



FACT OF
FAITH

Our Lady of Mount Carmel

CELEBRATED JULY 16

Mount Carmel, which juts out into the Mediterranean near Haifa, Israel, has been considered a sacred place since the prophet Elijah built an altar there in his contest with the prophets of Baal. The Carmel headland is traditionally associated with the beginnings of the Carmelite order around 1195, when a group of lay hermits formed a community there. Mary had been honored there as early as the fifth century, and by the 12th century Mount Carmel had become a site of Marian devotion. The Carmelites chose Mary as their protectress and dedicated their oratory on Mount Carmel to her. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is the patron of Bolivia and Chile. This Marian feast became an optional memorial in the Revised Roman Calendar of 1969.

“The Carmelites have spread among the Christian people devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, holding her up as a model of prayer, contemplation and dedication to God.

Indeed, Mary was the first, in a way which can never be equaled, to believe and experience that Jesus, the Incarnate Word, is the summit, the peak of man’s encounter with God. By fully accepting the Word, she “was blessedly brought



Pope Francis crowns a statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel as he celebrates Mass at O’Higgins Park in Santiago, Chile, Jan. 16. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

to the holy Mountain” (cf. *Opening Prayer of the Memorial*), and lives forever with the Lord in body and soul.” —Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, July 16, 2006