

# *The Catholic Mother*

INSPIRATION FOR LITURGICAL LIVING



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## *Light, Guard, Rule, Guide*

by Kim Halloran-Fry

The calendar in October reads like a greatest hits of feast days for me. There our incredible guardian angels, Raphael the archangel, and St Francis of Assisi, inspiration truly not only for children. We have the two wonderful "Theresa's" - St Therese of Lisieux and St Teresa of Avila. We have St Margaret Mary, patron saint of our dear daughter-in-law. The entire month is devoted to the Holy Rosary, about which enough cannot be said.

This month invites us to assess our own prayer life and the way we are instilling that in our children. It sometimes happens that we lose sight of how very powerful familiar practices actually are in our lives. We can come to neglect these simple but necessary prayers

as we become restless or dissatisfied, looking for more novel forms of devotion. The solution lies in revisiting the teaching behind well known customs, to reinvigorate and rededicate ourselves to a solid foundation.

It is also a good time to take stock of our children's prayer lives. Do they know all the prayers of the rosary? Prayers to invoke their guardian angel? Prayers before meals? The best method, for parent and child, is imitation. Take this opportunity to shore up your personal prayer life and institute common prayer within the family.

Many mothers find praying the rosary together with husband and children to be understandably challenging. Patience and persistence are key. We don't demand much more of small children than to be nearby and reasonably quiet. There are so many aids today to draw them in: child sized rosaries, rosary manipulatives, illustrated flip charts and picture books, Turning lights down and lighting a candle set the mood and convey to little ones that now is our special prayer time.

For those who did not grow up with the practice it can be a little awkward feeling to begin to pray together aloud, especially if the only child is an infant or if many years have passed and indeed the children are quite grown and unfamiliar with the routine. This is soon overcome. It is never too soon or too late. Wherever you and your family are right now is the place to begin.

This is also a friendly reminder that families celebrating All Saints' Day should start preparing early. Choose and learn about your saints, gather your costumes and games.

You may want to look ahead to the month of the Holy Souls as well and gather the holy cards or photos of your family's dearly departed for your home altar in November.

Our Lady of the Rosary, pray for us!

*\*a note about how to use this newsletter\**

*Each month there are links to a book for mothers, video and print biographies of a saint or two, a song to learn, quotes to carry in your heart, and a few crafts to do together. There is a printable prayer for your home altar and ongoing ideas for arranging your domestic monastery and living your vocation. God bless you!*



*“Let nothing disturb  
you, let nothing  
frighten you, all  
things are passing,  
God is unchanging.  
Patience gains all;  
nothing is lacking to  
those who have God:  
God alone suffices”*

*St Teresa of Avila  
Oct 15th*

**TO MAKE AND DO:**

OCTOBER AT HOME - VINTAGE CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL

ANGEL OF GOD COPYWORK PRINTABLE

HAIL MARY BOOK TO ASSEMBLE

CUPCAKE ROSARY

ROSARY HANGER TO MAKE

**TO READ:**

MEDITATIONS ON THE ROSARY (VINTAGE PRINTABLE)

ST FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

THE STORY OF A FAMILY

THE LITTLE FLOWER

**TO SING/RECITE:**

QUEEN OF THE HOLY ROSARY

**TO WATCH:**

THE ROSARY STORY

ST FRANCIS AND THE WOLF

**CONFRATERNITY MOTHER'S BOOK CLUB SELECTION FOR OCTOBER:**

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ST MARGARET MARY

**CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN MOTHERS RESOURCES:**

Members Manual Online

Why Enroll?

Pieta Sticker

Mother Love Book

Printable Prayer Card for Confraternity Mothers





## On Devotion to St Joseph in October

A few years ago I attended a talk about Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical Quamquam Pluries, On Devotion to St Joseph. It was written in 1889, but, on reading through, it is apparent how applicable it is today:

*"...you know the times in which we live; they are scarcely less deplorable for the Christian religion than the worst days, which in time past were most full of misery to the Church. We see faith, the root of all the Christian virtues, lessening in many souls; we see charity growing cold; the young generation daily growing in depravity of morals and views; the Church of Jesus Christ attacked on every side by open force or by craft; a relentless war waged against the Sovereign Pontiff; and the very foundations of religion undermined with a boldness which waxes daily in intensity. These things are, indeed, so much a matter of notoriety that it is needless for Us to expatiate on the depths to which society has sunk in these days, or on the designs which now agitate the minds of men."*

He goes on to give some guidance especially for October, already consecrated to the Virgin Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary. St Joseph lived with Jesus and Our Lady for many years. Their care and support was entrusted to him alone.

