

OUR LETTER BOX.

Many questions of public interest are put to us every month by our Correspondents. To save repetition and private Correspondence of too voluminous a character, we will select a few of these questions each month and answer them here.—A. J. Keefe, O. C. C.

The following letter from Rev. Fr. M.— is so important, that we give it in full:

REV. AND DEAR FATHER,—You will find enclosed a Scapular, which has been extensively sold in Montreal, and which, I believe, is still sold by dealers. On examining it to-day, with another priest, we came to the conclusion, that it is not made of wool but of felt, or some such material. In any case, it is not woven. Now, a number of persons enrolled here last year had just such a Scapular, and the question arises: Were they really enrolled?

If it is not wool, they have not been enrolled with a Scapular fulfilling the conditions, and my opinion is that they should be enrolled again. However, we would like your decision in the matter. I am not the only priest concerned, for a number of others have used the same Scapular without noticing particularly the stuff of which it was made, taking it for granted that, as the dealers were Catholics, they supplied the proper article.

In other cases, children buy Scapulars in which the cloth is black, but having the same pictures as those on the enclosed. Such Scapulars cannot be used, can they?

If both those are to be condemned, I think it would be well to do so in THE CARMELITE REVIEW, and request other Catholic journals and papers to publish it, so that the abuse may be stopped. And it should be stopped, as the promises to those enrolled and wearing the Scapular are too precious to be lost so easily. I do not know where the Scapulars are made, but I know the pack-peddlers through the country offer them for sale.

Another question which I should like to have answered, from the fact that several priests have been talking to me recently about the matter, and they have doubts concerning it, is the following: Have bishops, from the fact that they are bishops, faculties for life to enroll in the Brown Scapular, and power to delegate said faculties, and for how long a period of time?

An answer to these questions will greatly oblige a number of priests in our diocese, and I think an article in your REVIEW upon this subject would be interesting and instructive to a large number of priests in other dioceses as well, especially where priests receive their faculties by word of mouth, instead of in writing. Hoping, etc.

Answer:

1. The Scapular enclosed in the above letter was a flimsy, shabby thing made of a reddish brown felt. According to different decisions

of the Sac. Cong. of Ind., Scapulars must be made of *woolen* wool. The latest decision on this subject is dated May 6, 1895. (Vide Ann. Eccl. Rev. Vol. XIII, p. 68.)

2. The very name of the *Brown Scapular* indicates the color to be used. In missionary countries, where it was frequently impossible to obtain brown woollen goods, black has been allowed, but there is certainly no need of this exception in our country.

3. Those invested with an invalid Scapular must be enrolled again, as in matters of indulgences, conditions must be fulfilled, as prescribed. However, the Holy See has granted a *sanatio* to all those who had received the Brown Scapular invalidly, or whose names had not been inscribed previous to June 20, 1893.

4. Bishops in all missionary countries receive their faculties from the Propaganda, usually for a limited time. They must know what these faculties are, and when they delegate them to a priest, even by word of mouth, the priest can most assuredly exercise them. Regarding the Scapular, the faculties granted our bishops usually give them the right to erect the Confraternity of Mount Carmel, and to bless and impose the Scapular, as one faculty does not include the other. We have been repeatedly asked by bishops to send these faculties to their priests, as they were not mentioned in the latest formulas received from Rome. We have supplied several dioceses with the faculties for the Scapular, at the request of their bishops. The spiritual benefits derived from affiliation with the Carmelite Order, such as the communion of merits and suffrages for the departed, are not given by faculties from the Propaganda, as the Holy See claims no right over them, but only over indulgences and favors granted by the Holy Father.

Rev. F. P. R.— submits the following questions:

1. Is it necessary, in order to gain indulgences attached to the Scapular, to have one's name inscribed in any register?

2. What prayers must be said daily to gain these indulgences?

3. What is required in order to gain the Sabbatine Indulgence?

4. Is the recitation of the Canonical Office sufficient for this purpose, or must the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin be said also by those who recite the former?

5. Is fasting necessary?