

SAINTS OF THE MONTH

On July 26, the Feast Day of St. Anne and St. Joachim, we honor the lives of Mary's parents, the earthly grandparents of Jesus. As existing information about Saints Anne and Joachim comes from the Gospel of James which stands outside the canon of the New Testament. But regardless, it can be agreed that to be the parents of Jesus's earthly mother, Saint Anne and Saint Joachim must have been faithful, devoted parents indeed. The patronage of Saint Anne includes grandparents, couples without children, women in labor, and women unable to conceive. Likewise, Saint Joachim is considered the patron of grandfathers and fathers.

Anne, in Hebrew, means "God has given grace." According to existing accounts, she was barren for much of her life. One day in her advanced years, she conceived Mary, the mother of Jesus. Saint Anne dedicated the life of her child to the service of God when she was only three – a decision that was undoubtedly formative in the shaping of the future Mother of God.

The Role of Grandparents in Completing the Family Unit

As we reflect on the legacy of Saints Anne and Joachim, let us also reflect on the vital role played by all grandparents in completing the loving family unit and nurturing the faith of future generations. Grandparents can take a vital part in the training of their grandchildren, teaching them to love the ways of the Lord and honor his commandments. It was Saints Anne and Joachim who cultivated in the young Mary a love for God, preparing her for her role in the story of divine redemption. Pope Francis remarked of Saints Anne and Joachim:

In their home, Mary came into the world, accompanied by the extraordinary mystery of the Immaculate Conception. Mary grew up in the home of Joachim and Anne; she was surrounded by their love and faith: in their home she learned to listen to the Lord and to follow his will. Saints Joachim and Anne were part of a long chain of people who had transmitted their faith and love for God, expressed in the warmth and love of family life, down to Mary, who received the Son of God in her womb and who gave him to the world, to us. How precious is the family as the privileged place for transmitting the faith!

There is also something to be said for grandparents' roles as repositories of wisdom and history. Their experience in faith and life has enriched their judgment, rendering them invaluable counsels for the generations that follow.

