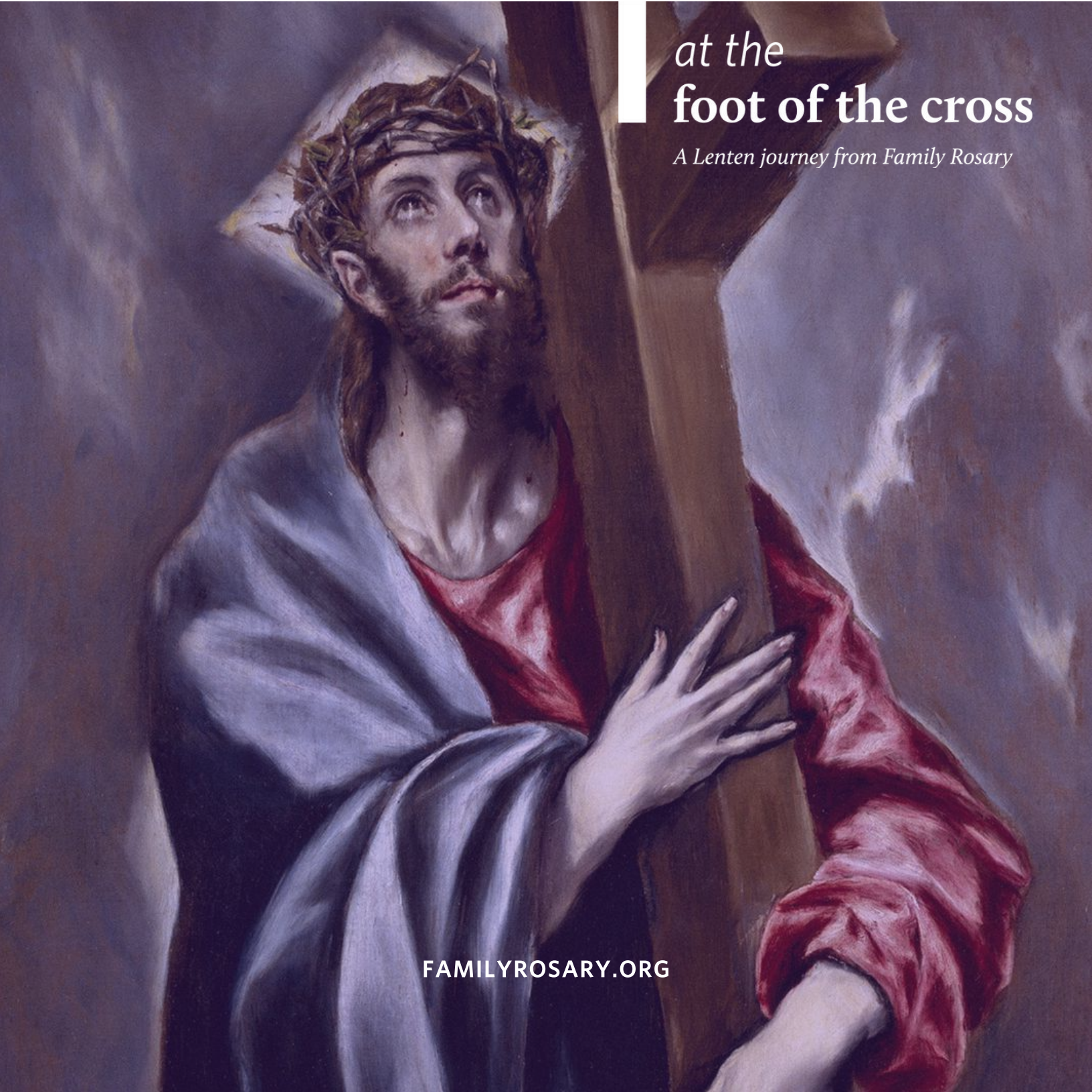


5 Last-Minute Lenten Practices

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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5 Last-Minute Lenten Practices

If you're like me, you end up (unintentionally) leaving planning and thinking out Lenten practices until RIGHT before Lent starts. If you're in the situation like I am, don't beat yourself up over it: God's grace still is overflowing!

