https://www.carmelitefriarsocd.org/blog/brown-scapular

Catechesis on the Brown Scapular

[Carmelite Spirituality](https://www.carmelitefriarsocd.org/blog/category/Carmelite+Spirituality)

Mar 11

by Father Sam Anthony Morello, OCD and Father Patrick McMahon, O.Carm.

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is best understood in the context of our Catholic faith. It offers us a rich spiritual tradition that honors Mary as the first and foremost of her Son's disciples. This scapular is an outward sign of the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our sister, mother and queen. It offers an effective symbol of Mary's protection to the Order of Carmel its members, associates, and affiliates as they strive to fulfill their vocation as defined by the Carmelite Rule of Saint Albert: "to live in allegiance to Jesus Christ."

While Christ alone has redeemed us, the Blessed Virgin Mary has always been seen by Catholics as a loving mother and protector. The Blessed Virgin has shown her patronage over the Order of Carmel from its earliest days. This patronage and protection came to be symbolized in the scapular, the essential part of the Carmelite habit.

Stories and legends abound in Carmelite tradition about the many ways in which the Mother of God has interceded for the Order, especially in critical moments of its history. Most enduring and popular of these traditions, blessed by the Church, concerns Mary's promise to an early Carmelite, Saint Simon Stock, that anyone who remains faithful to the Carmelite vocation until death will be granted the grace of final perseverance. The Carmelite Order has been anxious to share this patronage and protection with those who are devoted to the Mother of God and so has extended both its habit (the scapular) and affiliation to the larger Church.

Private revelation can neither add to nor detract from the Church's deposit of faith. Therefore, the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel echoes the promise of Divine Revelation: The one who holds out to the end is the one who will see salvation (Matthew 24:13), and Remain faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life (Revelation 2:10). The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a reminder to its wearers of the saving grace which Christ gained upon the cross for all: All you who have been baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in him (Galatians 3:27). There is no salvation for anyone other than that won by Christ. The Sacraments mediate this saving grace to the faithful. The sacramentals, including the scapular, do not mediate this saving grace but prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it.

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches:

Sacramentals do not confer the grace of the Holy Spirit in the way that the sacraments do, but by the Church's prayer they prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it. For well-disposed members of the faithful, the liturgy of the sacraments and sacramentals sanctifies almost every event of their lives with the divine grace which flows form the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. From this source all sacraments and sacramentals draw their power. (CC 1670)

We see, therefore, that the Church clearly teaches that all grace, including that of final perseverance, is won for us by the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord. Simply wearing the Brown Scapular does not confer that same result.

**What is the relationship of the Carmelite Order to the Brown Scapular?**

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the habit of the Carmelite Order. For the religious members of the Order it takes the form of two long, undecorated panels of brown cloth joined at the shoulders and falling, one to the front and one to the back. For the laity it takes the form of a two smaller pieces of brown or dark cloth, preferably plain, joined over the shoulder by ribbons, and falling, one to the back, the other to the front. As the Order's habit, the scapular signifies some degree of affiliation to the Carmelites.

Six practical ways of affiliation are recognized by the Carmelite Order:

* the religious men and women of the Order and aggregated institutes
* the Secular/Lay Order (Third Order)
* members of public associations and confraternities of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, such as active communities of the Scapular Confraternity.
* Those who have been invested in the scapular, practice the Order's spirituality, and have been granted some association with the Order.
* Those who wear the scapular out of devotion, practice the Order's spirituality, but who have no formal association to the Order.
* Those who are committed to practice the Marian characteristics of Carmelite Spirituality but use outward forms other than the Brown Scapular to express this devotion.

The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the common habit of all branches of the Carmelite Family and a sign of unity of that family. For that reason the Scapular Confraternity and similar associations of the faithful centering around this sacramental belong not to any one branch of Carmel, but to the entire Carmelite family. Thus, there is only one common public association of the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

If a person wears the scapular, but has no formal association to the Order, does that person still gain the benefits associated with the scapular?

