

Transform Your Family This Lent



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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Lent always sneaks up on me every single year. Really it shouldn't come as much of a surprise, but some years I feel like I am still putting away the last bit of garland from Christmas as we are entering a new liturgical season. I always wait until the stroke of midnight to figure out what I am doing for Lent, so it may come as no surprise that I am left finalizing our family Lenten plans as well. I am not creative or crafty; I will maybe print off some saint coloring sheets or have the children draw a scene from the Crucifixion on Good Friday. Other than that, we keep things pretty simple around here in the arts and crafts department. In the past, I have been tempted to create a laundry list of Lenten practices that our family would do -- we were going to become the Holy Family in 40 days or at least die trying through every toddler tantrum and tired kiddo meltdown. But when Lent was done I could at least feel accomplished with what we did, whether or not we had any joy left after the fact or pulled every hair out in the process! I easily found myself overwhelmed and anxious at trying to implement everything and disappointed in the results.

Sure, I could add in daily Mass or weekly adoration, but with two preschoolers and 5-month-old, some things just aren't going to work for our current state of life.

Trial and error has taught me to have a few set practices in place for Lent and do them well, or attempt to do them as well as you can while still keeping your sanity. With a house full of children, family life is always fluid and moms need to be willing to let go of expectations when life happens and schedules get shifted. A few years back for Lent we decided to pray two decades of the Rosary together as a family before bed. We have carried this practice over from Lent and now have it as part of our evening routine. I would like to say we always do it perfectly, but if you were a fly on the wall in our house, you'd peer in at the chaos that most nights are. Perfect is relative and you would probably get a good laugh!

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Some evenings it is only half the family as the preschooler who skipped a nap definitely needs to go to bed, the prayer intentions turn into litanies and then stories, children argue over who is leading what decade and the toddler attempts to tackle the older boys as they try to kneel piously. Most nights it's a scene far from perfect, so we keep the expectations pretty low, you could say. But over the past couple of years we have seen so much fruit from this coming together in prayer, not to mention that the 2-year-old can recite the Our Father and Hail Mary without having any formal instruction. At the beginning of Lent I have a few practices in place for our family and then see where the Holy Spirit leads us over the next 40 days. If something just isn't working, I decide to change it up. While nothing we do is major or a Saul-to-Paul breakthrough, it is the small, simple devotions and practices that encourage virtue and model a striving towards holiness. Nurturing and watering the seeds planted in our children's hearts, providing opportunities for growth and a space for the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.

20 ways to sanctify your domestic church this Lent:

- Pray a decade of the Rosary as a family, perhaps a couple times a week or on Sundays if nightly isn't feasible.
- Sacrifice beans. When the children show acts of virtue or kindness, or make a sacrifice, they can put a coffee bean in a jar, At Easter they turn into jelly beans.
- Have a Lenten devotional book that you read together daily or weekly.
- Save money for a specific mission or charity.
- Play a game together once a week instead of watching a movie or TV.
- Pray the Angelus before dinner.
- Write letters and cards and color pictures for loved ones, the sick, or the homebound.
- Go to the Stations of the Cross. Perhaps set a goal of three times during Lent.

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20 ways to sanctify your domestic church this Lent (Continued):

- Resurrection Eggs.
- Read the story of Christ's passion while discussing the symbolism of each object.
- Have the children color pictures from Christ's life.
- Make Rosaries.
- Write a card and send it to a nursing home or call an elderly neighbor who may be lonely.
- Have a meager meal once a week and use the money you save to buy food for the local food pantry.
- Have five minutes of silence after dinner to instill the practice of listening for God's voice.
- Set up pictures in your house that the children colored of the Stations of the Cross and pray them together on Fridays. Or maybe just four stations each time.
- At dinner, have each family member share a way they saw God's love revealed to them that day.
- Clean out closets and the toy room and donate items to charity.
- Give up sweets as a family.
- Host a meal for friends or family and have everyone help out in preparing the food, tidying the house, and setting the table.
- Read the Sunday Gospel together on Saturday evening or during Sunday brunch.

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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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