Before a direct answer is given to this important question, a brief description and some basic information about the scapular would be most appropriate for some people. The brown scapular in my possession measures 1-1/8" by 1-1/2", is made of cloth and has a picture of Mary holding the baby Jesus in her arms. Under this picture are these surprising words:

Whosoever dies wearing this (brown) scapular shall not suffer eternal fire. Mary’s promise.

This small rectangular patch of cloth is attached to another similar sized patch of cloth by way of two flat cords which enables them to be draped over one’s chest and back. The other piece of cloth also has a message on it underneath a picture of Jesus’ face: Cease! The Holy face of Christ protects me.

Along with this brown scapular came a small information sheet about it which carries the Imprimatur from Thomas M. O’Leary, D.D., July 16, 1941, Bishop of Springfield. In it we read that the aforementioned promise of escaping eternal fire, because one is wearing the brown scapular, was made by Mary to Saint Simon Stock on July 16, 1251.

Afterwards, the Catholic saint Alphonsus stated:

“Just as men take pride in having others wear their livery, so the Most Holy Mary is pleased when Her servants wear Her Scapular as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to Her service, and are members of the Family of the Mother of God” (emphasis ours).

Also we read: “Pope Benedict XV granted an indulgence of 500 days [from Purgatory] each time the Scapular is kissed.” Furthermore, it is alleged that:

“This Devotion and Garment can be traced back to The Old Testament, to the great prophet Elias and the remaining faithful living in the caves of Mount Carmel, and is recommended to sincere people of all faiths.”

A summarizing comment is then presented and followed by a prayer to Mary:

“Attach then, great importance to your brown Scapular, it is an assurance of your salvation, just as to reject Mary’s grace is to invite perdition” (emphasis ours).

“‘O Queen, who art the beauty of Carmel and the mediatrix of all graces, pray for us’ (prayer from The Raccolta may be said on your Rosary Beads)” (emphasis ours).

This misguided message, just as to reject Mary’s grace is to invite perdition, needs to be digested and understood. Whosoever dies wearing this (brown) Scapular, it is an assurance of your salvation. Mary’s promise.

First and foremost, Catholics wear the brown scapular because they think they will escape eternal fire by doing so! This misguided trust, as sincere as it may be, is only possible because Catholicism does not teach the only way to escape Hell fire is complete faith in Jesus (Jn. 14:6; Acts 20:21; Gal. 3:26). If they only knew JESUS is the only mediator to the Father (1 Tim. 2:5), has the only name in which salvation is found (Acts 4:12), is the gate (Jn. 10:9), our life (Col. 3:4) and hope (1 Tim. 1:1), then they would never trust in wearing a scapular again, even if the message allegedly originated through a vision from Mary and has a pope’s endorsement!

Among other reasons, the Bible was written to inform us about salvation (2 Tim. 3:15). Since it clearly does not mention salvation through the wearing of a scapular (or anything else) we should not think the message about the scapular can deliver us from eternal fire! Since this Catholic message originated from a vision in 1251, we should also immediately be skeptical about it, for now there would be a way of escaping eternal fire that did not exist before July 16, 1251.

Further, since Mormons, Seventh-Day Adventists and other similar religious groups also claim authoritative visions which likewise contradict the Bible, we can only conclude that it is impossible for God to be the source of all these visions, since they all contradict each other and even more importantly, the Holy Bible! Logically, there must be another source of visions, since God wouldn’t (even couldn’t) give out all these conflicting messages! The Bible confirms this and reveals who the source is that tries to deceive us through visions. Paul wrote:

“... Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

This is a key verse in evaluating visions. The devil wants to deceive us, and attempts to do so under the appearance of a friend (as with Eve in the garden of Eden) or a holy messenger from God through a vision, as apparently was the case in 1251!

(3) Please note that wearing the scapular is supposed to be “an assurance of your salvation.” Again, in contrast to this, the eternal, written Word of God declares the following about assurance of salvation:

“He who is having the Son, hath the life; he who is not having the Son of God—the life he hath not. These things I did write to you who are believing in the name of the Son of
God, that ye may know the life ye have ageduring, and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God” (1 Jn. 5:12,13, Young’s Literal Translation).

Please note the present-tense in that passage. The only true assurance of salvation, that is offered by God, comes from “having” (present-tense) the Lord Jesus. Verse 13 is also explicit as it reveals that only those who “are believing” in the name of the Son of God have true assurance of salvation! Please note the exclusive object of our faith must be Jesus. No such salvation assurance can be found anywhere in God’s Word by trusting anyone or anything else, including wearing the scapular! In fact, for one to trust in wearing the scapular to escape eternal fire shows that he is not trusting in Jesus, which reveals his lost spiritual condition.

(4) Though it is alleged that the scapular can be traced back to the Old Testament to the days of the prophet Elias, it is impossible to Scripturally substantiate this claim! There is no Biblical evidence for this claim! Furthermore, kissing an object can only be associated with idolatry, and never true worship of God, which has never included the use of a graven image of man, woman, etc. in any form (Deut. 5:8-10 cf. Jn. 4:23,24).

Therefore, according to Scripture, we have another solid reason to reject wearing of the scapular and devotion to it.

(5) Please note the way Catholicism views Mary, as expressed in the aforementioned prayer—Queen and mediatrix of all graces. There is nothing in Scripture to back up either of these ultra-exalting descriptions of Mary.

Many Scriptural objections could be cited to counter the teaching that Mary is Queen of Heaven or mediatrix of all graces. Regarding this latter de-

If you try to get to Jesus by first going through Mary, you are in disobedience to His directives and you’ll NEVER find Him or the salvation He offers!

Why Do Catholics Wear The Brown Scapular?