

THE LITURGY OF THE FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY OF THE SEVEN JOYS OF OUR LADY

WEEK ONE READING: How Flowers Became Prayers

At that time, a certain young man who had a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary was admitted to the Order of Friars Minor. Previously, he had been accustomed to crown a statue of the Virgin in his village with a chaplet of roses each day.

Not being able to gather flowers and so continue this devotion during his novitiate, the young man was greatly saddened and resolved to leave the order. But when he went to Our Lady's chapel to take his leave and ask for Her protection, She appeared to him saying, "Do not be sad or cast down because you are no longer permitted to place chaplets of flowers on my statue. For I will teach you to change this pious practice into one that will be more pleasing to Me and more meritorious for your soul. In place of flowers that soon wither and cannot always be found, you can weave for me a crown from the flowers of your prayers. These will remain fresh and will always be in season."

Our Lady then taught the young man to recite one Our Father and ten Hail Marys for each of the Seven Joys that She experienced on Earth. "If you recite these prayers as I have directed," She said, "rest assured, dear son, that you will weave for Me a most beautiful and acceptable crown and will merit for yourself innumerable graces."

WEEK TWO READING: How Prayers Became Flowers

The same novice, after receiving his vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary, promised, or was perhaps asked to make the promise, for we do not know which, that he would recite the Crown daily before partaking of any food. One day, he forgot this promise and found himself in the refectory with the other friars about to take food. Suddenly he rose, asking leave to visit the chapel.

The other friars took note of the youth's hasty departure, but they did not consider this reason for alarm. Nevertheless, when the meal was done, they went to see what had become of him. What they saw caused them to halt suddenly at the chapel door. The Novice Master made his way to the front of the bewildered crowd and there found the novice kneeling rapt in prayer before the statue of the Virgin. More marvelous still was the fact that angels could be seen plucking roses from the youth's lips and presenting them to the statue. Gradually a chaplet was formed, which the angels offered to the Virgin.

The event was widely discussed in the cloister and the Novice Master asked for an explanation of all they had witnessed. The novice gave an account of his former devotion to the Virgin—namely his practice of offering flowers to her statue each day—whereupon the entire community took up the custom of reciting the Crown of the Seven Joys of Our Lady. The same custom spread beyond the walls of the Friary and soon the Crown was being recited, first throughout all of Italy, and then throughout all Christendom.

WEEK THREE READING: The Crown Offers Protections Against Harm

In the Assisi Province of St. Francis there was a Franciscan who was known by the name Friar James of the Crown because he encouraged people everywhere, young and old, rich and poor, to pray the Rosary of the Seven Joys of the Blessed Virgin, and whenever any special need arose, he always sought divine help by praying this rosary.

On one occasion, when Neapolitan troops were besieging the town of Borgo San Sepolcro, the townspeople wanted to demolish the Franciscan friary outside of the town lest it be used by the enemy to their advantage. Friar James asked the Florentine senate to wait while he prayed the Crown of the Seven Joys before proceeding with their plan. By the time he concluded his prayers, the enemy had given up their siege and the friary was saved.

Other miraculous protections were attributed to the Crown. When a flood threatened a town, the people all came together to recite the Rosary of the Seven Joys and their land and houses were saved. On another occasion, a family who recited the Crown together every evening discovered that their young son had fallen into the river and drowned. The family was called together to recite the Crown of the Seven Joys over his body, after which the boy suddenly drew breath and revived.

WEEK FOUR READING: Two Further Miracles

Some years later, when the youth who received the Crown of the Seven Joys from Our Lady had completed his novitiate and become a friar, he was sent away on some business by the prior. Though his heart was simple, he had proved himself to be a capable person who could be entrusted with important matters.

While traveling, it so happened that he was set upon by robbers who meant to deprive him of the friary's property, beat him cruelly, and leave him for dead in the forest. But as they accosted him, rather than resist, the young friar began to joyfully recite the Seven Joys. At this, the robbers were abashed and fled from him in shame. Later, they visited the friary to beg for his forgiveness and receive his blessing. Thereafter, they amended their lives and became holy. When it came time for him to die, the friar who had received the Rosary of the Seven Joys was seen ascending into the heavens, surrounded by roses and lilies. There, the Virgin Herself enfolded him in Her arms.