*"...during the whole course of his life he fulfilled those charges and those duties. He set himself to protect with a mighty love and a daily solicitude his spouse and the Divine Infant; regularly by his work he earned what was necessary for the one and the other for nourishment and clothing; he guarded from death the Child threatened by a monarch's jealousy, and found for Him a refuge; in the miseries of the journey and in the bitternesses of exile he was ever the companion, the assistance, and the upholder of the Virgin and of Jesus."*

He goes on to explain why, "*men of every rank and country should fly to the trust and guard of the blessed Joseph.*" He is the personification of paternal vigilance, the perfect example of love between spouses, protector of the vulnerable, who passed his own life in humble labor, content with slight possessions. Next to Jesus and Our Lady, he is a most efficacious intercessor in Heaven for all families. For that reason the Holy Father made this request:

*"We prescribe that during the whole month of October, at the recitation of the Rosary, for which We have already legislated, a prayer to St. Joseph be added."*

It is a small thing, a simple pious practice we can join to the daily rosary this month. The prayer he recommends:

### **Prayer to Saint Joseph**

To thee, O blessed Joseph, we have recourse in our affliction, and having implored the help of thy thrice holy Spouse, we now, with hearts filled with confidence, earnestly beg thee also to take us under thy protection. By that charity wherewith thou wert united to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God, and by that fatherly love with which thou didst cherish the Child Jesus, we beseech thee and we humbly pray that thou wilt look down with gracious eye upon that inheritance which Jesus Christ purchased by His blood, and wilt succor us in our need by thy power and strength.

Defend, O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, the chosen off-spring of Jesus Christ. Keep from us, O most loving Father, all blight of error and corruption. Aid us from on high, most valiant defender, in this conflict with the powers of darkness. And even as of old thou didst rescue the Child Jesus from the peril of His life, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield us ever under thy patronage, that, following thine example and strengthened by thy help, we may live a holy life, die a happy death, and attain to everlasting bliss in Heaven. Amen.





FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY  
OCTOBER 7<sup>TH</sup>

Today more than ever there is need of a powerful weapon to protect family life. Worldliness and worldly doctrines — the sworn enemies of the Christian life — strike first at the family. These are stronger forces today than ever before. What hope has any family against them?

What hope has family life against the teachings of many college professors on planned parenthood, companionate marriage, divorce, and general immorality? The radio, newspapers, comic sheets, and magazines bring these doctrines into the home itself, lay them on the table for all to see, leave them ringing in everyone's ears. Moving pictures with color and sound attract even the wisest and wariest by scenes that make a joke of family life. Happily, God provides us with the weapon we need. It is the Family Rosary. The history of the Rosary has proved already how powerful it is against the forces of sin and evil, whatever these forces be.

The Rosary by itself has proved its power. The Family Rosary has a new power all its own. The family in itself is already a power: it is one of the units upon which society is founded.

Its bond of unity is mutual love. When such a unit lifts its voice in the Family Rosary, the power of this prayer of the centuries increases as the family becomes one with Jesus Christ Who said, "... where two or three are gathered together for My sake, there am I in the midst of them." How much more truly are they gathered together for His sake when it is the family already united by love that is so gathered! How much more truly does the prayer of the Family Rosary ascend as one voice with that of Mary's Son!

Prayer is talking to God. The Rosary is Mary's way for us to talk to Him, for she, His Mother, gave us this way, and a mother knows best. When individuals so closely united in love as to form a family talk to God in Mary's way, the power of the prayer is increased. The most powerful prayer said by the members of life's most powerful social unit, the family, becomes an irresistible plea to God and His Mother, Mary.

