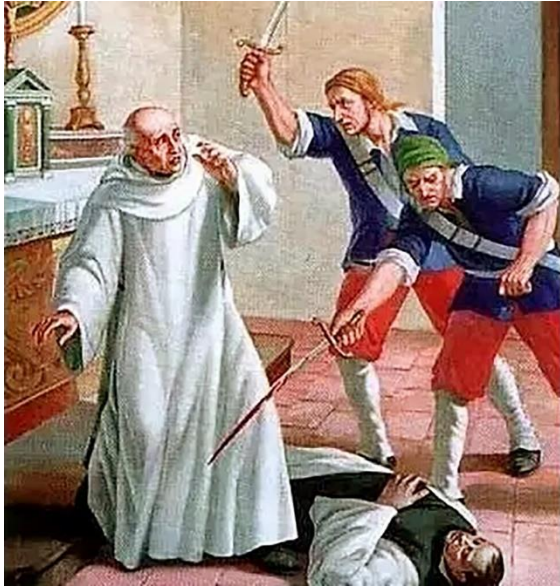
At the age of twenty, Jan Zavřel joined the Dominican order and received the religious name Chrysostom.

Priory of Dominican novitiate was then located in the town of Litoměřice, still the seat of the bishop for northern Bohemia. After a year of novitiate, he made perpetual religious vows in 1746. In 1752 he is remembered as a priest, a member of the Dominican Priory in Prague at St. Giles, where he continued his theological studies. After achieving the title of *Sacrae Theologiae Lector*, he devoted himself to teaching, first in Litoměřice, and later in Venice and Rome at St. Sabina.

As he later stated, he still heard an inner voice to dedicate himself to God in some more closed place. With the permission of the superiors, he moved to the Cistercian order of the Trappist reform in Casamari on the basis of a papal indult of 1776. Here he got the new religious name Dominik. He soon became a prior and later a novice master. He had the great gift of dealing with people, he settled all disputes and disagreements, he excelled in humility, knowledge of theology and spiritual life.

After the occupation of the Kingdom of Naples by the French Revolutionary Army, the population of central Italy was affected by its raids. On 13th May 1799, a group of soldiers arrived at the monastery in Casamari. The monks provided them with food and drink, as was the custom. Gradually, however, the mood of the soldiers began to escalate, they got drunk, smashed barrels of wine and olive oil. They searched in vain for money and especially for the abbot they wanted to kill. Eventually, they began to destroy temple equipment. They also opened the tabernacle on the main altar, took the ciborium in their hands, and scattered consecrated hosts on the ground.

At that time, Father Dominik Zavřel came there, and with the help of another priest, they collected the hosts in a chalice and placed them in the tabernacle. Another soldier later scattered the hosts again and took the chalice away. Father Dominik Zavřel collected the hosts



again, this time only to the corporal, and wept over such impiety. The soldiers searched them all and asked where their money was. When they found nothing, they became enraged and killed Brother Albertin with two blows to the head with a sabre, severely wounded Brother Dosideus, and finally killed Father Dominik Zavřel with two blows to the head with a sabre. He died with his usual prayer: *Jesus, Mary!* Other monks were murdered later that evening. All the martyrs were buried in the monastery cemetery. People from the area immediately began visiting their graves, and a large number of documented miracles followed, especially recovery from illness.

The ceremonial beatification service was attended by Czech ambassador to the Holy See Václav Kolaja, rector of the Czech College of Saint John of Nepomuk in Rome Roman Czudek, Czech professor at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas in Rome P. Efrém Jindráček OP, and Cistercians from the monastery Vyšší Brod – Hohenfurth (South Bohemia), restored after 1990, headed by their prior. Due to the French origin of the four martyrs, the French ambassador to the Holy See, Élisabeth Beton-Delègue, was also present.

Along with the local bishop, other bishops, as well as the abbot and monks of the Casamar Abbey, took part in the ceremony. In addition to the more than a hundred participants present in the basilica, a hundred other believers attended the Holy Mass, standing and sitting outside in front of the church.

After the Cardinal Prefect uttered the Latin beatification formula on behalf of the Holy Father, representatives of the Cistercian religious family placed six reliquaries with the remains of Blessed Casamar martyrs on the altar. The relics of Blessed Dominik Zavřel were carried by the Cistercians from the monastery in Vyšší Brod fr. Gerard Krutský and fr. Aelred Krejzar.

The live broadcast of the solemn service from Casamari was broadcast by the Czech Catholic television Noe, a Good News Television based in Ostrava (Moravia), and watched by a large number of inhabitants of the Czech Republic.



We are glad that the Apostolic See decided to integrate the memorial of the six blessed martyrs of Casamari in the Church Calendar on **16th May**. After all, 16th May is the feast day of St. John of Nepomuk, the martyr of the Holy Confession (+1393), prominent Czech Saint, the main patron saint of Bohemia. And so none of the Czech Catholics will certainly forget to remember the six martyrs of Casamari when celebrating their patron.

Congratulations to the Catholic parishes in Prague – Chodov and Prague – Hostivař, the Prague Archdiocese, the Dominican Priory of St. Giles in Prague, the Cistercian Monastery in Vyšší Brod, the Trappist Abbey of Nový Dvůr in western Bohemia and the Cistercian Abbey in Casamari.

Worship Services in Czech Republic Accessible

As in the whole world, as in the Czech Republic, we have been suffering from hygienic measures since March 2020 to protect ourselves against the spread of the viral disease that came to us from China. The impact on the worship of all churches has been shocking. In the Czech lands, last year's ceremonies of adult baptisms were often moved from Easter to Pentecost. Which, fortunately, did not happen again this year.

The Czech Government's ruling restricting gathering for hygienic reasons changed many times over the last 14 months, and it will be a great job for historians to map the changes in the legal situation in this area. As for attending services, the principle was that in our country only 10 percent of the seats in a church were allowed to be occupied. Many clergymen began to broadcast services online, multiplied the number of services on Sundays and feasts, set up a system of reserving seats in church pews, and somewhere it was possible to watch services outside the church, using large screens. Singing in the church was forbidden.

From 26th April 2021, the capacity of churches is no longer limited. However, believers can continue to attend the Mass in person only with respiratory protection (i.e., have a respirator, surgical mask or nano mask), must disinfect their hands before entering the church and keep two meters distance from people who are not members of the same household. No other restrictions have been set. The Church's recommendation to refrain from using holy water and shaking hands in sign of peace continues.

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Photo on the front page: Fortress in Prague – Chodov, birthplace of Blessed Dominik Zavřel, OCist.

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