

**February 17**

**SEVEN HOLY FATHERS OF OUR ORDER**

*Solemnity*

*Our seven Fathers were born and grew up in the city of Florence. Drawn together by friendship and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, they gave themselves to common prayer and works of charity. Their desire to serve God eventually led them to leave their homes and their businesses, and to form a community outside the city walls. About the year 1245 they moved to Monte Senario where, for a time, they followed a life of prayerful seclusion. As others came to join them, they laid the foundations of the Servite Order, whose members would be committed to the service of the Lord and others. They promised to follow Christ and witness his gospel; they took the Blessed Virgin as their Lady; and they lived communal life according to the Rule of St. Augustine. Pope Leo XIII canonized them as the Seven Founders of the Servite Order in 1888.*

**Evening Prayer I**

**HYMN**

Widely the wars of wickedness and weakness  
Cruelly tortured brotherhood and meekness.  
Hence to the cause of merciful forgiveness  
Comes holy Mary.

See how she calls the Seven as her Servants  
Filled with the force of Spirit's Love eternal.  
Flames then of fury turn to love fraternal  
Founded in mercy.

How they obey the holy Lady's claiming;  
Power and display of worldly way disdain.  
Now they are named by citizens proclaiming:  
"Servants of Mary."

So, to forego the noise of occupation,  
Only to know the God of contemplation,  
Yonder they go, Senario's desolation  
Silently welcomes.

Then in a hidden life of reparation,  
Penances strict requite man's degradation;  
Sentence is lifted by their dedication,  
Softened in mercy.

Thus giving joy and glory to the Virgin,  
Under her royal call, her mantle wearing,  
Full is their loyalty, called to be her Servants,  
Prayerful and holy.

Glory to God the Father the Almighty  
Through Jesus Christ his only Son eternal.  
Praise to the Spirit, voice of our devotion  
Now and forever.

Melody: Bella dum late 11.11.11.5 Text: Paul Addison, OSM

*Or another hymn may be sung.*

PSALMODY

Ant. 1 The Lord looked down upon the earth below and saw the humility of his servants.

Psalm 113

The Church rejoices in the holiness of her children

*He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the lowly (Lk 1:52).*

Praise, O Servants of the Lord,  
 praise the name of the Lord!  
 ay the name of the Lord be blessed  
 both now and forevermore,  
 From the rising of the sun to its setting  
 praised be the name of the Lord!

High above all nations is the Lord,  
 above the heavens is his glory.  
 Who is like the Lord, our God,  
 who has risen on high to his throne  
 yet stoops from the heights to look own,  
 to look down upon heaven and earth?

From the dust he lifts up the lowly,  
 from his misery he raises the poor  
 to set him in the company of princes,  
 yes, with the princes of his people.  
 To the childless wife he gives a home  
 and gladdens her heart with children.

**Psalm-prayer**

Almighty God, we praise and bless your holy name! As Servants of Mary and cherished children of Mother Church may we be always united in the bond of your love, and find our joy in serving our neighbour.

Ant. The Lord looked down upon the earth below and saw the humility of his servants.

Ant. 2 Blessed be our Fathers, whose hope was in the Lord and whose glory was in the service of Our Lady.

Psalm 146

The hope of the just is in the Lord.  
*Christ Jesus our hope (1 Timothy 1:1).*

My soul, give praise to the Lord;  
 I will praise the Lord all my days,  
 make music to my God while I live.

Put no trust in princes,

in mortal men in whom there is no help.  
Take their breath, they return to clay  
and their plans that day come to nothing.

He is happy who is helped by Jacob's God,  
whose hope is in the Lord his God,  
who alone made heaven and earth,  
the seas and all they contain.

It is he who keeps faith forever,  
who is just to those who are oppressed.  
It is he who gives bread to the hungry,  
the Lord, who sets prisoners free,

the Lord who gives sight to the blind,  
who raises up those who are bowed down,  
the Lord, who protects the stranger  
and upholds the widow and orphan.

It is the Lord who loves the just  
but thwarts the path of the wicked.  
The Lord will reign forever,  
Zion's God from age to age.

