

The scapular reminds us of Our Lady's message at Fatima: prayer and penance. In the scapular we have a small but constant reminder that we must frequently raise our minds and hearts to God in prayer. The least mark of reverence for our holy scapular is itself a prayer: a plea for help in time of temptation, a gesture of gratitude, or an act of reparation for "the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary."



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Token of a Mother's Love



**St. Simon Stock Receiving The Brown Scapular from
Our Mother Mary as a Sign of Salvation**

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by a Carmelite Nun
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It was October 13, 1917. Our Blessed Mother came to the Cova da Iria as promised and gave her last message to the children of Fatima. The children then saw three visions in the sky: the Holy Family, representing the joyful mysteries; Our Lady of Sorrows, representing the sorrowful mysteries, and to represent the glorious mysteries, Our Lady of Mount Carmel. No word was spoken, but this heavenly vision of the Queen of Carmel was a summary of all Our Blessed Mother had taught the children in the previous apparitions.



Our Lady of Carmel appeared to St. Simon Stock more than seven hundred and fifty centuries ago and presented him with the Brown Scapular – the special habit of the Carmelite Order. Because of various Saracen invasions, the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel had been forced to leave the beautiful site of their retired life on Mount Carmel. They went to Europe, but were beset by so many difficulties that it seemed that the order would perish.

In desperation St. Simon Stock knelt humbly in prayer to seek the guidance and protection of the Queen of Carmel. The Blessed Virgin came in answer to that prayer. In the holy scapular, she gave a token of her visit, a tangible proof of her watchful care and a means for her children to prove their love for her. It was something they could see, touch and feel to keep them mindful of her real, although invisible, motherly presence.



The results of this heavenly intervention were immediate. Difficulties melted away. The Popes began to support the scapular devotion and grant indulgences for its use. It is this approval of the Church that gives the devotion its authenticity, without which the vision would have been of no avail. The devotion quickly took root in the hearts of the faithful. Throughout the world during these more than seven hundred and fifty centuries, wearing the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been a mark of a child of the Church and of Our Blessed Mother. Through it the laity has a means of being a part of Our Lady's own order. In wearing the scapular, we are clothed in Mary's habit and share in the works of charity performed by the entire Carmelite Order. St. Therese, the Little Flower, wrote to a friend, "I am so happy you are wearing the holy scapular! It is a sure sign of predestination, and over and above that, it unites you more intimately with your sisters in Carmel" (Letter to Madame Pottier; July 16, 1894).

The spiritual value of the holy scapular is important. To wear the scapular is like a profession of faith in all that the Catholic Church teaches. It is an act of hope, relying on her power of intercession. Above all, it is an act of love, both on our side and on that of Our Mother Mary. The little straps that go over the shoulders connecting the two pieces of wool, have often been compared to the arms of Our Blessed Mother held lovingly around her frail little Child. As Mary held her Child on the desert road to Egypt, so she embraces all those who humbly wear her scapular. We are going through a more frightful "desert" than the one traversed by the Holy Family and we need Mary's warm spiritual protection.