The Order of Prayer:

1. The First Joy of Our Lady is the Annunciation, recalling the joy She felt on hearing the words "Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee." In our body, the First Joy corresponds to the Root Chakra at the base of the spine, the color of which is red. In Our Lady's body it represents the molten core at the center of our planet that warms the Earth from within.

(recited by all)

The rosary is My body,

And My body is the body of the world.

Your body is one with that body.

What cause could there be for fear?

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

2. The Second Joy of Our Lady is the Visitation, recalling the joy She felt in the company of her cousin Elizabeth, who was also miraculously with child. In our body, the Second Joy corresponds to the Sacral Chakra just below the navel, the color of which is orange. In Our Lady's body it represents the rock and soil that nurtures and supports all life on Earth, the generative matrix from which everything grows.

(recited by all)

*The rosary is My body,
And My body is the body of the world.
Your body is one with that body.
What cause could there be for fear?*

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

3. The Third Joy is the Nativity, recalling the joy Our Lady felt on bringing Her child from Her belly into this world through the portal of Her womb. In our body, the Third Joy corresponds to the Solar Chakra between the navel and diaphragm, the color of which is yellow. In Our Lady's body it represents the root systems that connect all life, filling us with creativity, confidence, and power.

(recited by all)

*The rosary is My body,
And My body is the body of the world.
Your body is one with that body.
What cause could there be for fear?*

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

4. The Fourth Joy is the Adoration of the Magi, recalling the joy Our Lady felt when the Three Kings arrived from faraway lands to recognize Her as the Mother of Life. In our body, the Fourth Joy corresponds to the Heart Chakra, the color of which is green. In Our Lady's body it represents all things green and growing.

(recited by all)

*The rosary is My body,
And My body is the body of the world.
Your body is one with that body.
What cause could there be for fear?*

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

5. The Fifth Joy is the Finding at the Temple, recalling the joy Our Lady felt when, having lost Her son in the city for three days, She found him and removed him from the Temple. In our body, the Fifth Joy corresponds to the Throat Chakra, the color of which is blue. In Our Lady's body it represents pure, life-giving water in all its myriad forms.

(recited by all)

*The rosary is My body,
And My body is the body of the world.
Your body is one with that body.
What cause could there be for fear?*

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

6. The Sixth Joy is the Resurrection, recalling the joy Our Lady felt when, after three days in the tomb, her Son was reborn. In our body, the Sixth Joy corresponds to the Third Eye Chakra located at the center of the forehead, the color of which is indigo. In Our Lady's body it represents Sol, the sun that clothes Her form in prophetic glory and power.

(recited by all)

The rosary is My body,

And My body is the body of the world.

Your body is one with that body.

What cause could there be for fear?

(Followed by one Our Father, ten Hail Marys)

7. The Seventh Joy is the Coronation of Our Lady, recalling the joy She felt when, at the end of Her earthly life as an avatar, She resumed Her place as Queen of the Cosmos. In our body, the Seventh Joy corresponds to the Crown Chakra located just beyond the top of the head, the color of which is violet. In Our Lady's body it represents the Moon below Her feet—Her true Throne from time immemorial.

(recited by all)

The rosary is My body,

And My body is the body of the world.

Your body is one with that body.

What cause could there be for fear?

(Followed by one Our Father and TWELVE HAIL MARYS, concluding with the words of Revelation 12.1 to complete THE STELLAR CROWN)

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.”

(recited by all)

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

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Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Members now offer brief petitions for summoning Joy and Rising Life Force—either in general or to transform specific areas of their lives. At the end of each petition, the words “Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee” are recited by the petitioner.

When all have stated their petitions, all recite together:

May the souls of the departed guide us and care for us.

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The Crown of the Seven Joys ends with one Our Father and one Hail Mary to obtain the wise and loving intentions of our ancestors.