

# THIS OCTOBER, DISCOVER THE ROSARY

The School of Mary



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**Family Rosary**

HOLY CROSS  
FAMILY MINISTRIES

WHY OCTOBER IS THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY &  
5 TIPS FOR RELUCTANT THE ROSARY PRAYER

# WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

There is no right or wrong when it comes to praying with your family. It may be chaotic and imperfect one day and quiet and orderly the next. Take comfort in knowing there is no one "correct" way of doing it. Any family can gather in prayer and amazing things may come from it!

No matter where you are, create a sacred space: At home with your family, light a candle, place your family Bible or an image of the Holy Family on the coffee table. If you find yourself in your vehicle on-the-go, roll down the windows and have everyone take a deep breath of fresh air. Wherever you are in this busy life, slow down long enough to welcome God's presence.

We're so glad to be joining you in prayer. We promise to be with you, growing in faith, every step of the way. May God continue to bless you and your family.

## A LITTLE HISTORY

Servant of God Patrick Peyton began his ministry in 1942 with the goal of building **family unity** through daily prayer of the Rosary. Inspired by his own father who had a deep devotion to family prayer, praying the Rosary became the foundation for the life of Father Peyton (1909-92).

We at Family Rosary are ever so grateful Father Peyton's family instilled in him the importance of **family prayer**. Now it can be part of your family's tradition so you can fulfill the vision that "The Family That Prays Together Stays Together," the slogan coined by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., so many years ago.



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## WHY IS OCTOBER THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY?

Tradition holds that October has been celebrated as the month of the rosary since 1571, and the victory of the Catholic League (an alliance of Spain, Venice, the Papal States, Genoa, Savoy, and Malta) over the forces of the Ottoman Empire who were seeking to take over Italy in an effort to move into the heart of Europe. It was October 7, 1571 when the battle was fought and the Catholic League was able to overcome the Ottoman forces.

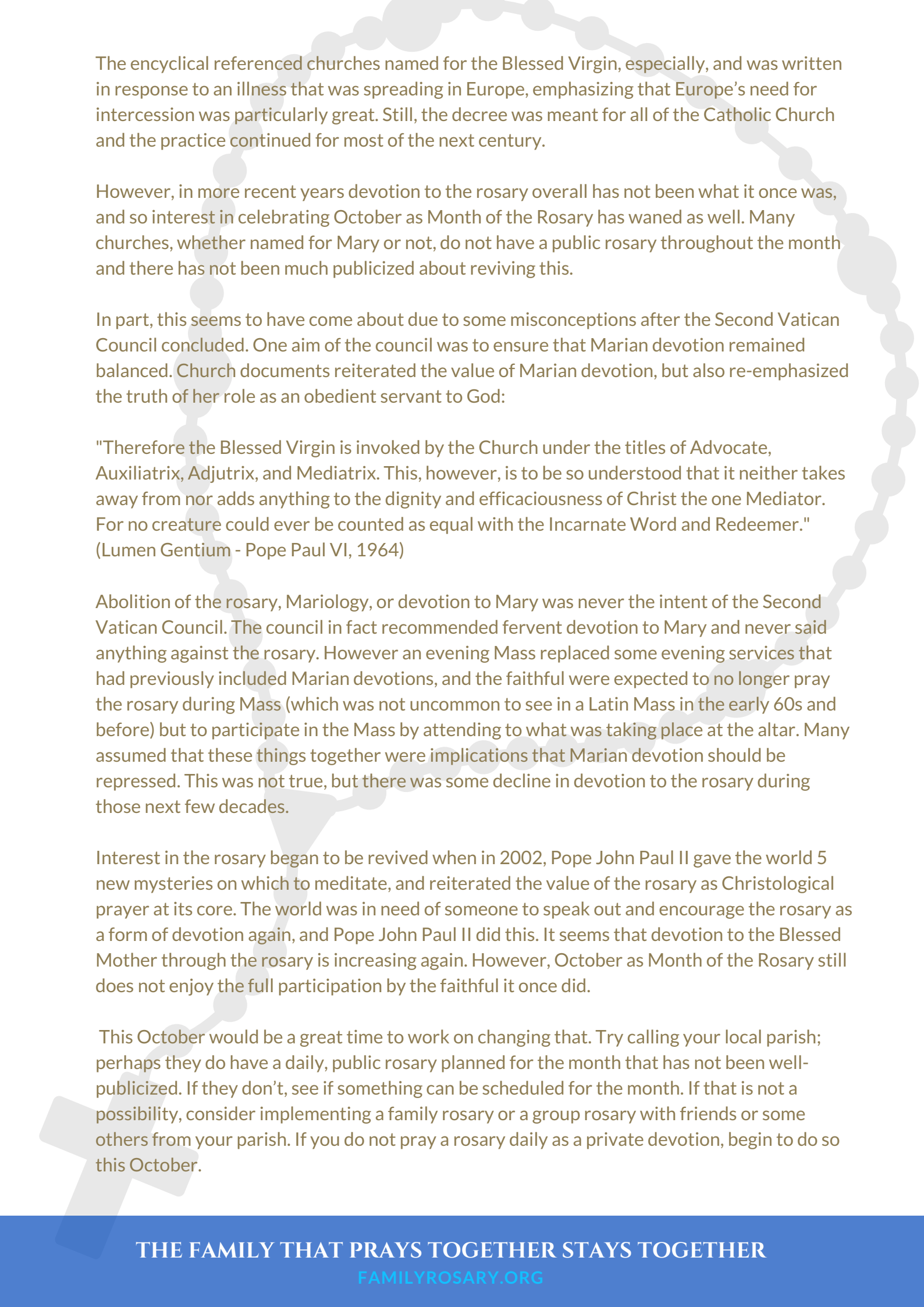
Prior to the ships sailing off towards battle, Pope Pius V prayed the rosary, asking for Our Lady's intercession in victory, and every man on board carried a Rosary. For this reason, as soon as the men returned from the battle, the good pope declared a feast day for Our Lady of Victory. A Rosary procession was offered in St. Peter's square after the victory and in time the whole month became associated with the rosary, rather than just one day. Pope Leo XIII officially established October as the Month of the Rosary in the 1884. That year, he published *Superiore Anno*, an encyclical which was focused on recitation of the holy rosary. In it, he called for the entire Church to dedicate the whole of the month to the rosary and pray it daily:

