

SCAPULAR MEDALS

CATECHETICAL EXPLANATION OF THE DECREE "CUM SACRA."

During the month of December (writes the Rev. James Hughes in the *Catholic Times*) some articles were published in various Catholic papers referring to the new Scapular Medal, for the blessing of which faculties had been given by the Holy Father to a small number of clergy. The whole question of the Scapular Medal has again been considered at length by the Holy See, and in a document dated December 16, 1910, but only officially published on January 16, 1911, the faculty of blessing the Scapular Medal has been widely extended and fully explained. The following is the English translation of the new Decree 'Cum sacra,' which has already appeared in these columns, and to which I have ventured to add a catechetical explanation of its most important points:

Which scapulars can be replaced by a blessed medal?—Any of the real scapulars approved by the Holy See: for instance, any of the five most ordinary scapulars worn by the faithful—the Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Blue Scapular of Our Lady Immaculate, the Black Scapular of the Seven Dolours, the Red Scapular of the Passion, the White Scapular of the Blessed Trinity, or other similarly approved ones.

Is the Scapular of the Third Order of St. Francis included?—No; scapulars which are proper to the Third Orders cannot be replaced by medals.

Are any Indulgences lost by those who wear the Medal instead of the Scapular?—No; those who wear the medal instead of a cloth scapular 'shall be enabled to share in and gain all the spiritual favours and indulgences attached to each scapular.'

What about the Sabbatine Privilege for the Scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel?—This also is included by name amongst the spiritual favours attached to a scapular which can now be gained by wearing the medal.

Of what size, shape, and material must the Medal be?—It must be made of metal, but no particular size or shape is ordered.

What images must it bear?—It must bear on the right side or front an image of Our Blessed Lord showing His Sacred Heart, and on the back an image of Our Blessed Lady.

Is it sufficient to have an image of the Sacred Heart alone, apart from the body of our Lord?—No; it is distinctly stated that it must be an image of Our Blessed Lord showing His Sacred Heart: 'effigiem SSmi. D. N. J. C. suum sacratissimum Cor ostendentis.' Any medals, therefore, which bear an image of the Sacred Heart alone without the Body of Our Lord are useless for gaining the indulgences.

Which image of Our Blessed Lady should it bear?—Any image of Our Blessed Lady will suffice, as Our Lady of Mount Carmel or Our Lady Immaculate, Our Lady of Sorrows, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Our Lady of Good Counsel, etc., etc. The Decree says simply 'an image of Our Lady.'

Must those who are enrolled in five scapulars wear five blessed medals?—No; a single medal may be worn instead of one or of several scapulars, but a distinct blessing must be given to the medal for each scapular which it replaces. If it replaces five scapulars the medal must be blessed five distinct times.

What prayers must be read by the priest who blesses the medal?—He has no prayers to read. He has simply to make over the medal one Sign of the Cross for each scapular which the wearer wishes it to replace.

How may priests obtain faculties to bless these medals?—Every priest who has now or obtains later either direct from Rome or through his Bishop the faculty of enrolling in any scapular receives also by virtue of this new Decree the power to bless the medal which replaces that scapular. Thus, if a priest has a faculty to enrol in the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel a medal blessed by him can replace that scapular alone. If, like the head-priest of each church in Liverpool diocese, he has received through his Bishop the faculty of 'enrolling in confraternities approved by the Holy See and of blessing the beads and scapulars proper to them,' he may bless a medal to replace any or all the scapulars, giving it a distinct blessing for each individual scapular.

May people be enrolled now with a medal instead of a scapular?—No; the Decree makes no change in what it several times calls the 'regular imposition of the scapular.' For this the ordinary prayers of enrolling given in the Ritual must be used for each scapular and a cloth scapular must be imposed as there laid down. Then immediately after the giving of the cloth scapular a medal may be blessed to replace it.

