

Enhance your family prayer with  
**FAMILY ROSARY**

*Traveling to the  
Temple with  
the Holy Family*

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

# WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

It's a new year! Take a moment to breathe in this fresh start. Begin or end each day with family prayer to get in the habit of praying together. Don't worry, it doesn't have to be perfect! Take comfort in knowing there is no one "correct" way of doing it.

It's a busy time of year for everyone, but it's especially important to slow down and enjoy each other's unique presence.

Know that we are joining you and your family in prayer. We promise to be with you, growing in faith, every step of the way. May God continue to bless you and your family.

## 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.



“ THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER. ”  
VENERABLE PATRICK PEYTON

# TRAVELING TO THE TEMPLE WITH THE HOLY FAMILY



This week we mark the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, also known as Candlemas day when candles are blessed all around the world and used for the entire church year. The significance of this celebration is rooted in the story of Jesus' Presentation in the Temple, when Jesus is presented as the *Light of the World*.

## IT IS TIME

Mary and Joseph have counted the days, and now it is time to redeem Mary's first-born Son at the Temple. The Child is 30 days old, and it's time to perform the Pidyan Haben. The Lord's plan was that every firstborn son would be a priest, but the worshipping of the golden calf had changed that. Only the Levites were priests now, and every other tribe would go through this ritual of having their firstborn sons relieved of the priestly duty.

Mary and Joseph have packed some food and water for the journey, and they set off on foot to Jerusalem from their small home in Bethlehem. After the excitement of the census, they were able to find a place to settle down. It was small, but it had room for Joseph to work. Right now, though, it isn't time to work. Right now it's time to present Jesus at the Temple and redeem Him from the priesthood with a small sacrifice. With the ceremony, they will also dedicate Him to God, acknowledging that He truly belongs to the Lord.

"Do you have the money for the turtledoves?" Mary asks Joseph. Since they left Nazareth, he hadn't been able to work, and they'd only just found their new home before it was time to go to Jerusalem.

Joseph smiles at Mary and rubs her back. "Yes. I have it here. Let's go." And with that, they start their 7-mile walk. It's early in the day, and the small family sets out at a moderate pace. As they travel, they sing Psalms, praising the Lord, the Father of the Child they carry in their arms.

Joseph's clear, strong voice rings out,

"Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?  
And Who shall stand in His holy place?  
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not lift up his soul to what is false,  
and does not swear deceitfully.

He will receive blessing from the Lord,  
and vindication from the God of his salvation.  
Such is the generation of those who seek him,  
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.”

Mary looks at her son and smiles into the face of the God of Jacob as she answers,

“Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in!”

Her heart soars with the knowledge that the King of glory will enter the Temple today.

Now Joseph sings,

“Who is the King of glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
the Lord, mighty in battle!”

He smiles at his wife, and feels a surging of joy in his heart over the tiny baby in her arms.

“Lift up your heads, O gates!  
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!  
that the King of glory may come in!”

Mary sings again, and looks back at Joseph, waiting for him to finish the Psalm.

“Who is this King of glory?” he sings,  
“The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory!”

## **ON THE ROAD**

By this time, they have met more people on the road, headed to the Holy City. Other families carry their own sons for dedication, and Mary and Joseph chat with them on the way.

They congratulate each other and talk of their children: How many children do you have? How old are the other children? What have you named your son? Before they know it, they are approaching the Temple. People begin to sing again and Mary and Joseph join their Psalm:

“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”  
Our feet have been standing

within your gates, O Jerusalem!  
Jerusalem, built as a city  
which is bound firmly together,  
to which the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the Lord,  
as was decreed for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the Lord.”

## THE TEMPLE

As they approach the Temple, Mary and Joseph pause for a moment, gazing up at the beautiful house built for God. Joseph puts his arm around Mary’s shoulders and gently squeezes her arm. “Here we are,” he whispers. “Are you ready?” Mary nods silently, still looking at the steps and columns of the Temple.

Together, they begin their ascent to where they will redeem their child from the Lord and Mary will perform the rituals of purification. Suddenly, an old man walks directly towards them, arms outstretched. He looks at them as if he knows them, but Mary and Joseph have no idea who he is. He stops directly in front of Mary and stares intently at her son. The joy on his face is so intense that Joseph feels no fear for his wife and the baby.

The man’s eyes well up with tears, and he looks at Mary. “May I . . . ?” he starts, holding his hands out to take the child from her arms. Something inside of her tells Mary that this is all right. Gently, she places her son into the man’s arms. The tears overflow and fall down his cheeks and past his enormous grin. “He is here! It is Him!” He kisses the tiny face, then laughs. He looks at Mary and Joseph, as if he’s suddenly aware of them again. “Forgive me! My name is Simeon. In my excitement I forgot to introduce myself.”

