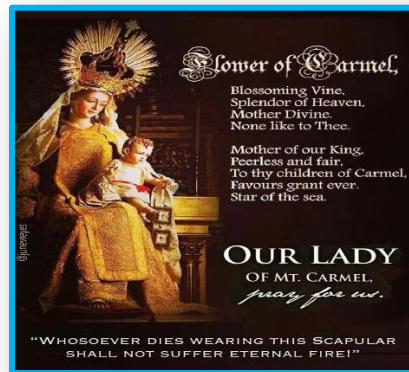
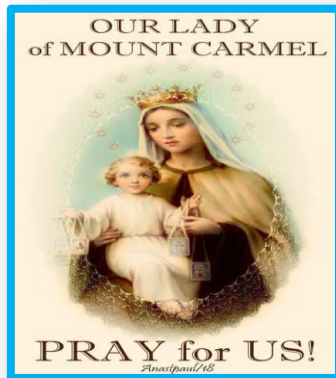


Daily Saints - 16 July



Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

She is especially invoked for the protection from harm, protection from dangerous situations, deliverance from Purgatory.

The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, celebrated on July 16, was first instituted in the late 14th century in commemoration of the approval of the rule of the Carmelite Order a hundred years earlier. According to legend, a religious community was established even before the time of Christ on Mount Carmel. This is the mountain overlooking the Mediterranean Sea on which the prophet Elijah successfully challenged the priests of Baal and won the people to the true God. The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel entered the Calendar of the universal Church in the early 18th century.

Although there is no historical evidence for the pre-Christian Carmelite community, references in the 12th-century record a community of monks on the holy mountain. Despite continual difficulties, the community built a monastery and church dedicated to the Virgin Mary on Mount Carmel in 1263. Saint Louis, King of France, had visited Mount Carmel in 1254 and brought back six French hermits for whom he built a convent near Paris. Mount Carmel was taken by the Muslims in 1291, and the brothers were killed and the convent burned.

The title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel can be traced back to the hermits living on Mount Carmel in Israel during the Old Testament. This ancient community prayed for the advent of the Virgin-Mother through whom salvation was promised to mankind. In Hebrew, "Carmel" means "garden". In ancient times this mountain was celebrated for its lush, verdant, flowery beauty. It was also on Mount Carmel that the Prophet Elijah prayed to God for rain during a terrible drought afflicting Israel for its sins and idolatry of Baal. The first sign that his prayer was answered was a tiny cloud that appeared in the sky out over the Mediterranean, the precursor of a great rainfall.

Elias saw the cloud as a symbol of the Virgin mentioned in the prophecies of Isaiah (7:14). The hermits took after his example and prayed likewise for the advent of the much-awaited Virgin who would become the mother of the Messiah. Praying thus became their spiritual mission.

St. Brocard, the successor of St. Berthold, set their way of life to a Rule, which was approved by Pope Innocent IV in 1247. From the time of St. Brocard, these monks were known as the "Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

Our Lady of Mount Carmel cannot be mentioned without also mentioning her brown scapular. The scapular, which derives its name from the Latin word *scapulae*, meaning shoulders, is a dress that covers the shoulders. During the thirteenth century the Carmelite Order suffered great persecution, and on 16 July 1251, while Saint Simon Stock, then general of the Order, was at prayer, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, holding in her hand a scapular. On one arm she held the Child Jesus and on the other a brown garment called a scapular, to be draped over the front and back of a person. As she showed him this garment she said, "Receive, my dear son, this scapular of thy Order, as the distinctive sign of my confraternity, and the mark of the privilege which I have obtained for thee and the children of Carmel. It is a sign of salvation, a safeguard in danger, and a special pledge of peace and protection till the end of time. Whosoever dies wearing this shall be preserved from eternal flames." "This shall be the privilege for you and for all the Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit shall be saved."

Another important aspect of wearing the Scapular is the Sabbatine Privilege. This concerns a promise made by Our Lady to Pope John XXII. In a papal letter he issued, he recounted a vision that he had had. He stated that the Blessed Virgin had said to him in this vision, concerning those who wear the Brown Scapular: "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death and whomsoever I shall find in Purgatory, I shall free, so that I may lead them to the holy mountain of life everlasting."

This privilege is extended to laypersons who, wishing to participate in this promise, choose to be enrolled in a small version of the scapular by an officiating priest or deacon. This practice must not be understood superstitiously or "magically", but in light of Catholic teaching that perseverance in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity are required for salvation. According to Church tradition, there are three conditions necessary to participate in this Privilege and share in the other spiritual benefits of the Scapular: wear the Brown Scapular, observe chastity according to your state in life, and pray the Rosary. In order to have a share in the merits of the sodality every member must:

1. Shun sin, and, according to his state of life, live chastely.
2. Say every day, if possible, seven times, Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father.
3. Strive to serve God by venerating Mary and imitating her virtues.
4. These rules, it is true, are not binding under penalty of sin, but the breach of them deprives us of all merit; and is not this something to be taken into account? "He who sowed sparingly shall also reap sparingly." (II Corinthians 9:6)

The scapular stands for:

1. A commitment to follow Jesus, like Mary, the perfect model of all the disciples of Christ. This commitment finds its origin in baptism.
2. It leads into the community of Carmel, a community of religious men and women, which has existed in the Church for over eight centuries.
3. It reminds of the example of the saints of Carmel, with whom it establishes a close bond as brothers and sisters.
4. It is an expression of the belief that the bearers of the scapular will meet God in eternal life, aided by the intercession and prayers of Mary.

The Carmelites insist that the scapular is not:

- A magical charm to protect someone.
- An automatic guarantee of salvation.
- An excuse for not living up to the demands of the Christian life

It is instead a sign which has been approved by the Church for over seven centuries and which stands for the decision to:

- Follow Jesus like Mary:
- Be open to God and to his will.
- Be guided by faith, hope, and love.
- To pray at all times
- To discover God, present in all that happens around us.