

Our Greatest

Privilege is REAL



by John M. Haffert

The Sabbatine Privilege exists INDEPENDENTLY of the original proclamation or "bull" which granted it. In addition to the MANY Popes who have spoken of the privilege . . . like the recent Popes quoted in our editorial comment below . . . there have been nine OFFICIAL RATIFICATIONS of the privilege. These are pronouncements by nine different Popes WHICH

WOULD VALIDLY ESTABLISH THE PRIVILEGE EVEN IF THE PROCLAMATION OF THE FIRST POPE HAD NEVER EXISTED.

For example, note the words used by St. Pius V:

"With our Apostolic authority and by tenor of the present we approve each of the privileges of the Scapular and also the Sabbatine."

St. Pius X used a similar expression when he granted the Scapular Medal, although that is not included in the nine official ratifications. St. Pius, in our own time, added: "Not excluding the Sabbatine."⁽¹⁾

Confirmed by Doctors

In addition to the confirmation of

(Continued on next page)



Editor's Note:



SOUL has received a great deal of mail concerning an answer on the Sabbatine Privilege given by Monsignor Sheridan in the April 11th issue of OUR SUNDAY VISITOR in his "Ask Me a Question" column.

After explaining the Privilege correctly, Monsignor Sheridan concludes:

"The Sabbatine Bull attributed to Pope John XXII in 1322 is not authentic."

Misunderstanding

Mr. Ernest Costabile of Cleveland writes:

"Monsignor John Sheridan's answer about the Brown Scapular . . . claims it is not authentic and this paper is well-known among thousands of Catholics who had great faith in the Brown Scapular until now. What is your comment? Please answer."

It is unfortunate—and we trust that Monsignor Sheridan would agree—that the comment about

the Sabbatine Bull should be made in such a way as to give the readers the impression that the Sabbatine Privilege is doubtful.

Confirmed by Popes

The only question about *authenticity* concerns the *original Bull* which, like many original documents prior to the printing press, was lost. During the Black Plague, documents thought to be contaminated by the Plague were copied and then destroyed. And mistakes were sometimes made in the copies.

But many Popes have affirmed the Privilege like Benedict XV who said it is the privilege which extends "even after death," and Pius XI described it as "*The greatest of all our privileges from the Mother of God.*"

Interestingly enough, this comment of the scholarly Pius XI (judged by Cardinal Tisserant the greatest Pope of the 20th century)

was made in a letter to the Prior General of the Carmelite Order who had written a book defending the Sabbatine Bull which Our Sunday Visitor's columnist declared was not authentic. The book (*Sabbatine Privilege of the Scapular*) was published by Connally in New York in 1923 and spends 141 pages in argument that the extant copy of the original Sabbatine Bull is probably authentic, although the evidence could never be conclusive.

In this July issue of SOUL we recall that July 16th is the FEAST OF THE SCAPULAR. We urge all Blue Army members to request Mass of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on that day. And it may be remembered that this beautiful Mass of the Scapular may be said ON ANY FERIA. And in reply to the letters we have received as a result of the misunderstanding of the recent statement in OUR SUNDAY VISITOR we explain here: OUR GREATEST PRIVILEGE IS REAL.



A picture shown here of the two-hundred-year-old scapular of St. Alphonsus shows it to be remarkable even had it not been in the tomb for forty years. The cotton picture is even intact, with the thread fastening it to the wool. Yet in the tomb, all beneath and above it turned to dust. It was found as pictured

here . . . on the saint's skeleton. Examination proves that it had no special treatment that could account for this wonder. And since clothing beneath and above it disappeared, and the body itself turned to dust, it is obvious that we are in the presence of a wonder which cannot be naturally explained.

the Privilege by the Popes there are at least three doctors of the Church who refer specifically to this Privilege:

St. Alphonsus Liguori says of the Sabbatine Privilege that if we do a little more than Our Lady requires for the Privilege "May we not hope that we shall not go to Purgatory at all?" (2)

St. Theresa of Avila says that she saw only three souls taken straight to Heaven. Two were St. John of the Cross and St. Peter of Alcantara.

The third was because of the Privilege. (3)

And St. John of the Cross, as he died, blessed God that he died on the day of Saturday, "the day of the Sabbatine Privilege." (4)

Confirmed by Miracles

It is interesting to note that when the body of St. Alphonsus Liguori was exhumed, forty years after his death, everything corruptible in his tomb had turned to dust with the sole exception of his Brown Scapular. This miracle seemed to cry from

the grave of the great devotion of St. Alphonsus and of his great faith in Our Lady's promises.

St. John Bosco, who also preached the Scapular and the Sabbatine Privilege, had a similar wonder occur in his grave. Everything corruptible (including the body beneath it and the clothing above it) returned to dust while the Brown Scapular of St. John Bosco remained untouched by corruption in the grave.