The Family Rosary is a lesson in living. A father and mother on their knees teach their children dependence upon God. The Family Rosary, too, is a practical way to strengthen the unity of family life, so easily weakened by the modern way of living. Father, away from home in the office or factory most of the day, sisters and brothers at work, school, or play, come home often to their own individual interests with little thought for one another. The Family Rosary, for at least a few short moments of every day, will join them in a bond of loving prayer to God and His Mother. - Fr Patrick Peyton, CSC

*The recitation of the Family Rosary should be the unfailing practice every day in every family, no matter what may take members of the family away from home.*

# PERFECT JOY OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

*Every year on the feast of St Francis of Assisi I revisit this essay penned by Brother Leo, a companion of the great saint. It is challenging, puzzling even, as it runs completely contrary to our understanding of what makes for earthly happiness. By his measure most of us have ample reason to rejoice daily. May we learn to see it that way!*

On a cold winter's day, Saint Francis walked with Brother Leo from Perugia to the Porziuncola. Because of their poverty, they suffered much in the cold. At one point, Saint Francis said to Brother Leo: "If God desired that the Friars Minor should serve as a great example of holiness to all people in all lands, please write down that this would not be perfect joy." At some point later in their journey, Saint Francis said to Brother Leo: "If the Friars Minor could make the lame walk; if we could straighten the crooked; if we could chase away demons; if we could give sight to the blind and speech to the dumb; and even if we could raise the dead after four days, please write down and note carefully that this would not be perfect joy."

Soon after, Saint Francis said to Brother Leo: "If the Friars Minor could speak every language; if they knew everything about science; if they could explain all the scriptures; if they could predict the future and reveal the secrets of every soul, please write down and note carefully that this would not be perfect joy." After a few more steps, Saint Francis cried: "Brother Leo, little one of God! If the Friars Minor could sing like angels; if they could explain the movements of the stars; if they knew everything about all animals, birds, fish, plants, stones, trees, and all men, please write down and note carefully that this would not be perfect joy." Finally, Saint Francis cried again: "Brother Leo, if the Friars Minor could preach and thus convert every person to faith in Christ, please write down and note carefully that even this is not perfect joy."

When this manner of discourse lasted for several miles, Brother Leo, who had been thinking about these sayings, asked: "Father Francis, I pray that you will teach me about perfect joy." Saint Francis answered: "If we arrive at the Porziuncola and if we are drenched with rain and trembling with cold, covered in mud and exhausted from hunger; and if we knock on the convent gate; and if we are not recognized by the porter; and if he tells us that we are impostors who seek to deceive the world and steal from the poor; and if he refuses to open the gate; and if he leaves us outside, exposed to the rain and snow, suffering from cold and hunger; then if we embrace the injustice, cruelty, and contempt with patience, without complaining; and if we believe in faith, love, and humility that the porter knew us but was told by God to reject us, then, my dear Brother Leo, please write down and note carefully that this also is perfect joy!"

Saint Francis then said: “Brother Leo, if we knock again and if the porter drives us away with curses and blows; and if he accuses us of robbery and other crimes; and if we embrace this with patience without complaining; and if we believe in faith, love, and humility that the porter knew us but was told by God to reject us again, then, my dear Brother Leo, please write down and note carefully that this is finally perfect joy!” Saint Francis said once more: “If urged by cold and hunger, we knock again; if we call again to the porter; if we plead to him with many tears to open the gate and to give us shelter out of love for God; and if he returns more angry than ever; and if he calls us annoying rascals and beats us with a knotted stick; and if he throws us to the ground, rolls us in the snow, and beats us again with the knotted stick; and if we bear these injuries with patience without complaining; and if we think upon the sufferings of our Blessed Crucified Lord, then, most beloved Brother Leo, please write down and note carefully that this, finally, is perfect joy!”

Finally, Saint Francis said: “Brother Leo, please listen to me. Above all gifts of the Holy Spirit, that Christ Jesus gives to his friends is the grace to overcome oneself, to accept willingly, out of love for Him, all contempt, all discomfort, all injury, and all suffering. In this and all other gifts, we ourselves should not boast because all things are gifts from God. Remember the words of Saint Paul: ‘What do you have that you did not receive from God? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if it were not a gift (1 Corinthians 4:7)?’ But in the cross of afflictions and suffering, we truly can glory because as Saint Paul says again:

*‘May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Galatians 6:14).’ Amen.*



## Our Guardian Dear

St. Francis of Sales had a particular devotion to his Guardian Angel; he celebrated the Feast with special care and piety; in spirit he received his blessing in the most important actions of his life; and not only was he devout to his good Angel, but also to the Angels of his friends. He had even a devotion to those of the heretics, his enemies; for he said that in disputing with the Huguenots he exorcised the demons who possessed and obsessed them, and afterward invoked their Angels.

When he was absent from his diocese, he recommended it in an especial manner to the care of his holy Angel. He never failed to salute the Angels of the kingdoms, provinces, or parishes which he entered. In the confessional he frequently invoked the Guardian Angel of his penitent, and we may read in his letters how much he recommended to his pious friends devotion to their Guardian Angel. He said that **in this world the Angels attend to almost everything**, as they are the messengers of God, and invisible; and that to accomplish much for His Divine service and not wish to appear was to serve God in an angelic manner.

Lest we think devotion to the angels is child's play, Father Husslein, S.J. says, *"Never let us imagine we can outgrow in stature or in years, our need for the daily and more frequent recital of that perfect little prayer to the Guardian Angel which we learned at our mother's knee."*

"Angel of God, my Guardian dear,  
To whom His love commits me here,  
Ever this day be at my side,  
To light and guard, to rule and guide."





## On Teaching Children to Pray

excerpted from Childhood Religion, Edgar Schmiedeler, 1900

It is not an exceptionally difficult task to teach a child to memorize a few short prayers during his early years. Among the first words that he learns to pronounce should be the names of Jesus and Mary. Some children may be taught to say a very simple improvised night prayer by the age of two. Much, if not all of the "Hail Mary" may be known by the little one of three or four. Differences of ability will, of course, show themselves here. In all cases repetition and drill will be necessary. This naturally calls for patience on the part of the parent. A considerable measure of patience is necessary, too, because a child easily forgets prayers that he apparently knew well before. Simply neglecting to recite his prayers for a time may be the reason for this. Or again, a spell of sickness may be the cause. But taken all in all, it is a relatively simple task for a parent to teach even the child of two or three to say some prayers.

To be sure, one can create difficulties here as one can in other matters of child training by demanding too much of little ones, by insisting, for example, upon teaching them too many and too lengthy prayers. But there is no benefit to be derived from such a practice. Indeed, it may prove both hampering and hurtful. The child's first prayers should be short and simple.

Certainly among the first of the more lengthy and formal prayers that the child should be taught are the "Hail Mary" and the "Our Father." To be sure, the young child will not fully understand the full meaning of these prayers, and for some time the parent will even have to help along, supplying what the child will omit. Still, the properly trained tot of only three or four years should be able to grasp in some measure the notions expressed in the Lord's Prayer: that God is the Father of all; that He is in Heaven; that His name should be honored; that He gives us our daily bread, etc.