There are several quick things that can be incorporated last-minute as a Lenten practice of fasting, prayer, and charity. I'm not saying that they are easy to do, necessarily, but they are quick to incorporate and require little to no preparation.

1. Morning prayer

I am not a morning person. My kids are definitely much more in this category. It is difficult for me to get up before them and there's no chance that I could do this successfully before they notice that I'm up and get up themselves. So what I've started doing is praying the readings of the day and a reflection before I leave my bed. The kids might even be snuggled in beside me, but I can still read the daily scripture on my phone. During a preparatory season I include spiritual reading in with my morning prayer. This year I'm reading/doing *33 Days to Morning Glory*; last year I did the *Screwtape Letters* by CS Lewis. I don't read much per day, only about a page, but it's something more to chew on spiritually.

2. Lenten Song for Grace

We've done this for a number of years now; we replace grace with a Lenten song. This has two main effects: It helps us reflect on the meaning of the season two or three times a day, and it also increases our kids' participation in the Mass as we usually choose a relatively well-known Lent song. This year, as my kids are a bit older, we will probably rotate between two to three songs, increasing the reflection on the season and their familiarity with songs at Mass.

The family that prays together stays together



at the foot of the cross

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3. Increase Service Time

We participate in a program called Meals on Wheels here as a family. Two times a month we deliver meals to housebound people over lunch time. We are increasing our availability to doing this three times a month as a family. This is a particular practice that we do (localized) and I don't expect that it's something you necessarily do! However, opportunities for service are plentiful! Either adding in something new or increasing your time in an area where you already serve is a great way to open our hearts to Jesus more. If you're having troubles finding something, the corporal works of mercy are a great place to find a fit:

- Feed the hungry
- Give drink to the thirsty
- Shelter to the homeless
- Visit the sick
- Visit prisoners
- Bury the dead
- Give alms to the poor

There have been many times that visiting the sick and those with infirmities has been a great option for us as well.

4. Less Media Time

It is hard to break up with our phones and media. Some people feel called to give it up entirely over Lent. I actually believe that is the easier option -- to just write it off completely for the time. I think it is much, much harder to limit and rein in current usage of phones and media while not completely cutting oneself off from it. These are some things that I've done in the past, with some success and also some fails:

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5 Last-Minute Lenten Practices (Continued):

- Limit phone usage in the mornings to reading reflections and prayers, and messaging with friends
- Put my phone away while my kids (especially) are in my presence. This usually meant that when they were outside playing or busy elsewhere or sleeping were the times in which I used my phone
- Limit usage of my phone/TV to certain hours or certain days of the week
- Whenever I reach for my phone to read news/articles/roam social media I force myself to open my prayer app first and spend three to five minutes praying first (daytime Liturgy of the Hours is great for this time frame)

5. Fast From Foods

When I think of fasting from food, I always want to come up with excuses. Always. The scripture that grounds me is the story of casting out a demon:

When he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, ‘Why could we not cast it out?’ He said to them, ‘This kind can come out only through prayer and fasting.’ (Mark 9:29)

Fasting. It's an important spiritual weapon and a good defense. I need to be reminded of this often: that fasting, when done in a spirit of humility and moderation, does much for my soul.

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5 Last-Minute Lenten Practices (Continued):

However, if I had a history of an eating disorder, I would likely approach this differently. For most of us though, we could easily take on fasting more often and offer the experience up to God. If we already have a habit of fasting, refraining from complaints and turning to praise in fasting more often would be my next step. This year, this will be especially difficult for me! I've discovered that the gastro problems I've been enduring are due to lactose intolerance and that there is medicine I can take that will allow me to consume dairy again. So my initial desire is to go out and EAT ALL THE DAIRY. I'm going to use Lent to moderate this desire to eat all dairy and only consume it several prescribed days a week. For me, this brings some sadness because, well, I just love cheese so darned much.

Well, those are some quick add-ins for Lent that can be brought in last minute! I've seen so many great posts about planning out Lent for your family, I hope you've been able to find something to help bring you and your family closer to God!

I'm ever so curious - what are you and your family doing this Lent?

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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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