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FAMILY ROSARY

Six Tips for Being a Mary-Like Conversationalist

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

Recently I attended a mom's retreat hosted by the Ann Arbor Dominicans. I knew a few of the sisters and was especially excited to catch up with them and their lives.

Yet, no matter which sister I was speaking with, I found I was talking a lot about myself! Every time I was about to ask them a question about them, they beat me to the punch and asked me a question about me.

When I called out one of the sisters on this, she replied, "Well, I already know how I'm doing! I went to this city and did some vocation work, and then I went to that city and saw that person, and it was great... and now really I want to hear all about this writing project of yours..."

So I kept talking and came away feeling joyful and edified, ready to love God more and encouraged in my vocation.

It dawned on me that this was a **very Marian way of visiting with friends**. At a practical, human level, **Our Lady must have known how to carry on a conversation with both friends and strangers in a way that brought out the best in them**. The virtues of hers we see in Scripture must have carried over into everyday small talk.

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.



MARY IS A WOMAN WHO WALKS WITH THE GRACE AND THE TENDERNESS OF A MOTHER; SHE UNTIES ALL THE KNOTS OF THE MANY PROBLEMS WE MANAGE TO CREATE, AND SHE TEACHES US TO STAND UPRIGHT IN THE MIDST OF STORMS.

POPE FRANCIS

SIX TIPS FOR BEING A MARY-LIKE CONVERSATIONALIST

I've really had to work at being a good conversationalist. Social situations with near-strangers make me anxious and I tend to clam up. Or, once I'm comfortable, sometimes I'll get excited about a subject and start rattling away, forgetting the other person in the process and all too often ending up with my foot in my mouth.

But I've gotten better, thanks to following these six Mary-like principles:

1) REJOICE.

Like Mary in her *Magnificat*, we can make a habit of expressing God's goodness with our friends and acquaintances. Whether that be politely complimenting a pretty scarf or necklace, praising their child's sportsmanship on the soccer field, or pointing out hope in a seemingly hopeless situation, we not only lift another's spirits but provide fodder for good conversation.

2) ASK OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS.

This may be a stretch, but we can learn from Mary's question to the angel Gabriel: "How can this be?" Questions extend and provide focus to a conversation. My husband tells me his secret to navigating the cocktail hour is to keep the focus on the other person and ask non-prying questions: "Where did you grow up?" "What do you do?" "What did you major in?" "What are your kids' names?" "Oh, that's an interesting point. Could you say more?"

3) EXPRESS GRATITUDE.

Mary knew the joy of the Resurrection and thanked God for it. We can bring joy to another as well as foster trust by leading into our rejoicing statements and open-ended questions with expressions of gratitude:

"Thank you so much for bringing the snacks today..." (Express gratitude)

"...They were delicious..." (Rejoice)

"...Where did you find the recipe? Was it easy to make?" (Ask open-ended questions)

4) LOOK FOR THE NEED AND BE AVAILABLE.

At the wedding at Cana, Our Lady saw that the wine was short and, in going to Jesus, found a way to rectify the situation in a sensitive, discreet manner.

Sometimes we find ourselves on the receiving (or giving!) end of complaints and gossip. Negative conversation is an opportunity for us to practice compassion. Usually when someone is griping there's a deep-down heartache that's somehow related. Keep your ears open. The right question can gently lead the conversation away from sin as well as be an opportunity for deeper conversation, conversion, and camaraderie.

5) SHOW COMPASSION BUT SKIP THE PLATITUDES.

Mary stood at the foot of the Cross, fully united to Jesus, but not a word of hers is recorded in Scripture. When someone is expressing sorrow, the best thing you can give her is a listening ear. Hold the advice and clichéd expressions about accepting God's will, etc. And even if your friend does ask your advice, offer it with circumspection and humility. Just expressing herself and hearing herself explain her problem out loud is often enough to give your friend the perspective she needs.

6) PRAY.

After the Ascension, Mary joined the Apostles in praying for the Holy Spirit. She was present to God and therefore present to her spiritual children. We can also pray to the Holy Spirit before, during, and after social events, asking Him for the right words at the right time. The Holy Spirit can help us overcome our distractions and stay focused on the person in front of us.

These conversational principles are both hard and easy to apply. Hard, because they require selflessness on our part. Sometimes the topic of conversation doesn't interest us, and sometimes the person we're speaking with is not the person we really wanted to talk to!

But these principles are also easy to apply because they are simple. "Ask questions" is a two-word mantra that I can remember when hovering over the hors d'oeuvres, trying to think of something interesting or witty to say to my husband's department chair.

Cultivating good manners isn't something we always think of when thinking of growing in holiness. Yet good manners provide a solid foundation for positive interaction with others. Good manners allow friendships to grow. Good manners encourage virtue. In a world of social media narcissism and angry comboxes, we need civil, selfless, and loving conversation more than ever.

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BRINGING FAMILIES TOGETHER IN PRAYER

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."