

*2015 is the year to recognize evangelization in and through the family. As we celebrate the feast of Saints Joachim and Ann (traditionally known as husband and wife, the parents of Mary, and grandparents of Jesus) on July 26th, it is an opportunity to reflect on the role of grandparents in the faith-sharing life of the family.*

#### About Saints Anne and Joachim



Tradition tells of these two saints:

Joachim and Anne were both were descendants of David. Joachim was a pious man, devout in the Jewish faith. He regularly gave to the poor and to the synagogue. Anne and Joachim spent twenty years in prayer, asking for the gift of a child, especially since the Jewish community looked on infertility as a sign that God disfavored them. They endured many years of heartbreak and community disapproval, including the rejection of Joachim by the high priest.

Joachim withdrew to the desert where he fasted and did penance for forty days. The angel Gabriel then appeared to Joachim, promising him and his wife a child. Joachim returned to Jerusalem and embraced Anne with great joy. She too had to been visited by Gabriel. Anne and Joachim's prayers were answered by the birth of Mary.

After her birth, Anne and Joachim consecrated Mary to God at the temple of Jerusalem and she spent much of her childhood there. While Anne and Joachim knew their daughter was going to be special, they were surely amazed. Writings by the Saints tell that Anne and Joachim were awed by the child's holiness and wisdom.

There was an ancient belief that a child born of an elderly mother who had given up hope of having offspring was destined for great things. So was born a daughter, Mary, Mother of God.

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Prayer to Saints Joachim and Anne

Saints Anne and Joachim, good parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, grandparents of our Savior, Jesus Christ,

When life seems barren, help us to trust in God's mercy.  
When we are confused, help us to find the way to God.  
When we are lost in the desert, lead us to those whom God has called us to love.  
When marriage seems lifeless, show us the eternal youth of the Lord.  
When we are selfish, teach us to cling only to that which lasts.  
When we are afraid, help us to trust in God.  
When we are ashamed, remind us that we are God's children.  
When we sin, lead us to do God's will.

You who know God's will for husband and wife, help us to live chastely.  
You who know God's will for the family, keep all families close to you.  
You who suffered without children, intercede for all infertile couples.  
You who trusted in God's will, help us to respect God's gift of fertility.  
You who gave birth to the Blessed Mother, inspire couples to be co-creators with God.  
You who taught the Mother of God, teach us to nurture children in holy instruction.  
You whose hearts trusted in God, hear our prayers for (*mention your requests here.*)

Our Father... Hail Mary ...Glory be ...

God of our ancestors, you gave Saints Anne and Joachim the privilege of being the parents of Mary, the mother of your incarnate Son.  
May their prayers help us to live in hope and to attain the salvation you have promised to your people.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

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