

## The Catechism OF MOUNT CARMEL.

Under this heading each month I shall cheerfully answer all questions sent to me. FR. ANASTASIUS J. KREIDT, O. C. C. I.

### INTRODUCTION.



We find the sweet name of Mary on the first page of the Gospel. We find it also on the first page of the history of the Christian Church. The mystery of the Incarnation begins with the veneration of the Blessed Virgin by an Archangel. The birth of the Church, according to the sublime teaching of the Fathers, takes place on Mount Calvary, when the heart of the Son of Man is pierced and sheds its last drop of blood in the presence of her, who with the dying words of her Son, as His most precious legacy to the Church, was constituted the Mother of His disciples.

We find her image in the Catacombs, we read her praises in the writings of the earliest Fathers of the Church, we pray to her in the most ancient liturgies, we sing her Magnificat with the martyrs of the Coliseum, and we listen with rapture to the eloquence of the holy bishops, who preach her panegyrics in the languages which we now call dead. Then, finally, in those ages, which are called so truly "Ages of Faith" the veneration of the Blessed Virgin culminates in two most Catholic devotions, the Scapular and the Rosary.

Both, as we know, were inspired by the Immaculate Queen of Heaven herself. To St. Dominic, the great founder of the Dominican order, she gave the Rosary, as the most powerful weapon to be used in his valiant warfare against heresy and sin—to St. Simon Stock, the sixth Latin General of the Carmelite Order, she gave the Scapular, as the livery of her special servants, and as a pledge of her powerful help and intercession in life and death.

And just as devotion to the Blessed Virgin was regarded by the first Christians as the sign of an orthodox member of the

Church, so to-day the Scapular and the Rosary are the marks of the Catholic who is a true child of the Church in name and deed.

It is therefore a difficult matter to find anywhere a devout Catholic who does not practice these devotions so pleasing to the Son of Mary, and so profitable to the soul.

Beginning with the Holy Father down through all the ranks of the hierarchy from the Cardinal to the village curate, every ecclesiastic of the Church says his Rosary and wears his Scapular.

The whole Catholic Church recites the Rosary in union with the Sovereign Pontiff, at his warm invitation.

Millions of the Catholic laity, from the child that makes its first Communion to the old man on his death bed, receive the Scapular from the hands of zealous priests. There is not a missionary who has not this powerful weapon against sin and relapse in his equipment—there is not a community of religious men or women, which does not distribute this gift of Mary's love.

And yet, how many thousands there are who do not receive it, or having received it no longer wear it? How many more wear it, but know so little about it?

How many wearers of the Scapular could answer questions such as these: What does the Scapular mean? Why is it called the Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel? What are the conditions for wearing it? What are its privileges?

A brave and apostolic writer, Don Sarday Salvany has just published a work called "The Social Evil—its causes and its remedies." In this remarkable book he recognizes ignorance in religious questions and practices as the greatest evil in so-called Catholic countries. He attributes it to this want of religious knowledge, that scepticism and materialism are making such frightful inroads among people who were once the most fervent children of the Church.

If this be true with regard to Catholic countries, in which the traditions of the Saints are still strong; in which the full ceremonial of the Church passes before the eyes of her children; in which all Catholic devotions have become almost flesh and blood of the faithful, it cannot be less true of countries, in which Catholics are surrounded by a hostile atmosphere, where