



The last line of today's first reading is very thought-provoking, 'if you do not stand by me, you will not stand at all'. The prophet was addressing, Ahaz, the king of Judah, at a time of national crisis, because Ahaz was attempting to address the crisis without reference to the Lord. The words of Isaiah to Ahaz are echoed in the words of Psalm 127, 'Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain'. In a similar vein, Jesus declares in John's gospel, 'apart from me you can do nothing'. We can all be tempted to go it alone, failing to recognize our dependence on the Lord for everything.

The words of Jesus in today's gospel reading express **his frustration at three of the towns of Galilee for their failure to acknowledge their dependence on what Jesus had come to offer them**, 'Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas for you, Bethsaida... And as for you, Capernaum...'. Jesus' words addressed to these towns may seem harsh to our ears, but they express the anguish of the shepherd who sees his flock turn away from the green pastures they need.

We sometimes like to think of ourselves as being in control, as having everything under control. Yet, the reality is that in so many ways we are not in control. So much happens to us over which we have no control. Among other things, we cannot control how people respond to us. We can offer someone the gift of friendship, for example, but we have no control over whether or not they receive that gift. Even Jesus had no control over how other people responded to him. He brought people the gift of God's presence but not everyone received that gift, not everyone recognized Jesus as God visiting his people.

In this morning's gospel reading, **Jesus laments the fact that the towns of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum did not respond to his presence, in spite of the miracles that were done in their midst**. He suggests that the pagan cities of Tyre and Sodom would have been much

more responsive to his presence. The fact that people were graced by the Lord did not necessarily mean that they responded to that grace. **We have been graced by the Lord in many ways. We have the gift of the Lord's presence in his word, in the sacraments, in each other. We spend our lives learning to respond to the many graces the Lord is always offering us.**

**So dear brothers and sisters,**

1. Let us repent and depend on the Lord for everything.
2. Acknowledge our dependence and respond to what Jesus has come to offer us every day.
3. Thank and praise God for His presence in His word, in the Sacraments and in each other.

**Let us pray:**

Lord, help me to repent daily of my sin. Help me to be an instrument of the repentance of others. May I always receive Your words in love and offer them in the form of love that is most effective.

**Jesus, I Trust In You.**

**\*\* Today is the feast of Our lady of Mount Carmel. The following may help to know about Our lady of Mount Carmel and reflect and receive His blessings through the intercession of Our lady of Carmel.**

**July 16 Tuesday (Our Lady of Mount Carmel):** Mount Carmel is a mountain in northern Palestine about twenty miles from Nazareth, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, three miles south of Haifa in modern Israel. 1 Kings Chapter 18 describes how the prophet Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel for rain was answered and how he defeated the 450 pagan priests of Baal on the

same mountain. He challenged them to bring fire from Heaven to burn the sacrificed bulls placed on the altar, and he proved that only Yahweh was the true God. According to the most ancient Carmelite chronicles, the Order had its origins with the disciples of the prophets Elijah and Eliseus on Mount Carmel. They lived very ascetic lives in caves on Mount Carmel honoring the “Holy Virgin” of the Messianic prophecies who would give birth to the promised Messiah. When the Apostles started preaching Jesus, the pious ascetics of Carmel accepted the Christian Faith. In the 13th century, a group of pilgrims who followed the Crusaders was impressed by the lifestyle of the disciples of Elijah. Hence, they set up a religious community on the western slopes of Mount Carmel and started living very ascetic lives. This was the beginning of the modern Carmelite Order, whose members started leading a contemplative life under the patronage of Mary, honoring her as the Mother of God and Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The people began to call them *Friars of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*. Pope Honorius III approved the order’s rule in 1232 (or 1236?). Since the Turks had started conquering Palestine by 1235, the hermits decided to go back to Europe, where they built monasteries in Cyprus, Italy, France, and England. Simon Stock, an English Carmelite, became the superior of all the Carmelites in 1247. He helped the order expand and adapt to the times, patterning the order on the Dominicans and Franciscans. The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was instituted first for the Carmelites in 1332 to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the approval of the rule of the Carmelite Order. *The Order of Discalced Carmelites* of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (OCD) resulted from 16th-century reforms of the Carmelites by St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross and later by reforms made by the order *Carmelites of Mary Immaculate* (CMI) in the Kerala State of India

**Our Lady of Mount Carmel and the Brown scapular:** According to a popular legend, Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, and gave him the Brown Scapular with the following words: “*This will be for you and for all Carmelites the privilege, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire.*” Mary promised her protection to all those who would wear the blessed habit and lead a life of prayer and sacrifice. Pope St. Pius X (1903 -1914) declared that the common people could have the same blessings if they would wear the metal scapular medal

carrying the picture of Our Lady of the Scapular on one side and the Sacred Heart on the other. The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel challenges us both to imitate the simple and ascetic life of the Blessed Virgin Mary with her trusting Faith in God and her humility and to seek her guidance and maternal protection in our Christian lives.