Joseph looks at Simeon and smiles. In his heart, God is telling him that Simeon is a friend — that he knows exactly Who this baby is. As Simeon rocks the child and coos at him, Joseph hears a couple of men behind him. “That’s Simeon the Righteous. Could those be relatives of his? Simeon seems to know them . . .”

Still holding Jesus, Simeon gazes toward heaven and says, “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel!”

Mary looks at Simeon in wonder and amazement. God has revealed the true identity of Jesus to him! She feels blessed to be in the presence of someone so holy. Joseph, too, smiles in utter surprise, and he wonders to himself how many people know what’s happening here between these four people. Most of the crowd in the busy Temple buzzes around them without any clue what Simeon is saying. A few people have stopped, though, and are looking at Mary and Jesus, trying to see who Simeon is speaking about.

Simeon is oblivious to them, though, as he places Jesus back in His mother's arms, blesses the family, and then says to her in a serious tone, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against — and a sword will pierce through your own soul, also — that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." Joseph is startled by this, as is Mary, but she recovers more quickly than he does.

"Thank you. The Lord bless you and keep you," she answers with a smile. Though she is troubled a bit by this message, she knows that God will protect her and care for her family. Before she can move another step, though, a woman steps out of the crowd and towards the four of them. Simeon turns and smiles at her broadly, gesturing to the baby.

"This is Anna," he says, turning to Mary and Joseph. "She is a widow these 77 years — a holy woman. She lives here, fasting and praying for all of God's people."

Anna gazes at Jesus with tenderness in her eyes, and looks up at His parents. "This is the Christ! He is the Promised One!" she says. "Oh, thank You Lord, that I have lived to see this day! You have sent our redemption to us!" She looks again at Jesus, then turns to go. She seems to practically float away, and as she leaves, Mary and Joseph can hear her telling people that the Christ had come. "Praise the Lord! Bless His holy name! Give thanks to Him! He has sent the redemption of Jerusalem!"

"Joseph," Mary whispers, "we've come to redeem our Son, but He will redeem us in the end. Thanks be to our Lord!" They walk to the merchant to purchase their turtledoves, and together they walk into the Temple to dedicate Jesus to His Father.

## **WHAT CAN MARY TEACH US THROUGH THIS MYSTERY?**

According to Jewish custom, the firstborn male of each family is consecrated to God, in accordance with His original plan to have each firstborn male be a part of the priesthood for the Israelites. After the incident with the golden calf at Mt. Horeb, God instead chose the entire tribe of Levi to fulfill this task for Him, as they did not participate in the idolatry that took place.

Regardless, as the first fruits of all things were consecrated to God, so were the firstborn male children of each family. The sanctification ritual would have taken place when Jesus was about a month old. And so Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple as a sign that they understood that all things belong to God, and we owe everything to Him.

## **GOING DEEPER**

In our own life, we often forget that we own nothing and all that we have is truly God's to give and take. This even includes our own family, and, as difficult as it might be to contemplate, what we need to strive for in our life is enough detachment from possessions that we are willing to give back anything to God which He asks of us.

Without a certain amount of detachment from worldly goods, instead of having our possessions, they possess us. Instead of the computer or iPhone being a tool for us to use, we become enslaved to our

possessions, worrying about whether or not we have the latest gadget or the coolest apps. Instead of being thankful for a vehicle, with an unhealthy attachment, we start griping that our minivan isn't fancy enough. "Why do we still have this old, base-model minivan when so many friends have newer ones with better features?" Instead of being thankful for the great iPad already in our hand, we start drooling over the the better iPad Pro or a MacBook Pro and wishing we could update our technology.

How wonderful it is that the Church teaches us to fast from things occasionally so we can develop healthy attachments rather than the crazy disordered attachments we weak human beings tend to get! Giving back to God what is His – fasting occasionally from our own pleasures, and being willing to give back anything He wants from me – this isn't as easy as it could be, but with practice, it can at least get easier.

## PRAY TOGETHER

Blessed Mother, pray for me and my family that we do not have a disordered attachment for anything, and that we will be ready and willing to return to God what belongs to Him.



### **CHRISTINE JOHNSON** CatholicMom.com Contributor

Christine Johnson has been married to Nathan since 1993 and has two daughters whom she homeschools. They live in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Southwest Virginia, where she tries to fit in as a transplanted Yank. She blogs at Domestic Vocation about her life as a wife, mother, homeschooler, and Lay Dominican.

# 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](http://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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