

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:

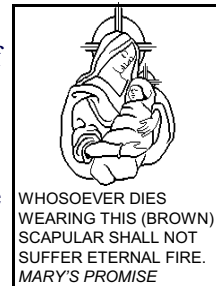
"Attach then, great importance to your brown Scapular, **it is an assurance of your salvation**, just as to reject Mary's grace is to invite perdition" (emphasis ours).

"**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).

After all of these authoritative Catholic claims and promises, now the original question which was stated in the title of this article can be more appropriately addressed—Why do Catholics wear the brown scapular?

(1) **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!

(2) 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

"Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor 11:14)

God, that ye may **know** the life ye have age-
during, 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-



scription of Mary, perhaps no refutation can excel the clarity associated with the conversion of the repentant, dying thief. If one would check the gospel accounts of the Lord’s infinite, redemptive death for every single person, he would notice that Mary was at the foot of the cross when Jesus was dying. In spite of this, **the dying thief did NOT go to Mary to get to Jesus, but went directly to Jesus (Lk. 23:42,43)!** Please note that Jesus did NOT tell this repentant sinner in need of forgiveness to first go to Mary, “the mediatrix of all graces,” so that he could afterwards come to Him! **The Scriptural record shows Mary had absolutely NO ROLE at all in this man’s salvation.**

Dear reader, be assured that the Lord Jesus will likewise receive us as He did the repentant thief, that is, if we, too, go directly to Jesus in a repentant state as this conversion example reveals. Furthermore, other Scriptures command us to follow this procedure (Matt. 11:28; Jn. 5:40; 6:35; 7:37; etc.)! Finally, 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!☹

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