

## INTERCEDE



## PRAY

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECT

The feast of Saints Anne and Joachim is celebrated on July 26. As the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, they were also the grandparents of Jesus. Although there isn't much historically verifiable information about their story, what we gain from custom and tradition can provide inspiration. Tradition holds that Anne and Joachim struggled with infertility for much of their marriage and were barren for many years. It is thought by some that they were treated poorly by their neighbors and that their childlessness prevented them from fully participating in the life of the community. As the story goes, despite long years of grief, Anne and Joachim continued to place their trust in God. In depths of such sorrow, Joachim went into the wilderness to fast and pray for a child. During this time an angel appeared to both he and Anne, promising that they would give birth to a child, despite their old age, who would be known throughout the world.

Today, many married couples also bear the cross of infertility. They often feel deep grief at their inability to welcome a child into their family. Yet each couple

is called, like Anne and Joachim, to continue to place their trust in God and His plan for their family. We pray for all married couples who so deeply long to welcome a child into their home. May God hear their prayers, console their hearts, and guide them on the path of peace.

## ACT *(choose one)*

- Offer a [novena of Faith and Perseverance](#) to Saints Anne and Joachim for this month's intention. (*We recommend praying the novena from July 17–25 in preparation for their feast day.*)
- Fast from television, social media, music, or electronics altogether for one day. Ask the Lord to use the quiet and stillness to bring you closer to Him.
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do for this month's intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

Learn more about the challenges of couples struggling with infertility in *Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility*: [respectlife.org/navigating-infertility](https://respectlife.org/navigating-infertility).

## DID YOU KNOW?

From July 25–31, the Church in the United States observes National Natural Family Planning (NFP) Awareness Week. The dates highlight the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25)—which articulates Catholic beliefs about human sexuality, conjugal love, and responsible parenthood—and encompasses the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26). NFP can sometimes help couples struggling with infertility to conceive a child. Learn more about NFP at [uscgb.org/nfp](https://uscgb.org/nfp).