May a number of medals be blessed at one time and then distributed?—According to the ordinary practice of the Church there seems no reason why this should not be done, for the Decree does not forbid it. But it would seem that they should be distributed only to those who were

already enrolled in the scapular before this general blessing of medals took place, and would be useless to any who are enrolled later than the time of that blessing. The Decree says: 'These separate blessings may be given by a single Sign of the Cross either in the act of enrolment immediately after the scapular has been regularly imposed or later at the convenience of those enrolled.'

How should the medal be worn?—To gain the Indulgences the medal must not be kept in a drawer or desk, but must be carried 'on the person, either round the neck or otherwise, provided it be in a becoming manner.' Thus one may fasten it by a string, chain, or ribbon round the neck, either inside or outside the clothes. If one has the pious custom of always carrying one's Rosary-beads in the pocket one might fasten the medal to the Rosary-beads, or even to one's watch-chain. As an open profession of faith one might wear it as a brooch or scarf-pin. But if a schoolboy carries it in his pocket in the midst of his top and string and marbles, he can hardly be said to carry it 'in a becoming manner.'

Does the Pope wish everyone to begin wearing these medals, and throwing aside the scapulars?—No; on the contrary, he 'earnestly desires that the faithful may continue to wear them (the cloth scapulars) in the same form as hitherto.' But many are constantly breaking the strings and losing the scapulars. Others find it very awkward to wear the cloth scapular at their work, as, for instance, those who have to work stripped to the waist before the fierce blaze of an iron furnace or in the stoke-hole of an Atlantic liner. The medal will last much longer, and can be carried where the cloth scapular is awkward to wear. But even for these one might recommend them to wear the cloth scapular on Sundays and carry the medal during the week.

Can a person wear the medal instead of a cloth scapular without any special necessity for so doing?—Yes, certainly. The Holy Father makes no exception, but says this 'is lawful for all the faithful.'

What is the use of the Pope granting this new privilege?—The Pope considers that to make the wearing of scapulars easier and simpler will lead to a great increase in the number of those who ask to be enrolled in the scapulars, for experience has shown that the wearing or carrying of such pious objects helps greatly to increase the devotion of the faithful and to remind them of their Faith and strengthen them in the determination to lead a holy life.

S. CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY OFFICE.

On the Substitution of Medals for Scapulars.

DECREE.

Since it is certain that the holy scapulars are greatly efficacious in fostering devotion among the faithful and stimulating them to good resolutions, Our Most Holy Lord Pius X., by Divine Providence Pope, although earnestly desiring that the faithful may continue to wear them in the same form as hitherto, still, in order that the pious custom of being enrolled in them may constantly increase, seconding the many petitions sent to him on the subject, and after taking the opinions of the Most Eminent Fathers Cardinals, Inquisitors, General, was graciously pleased in an audience granted to the Assessor of this Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on December 16 of the current year, to decree as follows:

For the future all the faithful already inscribed or who shall be inscribed in one or more of the real scapulars approved by the Holy See (excepting those which are proper to the Third Orders) by what is known as regular enrolment, may instead of these cloth scapulars, one or several, wear on their persons, either round the neck or otherwise provided it be in a becoming manner, a single medal of metal, through which, by the observance of the laws laid down for each scapular, they shall be enabled to share in and gain all the spiritual favours (not excepting what is known as the Sabbatine Privilege of Our Lady of Mount Carmel) and all the indulgences attached to each.

The right side of this medal must contain the image of our Most Holy Redeemer Christ, showing His Sacred Heart, and the obverse that of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

It must be blessed with a separate blessing for each of the scapulars in which the person has been regularly enrolled and for which the wearer wishes it to suffice.

Finally, these separate blessings may be given by a single Sign of the Cross either in the act of enrolment immediately after the scapular has been regularly imposed, or later at the convenience of those enrolled (whether the order of enrolments be observed or not and no matter how long after they have taken place) by any priest, even other than the one who made the enrolment, who possesses the faculty ordinary or delegated of blessing the different scapulars—the limits, clauses, and conditions, however, of the original faculty still holding their force. All things to the contrary, even those calling for most special mention, notwithstanding.

Given at Rome at the seat of the Holy Office, December 16, 1910.

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