

Seven Founders of the Order of Servites



These seven men were born in Florence, Italy and led lives as hermits on Monte Senario. They had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Friday, April 13, 1240, the hermits received a vision of Our Lady. She held in her hand a black habit, and a nearby angel bore a scroll reading "Servants of Mary."

Mary told them: "You will found a new order, and you will be my witnesses throughout the world. This is your name: Servants of Mary. This is your rule: that of Saint Augustine. And here is your distinctive sign: the black scapular, in memory of my sufferings."

They accepted the wisdom of Our Lady, wrote a Rule based on Saint Augustine and the Dominican Constitutions, adopted the black habit of an Augustinian monk, and lived as mendicant friars. The men founded the Order of Servites which in 1304 received the approval of the Holy See.

They are venerated on Feb. 17 because it is said to be the day on which Saint Alexis Falconieri, one of the seven, died in 1310. All seven were beatified December 1, 1717 by Pope Clement XI and canonized in 1887 by Pope Leo XIII.