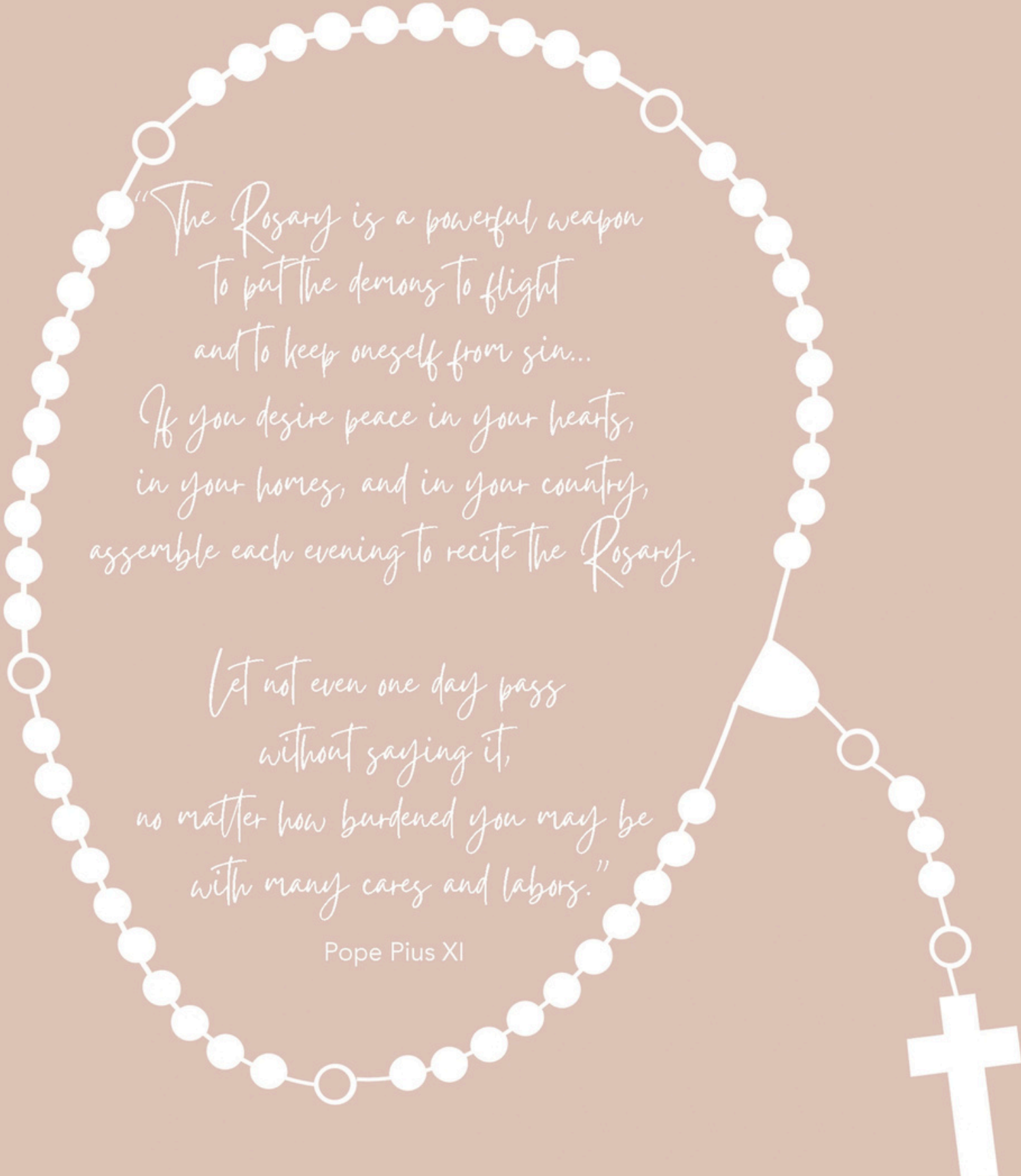
Not a little guidance regarding the particular prayers appropriate to children at various age periods can be obtained from the following words of a mother and former school teacher who has successfully reared a family of children of her own: "I am a firm believer in 'bending the twig,' hence I think religious training should start in the very cradle. It was my own custom to pray at the crib of my little ones. If such a practice does not teach the child anything, it is at least a good thing for the parents themselves. It is truly remarkable how early the children tried to imitate the rest of us in making the Sign of the Cross. Even as babies in their highchair they soon learned that no food would be given them until prayers before meals had been devoutly said.

I find that the average child of two years will enjoy story telling and may be told in simple language of the Christ Child and then gradually taught simple prayers to be said before retiring and after rising. A little prayer to his guardian angel helps wonderfully to make any child forget his fears in the dark. A child of four should be able to memorize, and in some degree understand, the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, the simple Acts, and by the age of six or seven, the Apostles' Creed."

While teaching a child merely to memorize some formal prayer which he can say by rote may be a relatively simple task, teaching the preschool child really to pray, that is, to speak to God intelligently and with understanding, will involve no small amount of patient effort on the part of parents. This teaching is not a thing apart. It should go hand in hand with the general religious training of the individual and should follow as closely as possible upon the more mechanical task of memorizing his first formal prayers. The child may not grasp the meaning of the words of his earliest prayers, though every reasonable effort should be made to teach him prayers made of words which he can understand and expressive of thoughts and feelings that he really has. Nor will he at first realize the need for prayer nor the good of prayer. But, with growing intelligence he will gradually learn what prayer really is, not only through instruction and guidance by the parent but also through example or the hearing of sincere appeals to God on the part of others. Indeed, in his early years the example of his father and mother and other grown-ups about him, and the whole religious atmosphere of the family circle, will exert a most far-reaching religious influence over him.

The child at this age is exceedingly imitative and such practices as saying grace before and after meals, the reverent repetition of simple prayers with the child while kneeling before bed time all seems in some indescribable way, peculiar to the little one, to direct his mind even before he can comprehend the meaning of formal prayers. The small child seems to learn intuitively from the heartfelt invocations to God of his elders who pray aloud with him.

As soon as the child is capable of grasping even in a vague sort of way the notion of a Supreme Being, the fundamental foundation for teaching him to pray has been laid. The parents should then make it a point to bring the idea of God more and more into the life of the child and link it with his daily prayers, thereby vitalizing them.



*"The Rosary is a powerful weapon  
to put the demons to flight  
and to keep oneself from sin...  
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."*

Pope Pius XI