"Last year, as each of you is aware, We decreed by an Encyclical Letter that, to win the help of Heaven for the Church in her trials, the great Mother of God should be honored by the means of the most holy Rosary during the whole of the month of October. In this We followed both Our own impulse and the example of Our predecessors, who in times of difficulty were wont to have recourse with increased fervor to the Blessed Virgin, and to seek her aid with special prayers.

... We therefore decree and make order that from the 1st of October to the 2nd of November following in all the parish churches, in all public churches dedicated to the Mother of God, or in such as are appointed by the Ordinary, five decades at least of the Rosary be recited, together with the Litany. If in the morning, the Holy Sacrifice will take place during these prayers; if in the evening, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for the adoration of the faithful; after which those present will receive the customary Benediction. We desire that, wherever it be lawful, the local confraternity of the Rosary should make a solemn procession through the streets as a public manifestation of religious devotion."

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The encyclical referenced churches named for the Blessed Virgin, especially, and was written in response to an illness that was spreading in Europe, emphasizing that Europe's need for intercession was particularly great. Still, the decree was meant for all of the Catholic Church and the practice continued for most of the next century.

However, in more recent years devotion to the rosary overall has not been what it once was, and so interest in celebrating October as Month of the Rosary has waned as well. Many churches, whether named for Mary or not, do not have a public rosary throughout the month and there has not been much publicized about reviving this.


In part, this seems to have come about due to some misconceptions after the Second Vatican Council concluded. One aim of the council was to ensure that Marian devotion remained balanced. Church documents reiterated the value of Marian devotion, but also re-emphasized the truth of her role as an obedient servant to God:

"Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator. For no creature could ever be counted as equal with the Incarnate Word and Redeemer." (Lumen Gentium - Pope Paul VI, 1964)

Abolition of the rosary, Mariology, or devotion to Mary was never the intent of the Second Vatican Council. The council in fact recommended fervent devotion to Mary and never said anything against the rosary. However an evening Mass replaced some evening services that had previously included Marian devotions, and the faithful were expected to no longer pray the rosary during Mass (which was not uncommon to see in a Latin Mass in the early 60s and before) but to participate in the Mass by attending to what was taking place at the altar. Many assumed that these things together were implications that Marian devotion should be repressed. This was not true, but there was some decline in devotion to the rosary during those next few decades.

Interest in the rosary began to be revived when in 2002, Pope John Paul II gave the world 5 new mysteries on which to meditate, and reiterated the value of the rosary as Christological prayer at its core. The world was in need of someone to speak out and encourage the rosary as a form of devotion again, and Pope John Paul II did this. It seems that devotion to the Blessed Mother through the rosary is increasing again. However, October as Month of the Rosary still does not enjoy the full participation by the faithful it once did.

This October would be a great time to work on changing that. Try calling your local parish; perhaps they do have a daily, public rosary planned for the month that has not been well-publicized. If they don't, see if something can be scheduled for the month. If that is not a possibility, consider implementing a family rosary or a group rosary with friends or some others from your parish. If you do not pray a rosary daily as a private devotion, begin to do so this October.



## 5 TIPS FOR THE RELUCTANT ROSARY PRAY-ER

The Rosary is a remarkable prayer tool and devotion and I know many people who credit the Rosary for answered prayer and family blessings. Countless popes, saints and priests have encouraged us to say the Rosary. Our Lady herself promises that her Immaculate Heart will indeed triumph, especially with increased dedication to this daily devotion. For years, I've heard of the beautiful graces attached to daily recitation of the Rosary, especially when it is said as a family.

I've been reluctant for a couple of reasons ... but I have decided that none of these reasons really warrant exemption for me.

