

PRAYER TO ST. ANNE AND ST. JOACHIM

"The tree is known by its fruit" (Mt 12.33; 7.16, 20), said Jesus. We know Christ, the flower and sweet fruit that came from the branch, the Blessed Virgin Mary, who was kept sinless by God from the first moment of her conception. From the holiness of the fruit, we may say that the tree, her parents, was holy. According to the apocryphal *Protogospel of James* (2nd century), the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary were called Anne (also spelled *Ann*, *Anne*, *Anna*, from Hebrew, *Hannah*, that is, grace) and Joachim (that is, *the Lord prepares*). The veneration of the grandparents of Jesus is very old in the East, where on a July 25, in about 550, a basilica in Constantinople was dedicated to St. Anne. In the West it appeared only in the 8th century. In 1584, the names of St. Anne and St. Joachim were inserted by Pope Gregory XIII in the Roman Liturgical Calendar.

Devotion to St. Anne was brought to Canada by the early colonists from Brittany (France) and adopted quickly by the native communities. In their culture the peoples of the First Nations have great respect for their ancestors who venerated St. Anne, the grandmother of Jesus. The shrine of Saint Anne de Beaupré, established in 1658 and raised to the rank of a minor basilica on May 5, 1887, is a famous place of pilgrimage for both Canadians and Americans, as is Lac Ste Anne in Alberta since June 1889.

St. Anne and St. Joachim,
you were especially favoured by God,
on the threshold of the New Testament,
to be the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.
You provided your daughter
with a loving home, family and faithful teaching,
and brought her up
to be the worthy Mother of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Your way of parenting was for her an example
to bring forth the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus,
treasuring all things in her heart. (cf. *Lk* 2.19, 51)
Your faith laid the foundation of courage and strength
that allowed Mary to stand by the Cross as her Son was crucified
and to still believe. (cf. *Jn* 19.25-27)
In communion with Mary and Joseph,
intercede to your grandson Jesus for all parents,
so that they may help their children,
to grow in strength and in knowledge
and to discover the mission that God entrusts to them
in the world and in the Church.

Good Saint Anne,
Mother of Mary, the Blessed one among women, (cf. Lk 1.42)
you were thanked by the newcomers on this glorious and free land
for your protecting intercession
during their uncertain trip on the sea
and you were invoked by them
in their trials in establishing new homes and traditions.
Intercede for all our families
so that, through the help of the Holy Spirit,
we may grow together in peace and understanding
and make our home hospitable to our visitors and guests.
May we persevere, like you, in the love of Jesus and Mary
and live pure and blameless lives in the sight of God.

Grandmother of Jesus, our Saviour,
you were honoured by the First Nations people of this land
in your role of nurturing him and bringing him up to maturity.
Intercede for all grandmothers,
so that they may nurture their grandchildren
with love and wisdom,
teaching them to find their way in life
and to be right in word and in deed.

Gentle Saint Joachim,
Father of the Virgin Handmaid of the Lord, (cf. Lk 1.38)
Grandfather of Jesus,
among your descendants, you had the privilege
to count the One whom your own ancestors longed to see,
the long expected Messiah.
Intercede for all elders and grandfathers,
who worked hard on this land, defending its integrity,
and who grew old in the service of the Almighty.
May God grant them
to benefit from their remaining strength,
to share the wealth of their experience and wisdom
and to enter his Kingdom at the end of their earthly time.

Good St. Anne and St. Joachim,
Parents of Mary, the “favoured one” (Lk 1.28),
accompany us, in our faith journey on this land,
to the glory and praise of God,
now and for ever and ever. Amen.