

JULY 16, 2021  
 Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel  
 Matthew 12: 1-8

“PRACTICING THE LAW OF LOVE.”

When you are in the presence of Jesus, you must behave and do things accordingly. He will not tolerate evil or wrongdoings on His watch. Christ is good and must be the same with His disciples. In our gospel, Jesus and His apostles were accused by the Scribes and Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath when “Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus saw nothing wrong with this, if He saw that the disciples are not guilty, then they are not guilty because “for the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath.”<sup>2</sup> It means as Master and Lord, He is not compelled by even the God-given laws of Israel. Just for the sake of argument, “He gave two examples which the Pharisees would find difficult to criticise: First, David’s soldiers, because they were hungry, went into the house of God and ate the loaves of proposition, that is, bread which was laid out as an offering to God. According to the law, only the priests were allowed to eat this bread. Second, he pointed to the priests on temple duty who not only worked on the sabbath but did more work than usual on that day (like priests today!). Yet no one found fault with them.”<sup>3</sup>

My sisters and brothers, sometimes we are tempted to be legalistic or strict in our observance of the Law that obstructs its main purpose, that is, to save and make other people good. “He calls his accusers’ attention to a saying from the prophet Hosea (Hos 6:6): ‘It is mercy I desire, not sacrifice.’ What this means is that the measure of our behaviour in God’s eyes is not our observance of law but the degree of love and compassion we have for our brothers and sisters. Laws are for people; people are not for laws. That is why a truly loving act always transcends any law. If the Pharisees had fully understood the meaning of Hosea’s words, they would not have “condemned these innocent men.”<sup>4</sup> Being small-mindedness really affect our life as Christians: we measure people and ourselves by the practice or non-practice of things contrary to the essence of our faith

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 12: 1 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 12: 8 Holy Bible NRSVCE Canadian Bible Society

<sup>3</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

or on the other side by not observing it at all. We are being reminded to follow the Law of Love which benefit both the giver and the receiver. It is really good to follow the law base on the Law of Love.

We also celebrate today the Feast of Our lady of Mt. Carmel. "Mount Carmel is a mountain in northern Palestine about twenty miles from Nazareth and overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. 1 Kings 18 describes how the prophet Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel for rain was answered and how he defeated the 450 pagan priests of Baal on the same mountain. He challenged them to bring fire from Heaven to burn the sacrificed bulls placed on the altar, and he proved that only Yahweh was the true God. According to the most ancient Carmelite chronicles, the Order had its origins with the disciples of the prophets Elijah and Eliseus on Mount Carmel. They lived very ascetic lives in caves on Mount Carmel honoring the "Holy Virgin" of the Messianic prophecies who would give birth to the promised Messiah. When the Apostles started preaching Jesus, the pious ascetics of Carmel accepted the Christian Faith. In the 13th century, a group of pilgrims who followed the Crusaders was impressed by the lifestyle of the disciples of Elijah. Hence, they set up a religious community on the western slopes of Mount Carmel and started living very ascetic lives. This was the beginning of the modern Carmelite Order, and the people began to call them Friars of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. Pope Honorius III approved the order's rule in 1232. The feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was instituted first for the Carmelites in 1332 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the approval of the rule of the Carmelite Order. According a popular legend, Mary appeared to St. Simon Stock on July 16, 1251, and gave him the Brown Scapular with the following words: 'This will be for you and for all Carmelites the privilege, that he who dies in this will not suffer eternal fire.'"<sup>5</sup>

My sisters and brothers, this Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel challenges us to imitate Her in professing the faith amidst uncertainties and trials. Let us ask Our Lady for guidance and motherly and caring protection as we put into practice the Law of Love in our lives today and always. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, pray for us. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://frtonyshomilies.com/>