### **Psalm-prayer**

Lord, you favored our holy Fathers with love beyond description. We bless you for your goodness and we ask that we may be like them with hearts that sing your praise and lives that give you glory in the humble service of others.

Ant. Blessed be our Fathers, whose hope was in the Lord and whose glory was in the service of Our Lady.

Ant. 3 Blessed be God, who in our Fathers has given us an example, of community, love and peace.

### Canticle Ephesians 1:3-10

The wisdom of God: to restore all things in Christ

Praised be the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has bestowed on us in Christ  
every spiritual blessing in the heavens.

God chose us in him  
before the world began  
to be holy  
and blameless in his sight.

He predestined us  
to be his adopted sons through Jesus Christ,  
such was his will and pleasure,  
that all might praise the glorious favor  
he has bestowed on us in his beloved.

In him, and through his blood,  
we have been redeemed,  
and our sins forgiven,  
so immeasurably generous  
is God's favor to us.

God has given us the wisdom  
to understand fully the mystery,  
the plan he was  
pleased to decree in Christ.

A plan to be carried out  
in Christ, in the fullness of time,  
to bring all things into one in him,  
in the heavens and on earth.

### **Canticle-prayer**

Lord, how richly you blessed our holy Fathers with every spiritual gift! Fill our hearts with your love, so that we may be holy and sinless in the presence of your anointed one.

Ant. Blessed be God, who in our Fathers has given us an example of community, love and peace.

### **READING** Colossians 3:12-15

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

### **RESPONSORY** See Ephesians 4:1-2; 5:2

- V. Lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you have been called with perfect humility and meekness.  
R. Lead a life worthy of the vocation to which you have been called with perfect humility and meekness.  
V. Live then in love, even as Christ loved us.  
R. With perfect humility and meekness.  
V. Glory to the Father ...  
R. Lead a life ...

### **CANTICLE OF MARY**

Ant. Our holy Fathers always prayed to the Queen of heaven, their spiritual Refuge, Mother and Lady.

### **INTERCESSIONS**

Gathered in the name of Jesus we lay before him the trials and hopes of our brothers and sisters. Lovingly we cry:

*You alone have the words of life.*

Christ, you have willed that your Church be founded in penance and nourished in charity.

- Inspire our community with the challenge of conversion and a willingness to love.

Christ, you associated your mother with you in the mystery of redemption.

- Help us to devote our lives and work to the salvation of our brothers and sisters as we faithfully follow the gospel.

Christ, you taught our Fathers to seek the will of God in prayer and then to carry it out in works.

- Grant that we draw our inspiration and plans from your gospel.

Christ, you called your disciples brothers and sisters.

-Help us to love one another at all times.

Christ, by dying you put an end to death and by rising you restored life.

- Grant peace and unfailing light to our departed brothers and sisters.

*(Together with Jesus Christ, let us pray as one family:)* Our Father ...

## **PRAYER**

Merciful God, guided by your loving care, Mary, our glorious Mother, called seven holy men to found a new family of her Servants. Grant that by our devotion to Mary we may more generously serve you and each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

## **Invitatory**

Ant. Come, let us worship the Lord, who called our Fathers to Mary's service.

*Invitatory psalm, as in the Ordinary.*

## OFFICE OF THE READINGS

## **HYMN**

Her garb of grief the Virgin gave,  
Her rule, her awe-inspiring name.  
That in his people God's own grace  
In new-found Orders win acclaim.

The Brothers yearn with love from God;  
Come down to men from mountain height  
That others learn the path they trod  
Of love for Mary, Queen of Light.

Their way removes all raging fear:  
In bonds of peace are hearts held strong;  
Dismay and gloom are raised in cheer  
And loving deeds discharge all wrong.

In heaven at th'eternal dawn  
They serve her throne in joyful light;  
On earth her Order they adorn  
With countless gems of virtue bright.

Blest Founders hear our fervent plea:  
Inspire our daily toil and deed.  
That, bound as Mary's Servants, we  
May know your help in all our need.

All praise and glory be to God

Our Father and his only Son,  
 With you, blest Strength,  
 O Spirit One While endless ages run. Amen.

Melody: Old 100th L.M. Text: Paul Addison, O.S.M.

