

The Brown Scapular

What is the Scapular?

A scapular is a sleeveless outer garment falling from the shoulders. Use of the scapular originated in the monastery orders of priests and monks, forming part of the habit (or clothing) of the members.

Essentially the brown scapular is a special garment worn as a sign of love and devotion to Mary, the Immaculate Queen. With the passage of time lay people were permitted to wear the scapular as symbolic members of a monastic order, with the attendant spiritual benefits attached to such membership. Over the years the scapular, at least for lay people, became much reduced in size to small pieces of woven wool cloth suspended front and back. By the end of the 16th century the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was most widely known and used. It is commonly called the Brown Scapular, and is the oldest scapular in use.

How did we get the Brown Scapular?

In 1251 the Blessed Virgin Mary handed Saint Simon Stock the brown woolen scapular and she spoke these words to him:

This shall be a privilege for you and all Carmelites, that anyone dying in this habit shall not suffer eternal fire ... It shall be a sign of salvation, a protection in danger, and a pledge of peace.

In time, the Church extended this privilege to all the laity who are willing to be invested in the Brown Scapular of the Carmelites, and who perpetually wear it.

The Brown Scapular is our armor, our shield of protection against the evil we are about to face – and the Rosary is our weapon. Through these two gifts from Mary, we will defeat Satan.

The Scapular even extends to Purgatory. In 1322, Our Lady appeared to Pope John XXII and said: *You will be the next Vicar of Christ, and when you become the Pope, it is my wish that you make the Sabbatine Privilege known.* Through this privilege we can be released from Purgatory on the First Saturday after death.

It has been told that a soul from Purgatory was asked by a Sister: *What is the average stay of the majority of the souls in Purgatory?* The Poor Soul answered: *From 30 to 40 years!* Can you see the importance of making Our Lady's Privilege known – especially if you consider that these flames are the same as the fires of Hell!

You will understand why the devil works against those who promote the Scapular when you hear the story of Venerable Francis Ypes. One day his Scapular fell off. As he replaced it, the devil howled, *Take off the habit which snatches so many souls from us!* Then and there Francis made the devil admit that there are three things which the demons are most afraid of:

*the Holy Name of Jesus,
the Holy Name of Mary,
and the Holy Scapular of Carmel.*

So now you can see why the Brown Scapular and the Sabbatine Privilege are so important.

There are 3 requirements to receive the Sabbatine Privilege:

- 1) To receive the imposition of the brown wool scapular and to wear it habitually.
- 2) To observe chastity according to our state in life.
- 3) To pray daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin (or a priest may give permission to make a substitution for the "Little Office" ... i.e. pray 5 decades of the Rosary ... 3 Hail Mary's ... or 7 Our Fathers with a Hail Mary and Glory Be.

The Brown Scapular

When a person is enrolled in the Brown Scapular, the priest says to him: “Receive the blessed Scapular and ask the most holy Virgin that, by her merits, it may be worn with no stain of sin and may protect you from all harm and bring you into everlasting life.

The Scapular is a habit – Our Lady’s Habit. The Scapular must be worn over the shoulders in such a manner that one part hangs in front of the body and the other in back. Worn in any other way, it carries no promise and risk not obtaining the indulgences attached to it. It is not necessary to wear the Scapular next to the skin. To obtain the graces and promise of the Scapular, it must be worn constantly. It should be worn day and night in sickness and in health. When it is worn out, since it is a sacred object, it should not be thrown in the garbage, but should be burned or buried.

Many Catholics may not know it is the wish of the Pope, that the Scapular Medal should not be worn in place of the Cloth Scapular without sufficient reason. Mary cannot be pleased with anyone who substitutes the medal out of vanity, or out of fear of making open profession of faith. Such persons run the risk of not receiving the Promise. The medal has never been noted for any of the miraculous preservations attributed to the Brown Cloth Scapular.

Saint Claude de la Colombiere said, *“Because all the forms of our love for the Blessed Virgin and all its various modes of expression cannot be equally pleasing to her, and therefore do not assist us in the same degree to reach Heaven, I say, without a moment’s hesitation, that the Brown Scapular is the Most Favored of all!”* He also adds, *“No devotion has been confirmed by more numerous authentic miracles than the Brown Scapular.”*

In wearing the Scapular at all times, we make a silent petition for the Blessed Mother’s continual assistance. We share in all the prayers and good works of the Carmelite Scapular Confraternity throughout the world. It is the “Sign of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.” The Scapular also represents the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ, which Mary helps us to bear, and it marks us as one of Mary’s chosen children, and becomes for us a **“Garment of Grace.”**

“When you wear the Brown Scapular, you shall not be condemned to hell {as long as you wear it *devoutly and perseveringly*} “if you pass on over the veil and are wearing the Brown Scapular, you shall not see the fires of hell.” “Even the greatest of sinners **will be converted ...**”

One of the great mysteries of our time is that the majority of Catholics either ignore or have entirely forgotten this Heavenly promise of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our Lady further says: *“Wear the Scapular devoutly and perseveringly. It is My garment. To be clothed in it means that you are continually thinking of me, and I in turn, am always thinking of you, and helping you to secure eternal life.”*