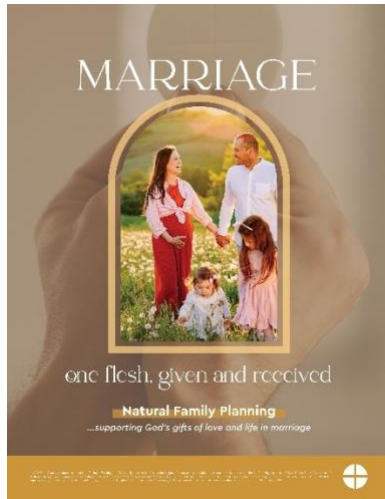


# WORD OF LIFE: JULY 2023

*Recommended dates are provided, but you are welcome to use these materials at any time!*

## FEATURED THIS MONTH

### [National NFP Awareness Week: July 23-29, 2023](#)



The dates of National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week highlight the anniversary of the papal encyclical *Humanae vitae* (July 25), which articulates Catholic beliefs about human sexuality, married love, and responsible parenthood. The dates also mark the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne (July 26), the parents of the Blessed Mother.

Couples' stories, sample intercessions, [homily notes](#), graphics, and more can be found [online](#).

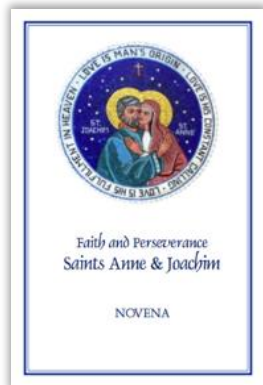
#### Poster

PDF: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

JPG: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Ordering information is [available here](#).

### Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne: July 26, 2023

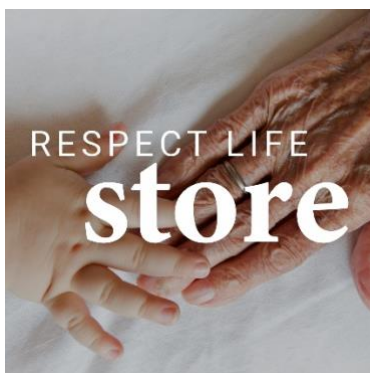


The Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, is celebrated on July 26. They are powerful intercessors for all married couples, expectant mothers, and married couples who are having difficulty conceiving, as well as those who are aging. Copies of the “Faith and Perseverance” novena to Saints Anne and Joachim are available for download or purchase. You can pray the novena from July 17-25 in preparation for their feast day.

**Download:** [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

Ordering information is [available here](#).

### USCCB Respect Life Store



You can now order your favorite Respect Life print materials from our new online store. Browse resources by topic or product type in the easy-to-use format. Visit the Respect Life Store at <https://store.respectlife.org/>.

[www.respectlife.org](http://www.respectlife.org)

## WORD OF LIFE – July 2023

### Intercessions for Life

#### July 2<sup>nd</sup>

For our nation:

May our laws protect  
every person's right to life,  
from conception to natural death;

*We pray to the Lord:*

**Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

#### July 9<sup>th</sup>

For families considering adoption:

May the Lord guide and bless their journeys  
and grant them peace along the way;

*We pray to the Lord:*

**Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

#### July 16<sup>th</sup>

For all those nearing death:

That their faith will grow ever stronger,  
as they prepare in hope  
to share eternal life with Christ;

*We pray to the Lord:*

**Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

#### July 23<sup>rd</sup>

May married couples embrace their call  
to total, faithful, and fruitful love  
with openness to new life;

*We pray to the Lord:*

**Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

#### July 30<sup>th</sup>

For women who are unexpectedly pregnant:

May they be filled with trust in God's providence  
and supported by those around them  
to lovingly welcome the gift of their child;

*We pray to the Lord:*

**Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

## Bulletin Quotes

### July 2<sup>nd</sup>

“O God our Creator... through the power and working of your Holy Spirit, you call us to live out our faith in the midst of the world, bringing the light and the saving truth of the Gospel to every corner of society.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
“Prayer for Religious Liberty”



[Download](#)

### July 9<sup>th</sup>

“Adopting Andrew has made us more aware of God's power and of his love for us. We realize that he always has a perfect plan for our lives.”

Read more at [www.bit.ly/AdoptionLoveStory](http://www.bit.ly/AdoptionLoveStory).

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“An Adoption Love Story”



[Order](#) | [Download](#)

### July 16<sup>th</sup>

“Because of our belief and hope in the Resurrection, we can face death not with fear, but with preparation.... We prepare for eternal life by choosing to love and follow God now, in our daily lives and decisions.” Read more at [www.respectlife.org/end-of-life-considerations](http://www.respectlife.org/end-of-life-considerations).

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing”



[Order](#) | [Download](#)

### July 23<sup>rd</sup>

“Married love differs from any other love in the world. By its nature, the love of husband and wife is so complete, so ordered to a lifetime of communion with God and each other, that it is open to creating a new human being they will love and care for together. ... That power to create a new life with God is at the heart of what spouses share with each other.”

