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Ever Try A Catholic Bookstore?

I always thought those places were full of pious books and not much else. To my surprise, there was a whole section just for novels and all around me were books by famous Catholic writers -- mystery stories and books of humor, biographies of people like Father Damien, Knute Rockne; and wonderful books by Thomas Merton and Bishop Sheen. I also picked up a Catholic Digest and am glad I did!...

"Although most secular books and magazines say nothing about God, I have just begun to realize that they made me forget God because He was never mentioned! Over a period of time, God faded farther and farther from my consciousness, just simply because I never read about Him. Maybe that's why I now get so many lifts out of reading books and articles written by those who share my faith."

--Robert Smith, S.J.

Not Exactly A Charm

Wearing a Scapular Medal is not wearing a charm. It has no intrinsic power of its own, no magic virtue. It is a sign or a symbol of devotion which derives its efficacy from two promises revealed by the Blessed Mother.

Our Lady appeared in a vision on July 16, 1251, to St. Simon Stock, and gave him the Scapular saying: "Receive, my beloved son, this habit of Thy Order: this shall be to thee and to all Carmelites a privilege, that WHOSOEVER DIES CLOTHED IN THIS SHALL NEVER SUFFER ETERNAL FIRE."

Our Lady also appeared to Pope John XXII, on March 3, 1322, and promised to free wearers of the Scapular from Purgatory on the first Saturday after their death. This is known as the SABBATINE PRIVILEGE. Her exact words were: "I, the Mother of Grace, shall descend on the Saturday after their death and whomever I shall find in Purgatory I shall free."

Our Lady does not mean that anyone dying in mortal sin will be saved; that is obviously impossible. But she did promise that anyone dying clothed in the Scapular will not die in mortal sin. The devout wearing of the Scapular entitles the wearer to those graces which he will need to die in the state of grace.

Apparently the best way of looking at these remarkable promises is that Mary, Mediatrix of all grace, will always find a way of helping the wearer to die with the love of God in his heart. Some theologians, such as St. Robert Bellarmine, Pope Benedict XIV, and Vermmersch, teach that Mary's promise means that anyone who dies in the Scapular will receive through her intercession the grace of final perseverance.

Superstitious?

"You mean to say that if I live a life of sin, I will escape God's justice by constantly wearing the Scapular?" Not exactly, because the chances are that if you are a habitual sinner, one who gives up going to Mass, ignores the 6th and 9th Commandments, neglects prayer -- you will not be very careful about wearing the Scapular.

We do mean that one who diligently wears the Scapular will also be careful to live a virtuous life. The Brown Scapular (or Scapular Medal) is a sign of consecration to Our Lady. Wearing the Scapular day and night, and faithfully living up to what it signifies -- true devotion to Mary -- is a bond of union with her who is the Mediatrix of every grace we receive. As Pope Leo XIII says: "Every grace has a triple process: from God to Christ; from Christ to Mary; from Mary to us."