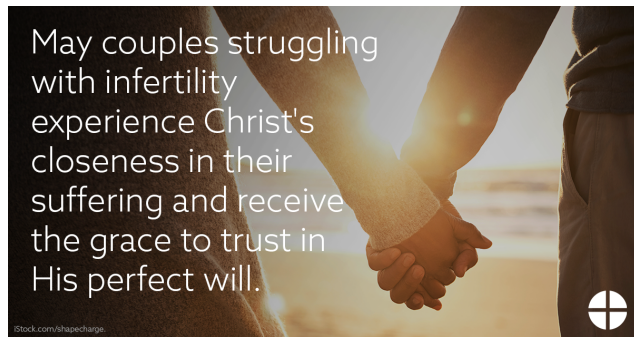


INTERCEDE



May couples struggling with infertility experience Christ's closeness in their suffering and receive the grace to trust in His perfect will.

PRAY

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECT

We may often assume that parenthood comes easily after “I do,” but for many married couples, it does not. For some, the joy of conception never happens. Others suffer repeated miscarriages. Still others experience secondary infertility: after giving birth to one or more children, they are unable to have another. This can be a profound cross for couples desiring a child, and their suffering can become overwhelming. Social media posts of pregnancies, baby announcements, or attending baby showers may intensify the sense of being alone in their ache for a child. The pursuit of medical treatments* in hopes of conceiving can be physically and emotionally taxing and increase feelings of isolation. It is estimated that as many as 1 in 6 adults experience infertility, meaning that you or someone you know is likely bearing this cross, often silently or without support.

We can find hope in the truth that God does not abandon us in our suffering. The Church desires to walk with those who struggle to have children. Pope St. John Paul II clearly affirmed that married couples who are unable to have children are “no less loved by

God” and that their “love for each other is complete and fruitful when it is open to others.”¹ It is important that couples who carry this cross—and those who desire to offer them support—know that their love can still be *fruitful* and their married life filled with meaning. We pray that these couples would know Christ’s closeness in a special way and be given the strength to trust in his plan for their marriage and family. May we strive to be channels of mercy through our own awareness, sensitivity, and support.

Reflection adapted from “Seven Considerations While Navigating Infertility” (respectlife.org/navigating-infertility).

ACT (choose one)

- Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet (usccb.org/divine-mercy-chaplet) for couples who experience difficulty having children.
- Choose one day this week to abstain from sweets or your favorite snack as a reminder to draw close to Christ in times of suffering and to trust in his plan for our lives.
- Offer some other sacrifice or prayer that you feel called to do.

ONE STEP FURTHER

Hear how four Catholic married couples face the cross of infertility and find love through it. in this podcast episode: bit.ly/fruitful-in-infertility.

**To learn about differences between medical interventions related to reproduction that are morally good versus morally wrong, please visit <https://bit.ly/repro-tech>.*

¹ Excerpt from Pope John Paul II, “Homily at the Mass for the Families” on February 13, 1982 © 1982, Libreria Editrice Vaticana. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

