

Some time later, he founded monasteries at Conza, Guglietto and Salerno opposite the palace of King Roger I of Naples.

King Roger of Naples saw the Spirit's presence in Saint William and sought his counsel and help. Some were upset by his good standing with the king so they tried to create a negative image of him as an evil man hiding behind a holy habit. They sent a woman to tempt him to sin but as soon as William realized what kind of woman she was, he supposedly worked a miracle and the woman ran away frightened. Thus his life of solitude, prayer, fasting and sharing faith had made a light to shine forth from him--it was the light of Christ.

Saint William died at Guglietto on June 25, 1142. He left no written constitutions, but a code of regulations bringing the order into conformity with Benedictine rule. The only monastery of William's foundation which exists at the present day is that of Monte Vergine. It now belongs to the Benedictine congregation of Subiaco, and has a much venerated picture of our Lady of Constantinople, to which pilgrimages are frequently made.

His symbols are: the wolf; trowel; lily; and passion flower.

\* (excerpted from: [www.stwilliam.org](http://www.stwilliam.org); [www.stwilliam.com](http://www.stwilliam.com); [www.traditioninaction.org](http://www.traditioninaction.org))



**The Monastery of  
Monte Vergine as it is today.**

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## ***Saint William of Vercelli***

**Feast Day: June 25**



**Saint William pray for us that we might have our sight restored,  
that we might see with the eyes of our  
hearts and souls God's presence in and around us.**

**Teach us to nourish spiritual journeys with prayer so that  
we too might be instruments of God's light and love to others.**

**In the spirit of St. Benedict help us to be people of hospitality who  
let our work become prayer.  
Let us find God in each other.**

## Saint William of Vercelli

\*Saint William was born in the year 1085 A.D. at Vercelli in the Piedmont region of Italy, of noble and wealthy parents. He was orphaned while an infant and was raised by relatives. When he was still very young, he determined to renounce the world and become a hermit. At the age of fourteen years old, he made a pilgrimage to Compostela, in Galicia, Spain, a pilgrimage that he made barefoot. He was at Mefi in 1106 and spent two years as a hermit on Monte Solicoli where he built his first hermit's house.

After abandoning a pilgrimage to Jerusalem when he was attacked by robbers, he decided to become a hermit on Monte Virgiliano (Vergine). Many disciples came to him there, attracted by the sanctity of his life and the many miracles he performed. One source notes that, shortly after his arrival, he healed a blind man, a miracle that brought him instant notoriety. Because of his humility, he did not want to accept the people's praise and admiration so he decided that he would live as a hermit on this high mountain. Even there, however, people gathered around him and so he decided to organize them into a community and build a monastery dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. People gave the mountain a new name-- Monte Vergine -- or Mount of the Virgin. It was in the year 1119 that the group became known as the Hermits of Monte Vergine.

Objections soon arose that Saint William's rule was too strict

and life too austere. It is unclear if the objections were internal or external to his community so he dissolved the first congregation of Monte Vergine. The monastery, however, remained and came into the religious of Our Lady of Monte Cassino who wear the white habit of Saint William to remember the founder of the monastery.

The following extraordinary fact is recorded about the Monte Vergine monastery, where the monks still lead a life of penance and austerity. According to the rule, it is not permitted to eat meat, eggs, milk, or cheese. If someone tried to violate this regulation, storm clouds would appear in the sky and the lightning would destroy the illicit foodstuff that had been brought into the monastery. Something similar was recorded happening at the Camaldula of Saint Romualdo. If someone tried to bring food not permitted by the rule into the hermitage, it would quickly become corrupted and infested with worms. This happened on many occasions, and always with the same result. It is the way God chose to show that He desires the traditions of penance and austerity of the great Saint William, as well as Saint Romualdo, to be maintained.

After dissolving his community at Monte Vergine, Saint William and his good friend, Saint John of Matera, founded another community on Monte Laceno in Apulia. The hermitages were destroyed by fire so they moved to Monte Cognato in Basilicata.