***Or another hymn may be sung.***

**PSALMODY**

*One of the series of Antiphons (A, B, C) may be chosen.*

Antiphon 1

Ser. A. Above all other virtues our Seven Fathers possessed charity, and the peace of Christ reigned in their hearts.

Ser. B Their lives were hidden with Christ in God.

Ser. C They delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated on it day and night.

Psalm 1

There are two ways a person may take

*The gate is narrow and the road is rough which leads to life (Matt. 7:14).*

Happy indeed is the one  
 Who follows not the counsel of the wicked;  
 Nor lingers in the way of sinners  
 Nor sits in the company of scorners,  
 But whose delight is the law of the Lord  
 And who ponders his law day and night.

He is like a tree that is planted  
 beside the flowing waters,  
 That yields its fruit in due season  
 And whose leaves shall never fade;  
 And all that he does shall prosper.  
 Not so, the wicked, not so!

For they like winnowed chaff  
 shall be driven away by the wind.  
 When the wicked are judged they shall not stand,  
 nor find room among those who are just;  
 for the Lord guards the way of the just  
 but the way of the wicked leads to doom.

**Psalm-prayer**

Lord, we honour our Seven Fathers, who were like trees yielding fruit for the Blessed Virgin Mary. Let the flowing waters of grace keep us, too, fresh in her service, that we may please you in fruitful goodness.

Ser. A. Above all other virtues our Seven Fathers possessed charity, and the peace of Christ reigned in their arts.

Ser. B. Their lives were hidden with Christ in God.

Ser. C. They delighted in the law of the Lord and meditated on it day and night.

## Antiphon 2

Ser. A. Their mutual love welcomed God in their midst, and his love was perfected in them.

Ser. B. They served Christ in justice and peace, finding favour with God and others.

Ser. C. The Lord crowned them with glory and honour and set them over the family of his servants.

## Psalm 8

The majesty of the Lord and the dignity of humanity

*All these things are yours, and you are Christ's and Christ is God's (See 1 Cor. 3:22-23).*

How great is your name, O Lord our God,  
through all the earth!

Your majesty is praised above the heavens;  
on the lips of children and of babes  
you have found praise to foil your enemy,  
to silence the foe and the rebel.

When I see the heavens, the work of your hands,  
the moon and the stars which you arranged,  
what is man that you should keep him in mind,  
mortal man that you care for him?

Yet you have made him little less than a god;  
with glory and honour you crowned him,  
gave him power over the works of your hand,  
put all things under his feet.

All of them, sheep and cattle,  
yes, even the savage beasts,  
birds of the air, and fish  
that make their way through the waters.

How great is your name, O Lord our God,  
through all the earth!

**Psalm-prayer**

Lord, you chose our holy Fathers to found the family of Servants as a loving community dedicated to the service of the Virgin Mary and gave them a crown of glory. Fill us with their spirit so that we may remain faithful to this vocation in unity of mind and heart.

## Antiphon 2

Ser. A. Their mutual love welcomed God in their midst, and his love was perfected in them.

Ser. B. They served Christ in justice and peace, finding favour with God and others.

Ser. C. The Lord crowned them with glory and honour and set them over the family of his servants.

## Antiphon 3

Ser. A. They were of one heart and one mind; they held all things in common.

Ser. B. Like branches on the vine, they lived in Christ and Christ lived in them.

Ser. C. Behold, O Lord, your servants, the children of your handmaid.

## Psalm 116:10-19

The just give thanks and fulfill their vows to the Lord

*It is well said. "Precious is the death of the saints," for they have been redeemed by the blood of Christ (Cassiodorus).*

I trusted, even when I said:  
"I am sorely afflicted,"  
and when I said in my alarm:  
"No man can be trusted."

How can I repay the Lord  
for his goodness to me?  
The cup of salvation I will raise;  
I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfill  
before all his people.  
O precious in the eyes of the Lord  
is the death of his faithful.

Your servant, Lord, your servant am I;  
you have loosened my bonds.  
A thanksgiving sacrifice I make:  
I will call on the Lord's name.

My vows to the Lord I will fulfill  
before all his people,  
in the courts of the house of the Lord,  
in your midst, O Jerusalem.

