

REFLECTION ON THE SYMBOLISM OF “SERVITE SOUP” (Feb 17, 2026)

True Gospel Community is one of the strong pillars of the Servite Order.

OSM Constitutions # 14: **So that we may be truly ONE, we place at the service of one another, what we have and are.
We accept our differences as contributing to our UNITY, enriching the community.**

THE SEVEN FOUNDERS: ... experienced the Presence of God in the group to which they belonged where they developed their prayer and their devotion to Mary. They remained open to this Divine Presence, and this led them to give up everything and go up into the mountains near Florence, Italy, to live a life of prayer and penance.

They kept Mary as a spiritual companion, regarding her as “Mother” and their “Lady” to whom they gave their allegiance in return for her protection and help ... according to the cultural custom of the day. Mary was a real inspiration in their faith journey – and this led them to found the Servite Order which has as its key component Mary’s spirit of being the “Servant of the Lord” (Annunciation) and being a Compassionate Presence in the lives of those who suffer (at the foot of the Cross of Jesus). The Founders’ spirituality was nurtured in the silence of Monte Senario and expressed in ministry to the poor and suffering in the city of Florence. This has been the spirit / identity of Servites throughout the almost 800 years of our history.

THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY: the “spirit” is the essence, the reality of someone or something.

The spirit of Community is one of the foundation pillars of the Servite Order.

The 7 Founders were companions, but they were more than just companions... they were **friends**.

The ideal of Community life is therefore that members love and care for each other as genuine friends, as well as brothers and sisters in a loving family of faith.

THE SOUP SYMBOL:

- Each ingredient is unique in substance, look, taste, flavor
- By itself it is good and useful; some may like and enjoy it but others may not; but when each ingredient goes into the pot, it blends in with other ingredients and so makes a nourishing meal. Potato is still potato, pepper is still pepper, pumpkin is still pumpkin... but its unique flavor and nutrient is integrated and blended into the soup in such a way that a completely new taste and nourishment is created.
- The pot is the Community, the fire is the energy that does the work of transforming each unique ingredient into a delicious, nourishing meal that is needed to sustain life....
- You were invited to bring at least one ingredient for this Soup; that ingredient is the symbol of you and your unique and special Self. You are not any of the other ingredient... but who and what you are is an important part of the composition of the Community... and as others partake of the Soup (and here is the amazing mystery!!) ... you have shared yourself in a symbolic way with the Community... **symbolic, but no less real.** (Const. #14)

(Each person is invited to come to the soup pot and symbolically put something into the pot..... as we sing.)