A person who wears the scapular and practices the spirituality of the Carmelite Order has an affiliation, loose as it may be, to the Carmelite family and so shares in the graces traditionally associated with the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. However, simply to wear the scapular without accepting the responsibilities attached to it would be to reduce this precious sacramental to the status of a charm or good-luck piece.

**What is this Carmelite spirituality that one must practice in order to have an affiliation with the Carmelite Order?**

The spirituality of the Carmelite Order is one of the preeminent spiritual traditions of the Catholic Church. It is difficult to reduce this spirituality to a few sentences. One who wears the scapular should certainly reflect upon the teachings of the great Carmelite saints, three of whom are doctors of the Church.

A few basic introductory principles of Carmelite spirituality would be:

* frequent participation in the Mass and reception of Holy Communion;
* frequent reading of and meditation on the Word of God in Sacred Scripture;
* the regular praying of at least part of the Liturgy of the Hours;
* imitation of and devotion to Mary, the woman of faith who hears the Word of God and puts it into practice;
* the practice of the virtues, notably charity, chastity (according to one's state of life), and obedience to the will of God.

**What is the official status of the Sabbatine Privilege?**

Historical research has shown that the alleged fourteenth-century appearance of the Blessed Mother to Pope John XXII is without historical foundation. As a matter of fact, in the year 1613 the Holy See determined that the decree establishing the "Sabbatine Privilege" was unfounded and the Church admonished the Carmelite Order not to preach this doctrine. Unfortunately, the Order did not always comply with this directive of the Holy See.

At the time the Carmelites were instructed to stop mentioning the"Sabbatine Privilege" the Holy See acknowledged that the faithful may devoutly believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary by her continuous intercession, merciful prayers, merits, and special protection, will assist the souls of deceased brothers and sisters and members of the confraternity, especially on Saturday, the day which the church dedicates to the Blessed Virgin.

Consistent with the Catholic tradition, such favors associated with the wearing of the Brown Scapular would be meaningless without the wearers living and dying in the state of grace, observing chastity according to their state in life, and living a life of prayer and penitence. The promises traditionally tied to the scapular offer us what the Second Vatican Council says about the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary: "By her maternal love, Mary cares for the brothers and sisters of her Son, who still make their earthly journey surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led to their happy fatherland."

**Who may invest people with the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel?**

According to the Rite for the Blessing and Enrollment in the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, approved by the Holy See in 1996, any priest or deacon has the faculties for blessing the scapular. A person given authority to act in the name of the order may receive people into the confraternity of the scapular. The official ritual provided by the Holy See makes no provision for someone other than a priest or deacon to bless the scapular.

**Is it necessary to enroll people in the Scapular Confraternity for them to share in the spiritual benefits attached to the scapular?**

No, those who wear the scapular out of devotion, practice the Order's spirituality, yet who have no formal association to the Order share in a spiritual affiliation to the Carmelite Order. It gives them the assurances of the graces pertinent to this sacramental. Indiscriminate enrollment in the Scapular Confraternity or other such associations weakens the purpose and mission of those associations and should be avoided.

**A valuable insight from the Ecclesiastical Censor**

The Ecclesiastical Censor of the Archdiocese of Washington, upon reviewing this booklet, wrote the following comment which deserves inclusion in this catechetical section:

That the Scapular is a garment, a piece of clothing, does much to make this a beloved and meaningful sacramental. Clothing is, even today, a sign of parental love and care even when the clothing is purchased at K-Mart. How much more in Jesus' day when mothers carded the wool, spun the thread, wove the cloth, and made the clothing! There is a sign value by the very nature of clothing that precedes even the scriptural examples form the Old and New Testaments. I think this helps to make the Scapular appealing to the faithful. Our earthly mother clothes us; our heavenly Mother clothes us. Without a word of explanation we know exactly what that means.

