

THE FRANCISCAN CROWN ROSARY

The Franciscan rosary, or as it is properly called, The Franciscan Crown, dates to the early part of the 15th century. At that time a young man who found spiritual joy in weaving a crown of wild flowers for a beautiful statue of Mary decided to enter the Franciscan Order. After entering the community, however, he was saddened when he no longer found the time to gather flowers for his personal devotion. One evening, while feeling tempted to abandon his vocation, he received a vision of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Virgin Mother encouraged the young novice to persevere by reminding him of the joyfulness of the Franciscan spirit. She also instructed him to meditate daily on seven joyful events from her own life as a new form of the rosary. Instead of a crown of flowers, the novice would now weave a crown of prayers. Before long, many other Franciscans began to pray the Crown and soon it spread to the entire Order, becoming officially established in 1422.

In addition to developing this Marian devotion, the Franciscans are credited with adding the final words to the Hail Mary, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. In 1263, Saint Bonaventure, Minister General of the Order, encouraged liturgical devotion honouring the mystery of the Visitation. Saint Bonaventure also popularized the daily triple recitation of the Angelus which it is believed Saint Francis initiated after visiting the Holy Land. Francis was deeply impressed by the Muslim practice of stopping to pray several times a day, and desired to Christianize this pious custom. A Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV (1471-1485), introduced the feast of the Immaculate Conception and the feast of Saint Joseph as husband of Mary. He also issued the first papal pronouncement encouraging the rosary as an invaluable instrument of personal and societal conversion.

Taken from **THE FRANCISCAN CROWN** (a beautiful booklet available in most Catholic Book stores) *Courtesy of* The Franciscan Friars of Marytown:

1. The Franciscan Crown consists of seven decades of Hail Mary's, each preceded by an Our Father and followed by a Glory Be.
2. The Crown recalls the Seven Joys of Mary and how she responded to the grace of God in her life. The Seven Joys are:
 - 1) **The Joy of Mary at the Annunciation**
 - 2) **The Joy of Mary in the Visitation (expressed in her *Magnificat*)**
 - 3) **The Joy of Mary at the Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ**
 - 4) **The Joy of Mary in the Adoration of the Magi**
 - 5) **The Joy of Mary in Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple**
 - 6) **The Joy of Mary when Christ appeared to Her Resurrected on Easter Morning**
 - 7) **The Joy of Mary in her Assumption and Coronation**
3. It begins with the sign of the cross which is then followed by seven decades, each consisting of one Our Father, ten Hail Mary's and one Glory Be.

4. At the end of the seven decades, there are two additional Hail Mary's, bringing the total of Hail Mary's to 72 years.

5. The Crown may be concluded by praying one Hail Mary and one Our Father for the intentions of the Pope.

There are other ways of reciting the Crown but the one given seems to be in more general use.

INDULGENCES^{*} : The plenary Indulgence attached to the recitation of the Franciscan Crown, and applicable to the dead, may be gained as often as the crown is recited (N.B. *Read footnote below*).

It is not required that the beads be blessed, or in fact that beads be used at all, since the Indulgence is not attached to the material rosary, but to the recitation of the prayers as such. In 1905 Pope Pius X, in response to the petition of the Procurator General of the Friars Minor, enriched the Franciscan Crown with several new Indulgences that may be gained by all the faithful. Those who assist at a public recitation of the Franciscan Crown participate in all the Indulgences attached to the Seraphic Rosary that are gained by the members of the Franciscan Order. It is required, however, that beads be used and that they be blessed by a priest having the proper faculties. A translation of the pontifical Brief is given in "St. Anthony's Almanac" for 1909.

* The indulgences specified are those that the Church *had* assigned to the Franciscan Crown *prior* to the sweeping changes that came with Vatican II and its aftermath. ***None*** of these said indulgences are any longer attached to this devotion. As much as we may regret this, the Church with the power of the keys has the authority from Christ to bind and to loose. Nevertheless, since the Church at one time so liberally granted these great indulgences to this devotion in honor of Our Lady's Seven Joys, we have every reason to believe that it is very pleasing to God. And, while the Church no longer guarantees them, God can, if He wishes, still grant these same indulgences for its recitation.