

RELIGIOUS DRESS

THE number of the Religious to be seen in all parts of Italy soon creates a deep impression on the visitor. Numerous Orders have their foundation houses in this country while others are also engaged here in various works.

Consequently the varieties of dress worn by the clergy are liable to prove most confusing.

In Italy, the clergy may be divided into two classes, the Diocesan, who work in the parishes among the people, and the Religious, who are engaged in special works.

During recent years the tendency in Italy has been for the number of religious clergy to increase and diocesan clergy to decrease. In 1937, diocesan

clergy numbered 40,262 and the Religious over 18,196, while religious Sisters in 1937 totalled 129,196.

It is really impossible to give the characteristic dress of all

the religious orders, firstly because they are so numerous and in the next instance many dress in the same manner as the diocesan clergy whose long black overcoat, known as Zimara or Greca, together with the large black hat, comprises their main dress characteristic.

BENEDECTINES (Monte Cassino and Sabiaco, founded 5th Century): — Black habit — the characteristic religious garment — with black cape and cowl, and black scapular which hangs down, front and back, from neck to knee. A leather girdle is also worn.

CAMALDOLESI (St. Romuald, at Camaldoli, 1012):—The members of this order are called White

Benedictines. Their dress is the same as the other Benedictines, with the exception that it is of white wool. The Camaldolesi wear beards.

CAPUCHINS (1512):—This is a branch of the Franciscans who established a more primitive form of Franciscan observance. They wear a beard and their habit is of coffee colour. At the waist is a white cord from which, at the side, hangs a large rosary. Cowl and sandals are worn, as well as a black cap—skull cap—on the head. The Franciscan dress is the same as the Capuchins with the exception that they wear stockings and do not have a beard.

CONVENTUALS, or Friars Minor:—Black habit, with cape, and white girdle with a rosary hanging from it. A black hat like that of the diocesan clergy is worn. While the Franciscans were founded in the 13th Century, the Friars Minor did not come into being until two centuries later.

AUGUSTINIANS (1119):—Practically the same dress as the Conventuals. Instead of a cord at the waist a leather girdle is worn.

DOMINICANS:—White habit, not of wool, with black scapular and cape. A black hat, similar to the diocesan clergy, is worn.

TRINITARIANS (Raymond of Penafort, 1198): Their habit is of white wool, with a red cross on the breast. This denotes that their work was centred mainly in the redemption of slaves, particularly from the 12th to the 16th Century, although in recent years nursing has been one of their main activities.