In the years since this catechesis was approved and published, several other questions keep arising regarding the Brown Scapular. Here are some of the most common:

**Did our Blessed Lady appear to Saint Simon Stock and give him the Brown Scapular?**

The long-standing tradition of the Church has approved this vision as an acceptable cult but that does not authenticate it as a historical experience. In fact, one must be careful to speak of any vision as a historical experience in as that supernatural phenomena are a sort of intersection between time and eternity and as such have a unique relationship to history which always is strictly limited to events that happen in time. The most one can say historically, for example, is that at such and such an hour on such and such a day this visionary had an experience of seeing this particular phenomenon. For example, one can say that on February 11, 1858, Bernadette Soubirous had an experience in which she perceived the Blessed Virgin standing in a grotto at Lourdes. One can speak historically of the living visionary Bernadette and what Bernadette experienced on that given day. It is more difficult to speak historically of the Blessed Virgin appearing because the Blessed Virgin no longer lives in a historical state, but lives in eternity. Since her dormition, Mary is beyond the realm of history. It is therefore not possible to speak historically of her apparitions. One can, however, certainly speak of her apparitions when one speaks in the realm of faith or mystical experience. This is an important distinction because we do not want to reduce our religious experience to the realm of the historically verifiable. Religious experience brings us to those places in our experience where we can glimpse beyond the finite something that history has no business doing. Religious experience puts us in, what years ago one professor of mine called "a time that is no time and a place that is no place." When we try to reduce our faith to the historical and verifiable we rob it of the eternal and transcendent. The question then, from a historical perspective, is not whether Mary appeared to Simon Stock and gave him the scapular, but rather did Simon Stock perceive the Mother of God bestowing this sign of her protection on him and his brothers in Carmel.

Well, after that long and metaphysical discourse, the answer still is "seemingly not." There are huge problems with the story of Simon Stock and the scapular. Father Richard Copsey, O.Carm., wrote an outstanding article, astonishingly erudite actually, for the Journal of Ecclesiastical History on this question. There are several problems. The first is the historicity of Simon himself. The second is the account of the vision.

There are few surviving documents from the 13th century that record the history of the Carmelite Order. There is an ancient tradition that is not without documentation albeit a fourteenth century necrology that seems to depend on an older but now vanished text that there was a thirteenth century Prior General named Simon. This is also borne out by other fourteenth century references. There is also a story preserved in Dominican, not Carmelite sources, of a prior on Mount Carmel by the name of Simon who met Jordan of Saxony during his ill-fated voyage to the Holy Land. And there is a tomb of one Carmelite named Simon in the Cathedral of Bordeaux, a tomb that once stood in the Carmelite Church of that city, which in the Middle Ages drew many pilgrims. It is to this last that the stories of the vision seem to be originally attached. This Simon, incidentally, would have been English and not French, as Bordeaux was for most of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the possession of the Kings of England and its religious houses populated by English religious. Simon the prior of Mount Carmel, Simon the thirteenth- century General of the Order, and Simon buried at Bordeaux may have all been one and the same person. But then again they may have been three individuals. Or two of the three could have been the same person. We simply do not know enough about any one of the three Simons to make a judgment. Nor is there any reason to connect Simon from Mount Carmel, or even Simon the Prior General, with the scapular vision. A late fourteenth century tradition makes some link between Simon buried in Bordeaux with the vision, but this first connection with this tradition to the Scapular vision is a century and a half after the purported event a long time for a tradition to be continuous without written documentation to support it.

This brings us to the second problem, and that problem is the account of the vision. No one seems to know about the vision until the very end of the fourteenth century, almost a century and a half after it supposedly happened. This is extremely problematic in establishing historical accuracy. Some argue that perhaps the stories were passed down verbally and only come to be written at the close of the fourteenth century. But there are people who should have known about them if they were historical that have no knowledge of the vision at all. The most prominent of these is a Carmelite friar named John Hornby. At a debate at the University of Cambridge in 1375 Hornby, attacked the Dominican John Stokes, precisely over the claims the Dominicans made for having received their habit from the Blessed Virgin Mary. According to Hornby, the Carmelites, ardent supporters of Mary's Immaculate Conception, were far more worthy of Mary's attention than the Dominicans. The Dominicans followed the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas who denied the Immaculate Conception. Hornby says that if the Dominicans had received their habit from the Blessed Virgin, they show her little gratitude. They are, he insists"her greatest enemies" because of their denial of her Immaculate Conception. Hornby testified in his debate with Stokes to a Dominican custom of having a picture or statute of the Blessed Virgin bestowing the Dominican Scapular on the Friars Preacher in each of their houses. He never mentions any such custom concerning the Carmelite scapular vision. In fact, there are no known pictures of Mary bestowing the scapular on Carmelites from this period or earlier. Moreover Hornby seems totally ignorant of any legends concerning his fellow Englishman, Simon Stock, having received the scapular from the Blessed Virgin in the previous century. This despite the fact that he was a member of the same province the English Province of the Order as Simon Stock, and that he was at Cambridge, less than a hundred miles from Aylesford, the alleged site of the vision.

