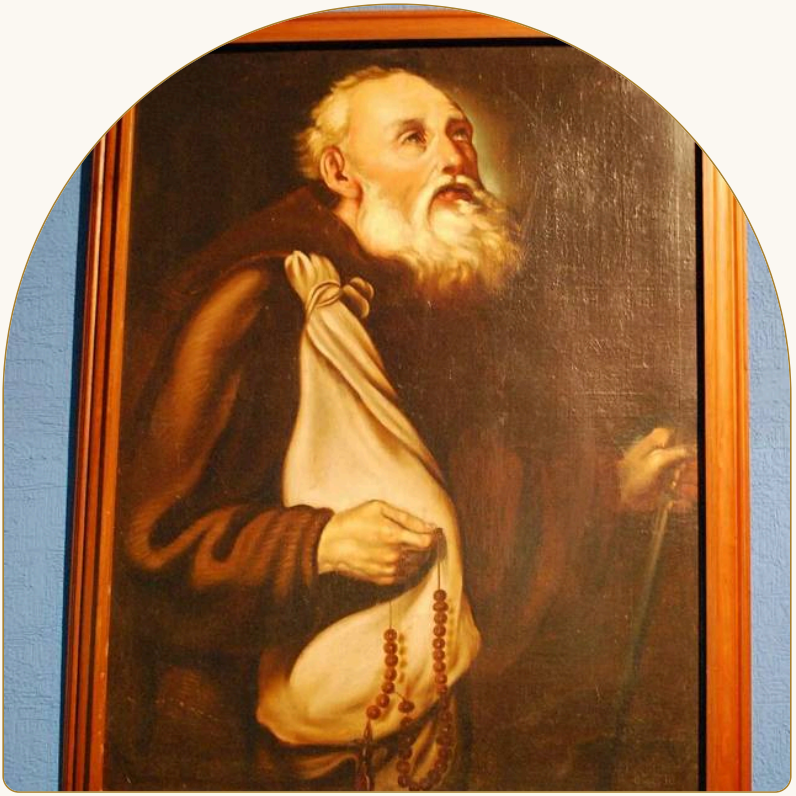


BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Simon Stock

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: May 16

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IN BRIEF

Saint Simon Stock

13th-century English Carmelite, prior general of his order, linked by tradition to the gift of the Brown Scapular.

Feast day	May 16
Born	late 12th century, Kent, England
Died	1265, Bordeaux, France
Canonized	Cult approved and extended to the whole Carmelite Order in 1564
Era	13th century
Patron saint of	Carmelites in England

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Simon Stock and the Flos Carmeli

Novena to Saint Simon Stock

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Simon Stock

Saint Simon Stock was an English Carmelite of the 13th century and one of the first priors general of the Carmelite Order in Europe. He is best known through the tradition that the Virgin Mary appeared to him and gave him the scapular, the brown garment that became one of the most widespread signs of Marian devotion in the world: the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. He died in Bordeaux in 1265, where his relics are kept in the cathedral, and his feast day is May 16.

Who was Saint Simon Stock?

Simon was born in Kent, England, at the end of the 12th century. The dates proposed vary, and his exceptionally long life belongs partly to tradition. Very little is known for certain about his youth.

A legend explains his surname "Stock," an old English word for a tree trunk, by telling that as a teenager he lived as a hermit in the hollow trunk of an oak. Other traditions make him a wandering preacher, or a pilgrim to the Holy Land before he joined the Carmelites.

The Carmelite Order was born at the beginning of the 13th century among hermits living on Mount Carmel, in the Holy Land, under the protection of the Virgin Mary. Driven out by the insecurity that followed the Muslim reconquest, many returned to Europe in the 1230s and 1240s. They then had to find a new way of life in a world that hardly knew them. It was in this setting that Simon Stock played a decisive role.

Key dates in the life of Saint Simon Stock

- **Late 12th century**: Born in Kent, England.

- **1240s**: The first Carmelites settle in England, notably at Aylesford, in Kent.
- **1247**: According to the tradition of the order, he is elected prior general at a chapter held at Aylesford.
- **1247**: Pope Innocent IV approves a revision of the Rule that makes the Carmelites a mendicant order.
- **July 16, 1251**: Traditional date of the scapular vision, placed at Cambridge or at Aylesford.
- **1250s-1260s**: Foundations of houses in university towns such as Cambridge, Oxford, Paris and Bologna.
- **1265**: Dies in Bordeaux, while visiting the houses of the order.
- **1564**: His cult is approved for the whole Carmelite Order.

The prior who saved the Carmelites

The one point firmly established by history is Simon's role as prior general of the order, from about 1247. The order was then in crisis. The hermits who had come from the East struggled to find their place in Europe, and some bishops and clergy were hostile to them.

