

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

There is nothing new in saying that the various Marian titles all speak essentially of a relation to Mary as Mother of Christ and Mother of Christians. The various names all speak of relation to her in the mystery of Christ and the Church. This is the case of the devotion to Mary of Carmel, who has dominated the Order throughout its history, from the earliest times of its foundation until our own days.

To say “Mary of Mount Carmel” is to say “Mary as venerated by the Carmelites.” And in saying “Carmelites” we must understand the whole Carmelite family: male and female religious, tertiaries, and those enrolled in the Scapular, because this enrolment also involves an aggregation to the spiritual benefits of the Order and a commitment to live up to its spirituality.

It was the conviction of Carmelites that they had a quite special relationship with Mary, their Patron, under the title “of Mount Carmel.” In honor of their Patron, Carmelites celebrated in a special way the feast of the Annunciation, that of the Immaculate Virgin, and then the Solemn Commemoration in July. This July celebration, the Solemn Commemoration, was instituted to thank Mary, its Patron, for all the benefits given to the Order: that is, as a remembrance of the descending action of Mary towards the Carmelites (protection) and as an ascending action of the Carmelites to Mary (thanksgiving). The feast began in England towards the end of the 14th century. The feast, therefore, is a manifestation of the “person” of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: of the Virgin Mother of God, advocate, patron of the Order.

The Solemn Commemoration of the glorious Virgin Mary, which is called the Feast of Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel or the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, was rightly instituted to be solemnly celebrated: because her holy company of Carmel was founded on Mount Carmel..., brought together for the sake of her name, by which it is especially ennobled; because of the special adoption of her sons, brothers, and confrères; because of the clothing with her glorious habit; because of her repeated protection of her own Order; and because of the endless benefits given to this her Order from the beginning until the present day.

Adapted from Ludovico Saggi, O. Carm., Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in *Santi del Carmelo*. English translation by Paul Chandler, O. Carm.