Hornby is not the only one who is unfamiliar with the vision. The two fourteenth century sources we have for a thirteenth-century General named Simon the necrology of the Carmelites of Florence compiled by Giovanni Bartoli c. 1374 and the catalogue of Priors General of the Order compiled by John Grossi, Prior General of the Avignon Obedience c. 1390 mention a Prior General named Simon, but give no mention of the scapular or a Vision of the Blessed Virgin. All in all, it is not possible to say that the stories of Simon Stock receiving the Scapular from the Blessed Virgin Mary are any older than the end of the fourteenth century, a century and a half after the vision supposedly took place. This presents significant problems to the historian for the claims that a thirteenth century Carmelite claimed to have seen the Virgin Mary and received the scapular from her.

The story of the vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Pope John XXII at Avignon conferring the Sabbatine Privilege of her promise to deliver from purgatory on the Saturday following death the souls of any who died in the scapular has been shown by scholars to be based on an inauthentic papal bull forged in Sicily in the first half of the fifteenth century. Thus the Sabbatine Vision and Privilege too are without any historical foundation. Moreover, in 1603 a book containing the privileges of the Carmelite Order, including the Sabbatine privilege, was condemned by the Portuguese Inquisition. Six years later all books mentioning the Sabbatine privilege were put on the Index of Forbidden Books in Portugal. An appeal to Rome ended when the Roman authorities supported the Inquisition's ban. The Carmelites were forbidden to preach the Sabbatine privilege a prohibition they did not always honor although the faithful were to be allowed to believe, with certain conditions,"that the Blessed Virgin by her continuous intercession, merciful prayers, merits and special protection will assist the souls of deceased brothers and members of the confraternity (of the Scapular), especially on Saturday, the day which the church dedicates to the Blessed Virgin."

These visions then cannot be seen as historical events. That does not mean that they are without meaning. The belief in the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary over the Order of Carmel and its members is and has always been strong from the first days of the Order. The scapular serves as a visible reminder of that protection despite its probable commonplace origins.

**Well, what about the various statements of the Popes over the centuries about the scapular. Don't they prove the historicity of the vision?**

Frankly, no. Over the years many popes have encouraged the wearing of the Brown Scapular. Some such as Gregory XIII, Clement VII, Pope Saint Pius V, Pope Saint Pius X, and Pope John Paul II have repeated the stories and legends concerning Saint Simon Stock or the Sabbatine Privilege. No one has ever claimed that these statements enjoy the privilege of infallibility. They do not meet the criterion which the First Vatican Council set down for papal statements to be infallible. The statements should be considered doctrinally sound, but that doesn't mean that they are historically accurate. Papal infallibility pertains to faith (doctrine) and morals, it does not extend to history or to the sciences. No Catholic would dispute that the scapular disposes its wearers to grace, including hopefully the grace of final perseverance, but we cannot say that Our Lady made any promises to Saint Simon Stock or to Pope John XXII regarding this sacramental.

**Can a lay person enroll you in the scapular?**

In the 1960's the Carmelite Order sought from the Holy See permission for certain designated lay persons to enroll other members of the faithful in the Scapular Confraternity permission was granted for the Prior General of the Carmelite Order to grant this permission to certain people and under certain conditions. It was meant primarily for mission countries where so much of the pastoral work of the Church is done by Lay and Religious catechists. For a very short time, this faculty was being extended to certain lay collaborators of the Carmelites. But this permission has not been granted for many years now. There were many abuses. Some Carmelite priests thought that they could give this permission on their own authority and delegated lay people to enroll others in the Scapular Confraternity. Even some priests who were not Carmelites began authorizing others to enroll members. It became a bit of a mess. As a result this permission has not been granted for many years now. Any lay person claiming to have this faculty should be able to produce a letter from the Prior General of the Order or from one of the Priors Provincial showing that they had in fact received this authority. Of course, by current legislation, any priest or deacon has the faculty to bless scapulars and enroll the faithful in the Scapular Confraternity. The privilege of blessing scapulars has always belonged exclusively to those who have a right to confer liturgical blessings i.e. those in the Orders of Bishop, Priest, or Deacon.

**Well, what about the Blue Army don't they have the right to enroll people in the Scapular Confraternity?**

As I said, any priest or deacon and of course any bishop can enroll the faithful in the Confraternity under the current legislation. Clergy acting for the Blue Army or other organizations like it can therefore enroll the faithful, but the Blue Army itself cannot grant this privilege nor can they authorize others to enroll.

**Well, what is the Scapular Confraternity?**

This is a key element of the problem with enrolling people indiscriminately in the Scapular. In the Middle Ages, clergy and Religious Orders often organized the faithful into confraternities brotherhoods or sisterhoods to help them lead a more spiritual life. Some of these confraternities performed charitable works the famous confraternity of the Miserecordia in Florence was organized eight centuries ago to care for the sick and still runs the cities ambulance service! Other confraternities were organized as penitential brotherhoods or, more rarely, sisterhoods. They often held processions in which they went through the streets barefoot and half naked, carrying crosses, scourging themselves, and even wearing crowns of thorns. Still other confraternities the most common type were laudesi or praise-singers. They would meet for devotional services in the church, in which they would sing an office of hymns in the vernacular language and listen to a sermon. These confraternities were very important in the Middle Ages and many continued up until the French Revolution. A few even survive today. In fact, the various confraternities that organize the famous Holy Week Processions in Seville and other Spanish cities can often trace their origins back to these medieval confraternities.

The Mendicant Orders Franciscans, Augustinians, Carmelites, and Dominicans saw great value in these Confraternities. The confraternities were ways of associating the laity in the mission and ministry of their Orders. Of course the Mendicants all had their Third Orders where the laity actually became members of the Order, but not all those who wished to associate with the Orders wanted to, or were able to, make this level of commitment. The Confraternities were a way of incorporating the faithful into an affiliation to the Orders without giving them full membership. The members of the various Confraternities would meet regularly at the Church of the Order to which they were affiliated for prayers. At their meetings, they often wore a habit most Confraternities had a habit of some sort that was similar to the habit of the Religious Order to which they were affiliated. They would say their prayers together and receive pious instruction from the friars. They had certain rights to participate in processions and ceremonies in the friars' churches. They usually had certain rights about being buried in the church as well, or having the friars assist at their funerals.

Most Carmelite Churches in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries would have had one or more confraternities that met there. Because of their affiliation to the Order, the members would have worn a habit similar to that of the friars. Often they wore the white cloak that marked the Carmelites as the Whitefriars the cloak would have given them the most immediate identification. As the stories of Simon Stock's vision and promises made to the Carmelites began to spread at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the scapular became desired badge of affiliation to the Order. The Confraternity members would have met regularly, participated in devotions together, and had a sense of identity with one another and identification with the Order.

In the eighteenth century, under the influence of the Enlightenment, many of the religious orders, including the Carmelites, were suppressed in various places in Europe. While the religious were banished, the Confraternities were often able to continue. Indeed, they often took responsibility for the churches where they met, churches that had once belonged to the various orders. Without the religious directing them, the Confraternities achieved a certain independent identity. The suppressions of Religious Orders were even more widespread after the French Revolution and well into the nineteenth century. The Carmelites were wiped out France and all be ceased to exist in Germany, the Netherlands, and the Austrian empire. They were suppressed for several decades in Spain and Portugal. But, again, the Confraternities often continued to exist, repeating the prayers and rituals they had long practiced but without the living spirituality of the Order. The confraternities often began to spread on their own forming new chapters. The various Carmelite confraternities practiced a devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel and usually maintained certain traditional Carmelite disciplines such as abstaining from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays along with Fridays of course.

