

The Scapular at **Lourdes, Fatima and Garabandal**

*Excerpt from God Speaks at
Garabandal by Fr Joseph Pelletier*

was a silent but obvious preaching of the scapular, just as her preaching of the rosary had been silent but eloquent. Our Lady did not say a word to Bernadette during this final appearance. But she did give a message to her and to us by choosing the feast of the scapular for her last visit. This silent message was like a last testament, something that she kept until the very end because she wanted to impress

Scapular and Rosary Go Together

For centuries the wearing of the scapular has been closely associated with the recitation of the rosary. These have long been considered as sister practices that go together. Children were enrolled in the scapular and given a rosary on the day of their first solemn Communion. It is not surprising then to find them both mentioned in each of the three great Marian apparitions of modern times.

At Lourdes Our Lady appeared eighteen times to little Bernadette in 1858. Her first apparition was on February 11 and the last one was on July 16, the feast of *Our Lady of Mount Carmel*. That Our Lady chose to end her visits at Lourdes on that day is not without significance. It



*Saint Bernadette of
Lourdes*



*Sister Lucia, Saints
Francesco and Jacinta
of Fatima*



Conchita, Mari Cruz, Jacinta and Mari Loli of Garabandal

us with its importance. The scapular is the symbol of Mary's love and protection, and it summarized the whole purpose of many appearances at Lourdes. Her last visit on the feast of Mount Carmel was an invitation to wear the scapular as a symbol of our placing ourselves under her protection.

At Fatima, the scapular was kept until the end also. It was the very last thing that Our Lady, recommended at the conclusion of her final apparition on October 13,

1917, As the people stared in amazement at the promised miracle, the dance of the sun, Lucia witnessed a series of tableaux close to the base of the sun the last of these was an apparition of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Our Lady had twice promised the children that she would come as Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

At Garabandal, even greater prominence was given to the scapular. It is the very title by which Our Lady chose to identify herself. On July 1, 1961, the Archangel Michael, who until then had been the only one to appear at Garabandal, said to the four girls, *"Tomorrow Sunday, the Virgin Mary will appear to you as Our Lady of Mount Carmel"*. She did in fact appear on July 2, feast of the Visitation, *"with the scapular on the right wrist."* It was a brown scapular and very large. In her subsequent apparitions, the Blessed Virgin usually appeared with the scapular hanging from her wrist.

The Feast of the Visitation?

It is legitimate to ask why Our Lady should have chosen the feast of the Visitation for her first appearance as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The answer could be that the scapular and the feast of the Visitation both have the same general significance. The scapular is a symbol of Mary's love and protection, of her willingness to help the children confided to her by Jesus at the foot of the cross. She showed this same love and willingness to help when she visited her cousin Elizabeth who was awaiting the miraculous birth of her child, *John the Baptist*.

Many Graces

Although the special grace of the brown scapular of Mount Carmel is Mary's assurance to the wearer of dying in God's friendship, innumerable cures, conversions and other graces of a spiritual nature have been obtained through this sacramental. The nineteenth century French Jesuit, *Blessed Claude de la Colombiere*, has well summarized the long history of this particularly efficacious sacramental when he said; *"No devotion has been confirmed with miracles more numerous and more authentic."*

Invitation to Wear the Scapular

In assuming the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel at Garabandal, and by holding out the scapular to us, as it were, by carrying it frequently at her visits, the Blessed Virgin was telling us that it still pleases her that we wear her mantle and that she will continue to bless and protect in a special way those who do this with faith and confidence. Our Lady even seemed to be telling us something by the very size of the scapular she carried. It was unusually large, similar in size to the maniple that the priest formerly wore at Mass over his left arm. It was as though the Blessed Virgin wanted to be sure that we would not fail to notice the scapular, as though she was trying to impress us in the concrete way with the importance she attaches to it.

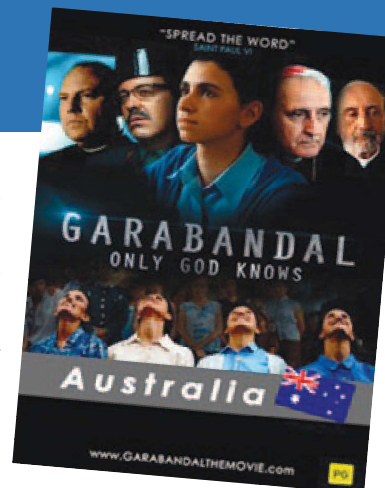


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