**Psalm-prayer**

Lord, how precious in your sight were the deaths of our holy Fathers! In your goodness grant to the Servants of your handmaid freedom from the chains of sin, so that they may offer you a sacrifice of praise and never cease to call upon your name.

## Antiphon 3

Ser. A. They were of one heart and one mind; they held all things in common.

Ser. B. Like branches on the vine, they lived in Christ and Christ lived in them.

Ser. C. Behold, O Lord, your servants, the children of your handmaid.

V. If you keep my word,

R. you will truly be my disciples and you will know the truth.

**FIRST READING**

From the first letter of the apostle John 4:7-21

*If we love one another, God dwells in us*

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God. Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love. In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him. In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also must love one another. No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God remains in us, and his love is brought to perfection in

us. This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as saviour of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us.

God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. In this is love brought to perfection among us, that we have confidence on the day of judgment because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment, and so one who fears is not yet perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

**RESPONSORY** See Galatians 6:2; 1 John 4:7

V. Bear one another's burdens;

R. in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

V. Love one another, for love comes from God;

R. in this way ...

## **SECOND READING**

*Choose one of the following readings.*

From a homily on John by Saint Cyril of Alexandria, bishop  
(Lib. XI, cap. 11: PG 74, 554-555, 559-562)

*We are all one body in Christ*

Here we find our Lord Jesus Christ praying not just for the twelve disciples, but for all those who have come to believe through their words. He decided to leave the meaning of his prayer somewhat obscure, so that from it we might learn what we ought to be and the path we should follow in order to do his will. What, then, does he ask for in this prayer? *May they all be one just as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so may they be one in us.* What he asks for is a bond of charity, concord and peace which will bring the faithful to spiritual unity: one that will reflect the natural and substantial unity which is understood of the Father and the Son, by which they are of one mind and heart in all things. We say, then, that Christ prays that the substantial unity, which the Father has with him and he with the Father, may be the primary instance and exemplar of the indivisible friendship and unanimity which should unite us by the power of the holy and consubstantial Trinity.

In order to make it possible to strive after and attain this union with God and the union among ourselves, despite the fact that we physically and spiritually differ from one another, Christ, in his wisdom and in counsel with the Father, devised a fitting plan. He would make us one body with himself; he would sanctify those who believed in him through a mystical union brought about by forming them into one body with himself and they with one another. By partaking of the bread, all would become one body. Christ cannot be divided. According to Paul the Church is called the body of Christ, and we Christians are his separate members. Each of us is especially unified with the one Christ through his holy body when we receive him, one and indivisible, into our bodies. If, then, all of us together form one body in Christ, not just among ourselves, but more especially with him who is in us by his flesh, why is it that we are not more clearly one, both among ourselves and in Christ? For Christ, God and human person, is the bond of unity.

Following the same line of thought, but in terms of our spiritual union, we can say that, since we have all received one and the same Holy Spirit, in a certain manner we are all united among ourselves and with God. Although viewed separately we may be many, even so Christ has caused his own Spirit and that of the Father to dwell in each one of us. Thus we who are individuals as far as our separate existences are concerned, have been gathered into Christ's one body so that all may be as one. just as the power of Christ's sacred flesh forms those in whom it dwells into one body, so

the one indivisible Spirit of God dwelling in each of us brings us together into spiritual unity. It is due to the one Spirit dwelling in us that God is the one Father of us all, leading us through the Son to that mutual unity of ourselves and himself through our sharing in the life of the Spirit. So we are all one in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit: one by reason of our communion with the sacred flesh of Christ and our sharing in the one Holy Spirit.

**RESPONSORY** See Ephesians 4:4-6

V. There is one body and one Spirit.

R. There is but one hope given to you by your calling.

V. There is one God and Father of all who is over all, through all, and in all.

R. There is but one hope ...

**Alternative.**

From the *Legenda de Origine of the Order of Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

(Nn. 15. 26-27. 16-19. 21. 30. 41. 48. 44. pass: Monumenta OSM, 1, pp. 71 ss.)

