

INTERCEDE



PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

While we often think of pregnancy as culminating in the birth of child, we know that the journey is only just beginning. While motherhood brings with it many joys and blessings, it also involves challenges and difficulties. In raising their children and dedicating themselves to their families, mothers participate in a type of “daily heroism,” one for which they “do not always find support in the world around them” (*EV* 86). Providing and caring for children as a single mother includes additional hardships. Sadly, today, one in four children are being raised without a father. Certainly, there are many reasons this might occur in any given circumstance. However, it is also true that in a culture that largely rejects the Church’s teachings on marriage, life, and sexuality, women and their children are often disproportionately impacted. It was Pope Paul VI in *Humanae vitae* who warned that, “a man who grows accustomed to the use of contraceptive methods may forget the reverence due to a woman... no longer considering her as his partner whom he should surround with care and affection” (*HV* 17). In the midst of this reality, the Church is called to be a beacon of light, hope, and support. May we respond to this call, individually and communally, to surround mothers with assistance and support as they lovingly care for their children.

ACT (choose one)

- Saints Anne and Joachim—whose feast is celebrated on July 26—were the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Parents often seek the intercession of these married saints as they raise their own children. Offer this [prayer](#), asking Saints Anne and Joachim to pray for this month’s intention.
- Fast from television, social media, music, or electronics altogether for one day. Ask the Lord to use the quiet and stillness to bring you more closely to Him.
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for this month’s intention.

ONE STEP FURTHER

[Learn more](#) about Saints Anne and Joachim, models for parents and for marriage.



Image: A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring.)



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