

Flower of Carmel, Tall vine blossom laden; Splendor of heaven,  
Childbearing yet maiden. None equals thee.

Mother so tender, Who no man didst know, On Carmel's children  
Thy favors bestow. Star of the Sea.

Strong stem of Jesse, Who bore one bright flower, Be ever near us  
And guard us each hour, who serve thee here.

Purest of lilies, That flowers among thorns, Bring help to the true heart  
That in weakness turns and trusts in thee.

Strongest of armor, We trust in thy might: Under thy mantle, Hard  
press'd in the fight, we call to thee.

Our way uncertain, Surrounded by foes, Unfailing counsel You give to  
those who turn to thee.

O gentle Mother Who in Carmel reigns, Share with your servants That  
gladness you gained and now enjoy.

Hail, Gate of Heaven, With glory now crowned, Bring us to safety  
Where thy Son is found, true joy to see. Amen. (Alleluia.)

Confident in Mary's help, Friar Simon Stock expanded the Carmelites  
into the university cities of Europe: Cambridge, Oxford, Paris, and  
Bologna, which assisted in the growth and training of more friars. He  
even extended the Order beyond mainland Europe into Ireland and  
Scotland. On his deathbed, his last words were "Ave Maria!" He died  
at Bordeaux, France, and was buried there. In the late nineteenth  
century, a large portion of his relics were transferred to the Carmelite  
church in London.

### Socials with the Saints

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Sources include: *Basilica of the Ntl Shrine of the Little Flower - Little FlowerBasilica.org*  
*"Flowers of Carmel," by P.A.B. of The Carmelite Review (May 1893)*  
*Carmel of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Tasmania*



### **St. Simon Stock** *Receiver of the Brown Scapular*

**Born:** circa 1165, Aylesford, England

**Died:** 16 May 1265, Bordeaux,  
France

**Fest Day:** May 16

During the Crusades, an Englishman named Simon journeyed to the Holy Land on a pilgrimage of faith. While on Mount Carmel, where the Prophet Elijah had shown God's glory in the Old Testament, Simon joined a group of hermits who were living there as followers of Elijah. When war broke out in the Holy Land, Simon fled to England, and brought some fellow hermits. The hermits became the Carmelite friars, a Catholic religious order dedicated to prayer.

Friar Simon became known as Simon Stock because of a legend that he lived so simply, he housed himself in a hollow tree. (The word "stock" means tree trunk.)

In 1254, Friar Simon was elected Superior General of the Carmelite Order. This was a challenging time not only in history but also within the Carmelites because war had scattered and uprooted them from their place of origin in the Holy Land. Friar Simon turned to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He requested a sign of her favor to strengthen the Order. On July 16, 1251, Friar Simon beheld a vision of Mary, who entrusted him with the brown scapular.

A scapular is a piece of clothing worn over the shoulders, taking its name from the Latin word for the shoulder blades (*scapula*). Vowed religious persons and priests generally wear a large vestment called the scapular that is part of their habit, often used practically as a work apron. Today, most lay people who wear an item called a scapular know it as two small, rectangular pieces of cloth held together by string or ribbon which is worn over the shoulders.

The brown scapular received by Friar Simon Stock was two pieces of brown woolen cloth. Today, the traditional brown scapular is usually embroidered with an outline of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, tied together by ribbon or string and worn over the shoulders. Mary is said to have told Friar Simon, “My beloved son, receive this scapular for your Order. It is the special sign of a privilege which I have obtained for you and for all God’s children who honor me as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Those who die devotedly clothed with this scapular shall be preserved from eternal fire. The brown scapular is a badge of salvation. The brown scapular is a shield in time of danger. The brown scapular is a pledge of peace and special protection, until the end of time.”

The wearing of the brown scapular is not a superstition, but is an exterior sign of a person’s love for God and the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title Our Lady of Mount Carmel, united with the Carmelite Order who follow Mary’s example of Christian discipleship.

“The Scapular is a small sign of the great ideal of Carmel: intimacy with God and friendship among the disciples,” states Carmelite Fr. Sam Anthony Morello. The Scapular “echoes the promise of Divine Revelation: ‘The one who holds out to the end is the one who will see salvation’ (Matthew 24:13), and ‘Remain faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life’ (Revelation 2:10). The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel is a reminder to its wearers of the saving grace that Christ gained upon the cross for all: ‘All you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in him’ (Galatians 3:27).”

The Church has approved the wearing of the scapular by lay people as a sacramental. Part of the reason for this approval was the constant stream of graces that were poured out on individuals through its devout use. Sacramentals are objects or actions that a person uses which will, because of their use, achieve through the merits of the wearer or user certain effects, mainly of a spiritual nature. Other examples of sacramentals include holy water and the rosary.

The brown scapular is one of the most highly recommended Marian devotions in the Catholic Church. This has been true through the centuries, and into our own modern times. The scapular as a sign is rich in meaning. It can serve as a sign of Mary’s quiet presence, as the

scapular is a silent devotion. It is a reminder of the contemplative aspect of Christian life. Contemplation is what the saints wrote so much about; union with God in the depths of the soul. It is in this silence that God best speaks to persons. Mary is the Church’s greatest contemplative. In her silence, she heard those extraordinary words spoken to her by the Lord through the Archangel Gabriel — *Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.*

### **How to take on the Scapular**

The Carmelite Order is eager to share Our Lady’s patronage and protection with all those who are devoted to her and who share a spiritual affinity with the Order. They extend both their habit—the scapular—and affiliation to all.

The Confraternity of the Brown Scapular is a means to participate in the Carmelite charism. This group formed at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Little Flower in San Antonio, Texas, in the 1930s and is open to new members. The group supports the Basilica and meets every month for spiritual talks.

A stained-glass window depicting Friar Simon Stock receiving the Brown Scapular is part of the largest window in the Basilica, which depicts several traditions of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

For those interested in associating with the Discalced Carmelites, any priest can confer the Brown Scapular on an individual. Perhaps Our Lady is calling you to start a Confraternity of the Brown Scapular in your parish.

“Devotion to Our Lady cannot be limited to prayers and tributes in her honor on certain occasions, but must become a ‘habit,’ that is, a permanent orientation of one’s own Christian conduct, woven of prayer and interior life,” explained St. John Paul II, who wore the Brown Scapular himself.

### **Friar Simon’s Story, continued**

Tradition tells us that Friar Simon Stock wrote the famous Marian hymn *Flos Carmeli*, Flower of Carmel. Here is an English version of the lyrics: