

Enhance your family prayer with
FAMILY ROSARY

*The Best
Part of
Christmas
is the First
Six Letters!*

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER



WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

Pope Francis once said, "Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man." Help prepare your family for the coming of Christ by praying together each day. 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 long enough to prepare your hearts and minds for Jesus. Take a moment to breathe in the great anticipation.

As the Church transitions into a new season, know that we're 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 slogan coined by Father Patrick Peyton, C.S.C., so many years ago.



“MAY ADVENT BE A TIME OF HOPE. WE GO TO ENCOUNTER THE LORD WHO COMES TO ENCOUNTER US.”
POPE FRANCIS



THE BEST PART OF CHRISTMAS IS THE FIRST SIX LETTERS!



Okay, admit it. By now, you've probably watched an occasional Christmas movie on the Hallmark Channel; it's possible you started doing this even before Thanksgiving.

It's a Wonderful Life, White Christmas and Miracle on 34th Street were taken off the shelf so you can watch them for the thousandth time, possibly while wrapping gifts or decorating your tree or baking the Christmas cookies and fudge.

The Christmas songs have been playing in your car and possibly in your office for at least a month. The sound of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas" still tugs at your heart no matter how many times you hear it. So why do we continue to watch the same movies and listen to the same Christmas music each year with so much fondness?

I'll tell you why. Because it's Christmas! Christmas reminds us of our happiest moments. As we begin embracing this time as the preparation for the upcoming celebration of Christ's birth, it's only fitting that the enthusiasm begin early. I don't want to discount that it has been a challenging year for many. It has! But, I also believe Christmas makes us realize the importance of appreciating the joy in our lives and bringing joy to others because that is what this season is about!

For example, take a look at the tradition of the Christmas tree and Advent wreaths. Who doesn't look forward to decorating your home and your tree? Every year families everywhere begin their holiday with these symbols in their homes. I do want to add as a reminder that there is significance in the wreath and trees. Evergreens symbolize the eternal life that Jesus brought to us. Remember, everything at Christmas is symbolic of that most important day we commemorate the birth of Jesus and the gift Jesus brought us all.

MAYBE THE SOURCE OF OUR HAPPIEST MOMENTS IS AS SIMPLE AS A CHRISTMAS MEMORY.

I know I have a few wonderful memories of Christmas, both from my childhood and my own family. I remember when my youngest sister Debbie and brother John were still young enough to believe in Santa Claus. We were never able to afford a large quantity of gifts. We didn't focus a lot on the

Santa myth. My mother did simple gifts on Christmas Eve. In reality they couldn't afford a lot of gifts for their family. Christmas Day was the time for Church and dinner and gathering as a family. It didn't matter to us, since being together in and of itself was the important thing.

But, I do remember this one year when my Dad really wanted my youngest siblings to experience the joy of Santa Claus. He decided to put a couple of gifts on the back porch in a pile of snow and before their bedtime he rang a couple of bells. They looked confused so he told them to look on the back porch. It's hard to know who was happier with his Santa scam, my brother and sister or my Dad. He explained to them that our house was likely Santa's first stop. They totally bought it. My Dad was so pleased that he succeeded in making Christmas memorable for them. He displayed a big smile for several days after his Christmas surprise.

Then there was the year my mother asked we not send gifts. She said, "I'm not going to be around much longer. Don't waste money on me. Save it for your own families." Reluctantly we accepted this request from her until I found a light pink sweatshirt with a sweet bouquet of flowers located in the center of the shirt. I bought it with the matching sweats and sent them to her. Initially she was upset with me. "I thought I told you no Christmas gifts!" she said. I told her that as soon as I saw them I thought she needed to be an owner. They just looked like something she would like. The minute she opened this gift, she expressed delight in it. "You shouldn't have done this. But, I love them, what a beautiful color they are," she said. She wore them as often as she could; she couldn't wait to get them from the dryer so she could wear them another day. She died in March of that following year. A discussion of what to let her wear when we had her funeral lead to this favorite pair of sweats.

There was always fun, food and music at our house at Christmas when I was growing up. These memories are what influenced me to try and create happy memories for my own family. So, what is the source for this special time? The answer is simple! We look for it in the Gospels. The Gospels of Luke and Matthew describe Jesus as being born in Bethlehem in Judea to a virgin mother. In Luke's gospel Joseph and Mary travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the census and Jesus is born there and placed in a manger. Angels proclaim Him a Savior for all people and shepherds come to adore Him.

LUKE 2:9-13

"An angel of the Lord stood over the shepherds. They were terrified. But the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by all people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And all at once, with the angel there was a great throng of the hosts of heaven, praising God with the words 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace for those he favors.'" Luke 2: 9-13

Even our exchanging of gifts which began over two thousand years ago when Jesus was visited with the gifts of the Magi; are representative of an expression of giving love. For many, it's not the receiving of gifts that are as meaningful as it is about the joy we experience from giving them.

Hopefully it's a time when we extend the giving of gifts to those who need our gifts of love the most. As we approach this season of love beginning with Advent and ending with bells ringing at Christmas, let's not forget it all began with the birth of Jesus Christ, the Savior of all!

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GOING DEEPER

Reflect with your family on the first Joyful Mystery, **the Annunciation**. The Holy Spirit appears to us in all the events of our day asking us to be kind and patient with those who are troublesome, generous with those in need of forgiving and compassionate to those who have offended us. Mary showed us how to respond to God's inspirations!

How can you follow Mary's example as you and your family enter this beautiful season of Advent? "Be it done to me according to your word." Luke 1:38

A WORD FROM FATHER WILLY RAYMOND, C.S.C.

Heavenly Father, "Creator of the Stars of Night," in Advent you give us three guides to prepare us for the joyful birth of your Son, Jesus. There is Isaiah the poet/prophet of ancient Israel that we meet this weekend. He fills us with hope and expectation. The other guides are John the Baptist, the herald of the Good News of the coming of the Messiah, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world; and Mary, the young maid of Nazareth given the most wonderful vocation of all to be the mother of your Divine Son.

Isaiah guides us this first weekend to recognize Israel's special role to gather all the nations in peace walking in the light of the Lord. Lord, fill us with the wonder, beauty and joy of Isaiah singing your praises and calling us to climb the mountain of the Lord and go rejoicing into the house of the Lord. This first Sunday of Advent, we rejoice at the beginning of a new chapter of grace in our Father's house, in your house Lord. Amen.



CATHERINE MENDENHALL-BAUGH CatholicMom.com Contributor

Cathy completed her education in Special Education and English and now works as an Agent in the Insurance Industry. A mother and Grandmother, Cathy grew up in a large Catholic family and has spent the last 30 years as a caregiver for her husband, Jack. She is a cancer survivor which inspired her to begin writing six years ago.



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 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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