Only God can perform a miracle, and God does not perform miracles to encourage belief in something

which is not authentic.⁽⁵⁾

In addition to the ratification of this Privilege by nine Popes, and its confirmation by three Doctors of the Church, and its further confirmation through miracles, we have the teaching of Vatican Council II:

The Council Fathers decreed that those traditional forms of devotion to Our Lady which have long existed in the Church are to be fostered and encouraged. The commission which prepared this particular document explained that no specific devotions are indicated but that the Pope would indicate them.⁽⁶⁾

Within a few months of the promulgation of this decree, Pope Paul VI sent his official message to the International Marian Congress held that year in the Dominican Republic, and in the message the Holy Father specified that among those traditional devotions mentioned in Paragraph 67 of LUMEN GENTIUM, *the two most to be encouraged are the Rosary and the Scapular of Mt. Carmel.*⁽⁷⁾

Since the two principal rewards of the Scapular devotion are the promise of salvation and the Sabbatine Privilege, naturally when the Holy Father emphasizes this devotion, above all other devotions to Mary in the Church, is not belief in the privileges attached to the devotion necessarily implied?

Confirmation at Fatima

As though all of the above were not enough, we of course have the confirmation in the great apparition of Fatima, in which Our Lady appeared six successive times with the Rosary, and in the last vision appeared holding the Scapular down to the world. Explaining this later,

Sister Lucia, who was left on earth to make known the fullness of the Fatima Message according to Our Lady's own words, said that the reason Our Lady held the Scapular out of the sky was because "*She wants everyone to wear it.*" Lucia further explained that "the Rosary and the Scapular are inseparable" and that the Scapular is "our sign of consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary."⁽⁸⁾

It is unfortunate that some in the Church today feel that these traditional devotions of the Rosary and the Scapular should be minimized as though they were a hindrance to a pure Christian life, or a hindrance towards union with our separated brethren to whom these devotions are not so well-known.

Our Greatest Reward

The Venerable Pere Lamy died in 1931. In his biography by Biver we read that on July 16th, 1924, Father Lamy said to a friend:

"Our Lady spoke to me of my plan for my own daily life, up to and including the end of evening prayer which I did not always recite well. She reminded me of the Sabbatine Privilege saying 'you must do what is demanded to obtain this Privilege.' And to Venerable Dominic of Jesus and Mary, Our Lady once said:

"Although many wear my Scapular, only a few fulfill the conditions for the Sabbatine Privilege."

Fortunately, today there are millions who are fulfilling the conditions of the Sabbatine Privilege because these are the same conditions Our Lady gave to the world at Fatima and which are "the plan of daily life" contained in the Blue Army pledge.

The Little Office of the Blessed

Virgin used to be the prayer-condition of the Privilege, but this is automatically commuted for those who sign the Blue Army pledge and request application of their daily Rosary for the Little Office.

Offered to the world over six centuries ago, this great privilege has now become a major incentive for fulfillment of the conditions of Fatima . . . conditions for which we may now obtain the conversion of Russia and world peace!

How it Works

The privilege "works" . . . and the conditions of Our Lady of Fatima for world peace work . . . because they make saints out of those who fulfill them.

The Bishop of Fatima described the Blue Army as "the Army which marches on its knees." It could also be called the Army of the Sabbatine Privilege . . . "greatest of all our privileges from the Mother of God."

We take comfort in that it has been proclaimed by the Church not just once, but nine times. It has been affirmed by Popes in addition to the nine proclamations. It has been affirmed by three doctors of the Church. It has also been a sign of miracles and was held out to the world in the final miracle of the sun at Fatima which God performed "So that everyone may believe."

Let us pray for those who do not believe in it . . . both inside the Church and outside. Let us hope that we shall have the grace to obtain this privilege and that we may be the occasion of similar grace for many others.

The privilege is a promise of speedy liberation from Purgatory, especially on the first Saturday after death.

(1) Documentation of all of these ratifications, with the names of the Popes and actual quotations from the documents, will be found in Chapter 7 of "Mary In Her Scapular Promise" available from AMI Press.

(2) *Glories of Mary*, original edition published by San Paolo, Page 306.

(3) *Autobiography*, Chapter 38.

(4) *Biography* by Bruno de Jesus-Marie (Plon 1929) page 360 and 461.

(5) The word "miracle" cannot be used lightly. Although many answers to prayer and even many cures may seem miraculous it is better to speak of them as "apparent" miracles unless they are adequately evaluated and approved by ecclesiastical authority. In the instance

of the preservation of the scapular of these two saints there was the immediate testimony of the ecclesiastical examiners who assisted at the exhumations. A picture shown here of the two-hundred-year-old scapular of St. Alphonsus shows it to be remarkable even had it not been in the tomb for forty years. The cotton picture is even intact, with the thread fastening it to the wool. Yet in the tomb, all beneath and above it turned to dust. It was found as pictured here . . . on the saint's skeleton. Examination proves that it had no special treatment that could account for this wonder. And since clothing beneath and above it disappeared, and the body itself turned to dust, it is obvious that we are in the presence of a wonder which

cannot be naturally explained. However there have been more important miracles through the Scapular. See MARY IN HER SCAPULAR PROMISE, Chapter 10.

(6) Reported by the Bishop of Coimbra at the Intl. Seminar on FATIMA IN THE LIGHT OF VATICAN II, July 18, 1968. Also see the Bishop's preface to Portuguese edition of MARY IN HER SCAPULAR PROMISE. See note 8 below.

(7) *L'Osservatore Romano*, April 2nd, 1965.

(8) MARY IN HER SCAPULAR PROMISE, pg. 197 (AMI Press). This also appears in the Portuguese edition which was translated at Lucia's own Carmel in Coimbra, Portugal, published by Edicoes Carmelo, Aveiro.