

INTERCEDE

May the Lord
comfort and
guide married
couples who
long to welcome
a child.

PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

As the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Saints Anne and Joachim 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 him 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 or recurrent pregnancy loss and feel deep grief at their struggle 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 (<https://bit.ly/anne-joachim>).
- 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.

ONE STEP FURTHER

"Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility" seeks to provide compassionate, practical guidance for couples experiencing difficulty having children. It also provides helpful context for supporting someone who may be carrying this cross. Read online at respectlife.org/navigating-infertility.

DID YOU KNOW?

Restorative Reproductive Medicine (RRM) investigates and seeks to heal the root causes of a couple's struggle to bear children... A number of national Natural Family Planning (NFP) education organizations can assist with a list of medical professionals who provide Restorative Reproductive Medicine. For a list of NFP organizations you can contact to ask for provider recommendations, please visit <https://bit.ly/nfp-providers>.