Simon, already old, showed great energy. He obtained from Pope Innocent IV an adaptation of the Rule that allowed the Carmelites to live in community in the towns and to preach, like the Franciscans and the Dominicans.

He founded houses in university towns such as Cambridge and Oxford, then on the continent, in Paris and Bologna, so that young friars could study. He also obtained letters of protection from the pope against the attacks the order was facing. Thanks to him, the Carmelite Order, which had been in danger of disappearing, entered a new period of growth.

The scapular vision

Simon Stock's fame rests above all on the account of the scapular vision. According to Carmelite tradition, on July 16, 1251, while he was praying to the Virgin Mary to protect his struggling order, she appeared to him holding the scapular of the order. She promised that those who died wearing this habit would be preserved from eternal fire.

Historians note that the oldest accounts of this vision date from the 14th or 15th century, long after Simon's death, and that the versions differ. The Church has never presented the vision as a proven historical fact.

It has, however, encouraged devotion to the scapular, provided it is not treated as a magic object. Wearing the scapular is a sign of belonging to Mary and a commitment to live as a Christian, in prayer and faithfulness to the Gospel.

The scapular, from habit to devotion

Originally, the scapular was a wide piece of brown cloth worn by religious over their tunic, like an apron covering the shoulders. Little by little, lay people wished to share in Carmelite spirituality, and the scapular was reduced to two small squares of cloth joined by cords and worn under one's clothes.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the devotion spread throughout Europe through the confraternities of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. It remains very much alive today, especially in Latin America and the Philippines, and it is familiar to many Catholics in the United States, Ireland and Britain.

Why is Saint Simon Stock linked to the Carmelites in England?

Simon was an Englishman, and according to the tradition of his order he was elected prior general at Aylesford, one of the first Carmelite houses in Europe. He is therefore honored as a patron of the Carmelite family in England. More

broadly, he is invoked by all who wear the scapular and by communities going through difficult times.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Simon Stock in art

Saint Simon Stock is shown as an elderly Carmelite friar in the brown habit and white cloak of the order, kneeling before the Virgin Mary, who holds the Child Jesus and hands him the scapular. This scene is found in many churches dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

His death and his cult

Simon died in Bordeaux in 1265, at a great age, while visiting the houses of his order. He was buried in the Carmelite church of the city. Graces were reported at his tomb, and a liturgical cult was celebrated in Bordeaux from the 15th century.

He was never solemnly canonized, but his cult was approved by the Holy See: in 1564 it was extended to the whole Carmelite Order, which celebrates him as a saint on May 16. During the French Revolution his relics were hidden to escape destruction, then placed in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Bordeaux, where they remain. Part of his skull was brought in 1950 to Aylesford Priory, where the Carmelites had returned in the 20th century.

Where to pray to Saint Simon Stock

- **Aylesford** (Kent, England): the Carmelite priory known as The Friars, one of the first houses of the order in Europe, which keeps a relic of his skull. It is a much-loved place of pilgrimage in England.
- **Bordeaux** (France): the Cathedral of Saint Andrew, which keeps his relics in a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
- **Everywhere**: in Carmelite monasteries and in churches dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, especially on July 16.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Simon Stock and the Flos Carmeli.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Simon Stock and the Flos Carmeli

Carmelite tradition attributes to Saint Simon Stock a short Latin prayer to the Virgin Mary, the *Flos Carmeli*, "Flower of Carmel." The attribution is not proven by history, but this prayer has been sung for centuries in the order, especially on the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. This page presents it, then offers an original prayer by Saintspedia.

The Flos Carmeli

Traditional Latin text, attributed to Saint Simon Stock by Carmelite tradition:

> *Flos Carmeli, vitis florigera, splendor caeli, Virgo puerpera singularis.*
> *Mater mitis, sed viri nescia, Carmelitis da privilegia, stella maris.*

Translation by Saintspedia:

> *Flower of Carmel, vine in blossom, splendor of heaven, Virgin and Mother beyond compare. Gentlest Mother, who knew no man, grant your favors to the children of Carmel, Star of the Sea.*

Source: the sequence *Flos Carmeli* of the Carmelite liturgy, sung especially on the solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16); traditionally attributed to Saint Simon Stock.

Prayer to Saint Simon Stock

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia.

Saint Simon Stock, brother of Carmel, you loved the Virgin Mary as a mother and as a sister. Pray for me.

You guided your order through hard times: support communities that doubt their future, and give them the strength to renew themselves in faithfulness.

Teach me to live under Mary's gaze, and to clothe myself in her virtues of humility, prayer and trust, even more than in any outward sign.