*Men especially devoted to Our Lady*

In the city of Florence, there were seven men worthy of all our praise and veneration, whom Our Lady brought into one community to form this Order of hers and of her servants. When I entered this Order, I found only one of the Seven still alive, Brother Alexis, whom Our Lady was pleased to preserve from death down to our own time so that we might listen to his account of the founding of the Order. As I saw myself and observed at fist hand, Brother Alexis led so good a life that all who met him were moved by the force of his example. Moreover, he was a living testimony to that special kind of religious perfection characteristic of that frat community. But where did these men stand before they formed their own community? Let us consider this in four respects.

First, as regards the Church. Some of them had never married, having vowed themselves to perpetual celibacy; some were married men at the time; some had lost their wives after marriage and were norm 1 widowers.

Second, regarding their status in the city of Florence. They belonged to the merchant class and engaged in buying and selling the goods of this world. But once they found the pearl of great price, our Order, they not only gave all they had to the poor but cheerfully offered themselves to God and Our Lady in true and loyal service.

Third, concerning their devotion and reverence to Our Lady. In Florence there was an ancient guild dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Because of its age and the number and holiness of its members, both men and women, the guild had acquired a title of pre-eminence and was called the Major Guild of Our Blessed Lady. These seven men were devoted to Our Lady and belonged to this guild before they established their own community.

Fourth, as for their spiritual perfection. They loved God above all things and dedicated their whole lives to him by honouring him in their every thought, word and deed. But when by God's inspiration and the special urging of Our Lady they had firmly resolved to form a community together, they set in order everything that concerned their homes and families, left to their families what they needed and gave all the rest to the poor. Then they sought the advice of virtuous men of good judgment, and described their plans to them.

They climbed the heights of Monte Senario and built on its summit a little house that would suit their purpose, and there they lived in common. As time passed, they began to realize that they were called, not simply to sanctify themselves but to receive others into their community, and so increase the membership of this new Order Our Lady had inspired them to found. They recruited new members; some they accepted, and thus established our present Order. In the beginning Our Lady was the chief architect of this new' Order which was founded on the humility of its members, built up by their mutual love, and preserved by their poverty.

**RESPONSORY**

V. The holy Fathers constructed a three-fold tabernacle on Monte Senario: they built a simple home for themselves; they erected a beautiful dwelling place for Christ in their hearts;  
 R. and they established a spiritual haven for the members of our Order.  
 V. Many were drawn to them because of their reputation for holiness.  
 R. And they established ...

*Alternative.*

*They spiritually begot us in the Order by their holy words and example*

In his providence, God has enriched the Church of every age with new religious families. Early in the twelfth century he inspired numerous lay men and women to follow Christ more closely and to respond more generously to the gospel. Leaving behind their secular involvement in order to devote themselves more totally to God, they led lives of penance, either in their own homes or in hermitages. Sometimes they formed new religious groups and adopted a common life-style of penance, simplicity and evangelical witness. These groups came to be called variously "brothers of penance," "the poor of Christ," "the humble ones," "the minors," and the like. Most notable of these groups were the orders founded by Francis of Assisi, a lay penitent, and Dominic, a canon of Osma. About the year 1240, while the struggle between Emperor Frederick II and the Apostolic See left Italian cities torn by rival factions, seven Florentine merchants decided to retire in solitude to Eve a common life marked by penance and prayer. They were already members of a lay group called Servants of Saint Mary and were noted for their special devotion to Our Lady, and for a close adherence to the gospel ideal of fraternal love and service to one another and to others, especially the poor and the sick. Consequently, they put aside their commercial activities, left their homes and distributed their personal possessions among the churches and the poor. The grey cloth commonly worn by penitents became their regular dress. They moved into a small house outside the city walls where they continued to minister to the spiritual and material needs of those who came to them for help. About 1245 they desired a more contemplative life, and at the same time they feared the Ghibelline leaders would force them to return to their homes. So they heeded the advice of Bishop Ardingo of Florence and ascended to the solitude of Monte Senario, a place sheltered from distraction and yet not far distant from the city. Saint Peter of Verona, who was then in Florence, also approved their spirit and lifestyle. On Monte Senario they built a small house with "cheap material," and -a chapel dedicated to Saint Mary.