Confraternities were a uniquely European phenomenon and never caught on much in the United States and Canada, though they spread and even thrived in Latin America. Nevertheless, among immigrant peoples in North America, the memory of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Scapular often survived and devotion to Our Lady and the Scapular remained popular. When the Carmelites came to North America, they were often asked to enroll people in the Confraternity. The only problem is that very few actual chapters of the Confraternity were organized. People were enrolled in an organization that existed more in theory than in practice. Their names were written down and submitted to the Order, but they themselves were given little or no instruction in what was expected of them as confraternity members. There were no meetings for them to attend, no formation in Carmelite spirituality, no community to support them. As more and more non-Carmelite priests began seeking faculties to enroll people in the Scapular Confraternity this situation only became worse. Then as the practice spread of enrolling all children at the time of their first communion, the situation became hopeless. People were being"enrolled" left and right, but no records were being kept and the entire meaning of the Confraternity of the Scapular had been lost. Today there is not even an attempt to keep records of enrollment much less to provide the experience of actual confraternities in which people are guided in the spirituality of the Carmelite tradition**. The scapular has all but lost its ties to the Carmelite Order and is one of the most abused sacramentals in the Church.** In many ways only the Carmelites themselves are to blame for this as they allowed the devotion to spread without taking responsibility for it. In the nineteen forties and fifties they even encouraged wild stories and unfounded legends to popularize a devotion that had been gutted of its original meaning.

In the end, when all is said and done, the scapular is the Carmelite habit. Carmelite tradition declares, not so much from a vision as from the living faith of the men and women of Carmel over eight centuries, that we the Carmelites enjoy a special protection by the Mother of God as a sign of her love for us and her appreciation of our trust and confidence in her and our devotion to however as our model for living a life of allegiance to her Son. We Carmelites are willing even anxious to share this protection and favor that Mary shows us as we are anxious to share the trust and confidence we place in her and our devotion to her. A visible sign of our sharing this protection and this devotion is the scapular. It is the Carmelite Order not the Blessed Virgin who gives the scapular to the faithful and invites the faithful to share our charism in expectation of the graces won by Christ and bestowed on Carmel and its members through the intercession of the Mother of God. The Graces are bestowed on the Family of Carmel; the scapular is a sign of belonging in some way and to some varying degree to the family of Carmel.

The Carmelite Order in both its observances should seriously look at reviving the Scapular Confraternity and reorganizing it in actual chapters under the guidance of the Carmelite family to spread an authentic devotion to the Mother of God as it is expressed in our Carmelite tradition. To this end, the Order should seek to revoke permission for any but Carmelite Religious to enroll the faithful in the Confraternity and enroll only those who are committed to actual and active membership in a confraternity. Of course, one does not have to be a member of the Confraternity to wear the Brown Scapular any member of the faithful can wear it, and to the extent that it expresses an authentic devotion to the Mother of God, any member of the faithful can expect to share in the graces and benefits to which such sacramentals dispose us.

**Does the Brown scapular have to be wool?**

It did at one time, it no longer does. Few Carmelite Religious use pure wool for their habits, including their scapulars, anymore because of the expense and the impracticality.

**I saw a scapular without a picture of Our Lady on it. Is this authentic?**

Actually, the most authentic form for the scapular is simply two pieces of undecorated brown cloth joined by ribbons for over the shoulders. The scapular of the Carmelite Religious is either totally devoid of decoration or has only a very small cross embroidered in white or red. The custom of decorating the scapular for the laity with elaborate embroidery or pictures began in the eighteenth century and has destroyed the visible (i.e. sacramental) link between the scapular of the Religious and the scapular worn by the faithful. Moreover, people confuse the picture for the scapular which is actually the pieces of cloth to which the pictures are sewn. It is better to have scapulars without decoration or with only a small cross.

**What about the Scapular medal?**

The Scapular medal can be worn in place of the cloth scapular for good reason but is not the preferred form precisely because the sacramental link the visible link with the cloth panels of the Carmelite habit has been lost.