Like a lot of people, I suspect, I was frustrated by how easily distracted I am in prayer ... especially through the repetition of the prayers of the Rosary. Even with the focus of the 20 Mysteries of the Rosary (one Mystery for each decade of prayers), my mind wanders and I'm constantly trying to rein my thoughts back in. As in a lot of initiatives in the spiritual life, I'm realizing that the apparent success or leaps in holiness I was hoping for are really just feeding pride. Our intentions and perseverance, even within distracted prayer, are what opens the faucets of Grace. Progress in holiness is not the result of our performance or our accomplishments; progress in the spiritual life is catapulted by God's Grace and how we choose to accept it as beloved sons and daughters of God.

It's a little unfortunate that I associate the family Rosary with our family car trips as a kid. Sometimes my parents would crack out the rosaries when my brother and I were fighting in the backseat. Sometimes, I get an involuntary sinking feeling at the suggestion of saying the Rosary, because it once felt a little like a tool to stop bickering or to sideline a conversation. I'm happy to say that that is starting to change!

After years of exempting myself, I have recently committed to saying the Rosary every day. Because it's kind of the way I roll, I have come up with 5 practical tips that have been helping me to make this into a new and lasting habit. I'm a couple of months past the habit-making three weeks and I haven't missed a day.

# 5 PRACTICAL TIPS FOR THE RELUCTANT ROSARY PRAYER

**1** I think I was a little reluctant to make the commitment to daily Rosary because I thought I would likely just forget one day and then my resolve would be gone and I'd give it up. One day at Mass, reflecting on the homily about the messages of Fatima, I received a little message of encouragement in my heart. If our Blessed Mother herself really wants me to say the Rosary every day, won't she prompt me to pray it? I asked her to remind me to pray my 5 decades each day ... and she hasn't missed one yet! The whole Prompt-Me-to-Pray prayer works!

**2** It's ok to spread out the 5 decades throughout the day. In fact, focusing on just one decade at a time

- helps us to keep the focus
- easily fits in with short tasks or chores or times of waiting
- help to practice the Presence of God by weaving prayers into our activities throughout the day

**3** The classic string of beads rosary or other Rosary rings or bracelets or even Rosary craft kits are all very helpful to keep track of prayers. It's good to get kids familiar with using these tools right from the beginning. We do, however, have 10 fingers, so not having a rosary isn't exactly an excuse for not saying one. There are plenty of tasks and times of day where I may be doing some kind of small task, but I definitely can be praying the Rosary while I do it. I do still get a little distracted and find that I'm not saying the perfect number of Hail Marys, questioning myself about which prayer (or decade!) I'm on. If my hands are actually busy doing something else, I've been known to use 10 little counters nearby, 10 little checks or doodles in my journal or I'll end up saying 11- or 14-Hail Mary decades.

If I only have one hand free. I'll make a fist for the Our Father, extend my fingers one at a time for the first five Hail Marys and then close one finger back into a fist for the last five Hail Marys.

**4** If you are without a rosary and can't easily use counters or even your fingers because you're just that busy, it can be helpful to announce the number of the Hail Mary at the start of the prayer. Announcing the Mystery of that particular decade at the start of each prayer also helps to maintain focus on the Mystery.

**5** There are also plenty of audio Rosaries to listen to, or Catholic apps to keep track of the prayers so that you can focus on the actual prayer and reflection and leave the accounting to someone else.

There are also books with beautiful prayers and scripture to encourage meditation on the Mysteries of the Rosary. My husband can still recite the Mystery summary and prayers from the Rosary Novena to Our Lady that his family recited every day with all five kids (plus visiting friends) kneeling around his parents.

Because I've also been on a bit of a mission to get better at praying out loud and spontaneous prayer, I've been announcing the Mystery of the Rosary (to myself) and adding my own spontaneous prayer summarizing the event of the Mystery and praying into it, looking for what virtues I need to learn from the Mystery and where in my life I need to apply them. If I'm a little shorter on time, I'll pray "Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner," or "Jesus, I trust in You," or "Mother Mary, teach me to be more like you" before I proceed to the Our Father and the Hail Marys.



### **Monica McConkey**

Monica, mom of 5, blogs about Catholic crafts and family traditions at [EquippingCatholicfamilies.com](http://EquippingCatholicfamilies.com). She is an author and creator of Super Saints quizzing cards and over 45 Saint, Sacrament, Catechism and Prayer-packed Craft Kits to help teach the Catholic Faith. The Catholic teaching tools and gifts are available through Arma Dei, the Catholic family publishing company founded with her husband Bill.



## **BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER IN PRAYER**

We hope the time you've spent reflecting with this material has been enriching. Continue to pray with your family every day, wherever you are.

For additional online resources for family prayer including additional e-books and the mobile Rosary App, please visit our website at [www.FamilyRosary.org](http://www.FamilyRosary.org).

This e-book and all our resources represent a culmination of Father Peyton's passion for family unity through prayer. We hope our services will enhance your family's prayer life particularly remembering Father Peyton's famous words, "*The family that prays together stays together.*"

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