

Why Do We Call Mary "Star of the Sea"?



Mary
Mother of Our Hope

A May Journey from Family Rosary

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Welcome to Our Family

“What is Spring? ... Growth in everything,” Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins famously wrote. May is springtime in the Northern Hemisphere, and consequently, nature abounds with new life and hearts are filled with renewed hope. It is fitting, therefore, that the Church dedicates the month May to Mary. She is the Mother of our true and lasting Hope, Jesus Christ.

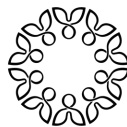
As the Mother of Jesus, Mary is also the Mother of each and every one of us. Therefore, we invite you and your family to celebrate the month of May by giving special honor to Mary, calling upon her and entrusting yourselves to her. If you welcome her into your family life, she will not come empty-handed; she will unfailingly bring her Son and bestow grace in abundance!

There are innumerable ways to express your love for Mary this month: attend a May Crowning at your parish or organize a simple one in your home; or, if you do not already, perhaps begin the practice of praying the Rosary as a family. No matter what you decide, Family Rosary is here to support you.

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 message 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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If the winds of temptation arise; If you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary; If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look at the star, call upon Mary.

I was admiring my sister-in-law's garden the other day with her beautiful stone Madonna looking perfectly in place surrounded by budding flowers. I thought sadly of my own haggard garden of bunny-munched tulips in hardened, bare earth. I'd considered putting my own little statue of Mary out there but it just didn't seem right. Unless, perhaps, it was a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, but it seemed like just one more thing she'd have to pray for.

The smiling Madonna, the sorrowful Mother of God, Our Lady is known by her children by a multitude of titles. Some of them are intuitive—Mary, Help of Christians, the Theotokos, or Christ-bearer—but some are not. A few have left me wondering, why do we call Mary that?

The first that's always intrigued me is the title of Mary, Star of the Sea. The Catholic Encyclopedia mentions that this title of Mary originated from St. Jerome's fifth century translation of Eusebius of Caesarea's *Onomasticon* (dictionary of proper names) in which he translates Mary's name in Hebrew—Miryam, meaning drop of the sea—into the Latin *Stilla Maris*, which later became *Stella Maris* due to a dialect of the Latin peasants.

The family that prays together stays together



Mary Mother of Our Hope

A May Journey from Family Rosary

A linguistic error? I was at first disappointed in the origin of that beautiful and oh-so-appropriate title for Our Lady who points us in the direction of Her Son, helping us navigate the sometimes rough waters of this world and even our own passions. Soon, though, the etymology of that title seemed fitting: a drop in the ocean becoming the guide for the entire sea; an unknown girl through faith and generosity becoming the Mother of God. The title now also evoked to me God's exaltation of humility.

Since Jerome, Mary, Star of the Sea has been a beloved title of Mary, especially among her many children who live and make their livelihoods by the sea. For a beautiful reflection on this special title of Mary please see Sarah Reinhard's article on the subject for Catholic Exchange.

Living in Wisconsin I'm far from the ocean and mercifully out of reach from the damage it can wreak. However, the storms of my passions come quickly and often without warning. This title of Mary has become a new favorite of mine when I feel the pull of emotion overtake the reality of a situation.

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux captured this moment and how we ought to respond in supplication to Mary in his twelfth century treatise "Homilies on the Gospel 'Missus est'":

"If the winds of temptation arise; If you are driven upon the rocks of tribulation look to the star, call on Mary; If you are tossed upon the waves of pride, of ambition, of envy, of rivalry, look to the star, call on Mary. Should anger, or avarice, or fleshly desire violently assail the frail vessel of your soul, look at the star, call upon Mary."

Mary, Star of the Sea, pray for us!

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If you think about it, “Mary, Mother of our Hope” could seem like an enigmatic phrase! How can Catholics say this? That is, how can Mary give birth to hope? Her Motherhood was not simply the physical act of giving birth. God prepared her and called her to a much greater mission. Her Immaculate Conception has long been seen by the Church as a dawning of the New Creation.

This is a time when hope and joy are necessary in order to be loving, strong, resilient, and faith-filled. May Our Lady give us knowledge and wisdom to touch the experiences of those we serve with 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!

#MaryMotherOfHope #May2021



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.

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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