

If you forgot to pray the Rosary during May, you're not alone



Before the kids go to bed each night, we gather in the living room – all eight of us, generally, now that our oldest is home from college – and we say prayers together. Sometimes it goes well – calm and without one kid fighting with another about sitting too close on the couch, or having to interrupt constantly to remind the 3-year-old that, during prayer we are supposed to sit quietly and listen, or any other number of common distractions.

Lately, we've been re-reading one of our favorites: [“Pope Francis Family Devotional: 365 Reflections to Share With Your Kids”](#) (OSV, \$16.95). Each day contains a quote by Pope Francis about family life and a reflection, written by Rebecca Vitz Cherico, on how to apply that lesson within your home.

We'll supplement that book with others depending on the liturgical season, and often we'll go around the room and ask who has specific prayer intentions that they want to share. (Generally, this is the 3-year-old's time to shine.)

In October (the month of the Rosary) and in May (the month dedicated to Mary), we try to pray a family Rosary at least once a week. For Christmas a few years ago, I had a sign made for my wife that hangs on a wall in our living room with a quote from St. Padre Pio painted on it: “Abandon yourself into the hands of Mary. She will take care of you.” At the bottom of the sign hangs eight hooks where we keep our rosaries.

It wasn't until the last day of May that I realized we hadn't touched those rosaries, not even to pray a single decade. We

have excuses, of course. As most families with young kids know, May is a crazy month, full of ballgames and school events. But still, instead of abandoning ourselves to Mary, it felt like we had abandoned her – and during her special month, no less.

I realized this colossal failure (not only as a Catholic parent, though, from that perspective, it's a little more disappointing, but also from the regression of my own personal faith) when I read about Pope Francis on May 31, the feast of the Visitation, [praying a public Rosary](#) during which he asked the Blessed Virgin to intercede to bring peace to Ukraine.

The pope was joined in the Basilica of St. Mary Major by many who wore yellow and blue scarves – the color of the Ukrainian flag – as he asked Mary, the Queen of Peace, to protect the people of the Eastern European nation, which was attacked by Russia in late February. Since that unjust invasion, the United Nations reports that more than 6.6 million Ukrainians have fled the country, making it Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II. On top of that, while the number of casualties are unclear, it's likely that tens of thousands of Russian soldiers, Ukrainian military personnel and Ukrainian citizens have died during the monthslong war.

“Grant us the great gift of peace; quickly end the wars, which have been raging for decades now in various parts of the world, and which has now invaded even the continent of Europe,” the pope prayed. “We are aware that peace cannot be the result of negotiations alone, nor a consequence of political agreements alone, but is above all an Easter gift of the Holy Spirit.”

“We are certain that with the weapons of prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and the gift of your grace, human hearts and the fortunes of the whole world can be changed,” he said, again addressing Mary. “Intercede for us with your son,” Pope Francis prayed. “Reconcile hearts full of violence and

vendetta, correct thoughts overcome by the desire for easy enrichment and make your lasting peace reign over all the earth.”

Whether you prayed a daily Rosary throughout May or, like me, ignored the devotion entirely, heed the words of Pope Pius VI, who led the Church from 1792-1806. “The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight and to keep oneself from sin,” he said. The rest of this quote spoke to me in a powerful way: “If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the Rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labors.”

Thankfully, it is never too late to return to the loving embrace of Our Mother.

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