

Dear Parishioners,

On Sunday, February 18th, the first Sunday of Lent after the 9:00 a.m. Mass, for anyone who wishes, we will invest you in the **Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel**.

What is a scapular? It is derived from the word **scapula**, which is a flat triangular bone connected to the shoulder bone (humerus). In ancient times, a soldier would have worn a breast plate to cover and protect their shoulders (almost like shoulder pads in football do today). So, in spiritual terms, a scapular, worn over the shoulders and two pieces of cloth hanging in front of your chest and back, serve as a reminder that the “Lord is your strength and your shield.” In the middle ages, many religious and the lay people who followed them, made the scapular a part of their religious habit (Benedictines, Dominicans, Carmelites, Trinitarians, Crosiers, for example). Those who wear a scapular are reminded of their protection from evil through the merits of Christ, and the prayers of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.

Let us pray for each other, that we will persevere in carrying out our Lenten penances. We know that the devil will be there to distract us and discourage us from what we have promised to do before God. It is not easy to change, but it is so wonderful when we do change for the better with the help of God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and St. Michael the Archangel.

Fr. Thomas J. Merrill, OFM Conv.

Pastor and Rector