

The Carmelites and the Brown Scapular.

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IN the wise economy of the Church man is offered all the ways and means conducive to salvation.

The Sacraments are channels of grace and are easy of access and participation. Besides the Sacraments and what are called the sacramentals, the Church has deigned to authorize confraternities of popular devotions which afford many helps in the great work of man's sanctification. To poor struggling mortals who are compelled to deal daily with the hard actualities of life, contending against the world, the flesh and the devil, these pious societies are like so many Noah's Arks, in which they may find shelter from the storms of temptation and sin, a refuge from the contaminating influence of their environment and a retreat from the unrest and trouble of time. These confraternities, placed under the protection of our Blessed Lord, His spotless Mother or the angels and saints, afford to people living in the world the opportunities of grace and perfection. As high an authority as St. Alphonsus Liguori has declared in reference to these pious associations: "We shall find fewer faults committed by twenty members of them than by one single individual who has not the happiness of belonging to them." From these academies of virtue and holiness have come forth worthy prelates and priests, angelic maidens and irreproachable men and women in every walk of life, and they have confessed that their advancement in goodness and perfection has been mainly due to the encouragement they have received in these pious societies to practice the Christian virtues and to

the ardent charity they have drawn from the weekly or monthly exercise of prayer, meditation and the frequent reception of the Sacraments prescribed by their rule. Pope Gregory XIII. who was very partial to these religious associations and granted them large indulgences, was wont to call them "Schools of Salvation." And it is a great proof of their beneficial aim and work that the Sovereign Pontiffs confirmed, recognized and blessed them.

The Confraternity of the Scapular of Our Blessed Lady of Mount Carmel is no exception to the favorable judgment of the Church. Holy and supernatural in origin, illustrious in its history and prolific in practical and appreciable results, it stands peerless among the religious societies recognized by the authority of the Church. It has ever thriven beneath the glory of the Carmelite institute, and, partaking of the warmth of its love and zeal, has spread to all habitable portions of the universe. The venerable Order of the Carmelites, which dates its origin to the days of Elias and Eliseus, prophets of the Old Law, has been the joyful parent of saints and heroes. "Count the stars of heaven," said Trithemius, "and you may count the saints of the Order of Mount Carmel." In ancient days this time-honored Order had suffered direful persecution from Judaism, and borne the brunt of hatred and blood at the hands of Chosroes, King of Persia, Hamar, King of Arabia, and other Eastern potentates. It had a share in the triumphs, the joys and sorrows of the Crusades. At length when, in the thirteenth century, the spirit of dissension