

Fr. Thomas Bourque, T.O.R., Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Province, Loretto, PA, has provided the following instruction and meditations on the Franciscan Crown, entitled , A JOURNEY OF FAITH: THE SEVEN JOYS OF MARY.

The Franciscan Crown consists of seven decades of Hail Mary's, each preceded by an Our Father and followed by a Glory Be. It recalls the seven joys of Mary and how she responded to the grace of God in her life. The Crown 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. At the end of the seven decades, there are two additional Hail Mary's, **in honor of the 72 years that Our Lady is said to have lived on earth.** **The Crown** is concluded by praying one Our Father and one Hail Mary for the intentions of the Pope.

As the joys of the Franciscan Crown are pondered, one is invited to listen to the Word of God and to be open to the gift of the Holy Spirit. The reflection studies each of the joys of Mary by beginning with one's openness to SCRIPTURE.

For each joy, a gift of the Holy Spirit has been given for study and reflection.

These seven gifts challenge each individual to live a graced-filled and moral life. They allow one to reflect on the grace and strength Mary had in responding to her call and relationship with God.

The reflection offers questions for meditation and ends with a prayer taken from the prayer of the Church.

FIRST JOY - THE ANNUNCIATION - THE GIFT OF FORTITUDE **Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-36**



Reflection:

At baptism we are called by name to give flesh to Christian values and beliefs. In responding to the gift of baptism, how have we dealt with becoming a disciple of the Lord? What is our relationship to God, Church and others? How do we respond to the invitation to build up the Body of Christ?

Why can living according to Christian values be a lonely and frightening thing? Name people and events in your life which have helped you live out your faith commitment?

PRAYER:

God our Father, your WORD became flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. May we become more like Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge as our redeemer , God and man. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

SECOND JOY - THE VISITATION - THE GIFT OF COUNSEL

Luke 1: 39-56



Reflection:

Mary's response to God was the powerful prayer of the Magnificat, the joyous acknowledgement of God's goodness within her. What is our response to God?

What are three positive qualities with which the Lord has blessed you?
Whom do you turn to for counsel and friendship in your life?

PRAYER:

Eternal Father, you inspired the Virgin Mary, mother of your Son, to visit Elizabeth and assist her in her need. Keep us open to the working of your Spirit, and with Mary may we praise you forever. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (2)

THIRD JOY - THE NATIVITY and THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI - THE GIFT OF FEAR OF THE LORD

Luke 2:-1-20; Matthew 2:1-12



Reflection:

In reflecting upon the role of Mary as a woman of faith, we learn that she accepted the will of the Father and all that went with that responsibility.

How do you respond to the will of God in your life?

Imagine the emotional turmoil Mary experienced at the time of Jesus' birth. She turned to God for strength. Where do you turn during those periods of emotional turmoil in your life?

PRAYER:

God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word that we may bring your life to the waiting world. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen. (3)

**FOURTH JOY - THE PRESENTATION - THE GIFT OF WISDOM
Luke 22:22-35**



Reflection:

As Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to the elders of the Temple, they once again displayed their love and faithfulness towards God.

As you were presented by your parents to the Lord in the Sacrament of Baptism, your parents also displayed their love and faithfulness towards God. How do you express your love and faithfulness towards God?

How do you share wisdom with others?

PRAYER:

All powerful Father, Christ your Son became man for us and was presented in the temple. May he free our hearts from sin and bring us into your presence. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (4)

FIFTH JOY - THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE - GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING

Luke 2:41-52



Reflection:

This event was probably a frustrating and stressful experience for both Mary and Joseph. The happiness of finding Jesus was lost when Mary and Joseph could not comprehend his explanation.

When do you most often lose sight of Christ within your life? How do you seek to understand the wisdom of God and the will of God?

What are the five qualities you appreciate about your parents and their love for you?

PRAYER:

Father, help us to live as the holy family, united in respect and love. Bring us to the joy and peace of your eternal home. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (5)

SIXTH JOY - THE RESURRECTION - THE GIFT OF PIETY AND LOVE
Luke 24:1-11; Mark 16:1-8



Reflection:

The ordeal of seeing her only Son die a criminal's death was undoubtedly a traumatic experience for Mary. She drew strength from the Father's love and realized that Jesus would conquer death through the power of God.

From where do you draw your strength? Does the gift of the resurrection truly give you a reason to hope and a reason to live?

PRAYER:

God our Father, by raising Christ your Son you conquered the power of death and opened for us the way to eternal life. Let our celebration today raise us up and renew our lives by the Spirit that is within us. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen. (6)

SEVENTH JOY - THE ASSUMPTION - THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE
John 11:17-27; Revelation 21:1-6



Reflection:

As Mary experienced the call from God, we also need a deepening conviction and eagerness to hear God's call in our lives and respond to the call. It is important to trust God enough to allow ourselves to respond freely and generously as Mary did.

Are you as eager to hear God's call as Mary was? How are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (love, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, serenity) growing and affecting your relationship with God and others?

PRAYER:

Father, you have given us the mother of your Son to be our Queen and Mother. With the support of her prayers may we come to share the glory of your children in the kingdom of heaven. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Endnotes

1. Opening Prayer. Annunciation. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974. ICEL

2. Opening Prayer. Visitation. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974 ICEL

3. Alternate Opening Prayer. Christmas Mass during the Day. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974 ICEL

4. Opening Prayer. Presentation of the Lord. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974 ICEL

5. Opening Prayer. Holy Family. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974 ICEL

6. Opening Prayer. Easter Sunday. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974 ICEL

7. Opening Prayer. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of all Creation. Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1988 ICEL

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John Paul II. *Mother of the Redeemer*. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1987

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