

Saint Simon Stock



On May 16, the Catholic Church remembers Saint Simon Stock, a twelfth- and thirteenth-century Carmelite monk whose vision of the Virgin Mary is the source of the Brown Scapular devotion.

Simon was born during 1165 in the English county of Kent. He is said to have been strongly devoted to God from his youth, to the point that he left home at age 12 to live in the forest as a hermit. Following the customs of the earliest monks, he lived on fruit and water and spent his time in prayer and meditation.

After two decades of solitary life in the wilderness, he returned to society to acquire an education in theology and become a priest. Afterwards, he returned to his hermitage until the year 1212, when his calling to join the Carmelite Order – which had only recently entered England – was revealed to him.

During the early 13th century, a group of monks in the Holy Land sought formal recognition as a religious order. Their origins were mysterious, and by some accounts extended back to the time before Christ, originating in the ministry of the Biblical Prophet Elijah.

The Carmelites' ascetic, contemplative lifestyle was combined with ardent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is she who is said to have appeared to Simon Stock, telling him to leave his hermitage and join the order that would soon be arriving with the return of two English Crusaders.

Impressed by the Carmelites' rigorous monasticism, Simon joined in 1212 and was sent to complete a course of studies at Oxford. Not long after his return to the order, he was appointed its vicar general in 1215. He defended the Carmelites in a dispute over their legitimacy, later resolved by the Popes.

In 1237, Simon took part in a general chapter of the Carmelites in the Holy Land. Facing persecution from Muslims, a majority of the monks there decided to make their home in Europe – including Simon's native England, where the order would go on to prosper for several centuries.

After becoming the general superior of the Carmelites in 1247, Simon worked to establish the order in many of Europe's centers of learning, including Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris.

Late in his life, Simon Stock reportedly received a private revelation about the Brown Scapular, a monastic garment worn by Carmelites.

"To him," an early chronicle states, "appeared the Blessed Virgin with a multitude of angels, holding the Scapular of the Order in her blessed hands, and saying: 'This will be a privilege for you and for all Carmelites, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire.'"

This vision was the source of the Brown Scapular devotion – a tradition which involves the wearing of an adapted version of the garment, along with certain spiritual commitments, by lay Catholics as well as priests and religious.

St. Simon Stock died in France in 1265, 100 years after his birth. He has been publicly venerated since the 15th century.

The Brown Scapular

It is a gift to you from your Heavenly Mother.

“WHOSOEVER DIES IN THIS GARMENT SHALL NOT SUFFER ETERNAL FIRE.”

- promise of Our Lady to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251

[Frequently asked questions about wearing the brown scapular](#)



History

In the year 1251, in the town of Aylesford in England, Our Lady appeared to St. Simon Stock, a Carmelite. She handed him a brown woolen scapular and said, “This shall be a privilege for you and all Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit shall not suffer eternal fire.” In time, the Church extended this magnificent privilege to all the laity who are willing to be invested in the Brown Scapular of the Carmelites and who perpetually wear it.

Devotion

True devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary consists in three things: VENERATION, CONFIDENCE AND LOVE. By simply wearing the Scapular, we can tell her every moment of the day that we venerate her, love her and trust in her protection.

The Scapular Is a Silent Prayer

As Our Lord taught us to say the Our Father, Our Blessed Mother taught us the value of the scapular. When we use it as a prayer, Our Lady draws us to the Sacred Heart of Her Divine Son. It is good, therefore, to hold the scapular in the hand. A prayer offered while holding the Scapular is as perfect as a prayer can be. It is especially in time of temptation that we need the powerful intercession of God’s Mother. The evil spirit is utterly powerless when the wearer of a scapular faces temptation, calling upon the Holy Virgin in this silent devotion. “If you had recommended yourself to me, you would not have run into such danger,” was Our Lady’s gentle reproach to Blessed Alan de la Roche, one of her devoted servants.

Enrollment in the Confraternity

To be eligible for the scapular promise, one must be enrolled in the Brown Scapular Confraternity. This is a simple ceremony which can be performed by any priest (see below). The members of the Confraternity have the added benefit of sharing in all the spiritual benefits of the Carmelite Order.

According to a statement made by the Carmelite Fathers at the National Scapular Center, every priest now has the right to invest the faithful in the Brown Scapular and to substitute the rosary in lieu of the Little Office (see below).

The scapular must be 100% wool without plastic casing and should not be pinned or affixed to clothing. It is worn over the head, under one’s clothes, with one square of wool hanging on the chest and the other on the back. Pictures are not necessary.

