

13 July 2025

To Know, love and serve Jesus  
by sharing our gifts through our baptismal mission

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Every July 16, the Church celebrates with joy to honour Our Lady of Mount Carmel, one of the most beloved and venerated Marian devotions throughout the Catholic World. From the fisherman of the Mediterranean to cloistered nuns, from faithful families praying the Rosary in their kitchens to the Carmelite Friars high on the mount, all agree on one thing: devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel is warm, deep,

and full of promises. But who really is Our Lady of Mount Carmel? Where does the devotion come from? Why does the theology teach about this Marian title? And above all, how can it transform our daily lives.

Although the title “ Our Lady of Mount Carmel” does not appear literally in Sacred Scripture, it’s root lies in a profoundly geography and spirituality. Mount Carmel (whose Hebrew name *Karmel* means “God’s Vineyard) has been a sacred place since ancient times. The prophet Elijah lived there, and it was from this mountain that he proclaimed the sovereignty of Yahweh against the prophets of Baal ( see 1 Kings 18). Thus, Carmel became a symbol of fidelity, prayer and spiritual battle.

The spirituality of Carmel, centred on seeking the face of God in silence and contemplation, finds in Mary it’s perfect model. Mary is the praying woman, the one who keeps and ponders all things in her heart (Luke 2:19). She is the small cloud Elijah saw rising from the sea as a sign of the rain of blessings after the drought ( 1 Kings 18:44): a prophetic image of the virgin, bearer of the Saviour.

Devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel began with the first hermits on Mount Carmel in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. These men, seeking to imitate the life of Elijah and live in solitude, built a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary, whom they soon began to call “Lady of the Place”.

When the Crusades ended and the Holy Lands fell into Muslim hands, the Carmelites migrated to Europe. There the Carmelite Order was officially recognised by the Church, and with it grew the devotion to their Patroness.

In 1251, on 16 July, according to tradition, the Virgin appeared To Saint Simon Stock, Prior General of the Order, and gave him the Holy Scapular with the promise: *“Whoever dies wearing this scapular shall not suffer eternal fire”*.

This event marked a turning point: Our Lady of Mount Carmel became not only the protector of the Carmelites, but all who devoutly wear her scapular, - a sign of consecration and belong to Mary.

The scapular of Mount Carmel is not an amulet nor a magical guarantee of salvation. It is a sacramental, that is, a sacred sign instituted by the Church that disposes the faithful to receive grace and cooperate with it. Wearing it with faith implies:

- Living in a state of grace, avoiding mortal sin.
- Imitating Mary’s virtues, especially purity, humility and obedience.
- Praying constantly, with special attention to the rosary and the liturgy.
- Practicing chastity, as the fruit of a life with Christ.

The scapular is, in short, a spiritual “habit”; a daily way of clothing oneself in Christ through Mary. As Saint John Paul 11, a great devotee of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, expressed it: *“The scapular is an eloquent sign of the covenant between Mary and the faithful; it expresses the continual protection of the Virgin in this life after death.”*

From a theological perspective, Our Lady of Mount Carmel represents Mary as:

- Model of Contemplative Life: Mary is the woman who lives in total union with God. In Her, the vocation of Carmel is fulfilled: silent prayer, recollection, listening to the Word. Her life is constant adoration. Therefore, the Carmelite and every Christian sees in her a mirror of the soul.
- Powerful Intercessor and Spiritual Mother: The scapular symbolizes Mary’s protection, who intercedes for her children. The dogma of her spiritual motherhood, taught by the Second Vatican Council (Lumen Gentium 62) finds a tender and approachable expression in Carmel. Mary not only cares – she also forms and guides towards Christ.
- Consolation in Purgatory: Carmelite tradition speaks of the *“Sabbatine Privilege”*, an ancient belief approved by several popes, according to which the Virgin releases from Purgatory those who wear the scapular with devotion. Though not a dogma, this aspect expresses Mary’s maternal mercy towards suffering souls.

In a world marked by haste, superficiality and the loss of transcendent

meaning, Our Lady of Mount Carmel reminds us what is essential:

- Interior Silence: against the noise of the world, Mary teaches us to gather ourselves, to pray, to contemplate. *“The Virgin Mary advanced in her pilgrimage of faith”* (Vatican 11). In her, there was no anxiety or despair, but trust.
- Fidelity in Trials: In times of crisis, when everything shakes, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a safe refuge. *Refugium Peccatorum*, we rightfully call her. Her scapular is a promise that we are not alone.
- Path to Holiness: Mary not only intercede, but also educates. She forms the heart of Christ within us. As a pedagogical mother, she instructs us in love, patience, purity and strength.

How to live today under the mantle of Carmel, here are some practical suggestions to incorporate this devotion into your daily life:

- Consecration to Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Make a personal or communal prayer, offering your life, family, work and projects to her care.
- Wearing the scapular: receive the scapular from a priest and wear it with faith, living according to the demands of the Gospel.
- Daily prayer to Mary: pray each day the prayer of Our Lady of Mount Carmel or the Hail Mary with filial confidence.
- Imitate her virtues: in humility, silence, obedience and love, Mary is our teacher.
- Remember the souls of the departed: offer Masses and prayers for the souls in Purgatory, especially on Saturdays, in Mary’s honour.

In conclusion, Our Lady of Mount Carmel is not a distant character or a romantic tradition of the past. She is a living and powerful presence, an attentive mother, a sure guide. In her are found the fire of Elijah, the beauty of contemplation, and the tenderness of motherhood.

Today more than ever we need to return to Mary, to wear the scapular of love, and to let ourselves be guided by the Star of the Sea. Because in the midst of the storm of the modern world, there is a Mother who never ceases to watch over the boat, saying with a firm and gentle voice:

*“Do whatever He tells you” (John 2:5)*

**Holy Mary of Mount Carmel, pray for us.**

**Mother and Queen of Carmel, lead us to the heart of your son. Amen**

# Welcome to our Feast Day Celebrations and Fiesta

- After today's Mass please join the procession with Our Lady and join in the hymns. The procession will conclude at the stage.
- Fr will bless the scapulars for enrolment and bless the lunch.
- The food service and concert will commence shortly afterwards.
- Everything is free except soft drinks (can be purchased at the fundraising stall). You can make a donation to the parish also.
- Make sure you visit the information stalls showcasing the various ministries and activities you can join in our parish.
- There are children's game sand face painting.
- Go and say hello to the brave volunteer firefighters from the Georges River Bushfire Brigade and to the volunteers from Vinnies who take their van to the streets in our local community at night to feed and support homeless people.
- Our annual major cash raffle will commence today. There are books of tickets to take home, sell to your family and friends and return in time for the draw on november 27.
- Thank you to the committee and teams who have prepared for today.
- We hope to see you at Mass in the future.

## Contact Us



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Enquiries contact Gabriel Mafi 0438 653 401

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