

If those who use the seven-decade rosary make a slight change in the mysteries they recall in each of the decades, they can gain the same indulgences which have been granted for the so-called Dominican Rosary of fifteen decades. All one has to do is to make the first five of the seven mysteries coincide with the five Joyful Mysteries, and then add two of the Glorious Mysteries for the two additional decades, as follows: (1) The Annunciation. (2) The Visitation. (3) The Birth of Our Lord, including the Adoration of the Magi. (4) The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. (5) The Finding of Jesus in the Temple. (6) The Resurrection of Our Lord. (7) The Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven.

Praying the Franciscan Crown in this way, we can gain the following indulgences: (a) a plenary indulgence for praying a third part (five decades) of the Rosary continuously, either in a church or public oratory, or in the family, a religious community, or a pious association; (b) a partial indulgence for the same in other places or at other times (Enchiridion, no. 48).

To gain these indulgences, it is required that we meditate or reflect on the mystery of each decade (that is, five decades). When the decades are recited publicly, these mys-

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teries must be announced according to approved local custom. In the private praying of the decades, this is not necessary as long as meditation on the mysteries is added to the vocal prayer. Although the beads are helpful, they are not required for gaining the indulgence.

Besides the Rosary (five decades), there are three other pious exercises for which one can gain a plenary indulgence on any day: (1) a half-hour Visit to the Blessed Sacrament; (2) Reading the Bible for a half hour; (3) the Stations of the Way of the Cross. Only one plenary indulgence can be gained on any single day. Do not forget the Our Father and Hail Mary for the intentions of the Holy Father.



CUM PERMISSU SUPERIORUM

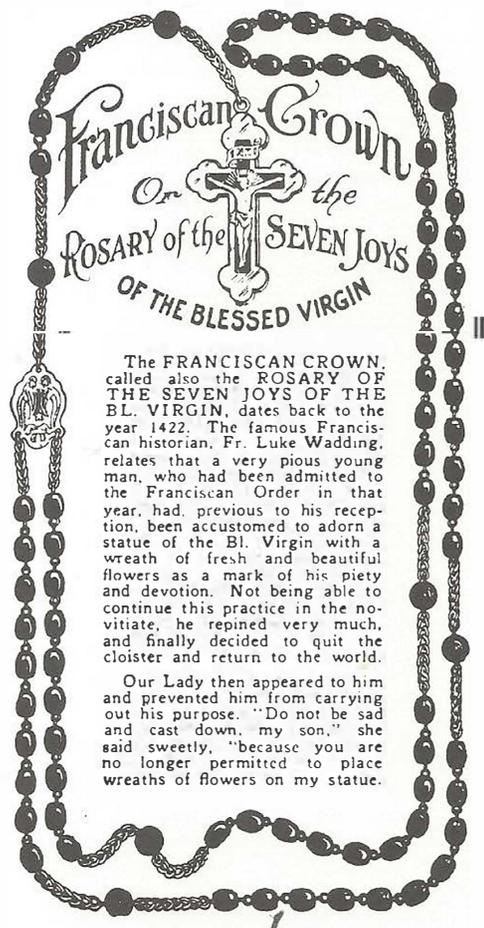
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FRANCISCAN HERALD PRESS

1434 West 51st Street

Chicago, Illinois 60609

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The FRANCISCAN CROWN, called also the ROSARY OF THE SEVEN JOYS OF THE BL. VIRGIN, dates back to the year 1422. The famous Franciscan historian, Fr. Luke Wadding, relates that a very pious young man, who had been admitted to the Franciscan Order in that year, had, previous to his reception, been accustomed to adorn a statue of the Bl. Virgin with a wreath of fresh and beautiful flowers as a mark of his piety and devotion. Not being able to continue this practice in the novitiate, he repined very much, and finally decided to quit the cloister and return to the world.

Our Lady then appeared to him and prevented him from carrying out his purpose. "Do not be sad and cast down, my son," she said sweetly, "because you are no longer permitted to place wreaths of flowers on my statue."

"I shall teach you to change this pious practice into one that will be far more pleasing to me and far more meritorious to your soul. In place of the flowers that soon wither and can not always be found, you can weave for me a crown from the flowers of your prayers that will always remain fresh and can always be had.

"Recite *one Our Father and ten Hail Marys* in honor of the joy I experienced when the angel announced to me the Incarnation of the Son of God. Repeat these same prayers in honor of the joy I felt on visiting my Cousin Elizabeth. Say them again in honor of the supreme happiness that filled my heart on giving birth to Christ the Savior, without pain and without the loss of my virginity. Recite the same prayers a fourth time in honor of the joy I felt when presenting my Divine Son to the adoration of the Magi. Repeat them for the fifth time in honor 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 the one Our Father and then ten Hail Marys in honor of the joy I experienced on beholding my Divine Son gloriously risen from the grave on Easter Sunday. Finally, for the seventh time, repeat these prayers in honor of my own most glorious and joyful Assump-

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tion into heaven, when I was crowned Queen of heaven and earth. If you recite these prayers as I have directed, rest assured, dear son, you will weave for me a most beautiful and acceptable crown and will merit for yourself innumerable graces."

When Our Lady had disappeared, the overjoyed novice at once began to recite the prayers in honor of her Seven Joys, as she had directed. While he was deeply engrossed in this devotion, the novice master happened to pass by and, behold! he saw an angel weaving a marvelous wreath of roses and after every tenth rose he inserted a golden lily. When the wreath was finished, the angel placed it on the head of the praying novice. The master then demanded under holy obedience that the youth tell him the meaning of the vision. Joyfully, yet fearfully, the novice complied. The good priest was so impressed with what he had seen and heard, that he immediately made it known to his brethren. Thus the practice of reciting the Crown of the Seven Joys of the Bl. Virgin soon spread over the entire Franciscan Order and became one of the favorite devotions of the friars.

Later, it became customary to add two Hail Marys in honor of the seventy-two years that Our Lady is said to have lived on earth, and one Our Father and Hail Mary for the intention of the Pope to gain the indulgences.

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LIST OF INDULGENCES

ON JUNE 15, 1968, Pope Paul VI abrogated the indulgences previously granted by the Church and approved a new and reduced collection of indulgences for the universal Church (Enchiridion Indulgentiarum, Vatican, 1968). A limited number of new indulgences were also granted to the members of the Orders of St. Francis, but among these there are none for the praying of the Franciscan Crown. This does not mean that this form of prayer must be given up or that the seven-decade beads should be discarded. The Crown is still a prayer that is pleasing to God and to our Heavenly Mother.

If the seven decade rosary is blessed, it is one of those blessed objects (crucifixes, crosses, rosaries, scapulars, medals) for which the Church has granted new indulgences, if they are used in a pious manner. If the Crown is blessed by a priest, the faithful can gain a partial indulgence by using it piously; and if it is blessed by the pope or a bishop they can gain a plenary indulgence on the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (June 29), under the usual conditions (confession, Communion, and at least one Our Father and Hail Mary for the intentions of the pope), provided that they add a profession of faith, using any correct formula, for instance the Apostles' Creed (Enchiridion, no. 35).

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