Their life of austere penance blended elements of both, the solitary and common life-styles. They supported themselves by their own work, sang psalms together, and experienced long hours of solitary prayer and silent contemplation of the word of God. All who came to them with doubts or worries, seeking counsel and comfort, were assured of sympathetic and understanding hospitality. The "Act of Poverty" of 7 October 1251, attests to the radical nature of their poverty: Brother Bonfilius, prior of the Church of Saint Mary of Monte Senario, and the other brothers there, solemnly promised never to accept any possessions. By this time some of the friars had been ordained priests. The fame of their sanctity spread and many men asked to join their group. As time went on, retaining the title of Servants of Saint Mary, they began an Order inspired by the life-style of the apostles; they adopted the Rule of Saint Augustine as well as some norms of their own. The second editor of the *Legenda de Origine* saw in the habit which these men wore "a sign of the humility of the Blessed Virgin an a clear reminder of the sorrow that she suffered in the most bitter passion of her Son. In early documents, The seven are rightly called "our parents" and "our fathers" because they initiated the Order of the Servants of Saint Mary. The Order grew rapidly in Tuscany and central Italy, spreading the fight of the gospel and devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Bishop Ardingo approved their first statutes. Innocent IV granted them the protection of the Holy See and approval of the life of poverty and penance which they had embraced. In 1256 Alexander IV reaffirmed the approval granted by his predecessor with the letter "Deo grata." When the Order's very existence was called into question after the Second Council of Lyons (1274), a solution was found through the efforts of Saint Philip of Florence. Finally in the year 1304, Pope Benedict XI

definitively approved the Order of Servants of Saint Mary with the Bull "Dum levamus." He wrote concerning the original spirit of the Order: "Because of the devotion you have for the glorious Blessed Virgin Mary, you have taken her name, humbly calling yourselves her Servants." Those who followed the Seven have always preferred to venerate them as a group, since they had been so united in fraternal love. In 1888, Pope Leo XIII canonized them as a group with the names Bonfilius, Bonajuncta, Manettus, Amadeus, Hugh, Sostene, and Alexis. At Monte Senario, one common grave brings together in death these men who were so united in fraternal life.

### **RESPONSORY**

V. Through the gentle working of Our Lady, they were joined together by a bond of fraternal charity.

R. They were drawn to live their lives in common.

V. On Monte Senario, our holy Fathers, seeking to follow Christ in all things, searched the will of God.

R. They were ...

### **HYMN, Te Deum.**

*Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.*

Canticles and Gospel Readings for Vigils

*Those who wish to extend the celebration of a vigil of a solemnity, according to tradition first celebrate the Office of Readings. After the second reading, they may add canticles and the Gospel reading as indicated below. A homily on the Gospel may be given. Afterward the Te Deum is sung, the prayer is said, and the hour is concluded as in the Ordinary.*

### **CANTICLES**

Ant. These were kind and holy men. Their seed and their glory shall not be abandoned.

**Canticle I** Jeremiah 17:7-8

**Blessed are those who hope in the Lord**

*Blessed are the who bear the word of God and keep it (Lk.11:28).*

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord,  
whose hope is the Lord.

He is like a tree planted beside the waters  
that stretches its roots to the stream:

It fears not the heat when it comes,  
its leaves stay green;  
in the year of drought it shows no distress,  
but still bears fruit.

**Canticle II** Sirach 14:20, 15:3-5a, 6b

**The happiness of the wise**

*Wisdom is justified by her children (Luke 7:35).*

Happy the man who meditates on wisdom,  
and reflects on knowledge.

She will nourish him  
with the bread of understanding,  
and give him the water of learning to drink.

He will lean upon her and not fall,  
he will trust in her and not be put to shame.

She will exalt him above his fellows;  
and he will inherit an everlasting name.

**Canticle III** Sirach 31:8-11

**Blessed are those who do not seek after gold**

*Make for yourselves a never failing treasure in heaven (Lk. 12:33).*

Happy the rich man found without fault,  
Who turns not aside after gain;

Who is he, that we may praise him?  
He, of all his kindred, has done wonders,  
for he has been tested by gold and come off safe,  
and this remains his glory.

He could have sinned but did not,  
could have done evil, but would not,  
so that his possessions are secure,  
and the assembly recounts his praises.