The Sabbatine Privilege

The Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel has promised to save those who wear the scapular from the fires of hell; She will also shorten their stay in purgatory if they should pass from this world still owing some debt of punishment.

This promise is found in a Bull of Pope John XXII. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him and, speaking of those who wear the Brown Scapular, said, "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."

The Blessed Virgin assigned certain conditions which must be fulfilled:

1. Wear the Brown Scapular continuously.
2. Observe chastity according to one's state in life (married/single).
3. Recite daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin OR Observe the fasts of the Church together with abstaining from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays OR With permission of a priest, say five decades of Our Lady's Most Holy Rosary OR With permission of a priest, substitute some other good work.

Pope Benedict XV, the celebrated World War I Pontiff, granted 500 days indulgence for devoutly kissing your scapular.



The Morning Offering

O my God, in union with the Immaculate Heart of Mary (here kiss the scapular as a sign of your consecration), I offer Thee the Precious Blood of Jesus from all the altars throughout the world, joining with It the offering of my every thought, word and action of this day. O my Jesus, I desire today to gain every indulgence and merit I can, and I offer them, together with myself, to Mary Immaculate, that she may best apply them to the interests of Thy most Sacred Heart. Precious Blood of Jesus, save us! Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us! Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us!

The Popes and the Brown Scapular

Pope Leo XIII: "The Carmelite Scapular's nobility of origin, its extraordinary spread among Christian peoples for many centuries, the spiritualizing effects produced by it and the outstanding miracles worked in virtue of it render the Scapular of Carmel commendable to a wondrous degree."

Pope Pius XI: "In consideration of the munificent goodness of the heavenly Mother towards her children, it surely ought to be sufficient merely to exhort those who belong to the Scapular Confraternity to persevere in the holy exercises which have been prescribed for the gaining of the indulgences to which they are entitled."

Pope Pius XII: "All Carmelites, whether they live in the cloisters of the First or Second Orders or are members of the Third Order or of the Confraternities, belong to the same family of our Most Blessed Mother and are attached to it by a special bond of love. May they all see in this keepsake of the Virgin herself a mirror of humility and purity; may they read in the very simplicity of the Garment a concise lesson in modesty and simplicity; above all, may they behold in this same Garment, which they wear day and night, the eloquent expressive symbol of their prayers for divine assistance."

Pope John XXIII: He spoke "of the Mother of God who is honored in this Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Devotion to her becomes a necessity; towards Our Lady of Mount Carmel we are drawn with a most tender, yet irresistible, attraction."

Pope Paul VI, speaking of Marian devotions, especially of the Scapular, says "Let the faithful hold in high esteem the practices and devotions to the Blessed Virgin approved by the teaching authority of the Church. It is Our conviction that the Rosary of Mary and the Scapular of Carmel are among these recommended practices. The Scapular is a practice of piety, which by its very simplicity is suited to everyone."

THE ROSARY AND THE SCAPULAR ARE INSEPARABLE.

Procedure for Blessing and Investiture

English

Priest - Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy.

Respondent - And grant us Thy salvation.

P - Lord, hear my prayer.

R - And let my cry come unto Thee.

P - The Lord be with you.

R - And with your Spirit.

P - Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, sanctify + by Thy power these scapulars, which for love of Thee and for love of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Thy servants will wear devoutly, so that through the intercession of the same Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and protected against the evil spirit, they persevere until death in Thy grace. Thou who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

THE PRIEST SPRINKLES WITH HOLY WATER THE SCAPULAR AND THE PERSON(S) BEING ENROLLED. HE THEN INVESTS HIM (THEM), SAYING:

P - Receive this blessed scapular and beseech the Blessed Virgin that through Her merits, you may wear it without stain. May it defend you against all adversity and accompany you to eternal life. Amen.

AFTER INVESTITURE THE PRIEST CONTINUES WITH THE PRAYERS:

P - I, by the power vested in me, admit you to participate in all the spiritual benefits obtained through the mercy of Jesus Christ by the Religious Order of Mount Carmel. In the name of the Father + and of the Son + and of the Holy Ghost. + Amen.

May God Almighty, the Creator of Heaven and earth, bless + you, He who has deigned to join you to the Confraternity of the Blessed Virgin of Mount Carmel; we beseech Her to crush the head of the ancient serpent so that you may enter into possession of your eternal heritage through Christ our Lord.

R - Amen.

THE PRIEST THEN SPRINKLES AGAIN WITH HOLY WATER THE PERSON(S) ENROLLED.

