

FEAST of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

For your reflection and consideration, a quote by **Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, O.C.D.** : **Divine Intimacy, 378**

The Blessed Virgin is a Mother who clothes us with grace and takes our supernatural life under her protection, in order to bring it to its full flowering in eternal life. She has cooperated in obtaining the garment of our eternal salvation, the wedding garment in which we shall enter the banquet hall of heaven. How she longs that this robe be imperishable! From the moment we received it, Mary has never ceased to follow us with her maternal gaze, to safeguard within us the life of grace.

The scapular, the little habit, that our Lady of Mount Carmel offers us is only the external symbol of her unceasing, maternal care: the symbol, but also the sign, the pledge of eternal salvation. The Blessed Virgin gives the assurance of the supreme grace of final perseverance to all who wear worthily her little habit. "Those who wear the scapular," said Pius XII, "profess to belong to Our Lady." Because we belong to Mary she takes special care of our souls. Devotion to our Lady of Mount Carmel indicates a strong call to the interior life, which, in a very special way is Mary's life.

The Blessed Virgin wants us to resemble her in heart and mind much more than in externals. Those who wish to live truly devoted to our Lady of Mount Carmel must follow Mary into the depths of the interior life. Carmel is the symbol of the contemplative life, of life wholly consecrated to seeking God and tending wholly toward divine intimacy and she who best realizes this very high ideal is Mary, Queen, Beauty of Carmel. Every interior soul even if living amid the tumult of the world, must strive to reach this peace, this interior silence, which alone makes continual contact with God possible. It is our passions and attachments that make noise within us, that disturb our peace of mind and interrupt our intimate converse with God. Only the soul that is wholly detached and in complete control of its passions can, like Mary, be a solitary, silent "garden" where God will find His delights. This is the grace we ask of Our Lady today when we choose her to be the Queen and mistress of our interior life.

Extract from the Constitutions of the Order of Discalced Carmelites Secular:

The members of the Secular Order of Discalced Carmelites are faithful members of the Church, "called to live in allegiance to Christ" "through a friendship with the one we know loves us" and in service to the Church. Under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in the biblical tradition of the prophet Elijah and inspired by the teachings of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross, they seek to deepen their Christian commitment received in baptism. The Virgin Mary is present in a special way, most of all as a model of faithfulness in listening to the Lord and in service to Him and to others. She is Mother of the Order. Secular Carmel enjoys her special protection and cultivates a sincere Marian devotion. Carmel contemplates Mary as Mother and Sister, as "the perfect model of the disciple of the Lord" and, as such, a model for the life of the members of the Order. For Secular Carmelites, Mary is a model of total commitment to God's Kingdom. She teaches us to listen to God's Word in Scripture and in life, to believe in it in every circumstance in order to live its demands. All this she did, without understanding many things; pondering all in her heart until light dawned through contemplative prayer. Mary is also an ideal and inspiration for the Secular Carmelite. She lived close to people and their needs, being concerned about them. She helps us understand the meaning of mission. She, Mother and Sister, who goes before us in a pilgrimage of faith and in following the Lord Jesus, keeps us company so that we may imitate her life hidden in Christ and committed to the service of others.