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
“Married Love and the Gift of Life”



[Read Online](#) | [Download](#)

### July 30<sup>th</sup>

“A woman with an unexpected pregnancy may have any number of fears and challenges: facing judgment from her friends and family, losing her job or housing, or being abandoned by the father of her child. Following Mary’s example, we can ask ourselves how to better know these mothers, listen to them, seek understanding, and help them obtain the necessities of life for themselves and their children.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“Called to Serve Moms in Need”



[Read Online](#) | [Download](#)

# WORD OF LIFE - July 2023

## Bulletin Art

You are welcome to use these, provided they are not altered in any way, other than the size. Thank you!

### Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**An Adoption Love Story**  
Read the full version at [respectlife.org/adoption-love-story](https://respectlife.org/adoption-love-story).

Having children and raising a family had always been our expectation. We soon learned, however, that our chances of becoming pregnant were small. It wasn't long before we started talking about the possibility of adoption. I wondered if my heart was big enough to love an adopted child as I would have loved a biological child. But with prayerful discernment, we decided to start the process. On Christmas Eve, Bill and I left the hospital with Andrew. It didn't take long before there was no doubt in our minds that he was our son, the greatest gift from God! We can't imagine loving a child whom we conceived more than we love Andrew.


**We can't imagine loving a child whom we conceived more than we love Andrew.**

\*Names changed for privacy. This is a summary of a USCCB Respect Life Program article by the same name and is reprinted with permission. © 2019, USCCB, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.  
iStock.com/hevodika

Download: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

### Sunday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023

"Every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is 'the child' whom Joseph continues to protect."  
*Patris corde, 5*



Patris corde, 5, © 2020, Liturgy Education and Lay Life Commission. All rights reserved.  
Copyright © 2023, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.

Download: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)

### Sunday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

**MARRIAGE**  
one flesh, given and received  
Natural Family Planning



One of the most joyful celebrations in life is the wedding of a man and a woman. When they are joined together in marriage, they are no longer "me" and "you" (see Matthew 19:6). Married or not, Catholics are called to live in a loving relationship in which husband and wife are faithful to one another. Most people also live for the good of the world where a person will sacrifice for the beloved. As Catholics, it is important to remember that Jesus sanctified marriage and elevated it to sacramental love for the Church—marriage "in the Lord" mirrors the very love of our Lord, Jesus, who is called to be a love that will sacrifice for the beloved.

**Sponsoring Life**

When did this idea come from? Some might argue that it is a natural human understanding. That is partially true because we all know that the experience of loving another person is part of the fabric of human life. Our Christian faith tells us more however, the answer through the eyes of faith that God, who is love, created us for love and to love!

While love is experienced throughout life in family relationships and with friends, marital love is unique. Created in God's image, husband and wife become "one flesh" (see Genesis 2:24) and are called to be a love that is faithful, selfless, generous, and everlasting. God established marriage as an original blessing, not only to

spouses but also to the world. Through it, God builds up families and society.

Despite the fact we and its them to God's original plan for man and women, especially as he called for marriage, marriage will reflect God's love in the world. This is true regardless of the individual religious faith of each spouse. However, in Christian marriage—the marriage of a baptized Christian man to a baptized Christian woman—God's grace is present. Christian marriage beyond the dignity and value of natural marriage and gives spouses the privilege of reflecting Christ's love for his bride, the Church (see Ephesians 5:21-32). They witness to something that many do not believe is possible: free, total, faithful, permanent, fruitful love. This is the love our hearts long for. This is the love husband and wife are called to in marriage. It is a love made real in Christ precisely because He is both present with husband and wife in the sacramental reality of the marriage and because marriage reflects His spousal love for the Church.

**Marriage is a Gospel**

In God's original plan for man and women, the mutual love of spouses "becomes an image of the absolute self-giving love with which God loves man" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1604)—this is good news! Despite humanity's fall from grace and the resulting brokenness, the Lord God continued to create His children to accept His design for marriage which reveals the love between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Pope Benedict XVI taught this truth when he wrote:

"[Marriage] is a Gospel in itself, a 'Good News' for the world of men, especially the disoriented world. The union of a man and a woman, their becoming 'one flesh' in charity, in faithful and indissoluble love, is a sign that speaks of God with 'force and an eloquence.' Marriage, as a union of faithful and indissoluble love, is based upon the grace that comes from the Holy Spirit, who in Christ binds us with a faithful love, even to the Cross."  
Message of Pope Benedict XVI October 1, 2005, Proverbius

The love of Christ is expressed in His Passion, in His total gift of self for the Cross. The Eucharist is the memorial of what Christ has done for us, "the making present and the sacramental offering of his unique sacrifice. In the Eucharist of the Church which is His Body" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1324). It is the great sacrament of love, the Lord, entrusted to His Beloved Spouse, the Church, a sacrament of love in sign of unity of love of charity" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1323). Christ being other than self is a self-gift of self, permanent, faithful, and fruitful love for the Church and for each individual in the Church.

Download: [English](#) | [Spanish](#)