Ant. These were kind and holy men. Their seed and their glory shall not be abandoned.

**GOSPEL**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 19:27-29

*You who have left all things to follow me shall receive a hundredfold*

Then Peter said to him in reply, "We have given up everything and followed you. What will there be for us?" Jesus said to them, "Amen, I say to you that you who have followed me, in the new age, when the Son of Man is seated on his throne of glory, will yourselves sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times more, and will inherit eternal life.

HYMN, Te Deum.

*Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.  
Conclusion as in the Ordinary*

## Morning Prayer

### HYMN

Under our blessed Lady's care  
 A sev'nfold family comes to birth,  
 Who leave the comforts of this earth  
 And choose the things of God their share

At Mary's call the desert height  
 Senario is their place of prayer.  
 Again she leads, and so they bear  
 To those in shade Christ's healing light.

Christ's kingdom by their work expands  
 As brotherhood and peace return;  
 The Servants soon increase; all hearts  
 The Virgin's praises to resound.

Their upright lives are set aside  
 For life's reward in holy death;  
 The Virgin's faithful Servants blest  
 Are welcomed as God's heav'nly bride.

O blessed brothers, in God's presence  
 One, look kindly on our prayers,  
 For still we strive against the snares  
 Of sin encircling: guide us on!

All praise and glory be to God  
 Our Father, and his only Son,  
 With you, blest strength,  
 O Spirit one While endless ages run. Amen.

Melody: Old 100th L.M text: Paul Addison, O.S.M.

Ant. 1 Blessed be our Fathers, those servants whom the Lord found watching when he came.  
*Psalms and canticle from Sunday, Week I.*

Ant. 2 Praise God, all you Who serve him, both great and small.

Ant. 3 Blessed are your servants, O Queen of the universe, blessed are your servants who forever stand in your presence.

### **READING** Ephesians 4:32-5:2

Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ. So be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and handed himself over for us as a sacrificial offering to God for a fragrant aroma.

### **RESPONSORY** See 1 John 2: 10; 3:24

V. Those who love their brothers and sisters live in the light.

R. Those who love their brothers and sisters live in the light.  
 V. Those who abide in love keep the commandments.  
 R. They live in the light.  
 V. Glory to the Father ...  
 R. Those who love ...

#### CANTICLE OF ZECHARIAH

Ant. The Seven Holy Fathers, placing themselves in the service of the glorious Virgin, declared that they were Servants of Mary.

#### INTERCESSIONS

Blessed be God, the unfailing source of charity: for in every age he raises up people who leave all things for the kingdom of heaven and give an outstanding example of Christian love. Let us therefore implore him:

*Lord, may your love inspire us.*

Lord, you wish everyone to come to truth, yet you reveal yourself to the humble.

- Turn your people to the word of your Son in humility and loving service.

Lord, you depose the mighty and thwart their evil plans.

- Grant that we may trust in you alone and live in simplicity of heart.

Lord, you taught our Fathers to live in peace and friendship in the midst of a city torn by hatred.

- Help us to believe that even the most serious division can be reconciled by one who accepts the message of the gospel with an upright heart.

Lord, look kindly on the Order of Servants.

- Strengthen its spirit of community and love for the Blessed Virgin. Lord, your Spirit breathes where it wills.

- Incline our hearts and minds this day to hear the Spirit's voice.

*(May the Lord's Prayer confirm our petitions, for in it we honour our Father and express our daily needs:)* Our Father ...

#### PRAYER

Merciful God, guided by your loving care, Mary, our glorious Mother, called seven holy men to found a new family of her Servants. Grant that by our devotion to Mary we may more generously serve you and each other. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

### Daytime Prayer

*Complementary psalmody from the Ordinary.*

#### *Midmorning*

Ant. These seven men were filled with the Holy Spirit.

#### **READING** Sirach 44:1, 6-8

Now will I praise those godly men, our ancestors, each in his own time: Stalwart men, solidly established and at peace in their own estates All these were glorious in their time, each illustrious in his day. Some of them have left behind a name and men recount their praiseworthy deeds.

