

The Rosary and The Scapular Are Inseparable

The exact origins of both the rosary and scapular are subject to debate among scholars. Pious tradition maintains that both the rosary and the brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel were given by the Virgin Mary to Saints Dominic and Simon Stock respectively during the 13th century. Historical records document their growth during the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. By the early 20th century they had gained such a strong following among Catholics worldwide that Josef Hilgers, writing in the Catholic Encyclopedia of 1914 stated: "Like the Rosary, the Brown scapular has become the badge of the devout Catholic." Since the Second Vatican Council the more appropriate term for these items is "devotional articles", in order to distinguish them from liturgical actions and items used therewith, such as candles, chrism, or holy water. The sacramental related to them would be the rite of blessing, rather than the object blessed. As with all religious articles, the use of the rosary and the scapular are optional for Roman Catholics. Specific indulgences have been associated with each of them. The Rosary and the Scapular are important expressions of popular piety in the Roman Catholic Church. Sister Lucia from Fatima stated, "The rosary and the scapular are inseparable." In order to obtain the graces and promises received from wearing the Scapular, one should wear it devoutly. In other words, under the usual conditions, i.e. state of grace (bo to Confession regularly!!), be properly invested/enrolled by a Catholic priest, pray either the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary or five decades of the Most Holy Rosary daily. Novenas to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel are optional but highly recommended to show Mother that we, Her most lowly and undeserving servants, have faith in Her most powerful protection and intercession.

The rosary and the scapular are viewed as devotional elements of Catholicism. Some historians suggest that the combined effect of the devotional elements, and the benefits associated with them, made the rosary and the scapular favored among Roman Catholics. However, although many of the faithful choose to pray the rosary and wear the scapular, the linking of the rosary and the scapular is not formally reflected in church doctrine.

The Dominican tradition holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary made 15 specific promises to those who pray the rosary. The promises range from protection to meriting a high degree of glory in heaven. The scapular has remained for Carmelites a sign Of Mary's motherly protection and commitment to follow Jesus in the footsteps of His Mother. In 1251 the Virgin Mary made the "Scapular Promise" to St. Simon Stock regarding the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, namely: "whoever dies clothed in this habit shall not suffer the fires of Hell." This is understood to mean that anyone who remains faithful to the meaning of the brown scapular until death will be granted the grace of final perseverance. The approval of the "Confraternity of the Scapular" for every diocese helped the spread of that devotion, reaching its culmination in 1726 via the extension of the Feast

of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16) to the universal Church. In the 19th century, the reported Marian apparitions of Our Lady of Lourdes gathered significant attention, and provided momentum for the spread of the Rosary. The spread of the devotion to both the Rosary and the Scapular was influenced by Marian apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima reported by three Portuguese children in 1917. The Fatima messages placed a strong emphasis on the Rosary and in them the Virgin Mary reportedly identified herself as The Lady of the Rosary. The visions and messages also encouraged the wearing of the Brown Scapular. In the final Fatima appearance on October 13, 1917 the Virgin Mary had a brown scapular in one hand and a rosary in the other.



The 20th century witnessed the development of a number of Marian organizations. The Blue Army of Our Lady of Fatima was formed in 1946 in the United States and through "Scapular Magazine" helped enroll one million Americans to pray the Rosary based on the Fatima messages regarding the Consecration of Russia. The Blue Army eventually reached a larger audience of several million members. The scapular and rosary have been supported, encouraged and linked by a number of

Catholic figures such as, saints and cardinals. Pope John Paul II stated that: "The Scapular is essentially a habit which evokes the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary in this life and in the passage to the fullness of eternal glory." Although Pope John Paul II is best known for his devotion to the Rosary, he received his own first Brown Scapular of Mount Carmel at age ten when his Marian devotion was taking shape and he continued to wear it into his papacy. When he gained consciousness before being operated on to remove the bullet that wounded him in St. Peter's Square on 13 May 1981, he instructed the doctors not to remove his Brown Scapular during the operation. He viewed the Scapular as a "habit" to orient one's Christian life. Saints and popes have emphasized the spiritual and meditative benefits of the Rosary and the Scapular. Pope Pius XII said of the Brown Scapular: "Let it be your sign of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary".

Through the grace of God, our Padre Pio Prayer Group will start a ministry of sharing rosary scapulars. We have devotees who are working endlessly making brown corded rosary scapulars to wear. They will be a sign of Marian Spirituality, the loving presence of Our Blessed Mother. Her two requests have been 'pray the rosary daily' and 'wear the brown scapular'. It must become a *habit*, that is, a permanent sign of one's own Christian conduct.



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