May the scapular worn by so many Christians be for them a call to follow Christ each day, and a hope for the hour of their death.

I entrust to you my intention (name it in silence). With Our Lady of Mount Carmel, present it to the Lord. Amen.

When to pray this prayer

- On his feast day, **May 16**.
- On **July 16**, feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.
- When you receive the Brown Scapular, or renew your commitment to wear it.
- When a parish, a religious community or a family is going through a crisis.
- At the bedside of someone who is dying, to entrust them to Mary.

To know him better, read the life of Saint Simon Stock, or pray the novena to Saint Simon Stock.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Simon Stock

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Simon Stock, English Carmelite and prior general of his order in the 13th century. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, May 16, begin on May 8. It can also be prayed before July 16, the feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (from July 7), before receiving the Brown Scapular, or for a community going through hard times.

We know little for certain about Simon, but enough to see a man who loved Mary, who led his brothers through a crisis and who never stopped looking forward even in old age. These nine days walk with him, and through him with Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

How to pray this novena

Each day, place your intention before God, read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then the closing prayer, followed by an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. Those who wear the scapular may hold it while praying. The "Today" suggestion is a small act to live the day's theme.

Day 1: A heart for solitude

Legend says that the young Simon lived as a hermit in the hollow trunk of an oak, which gave him the name "Stock." Whatever its truth, the story speaks of a heart drawn to silence and to God alone.

Prayer: Saint Simon, give me a love for silence, and help me to make room for God in my busy days. Amen.

Today: Turn off your phone for fifteen minutes and simply stay in God's presence.

Day 2: Brothers of Our Lady

The first Carmelites lived on Mount Carmel under the protection of the Virgin Mary. They called themselves her brothers. Simon inherited this simple, family-like love for Mary.

Prayer: Saint Simon, teach me to love Mary as a mother and a sister, and to trust her with my life. Amen.

Today: Pray a decade of the Rosary slowly.

Day 3: Exiles in a new land

Driven out of the Holy Land, the Carmelites had to start again in Europe, in a world that did not know them. Many people today also experience exile, migration or a fresh start far from home.

Prayer: Saint Simon, be close to migrants and to all who must start over in a strange land. Amen.

Today: Welcome or help someone who is new in your parish, workplace or neighborhood.

Day 4: Leading through a crisis

Around 1247, already old, Simon became prior general of an order in danger of disappearing. He did not give up. He adapted what needed adapting while keeping what was essential.

Prayer: Saint Simon, give wisdom and courage to all who lead communities through difficult times. Amen.

Today: Pray for a parish, school or religious community that is struggling.

Day 5: Faith and study

Simon founded houses in Cambridge, Oxford, Paris and Bologna so that young friars could study. He knew that faith grows stronger when it is nourished by understanding.

Prayer: Saint Simon, bless students and teachers, and give me a desire to know my faith better. Amen.

Today: Read a chapter of the Gospel or a page of the Catechism.

Day 6: Prayer in a moment of distress

Tradition says that Simon, praying for his struggling order, turned to Mary with great trust. In every trial we can do the same: speak to her simply and ask for help.

Prayer: Saint Simon, when I am in distress, remind me to turn to Mary with confidence. Amen.

Today: Pray the Memorare or the Flos Carmeli for someone in difficulty.

Day 7: Clothed in Mary's virtues

The scapular is a garment. The Church reminds us that it is not a charm but a sign: to wear it is to be clothed in Mary's humility, purity and prayer, and to live as a Christian.

Prayer: Saint Simon, help me to live what I wear, and to be clothed in the virtues of Mary. Amen.

Today: Choose one of Mary's virtues and practice it deliberately today.

Day 8: Hope for the hour of death

The scapular tradition speaks of Mary's protection at the hour of death. Every Hail Mary ends with this same request: "pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

Prayer: Saint Simon, obtain for me and for those I love the grace of a holy death, in the arms of Mary. Amen.

Today: Pray for the dying, and for someone in your family who has died.

Day 9: Faithful to the end

Simon died in Bordeaux in 1265, at a great age, while visiting the houses of his order. He served until his last day. Holiness does not retire.

Prayer: Saint Simon, keep me faithful to my calling at every age, and let me end my life in God's service. Amen.

Today: Thank an elderly priest, religious or parishioner for their faithfulness.

Closing prayer for each day

> *Lord God, you gave Saint Simon Stock to the Carmelite family as a wise and faithful guide, devoted to the Virgin Mary. Through his prayers and under the protection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, help us to follow your Son each day, to persevere in times of trial and to hope in your mercy at the hour of our death. Hear the intention I place before you (name your intention). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Saint Simon Stock, pray for us. Our Lady of Mount Carmel, pray for us.

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