V. If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

R. This is my commandment: Love one another as I have loved you.

#### *Midday*

Ant. They lived in harmony with one another in the spirit of Jesus Christ and together they praised God with one voice.

**READING** Sirach 44:10-13a

Yet these also were godly men whose virtues have not been forgotten; Their wealth remains in their families, their heritage with their descendants; Through God's covenant with them their family endures, their posterity for their sake. And for all time their progeny will endure.

V. The whole law is summed up in one commandment.

R. Love your neighbour as yourself.

*Midafternoon*

Ant. Charity places the common good before self, and not self before the common good.

**READING** Sirach 44:13-15

For all time their progeny will endure, their glory will never be blotted out; Their bodies are peacefully laid away, but their name lives on and on. At gatherings their wisdom is retold, and the assembly proclaims their praise.

V. If we love one another, God will live in us.

R. And his love will be made perfect in us.

*Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.*

## Evening Prayer II

HYMN

Widely the wars of wickedness and weakness  
Cruelly tortured brotherhood and meekness;  
Hence to the cause of merciful forgiveness  
Comes Holy Mary.

See how she calls the Seven as her Servants,  
Filled with the force of Spirit's love eternal.  
Flames of fury turn to love fraternal  
Founded in mercy.

How they obey the holy Lady's claiming;  
Power and display of worldly way disdaining.  
Now they are named by citizens proclaiming:  
"Servants of Mary".

So, to forego the noise of occupation  
Only to know the God of contemplation,  
Yonder they go, Senario's desolation  
Silently welcomes.

Then in a hidden life of reparation  
Penances strict requite man's degradation;  
Sentence is ed by their dedication,  
Softened in mercy.

Thus giving joy and glory to the Virgin,  
Under her royal call, her mantle wearing,  
Full is their loyalty, called to be her Servants.  
Prayerful and holy.

Glory to God the Father, the Almighty,  
Through Jesus Christ his only Son eternal.  
Praise to the Spirit, voice of our devotion  
Now and forever.

Melody: *Bella dum late* 11.11.11.5 Text: Paul Addison,

***Or another hymn may be sung.***

Ant. 1 These seven men were so distinguished for their sanctity that through them the Blessed Virgin Mary founded her Order.

*Psalms and Canticle from the common of saints of our Order, or from the common of holy men.*

Ant. 2 Burning with God's love, they devoted themselves continuously to the contemplation of heavenly things in solitude and silence.

Ant. 3 By the word of God and their example of charity, they attracted many to follow Christ and to serve the Virgin.

**READING** Colossians 3:16-17

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**RESPONSORY** See 2 John 6 and 1 John 4:14

V. This is charity: that we live according to his commandments.

R. This is charity: that we live according to his commandments.

V. The Father sent his Son as saviour of the world.

R. That we may live according to his commandments.

V. Glory to the Father ...

R. This is charity ...

**CANTICLE OF MARY**

Ant. The King of ages has lifted up our Fathers to reign with him in heaven, and joyfully has united these faithful servants of the Blessed Virgin with the choirs of saints.

**INTERCESSIONS**

As day recedes our gladness and our hope do not diminish, because the Lord is with us and our seven Fathers embrace us in their protection. May our common evening prayer rise to God: *Strengthen us in your love, Lord.*

You gathered our Fathers in the unity of body and spirit.

- Help us to live at home as one and let us be one in spirit and one in heart with you.

You led them to the retreat at Monte Senario.

- Teach us to seek solitude amidst the rush of the world, and there to meet you and hear your voice.

You made them heralds of peace and concord.

- Grant that our efforts on behalf of peace may make us worthy to be called your sons and daughters in eternity.

You inspired them to dedicate themselves to the service of the Virgin Mother.

- Teach us to find refuge in the Queen of mercy and to follow her example in serving our brothers and sisters.

Remember our brothers and sisters, Lord, who have died in the service of the Blessed Virgin.

- Make a place for them in your kingdom as companions of our glorious Lady and the Seven Fathers of our Order.

*(There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one calling, and one and the same family. With one heart and one voice, let us offer our common prayer:)* Our Father ...

***Prayer, as in Morning Prayer.***

**Note:** Some biblical texts are taken from: The New American Bible <http://www.vatican.va/archives/>