

# GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



In the foundation and development of every religious community, the guiding aspect of its life and mission is called a charism. The charism is a gift given to the community by the Lord in which the community shares with the Church and the world. Since our founding in 1233, we Servites live and serve through our charism which is expressed in service, fraternity and under the inspiration of Our Lady. We briefly explore our charism this month to aid you in discerning your call to religious life and the Servites.

## SERVICE

Service is an essential element of the Charism of the Order. This spirit of Service has its deep roots in the Sacred Scripture. In their ideal of service, the Servants of Mary are indeed inspired by the example of Christ who embodies the figure of the “the Servant of the Lord” who came “to serve and to give his own life in ransom for many” (Mk 10, 45) and is present in the midst of his disciples “as one who serves.” We are inspired by the humble attitude of the blessed virgin Mary who presented herself as “the handmaid of the Lord” when she was called by God to collaborate in the salvific plan of the incarnation of the Word (Lk. 1, 38). The Servites do a good variety of services: Service to God, the Virgin Mary, the Church, humanity, and to the friars of his own community.

## CALLED TO SERVE

### ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY

#### Vocation Newsletter

Service is ‘sharing the aspirations and the restlessness of humanity and promoting the genuine forms of Christian life’; service as offering hospitality and welcoming the brothers, especially the humble; assisting the elderly ones, the sick and the needy. Service also means manifold forms of

apostolic responsibilities, particularly missionary activities

## FRATERNITY

The legislative texts of our community gives us a very clear idea about the importance of fraternal communion in





our life. Jesus' prayer to the Father (cf. Jn.17, 11), the witnessing life of the first Christian community (Acts 4, 32), the community life-style proposed by St. Augustine, and finally the exemplary life of the Seven Holy Founders of the Order help us understand the importance of fraternal communion as an essential element of our life. Without this we would not be authentic Servants of Mary. The fraternal communion characterizes our way of witnessing the Gospel. It defines our life-style, our work and prayer. It determines the form of government of the Order and it gives a special imprint to our apostolic services where we give witness to the evangelical poverty, obedience to the Word of God and to the community

reality that the Order was a sign of the maternal and merciful figure of Mother Mary. Down through the centuries the Order felt the presence of Mary very close to itself and venerated the Virgin Mary with devoted service to her. In moments of trials and difficulties, the Order's devotion to Our Lady gave hope and strength to continue its evangelical commitments. The Constitutions of the Order propose the whole mystery of the Blessed Virgin Mary for contemplation. According to the tradition of the Order, some of the following aspects are highlighted: the incarnation of the Word, a great event in which the Servites contemplate the holy Virgin of the Annunciation who gives her "fiat" (cf. Lk 1, 38), as a humble and faithful

## Questions for Prayer and Reflection:

1. How am I serving others now? How might I serve others as a Servite Friar?
2. Can I live in community with other friars? What questions do I have about community living?
3. How does the example of Mary inspire my faith in Jesus? What does Mary teach me about responding to the Lord's call?

decisions. In our fraternal communion, we recognize a source of friendship and a safeguard of our consecration to the Lord in chastity for the Kingdom. Finally, fraternal communion is an essential atmosphere for the authentic formation of the Servants of Mary and for the integral development of our personality as friars.

### MARIAN INSPIRATION

Total dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary is another essential element of the life of the Order. It is rooted in the same experience of the seven holy Fathers at the beginning of their spiritual journey. As they were aware of their imperfection, they humbled themselves, and with much devotion surrendered themselves at the feet of the glorious Virgin Mary because she as a mediator and advocate, reconciled them to her Son and made them bear much fruit. That is why, from then on, they wanted to be called "Servants of Mary." In fact the Order is very convinced about the presence of Mary down through the centuries in its life. Already in the time of the Seven Holy Founders and St. Phillip Benizi, the Servite friars were aware of the

servant of the Lord. And it is from her that the Servites learn "to welcome the Word of God and to be attentive to the call of the Spirit." The role of Mary taking part in her Son's salvific sufferings (cf. Lk 2, 34-35; Jn. 19, 25-27) inspires the Servites to have a special veneration towards Our Lady of Sorrows. The Virgin at the Cross of Jesus teaches Servites to witness Christ's love through compassionate service. Our Lady is very much present within the life of the community through the many prayers and acts of reverence that Servite offer her.

As you continue to discern your vocation to religious life and to the Servites, reflect on our charism as a guide to how you might live your life as a Servite in service to others, supported by other Servites, inspired by Mary. Know that we Servites are praying for you.

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ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY