

Parishioners' Corner

The Divine Mercy Chaplet



The name of the prayer sounded familiar. Yet it wasn't until my father introduced it to me after my mother passed in 2021, where I became accustomed to each line from Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska's diary entries and the few everyday prayers embedded throughout the chaplet. My dad informed me of her visions of Jesus and how she was canonized under Pope John Paul II. My dad recited the novena for his wife 56 years.

My visits to Metro Detroit to spend the weekend

with him increased. Or I would drive there for an evening and bring my dad to Chicago the following day for holidays and celebrations with my family. When he and I visited my mom at the cemetery, we would take out our rosaries and begin narrating the prayer from my phone. If it was biting cold, we would leave out the optional portions toward the end of the Divine Mercy or reduce the decades. Typically, by the second decade, my father would hesitate and get emotional. It seemed like moments of disbelief in requiring us to do this and that she was gone. At the end of January, 2022, my dad asked me to pray the novena of Divine Mercy once his time came. We were standing next to my mom's grave during this request. It is the only thing that I promised him.

When our family visited him a few months later, my dad introduced the prayer to them as well. At that point, he visited the cemetery each day, usually with daily Mass and perhaps a breakfast at his favorite bakery or diner. For the next few years, the only time I read the chaplet was with my dad and laden with intentions for my mom.

In 2024, my father was diagnosed with cancer. At first his treatment was going well. Yet by January, 2025, it had spread. By mid-March, he was bedridden. I asked the former pastor of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity, Father Mike Grisolano, if I had to recite the novena while physically being at my father's grave for nine days, once the funeral eventually commenced. He informed me at our men's group meeting that I could begin the prayer daily that evening. So I did. Seven days later my father passed. I continued recounting the Divine Mercy Chaplet each day, 300 miles away from my parents.

I noted the nine days but I didn't stop. From the chair near the front window of my home, I kept my mom's turquoise rosary to delve into Divine Mercy. It usually would occur late at night, after grades, lesson planning, emails, and paperwork were finished. Through October, I prayed for my dad. In November, since it is the month that my mom had passed, I began diverting the intentions onto her. In December, for both my parents. In 2026, I continued each day. I dedicated a quiet nine or ten minutes for my mother-in-law, friends of mine, and family members. As I continued this tradition, I couldn't help but think that this may be the first time Divine Mercy had been directed towards them, in order to solidify heaven. Each late family member and friend will receive a month of the chaplet. Once May, 2026 arrived, I began saying it for my dad once again. Next, my grandmothers. Then, grandfathers.

In November, it will be my mom's turn. When I whisper the prayer, the memories flood of my loved one. Sometimes, their death will as well. But I try to revert back to the wondrous memories with them as I chant each sentence, even their lives and efforts before I came into the picture.

About the Author: Joris Soeding and his family have enjoyed being parishioners of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity for over a decade. Soeding is an author, elementary teacher, and President of Mr. Otto Foundation.

Photo Credit: Joris' children being introduced to the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Greenwood Cemetery, Birmingham, Michigan, May 30, 2022. Photographed by Christa Poskozim.