

February 17, 2023

Good Morning!

**Parish Mission - Last Session - Morning Only**  
**Today's Topic: 10:00 AM *So It Is Below***

1. Today's Readings: [Friday of the Sixth Week in Ordinary Time | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: In 1233, seven Florentine laymen—two married, two widowed, three single—all well-known merchants and members of a Marian confraternity, abandoned homes, jobs, and wealth for a life of poverty, prayer, and penance at Monte Senario, where they built a chapel and hermitage. Within a few years, they formed the Order of Friar Servants of Mary, or Servites, a mendicant order that received formal papal approval in 1304. The seven founders, jointly canonized in 1888, are: Bonfilius, Bonajuncta, Amadeus, Hugh, Manettus, Sostene, and Alexis. Alexis, who out of modesty refused ordination, served the order in various ways as a lay brother; he outlived the other founders and reportedly died at age 110. ([usccb.org](http://usccb.org))

3. Quote of the Day:

~"Those who in fact risk all for God will find that they have both lost all and gained all." *St. Teresa of Avila*

***St. Joseph, Pray for Us!***

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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. They were like seven stars joined together to form a constellation.

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 first 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 first 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 now were 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 preeminence 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 honoring 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.

Source: [liturgies.net](http://liturgies.net)