



A spiritual, historical, and theological guide for devotees of Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Introduction

At the heart of Marian devotion, among the many pious practices that have accompanied Catholic faithful throughout the centuries, shines a promise that has sustained the hope of countless souls: the *Sabbatine Privilege*. Closely linked to the use of the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, this privilege is much more than an ancient tradition; it is a call to a life of conversion, prayer, and trust in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In this article, we will thoroughly explore what the Sabbatine Privilege is, its historical origin, theological foundation, and how it can be lived today with deep meaning and authentic fidelity to the Church's teaching. Far from being superstitious, the Scapular is not a "charm," but a visible sign of a life consecrated to Mary, and the Sabbatine Privilege is a promise that requires a concrete response of faith, penance, and charity.

1. What is the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel?

Before speaking of the Sabbatine Privilege, it is essential to understand what the Scapular represents. The Brown Scapular is a sacramental of the Catholic Church that originated in the 13th century with the *Carmelite Fathers*, a religious order born on Mount Carmel (Holy Land) and later expanded throughout Europe.

According to tradition, on July 16, 1251, the Virgin Mary appeared to Saint Simon Stock, then Prior General of the Carmelite Order, and gave him the Scapular with these words:

"Receive, my beloved son, this scapular of your Order as a sign of my confraternity; whoever dies wearing it shall not suffer eternal fire."

This is known as the "great privilege" or *Scapular Promise*, which implies spiritual protection and the promise of salvation for those who die in a state of grace while devoutly wearing the



Scapular as a sign of belonging to the Virgin.

2. What is the Sabbatine Privilege?

The *Sabbatine Privilege* is a second Marian promise connected to the devotion of the Scapular, attributed to a private revelation of the Virgin Mary to Pope John XXII in the 14th century. According to this tradition, the Virgin promised the following:

“I, the Mother of Mercy, will descend into Purgatory on the Saturday after their death, and I will deliver those whom I find there who have worn the Scapular, observed chastity according to their state in life, and recited the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin or, in its place, the prayers the Church has granted them.”

This privilege, called “Sabbatine” because it refers to Saturday — the day especially dedicated to the Virgin — consists in the liberation from Purgatory on the first Saturday after death for those who fulfill certain conditions associated with the use of the Scapular.

3. Conditions for the Sabbatine Privilege

The Virgin’s promise is neither magical nor automatic. As in all aspects of the Christian life, it depends on the disposition of the soul, fidelity to God, and a life of virtue. The traditional conditions to benefit from the Sabbatine Privilege are:

1. **Devoutly wear the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.**
Not as an accessory, but as a visible sign of belonging to the Virgin and commitment to Christ.
2. **Observe chastity according to one’s state in life.**
This means living according to Christian moral teaching regarding sexuality, whether as a single, married, or consecrated person.
3. **Pray daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary** (a shortened form of the



Divine Office), or, if not possible, fulfill other pious works prescribed by a priest (such as the Rosary, frequent Communion, etc.).

These conditions are not impossible, but they do demand a life consistent with the Gospel. It is an invitation to live in the state of grace, in union with Mary, and trusting in God's mercy.

4. Theological and Ecclesial Foundation of the Privilege

From a theological standpoint, the Church treats private revelations with prudence. The *Sabbatine Privilege* is not defined as a dogma of faith, and the Holy See has always required a balanced and orthodox interpretation. However, **the Church has approved the Scapular as a sacramental**, encouraging its use with indulgences, blessings, and liturgical recognition, especially on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16).

Pope Paul V (17th century) acknowledged that the faithful may "piously believe" in the special intervention of Mary on Saturdays, and that "those who wear the Scapular devoutly may hope for her maternal help."

Theologically, this promise is grounded in the Church's understanding of Mary as **Mother of Mercy**, a powerful intercessor and "our advocate" (as we invoke her in the *Salve Regina*). As taught by the Second Vatican Council:

"The Blessed Virgin was, from the moment of her conception, predestined by eternal decree to be the Mother of God, and was associated in a singular way with the work of the redemption"
(*Lumen Gentium*, 61).

Therefore, **Mary's maternal mediation** adds nothing to the unique mediation of Christ but participates in it in a subordinate and effective way. The Sabbatine Privilege is understood within this economy of salvation as an extraordinary act of mercy from Mary towards those who are devoted to her and strive to live holy lives.



5. What Does the Bible Say About This?

Although the Sabbatine Privilege itself does not appear explicitly in Scripture (as is the case with many devotions), we find solid foundations to understand it within the mystery of Mary and the Communion of Saints. St. Paul writes:

“God desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4).

And Christ, from the Cross, gave us Mary as our Mother:

“Woman, behold your son... Son, behold your mother” (John 19:26-27).

From that moment, Mary exercises a spiritual motherhood over all the faithful, accompanying them, interceding for them, and helping them even after death, as taught by the tradition concerning Purgatory.

6. Practical Applications: Living the Scapular Today

In a world marked by immediacy, moral relativism, and forgetfulness of the eternal, the Scapular and the Sabbatine Privilege are a **reminder of Christian hope** and the need to live in grace. It is not enough to “wear the Scapular”; we must live as children of Mary:

- **Pray the Rosary frequently**, as a sign of belonging to the Virgin.
- **Live in the state of grace**, going to Confession regularly.
- **Participate actively in the sacraments**, especially Sunday Mass and Holy Communion.
- **Practice works of charity, penance, and humility**, consistent with the faith.
- **Foster Marian devotion in the family**, especially among children and youth.

The Virgin’s promise is a consolation, but also a commitment. She invites us to walk with her



toward Christ, to die with her hand in ours, and to trust in her help in life and death.

7. What Is the Meaning of the Sabbatine Privilege Today?

Today, the Sabbatine Privilege may seem like an echo of medieval piety, but it carries a deeply relevant message: **the Virgin never abandons her children**, not even after death. In times of uncertainty, spiritual warfare, and doctrinal confusion, Mary presents herself as a **safe harbor**, a powerful intercessor, a Mother who never forgets her faithful children.

Saturday, in Christian spirituality, is a day of silence and of confident waiting for the Resurrection. That Mary would help us “on the Saturday after our death” means she will not leave us alone, and that **her maternal prayer reaches even the souls who are being purified in Purgatory**.

Conclusion: What Did the Virgin Promise? A Response of Love

The Sabbatine Privilege, like all authentic devotions, is not a shortcut, but a path of love. It does not replace the Gospel, but embodies it in the hearts of the little ones, the poor in spirit, those who trust entirely in Mary.

“Whoever receives you receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me” (Matthew 10:40).

To receive Mary into our lives, to accept her Scapular, and to live faithfully the conditions of the Sabbatine Privilege is a concrete way of belonging more deeply to Christ. May every time we touch our Scapular, we remember Mary’s promise and renew our hope in eternal life, knowing that she, as a true Mother, will never leave us alone.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.
Mother of Mount Carmel, guide our hearts to Heaven.



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Mary, Queen of Purgatory, save us through your intercession.