

Enhance your family prayer with
FAMILY ROSARY

Grief

*Looking to the Lord as
our model*

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

Even for those with a deep faith, saying goodbye to someone you love is difficult. Regardless of the circumstances, it's painful and **HARD**.

Watching others experience grief is also challenging. Finding the right words and being a pillar of peace can be daunting.

But if we lean into our faith and seek strength, we can help those hurting in a gentle and supportive way.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C. 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 created by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., so many years ago.



FAITH HELPS US GRASP THE MEANING OF LIFE: GOD IS WITH US AND LOVES US INFINITELY.

POPE FRANCIS

GRIEF

This past week I was out walking my dog when a neighbor slowed down her car to speak with me. She is a beautiful, accomplished woman with two special teenage daughters, and a great husband. I had not seen her in months, but knew from conversations with her husband at a neighborhood Labor Day party that her mom was not well and had been ill since January.

Dawn was very close to her Mom, they would see each other every week; even after she and her husband packed up her kids, moved out to the suburbs and her parents stayed behind in her childhood home in the heart of Boston. Dawn is an accomplished attorney who has pushed through one glass ceiling after another and keeps her family at the center of her life. She inspires all of us who know her with her unabashed can-do attitude.

When she told me that her Mom had passed a few days earlier, I could see the pain. Both of my parents have passed, and I remember all too well the pain of separation that seems insurmountable. When my nephew, Joe, died in a car accident, I remember my Mom telling my sister (Joe's Mom) that just getting out of bed in the morning is an accomplishment when you are overwhelmed with grief.

Even for those of us with a deep faith, saying goodbye is hard. Regardless of the circumstances – hospice or accident, heart attack or cancer – it's painful and difficult and HARD.

WHAT NOT TO SAY.

When you encounter someone in that process – at the beginning, or a few weeks later – what do you do? Start with prayer. We pray for the deceased but even more importantly we pray for those who are grieving. We pray for guidance on what to say – and what not to say.

Nothing got my sister angrier after Joe's accident than people telling her, "There's a reason for everything." Certainly, with God's Grace, beautiful flowers can bloom in the desert of grief - people "lean in" to be a listening ear, we hear stories never shared about the good soul and pure heart of the person we have lost. But it is not comforting to a parent grieving a child, or a family exhausted after caring for a loved one, that there is a "reason" they went through a trying ordeal. While true that we all bear crosses in life, and Jesus suffered in a way we cannot even fathom in 2018 – in these circumstances we are called to bring comfort to those who are grieving – comfort, not meaning.

SO WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO DO?

Jesus shows us by his example what we are called to do: be PRESENT. It's easy to send a card or flowers, but going to a funeral mass or having a walk or cup of tea with our friend who is grieving – that is what we are called to do.

Jesus “wept” at the sight of Lazarus dead. Jesus who understood how magnificent heaven is, made a choice to go to the grave site – knowing he was dead – and wept.

As Catholics, we have a beautiful tradition of memorial Masses or having a Mass offered in honor of the deceased. Regardless of the grieving family's faith and religious affiliation, this is a gift that says “I remember and am praying for your loved one.” I've found this truly touches people – and my husband and I make a point to do it a few weeks after funeral services. As one who has experienced grief, I know that the first year is especially difficult to adjust to a new reality – a life bereft of the physical presence of someone so central to your life and identity.

STILL, THE WORLD TURNS.

I remember vividly taking a walk with my sister the day after my nephew's funeral. It was a beautiful June sunny day in Michigan. I wanted it to be dark and stormy, cold and windy to reflect the deep abyss we were all thrown in – I remember watching cars drive by and thinking they were probably going to work. I wondered how life could just move on like that? I wanted everything and everyone to STOP. How could the world turn as if nothing happened?

In my parents' neighborhood, we ran into a mom with a baby – a young woman who had been a good friend of mine in high school that I had not seen since I moved to Boston nine years earlier. I was pretty sure they had no idea about Joe. I wasn't in the mood for small talk and we truly had not talked in years (social media did not exist in 1997). My sister walked over and looked at that beautiful newborn. As we walked away she said to me, “You know Margaret they're never really yours. They are a gift.”

FACING GRIEF.

To be loved as my nephew was, or my neighbor's Mom who was adored by all those blessed to know her – is all that we can hope to be at the end of our life. Loved and remembered. So while we go about our day-to-day life, let's be sure to lean in and love – even when it's hard. To be “present” as our Lord was to those who are grieving, and witness our faith not so much by what we say, as what we do.

GOING DEEPER

Chances are you know someone who has lost a person they treasured and are having a difficult time of adjusting to their new physical reality. Make a point to pray for that person this week with intention, and ask the Lord if he is leading you deeper in your effort to bring them comfort.

"Lord, I offer up this time for _____, help me to be an agent of your love and mercy. Open my eyes, ears and heart to your direction. Amen."



MARGARET DWYER

Margaret has been married to her husband Michael Hogan for twenty years, and they reside in Easton, Massachusetts with their four children. She is a catechist at her church, and loves to help Holy Cross Family Ministries spread devotion to Father Peyton's cause and his continuing ministry, Family Rosary.

BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER IN PRAYER

We hope the time you've spent reflecting with this material has been enriching. Remember, we're with you in prayer, every step of the way!

For additional online resources for family prayer including a Prayer Petition Page and our World at Prayer Blog, 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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