

The Franciscan Crown

The Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin

The Franciscan Crown, also called the Rosary of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin, dates back to the year 1422. The story is told of a pious young man who had been admitted to the Franciscan Order in that year. Prior to his joining the Order, it had been his custom to adorn a statue of the Blessed Virgin with a wreath of fresh and beautiful flowers, as a mark of his devotion to Mary. Being unable to continue this practice once he was in the Order, he became dejected and eventually decided to leave the Order and return to the world.

Our Lady then appeared to him and persuaded him not to leave the Order. She said to him, 'Do not be sad and cast down, my son, because you are no longer permitted to place flowers on my statue. It would be far more pleasing for me, and be far better for your soul, if, rather than giving me flowers that soon wither and die, instead you give me a crown of flowers from your prayers. These will always remain fresh.

Recite one our Father and ten Hail Mary's (note: NO Glory be or Fatima Prayer) in honour of the joy I experienced when the angel announced to me the Incarnation of the Son of God. Repeat these same prayers in honour of the joy I felt on visiting my cousin Elizabeth. Say them again in honour of the supreme happiness that filled my heart on giving birth to Christ the Saviour, without pain and without the loss of my virginity. Recite the same prayers a fourth time in honour of the joy I felt when presenting my divine Son for the adoration of the Magi. Repeat them for the fifth time in honour of the joy that thrilled my soul when, after seeking Jesus with deep sorrow for three days, I found him at last among the doctors in the Temple. Sixthly, recite them again in honour of the joy I experienced on beholding my Son, gloriously risen from the grave on Easter Sunday. Finally, for the seventh time, recite them again in honour of my own most glorious and joyful assumption into heaven, when I was crowned Queen of heaven and of earth. If you recite these prayers as I direct, be assured my dear son that you are weaving for me a most beautiful and acceptable crown and that you will earn innumerable graces.'

When Our Lady had disappeared, the overjoyed novice at once began to recite the prayers as she had directed, in honour of her Seven Joys.

While he was saying the prayers, the Novice Master came past and was astonished to see not only the novice at his prayer, but also an angel, who was weaving a marvellous wreath of roses. After every tenth rose the angel inserted a golden lily. When the wreath was finished, the angel placed it on the head of the praying novice.

The Novice Master then demanded, under holy obedience, that the youth tell him the meaning of the vision. Joyfully, but fearfully, the novice told him. The good priest was so impressed with what he had seen and heard that he immediately told his brother friars.

The practice of reciting the Crown of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin soon spread over the entire Franciscan Order and became one of the favourite devotions of the friars and of all members of the Franciscan Family.

✠ **In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen**

(Note: No Creed)

1. Annunciation

Luke 1: 26-38

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, through the intercession of Mary Your mother, help us to be the servants and handmaidens of the Father. Through the power of the Holy Spirit we ask that You be present to us and that, in turn, we may be present to You and to others.

2. Visitation

Luke 1: 41-47

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, Your mother Mary has given us an example of spontaneous and generous love. We ask that we might imitate her and sow kindness to those in need.

3. Nativity

Luke 2: 6-11

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, You were born in the beautiful atmosphere of the love of Mary and Joseph as well as in the love of Your Father in heaven. We ask that in some small measure we may be enabled to experience something of that same love and so attain to joy and peace.

4. Adoration of the Magi

Matthew 2: 1-12

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, King of all creation, we pray that peoples of the whole world come to recognise and acknowledge You. Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Your mother, and through our own humble efforts, may we in some small way help this to come to pass.

5. Finding in the Temple

Luke 2: 43-49

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, help us to imitate You in Your marvellous dedication to the will of Your Father in heaven. Through the intercession of Mary, Your mother, grant us true insight and a steady constancy.

6. The Resurrection

Luke 24: 1-9

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, just as You revealed Yourself to Your beloved mother after Your Resurrection, we ask, through her loving intercession, that You reveal Yourself to us in the measure we can receive it. We need this enlightenment and guidance to be Your followers in the world.

7. Assumption and Coronation

Revelation 11: 19; 12: 1; 19: 5-8

One Our Father..., ten Hail Mary's..., (No Glory be or Fatima Prayer)

(Optional Prayer)

Lord Jesus Christ, You have revealed to the world that the intercession and patronage of Mary, Your mother, is most powerful and effective. We ask that, together with You, she may receive us as her children and keep us in her loving care.

Two Hail Mary's complete the Franciscan Crown, in commemoration of the seventy-two years that our Lady is said to have lived on earth.

(Optional Closing Prayer)

Prayer to the Blessed Virgin

Holy Virgin Mary,
There is none like you among women.
You are the daughter and the handmaid
of the great King –
you are our heavenly mother.
You are the most holy mother of
Our Lord, Jesus Christ.
You are the spouse of the Holy Spirit.
Pray for us in union with the Archangel Michael,
and all the angels and saints of heaven,
to your Divine Son,
who is our beloved Lord and Master.
Amen.

St Francis of Assisi