

## Weapon around my neck

There was no prayer that I avoided more than the Holy Rosary. “What a burdensome Catholic devotion”, I thought. Pondering on it now, I can hardly believe how a fifteen-minute prayer could feel so heavy – almost unbearable – to me. Getting through five decades of the Rosary was, in my view, quite an accomplishment. It would take a miracle for me to pray it every day.

To love means to sacrifice and sacrifice, though profoundly fulfilling, hurts. This was my journey to a faithful devotion to the Holy Rosary – one of sacrifice, of love. More specifically, love for my wife. Kaylyn and I struggled with purity all throughout our courtship. We both had already been very much exposed to the world of teenage hormones, infatuation or ‘love’ as we called it, Hollywood, MTV and all the rest that follows in this confused culture. In a nutshell, we did not understand what it meant to love one another, what love was. Fortunately, we were very involved in church ministry and exposed to the Church’s teachings, specifically St. John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body*. This teaching changed my life immensely and I did not hesitate to share it with Kaylyn. Together we embarked on an exciting, yet difficult, journey of learning to love one another. That journey continues to this day, and I’m convinced it will ‘til death do us part.

In the midst of our struggle, which included endless trips in and out of Confession (often together), Kaylyn decided to buy me a Rosary ring as a promise of her faithfulness to our fight for chastity, for love. Since it was a Rosary ring, I thought it fitting that I pray the Rosary as my response to her gesture and in doing my part in this fight. I could not commit to five decades however, and promised God that I would pray one decade a day. One turned into two soon after, one decade for myself and one for Kaylyn. The struggle continued and two turned into three decades, respectively for myself, Kaylyn and our relationship.

The struggle raged on until one New Year’s eve when I decided to step up my game. I firmly and solemnly vowed to begin the new year by reciting five decades of the Rosary every day for fifty-four days, known as the ‘54-day Rosary Novena’. The strength I gained in these fifty-four days was evident to me and by the end of the novena, I firmly resolved to continue. In fact, I had somewhat grown attached to this devotion and to Our Lady. After a year of faithful devotion, I felt a call to consecrate myself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was a powerful and beautiful encounter in my life, one that has stood and grown to this day.

The Rosary has become my favourite prayer. Many years ago I received a beautiful wooden Rosary from my mother which was made in Jerusalem. I later vowed to place it around my neck everyday, while reciting a consecration prayer, as a reminder of decision to bear my cross and follow Jesus. It also serves as a reminder of my consecration to Our Lady and is the physical manifestation of my favourite spiritual weapon in this battle of life. It has become, second to the Mass, ‘the oxygen of my soul’, as Padre Pio puts it. It has also become a pillar for my marriage and family, a pra

There are vast reasons as to why we should make the Rosary part of our daily life. Read up on its history and its power, especially by authors like John Paul II, Mother Teresa, Louis de Montfort, Maximilian Kolbe – to mention but a few. Here’s a good article to get you started: <http://catholicexchange.com/25-things-know-rosary>.

In this month of the Holy Rosary, consider making a resolution to include this great devotion in your daily life. Don’t miss out on the abundant graces God wants to shower on you through the beautiful, Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Our lady of the Rosary, pray for us.