

Enhance your family prayer with
FAMILY ROSARY

"Just Friends"

*When Affection & Action
become Step-Stools to
Heaven*

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THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER

WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY

Transitioning out of Ordinary time and into Lent, we're reminded how the special seasons of the Church are a gift from God. Though we're called to continuously grow our faith throughout the year, Lent gives us a particular reason to take time and reflect. So as we enter this Lenten season, embrace this spiritual opportunity you and your family have been gifted by God.

During this time, commit to beginning or ending each day with family prayer. After a few days you'll soon be 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.

We know it's a busy time and you've likely already decided on a few other Lenten promises. Let us help you accomplish this part of your family's Lenten journey, so you can nurture your relationships and enjoy the time you share together.

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.



“ FOR GREAT IS HIS STEADFAST LOVE TOWARD US, AND THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER. ”
PSALM 117:2



BEING "JUST FRIENDS"



And so Lent begins, as it always does, with Ash Wednesday. However this year it happens to fall on February 14, more popularly known as St. Valentine's Day. An appropriate coincidence, we enter our Lenten journey focused on **love**.

This witness story leads us to a greater understanding of God's love ... and what we can do to help it spread like wildfire. After reading this reflection, we encourage you to go deeper with your family.

IT'S COOL, WE'RE JUST FRIENDS

My husband and I met swinging on a swing – we both just happened to be at the same place at the same time because of a shared interest. Our friendship grew at a time when it was important for both of us that we be friends – and “just friends.” We came to have what C.S. Lewis calls “Affection” for one another.

In his, *The Four Loves*, Lewis affirms that Affection “teach[es] us first to notice, then to endure, then to smile at, then to enjoy, and finally to appreciate, the people who “happen to be there.”” Affection is the “least discriminating” and “humblest” of loves. I liken it to the story of Beauty and the Beast (I'll leave it up to you to determine who is the “beauty” and who is the “beast” in this scenario). Out of this maturing appreciation for one another came a (now, sing along with me, here) “Something there that wasn't there before.”

LOVE REQUIRES ACTION

I knew from very early on that Mike would be in my life forever – in some capacity – though I couldn't have imagined I'd some day have the honor of calling him “husband.” I'll spare you the details of our personal love story and get to my bit on love and how to keep it strong this Valentine's day.

A priest once reminded Mike of something that has stuck with us both, and it's something that we try to be mindful of on a regular basis: **It's your job to help get your spouse** (or significant other, friends, and family members for that matter) **to heaven**. All of our actions should aim at that end goal.

Jesus reminds us that our number one commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. It's easy enough to say, 'Yeah, okay, I can do that,' but it's an entirely other thing to take it into action. We accomplish the above by loving others with all of our hearts, souls, and minds. Sometimes, love comes naturally (like when we see and feel our children for the first time). In most cases, though, to love takes effort – it's work to act out a verb!

It's like how we've been saved by Jesus through his death on the cross. Even God shows us His love through action. We're "saved," yes – simple as that. But it doesn't stop there. I believe it's our job to then "do good works" because we've been saved.

YOUR LOVE IS SHOWING

The other night, Mike joked about the "honeymoon" being over because I asked if he'd made his sandwich for lunch the next day. While he was joking and in no way expects me to make his lunch every night, it struck a cord in me. I know that feminists would have a field day with what I'm saying here, but hear me out. I've always made his lunch in the past not because he's incapable of doing so. It's in my making it that shows him I love him. I can say that I love him (which I do often), but I can also show him in "the little things."

It's like when my son, James, just recently saw me cry for the first time. He could have said, "It's okay, Mommy" (which he did), but he showed me by grabbing a tissue, wiping my tears himself and kissing my cheeks. It's like our English teachers always told us, show – don't tell.

GOD IS LOVE

If we remember one thing this Valentine's day, let us remember God, our very first beloved, and give Him thanks – because we are only able to love our Valentines as much as we do because we were first loved by HIM. Let's all keep the "honeymoon" going strong by getting our Valentines to heaven. Okay. Go.

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GOING DEEPER

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, love is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.

Corinthians 13:4-8

Saint Teresa of Calcutta once said, "If you want to bring happiness to the whole world, go home and love your family." That's where it all begins, in the family.

Children watch their parents to learn what love is: how they treat each other and others. They feel what it means to be loved: with hugs and twirling around the room powered by an energy created only by Our Creator. When they taste what love is: the first bite of the family's casserole recipe passed

down by generations (and grandpa reveals the secret ingredient is love).

Whatever the sense, it's all rooted in family. Love each other and we guarantee, that love will only spread.

Pray with your family that as you enter this Lenten season, you do so with love:

Father, this day sounds the trumpet to begin the grand pilgrimage to Holy Week and Easter. This is also the day for spouses to renew their vows. May our family make the journey of Lent in love. Amen.

CONTINUE THE JOURNEY

As we enter the Lenten season many of us have already determined what sweet treat or bad habit we're giving up for the next 40 days. However this year, maybe consider switching it up and doing something. Doing is challenging, it requires intentionality and self-giving sacrifice. This could include taking on a family member's chore you don't necessarily enjoy or making lunch for your spouse each morning. You could pray a Rosary with your spouse and children, honoring your first Valentine, Jesus, with those you love most. Whatever it is, try committing to "One Act of Love" each day of Lent.

For additional reading come back each week for a new Lenten eBook to enrich your journey! Also if you're searching for new meatless recipes, visit CatholicMom.com every Friday for fresh meatless dinner options for you and your family!



MANDY NICHOLSON

Mandy is a convert to the Catholic Church, and her faith is rooted in Presbyterian Protestantism. She is a wife, mother of three children, and adjunct college professor. While she is not a theologian, she has degrees in English Literature, and enjoys uncovering "golden nuggets of Grace" in everyday tasks and challenges. She lives in central Massachusetts and hopes that all will enjoy her anecdotes about "finding God in snuggles and poop diapers."

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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