

The Lent Tree



at the
foot of the cross

A Lenten journey from Family Rosary

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Welcome to Our Family

Each year, the Church gives us the Lenten season to help us reorient our lives toward God. We encourage you and your family to enter into this season together, journeying with Jesus and Mary to the foot of the Cross and, ultimately, to the joyful celebration of Easter.

The traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (acts of love and service) help us to turn away from everything that binds and blinds us in order to make space for God in our hearts and our homes. He wishes to bring light and warmth to family life, to free us and fill us with Himself! This is the tremendous call of the entire Christian life, but the Lenten season bids us to respond to this call with even greater intentionality.

Orienting our lives toward God always requires an experience of the Paschal Mystery—the suffering, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Notably, however, this experience does not end with the Cross; it leads to the glory of Easter! As you and your family find ways to practice prayer, fasting, and almsgiving this Lent, let Mary accompany you on your journey, so that she can show you how her Son redeems and brings new life.

To facilitate your Lenten journey, we are offering prayer resources and a 40-day Lenten family activity calendar on our website, FamilyRosary.org. 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.



Family Rosary

HOLY CROSS
FAMILY MINISTRIES

The family that prays together stays together

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The Lent Tree

Better Lent than never. Or something like that.

I'm so far behind I'm starting to get frazzled. Case in point: our Lent Tree. Or I should say, the absence of our Lent Tree. Because even with the ashes on our foreheads already smudged into oblivion, I still hadn't gotten around to making it. For the Lent Tree I paint a bare-branched tree to put up on the wall next to a basket of paper leaves and a glue stick. Then throughout Lent when a good deed is done, the good-deed-doer glues a leaf on the tree. So what begins as a bare winter tree becomes festooned with a profusion of glorious green foliage by Easter (hopefully, if we've been good-deed-doer-glueers) as the Lent Tree passes from stark winter to verdant spring. My lack of progress on the Lent crafting was partly due to my Vision of Grandeur. I dreamt of creating the most perfect Lent Tree ever beheld by the wide and wonder-filled eyes of man (or at least by my children), the memory of which would be handed down in family lore from generation to generation. The result was that I found myself bound by tight chains of aspiration which constricted me into total inactivity. It would take hours, I speculated, maybe days, to create The Perfect Lent Tree. And as hours and days are scarce of late, I wound up doing nothing. In stepped my mom (a mother of eight who knows all about the scarcity of time resources). "You can still do it," she told me, "we haven't had a full week of Lent yet." (She can also find a positive spin on just about any situation, she's a world class champion of the Pollyanna game — as a mother of eight she's had lots of practice in looking for bright sides). "But," she warned me, "you better do it soon. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to be." She was right.

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at the foot of the cross

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The Lent Tree was started by my Mom when I was a kid and I'd hate to have a beloved family tradition fail now. So I bid adieu to my Dreams of Crafting Magnificence and decided to settle for The Reality of Crafting Now: whatever our craft cabinet happened to hold at this very moment was what was going to become our Lent Tree. Today. It was time. I dug into the cabinet and got busy. With a Sharpie, a kiddie watercolor kit, a piece of discount watercolor paper, and a half hour, we had a Lent Tree. Finding the leaf die-cutter took a bit longer, but with a little rummaging crisp card-stock leaves of bright green were soon popping out at a good clip. A poster-board frame completed the final, finishing touch. By the school pick-up time the Lent Tree was on the wall. All were happy to see it, and already it is blooming with good deeds. And I was happy, too. To have it checked-off my to-do list, yes. But even more, to see the blooming of little souls that goes along with the card-stock furze bursting out on our paper-tree. My 5-year-old got himself ready on his own in the morning, dressing, brushing his teeth, getting on his socks and shoes, everything, and he did it all cheerfully and with a smile. I told him, "Why don't you put a leaf on the tree?" "Can I?" he asked, excited. "Yes," I told him, "you did a good job getting yourself ready, and best of all you did it so cheerfully, it helped make a cheerful morning for everyone." He smiled and ran over to glue on his leaf.

Which is really what the Lent Tree is all about: encouraging all of us to think about how we go through our day and the impact of our decisions, large and small, on ourselves and everyone around us. If the Lent Tree can help all of us change our hearts a little and encourage us to live with joy and gratitude for God's blessings, then it really has become something worth passing on to our children, and maybe one day their children, too.

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Reflecting on the context of our Lenten practice this year, let us note that in the first place, Lent is the time to prepare for the great annual remembrance of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of the Lord, so that we will be ready to stand at the foot of the Cross with Mary. Christ, both Victim and Priest, sacrifices Himself to the Father for the forgiveness of sins and to open the way to Eternal Life. Mary once more says YES, offering her Son as this Sacrifice of the New and Eternal Covenant. This is our Salvation. This is our true Hope.

Keep an eye on:

Family Rosary@ familyrosary.org

Catholic Mom@ catholicmom.com

Museum of Family Prayer@ museumoffamilyprayer.com

and on our Facebook and Instagram sites too!

#AtTheFootOfTheCross #Lent2021



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.

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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