

How I learned to stop worrying and love the Rosary

"The Rosary is the most beautiful and the most rich in graces of all prayers; it is the prayer that touches most the Heart of the Mother of God ... and if you wish peace to reign in your homes, recite the family Rosary."

– Pope St. Pius X

If the good pope is correct about the [Rosary](#) (he is), it is fitting that we celebrate the Church's most beautiful prayer during the calendar's most beautiful month. October leisurely holds hands with the warm days of summer and the cool nights of fall. It is evening walks that cast long shadows and sleeping peacefully under layers of blankets with the windows cracked. It is bonfires and pumpkin patches, apple cider and football season. October is God showing off.

As beautiful as October is outside of our home, it is almost as peaceful inside. Just more than a month into the school year, my wife and I still are enrobed in a "we've got this" confidence – something that fades like daylight hours in winter. We haven't yet given up on checking backpacks nightly. We're filling out permission slips and reading logs (on time!). We're still a month or two away from when packing lunches becomes literally the worst thing in the world.

Life in October wasn't always all caramel apples and lazy Sundays. Previously, like many Catholic families, at the start of the month we would commit ourselves to saying the Rosary every night with our brood of blessings (now ages 14, 12, 8, 2, and 6 months). Our intentions were as pure and perfect as the Blessed Mother herself.

But as soon as we'd make the first Sign of the Cross, Jacob, the 8-year-old, would move from the couch to the floor to

avoid being climbed on by Dominic, the 2-year-old, who refused to be denied tormenting his brother. And a decade in, I would notice Grant, the 12-year-old, had completely zoned us all out and wasn't even pretending to pray. At every other Hail Mary, I would have to remind somebody to sit down, be quiet, pay attention. As the chaos escalated, so did my blood pressure. And because of their behavior and my yelling, our family Rosary was as peaceful as a three-ring circus.

And so, as we paid special honor to Mary this past May, my wife suggested that if I calmed down, so would the boys. She reminded me that they're not little prayer robots. If they wanted to pray lying on the floor or sitting at the kitchen table or hanging upside down with their head hanging off of the couch, so be it; if they wanted to actively participate or not, fine.

I let go of the notion that in order to foster a devotion to the Rosary in them they had to sit still with hands folded perfectly. In doing so, our family Rosaries became something that filled me with joy instead of anxiety, and it trickled down.

The late Father Patrick Peyton, known as "the Rosary Priest," once said, "If families give Our Lady 15 minutes a day by reciting the Rosary, I assure them that their homes will become, by God's grace, peaceful places."

From his lips to God's ear.

Confessions of a Catholic Dad is a feature from Take Out magazine. To get the newest columns, subscribe [here](#)!