

OUR PATRON, SAINT ANNE

St. Anne (or Anna), is the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the grandmother of Our Lord Jesus Christ. She was revered in the Early Church as a holy woman, and she is an important figure in the Tradition of the Church. Much of her story comes from the “Protoevangelium of James” which is a document from the second century. This document tells the traditional story of the conception and childhood of the Virgin Mary. The story of St. Anne (and her name) mirrors that of Hannah in the Book of Samuel, who was barren and prayed to the Lord to conceive, promising to dedicate the child to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:1-2:11). Hannah received what she prayed for and having given birth to Samuel the Prophet, sang a song of thanks which is mirrored in Mary’s *Magnificat* after the conception of Jesus (1 Sam. 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-55).

Like Hannah, St. Anne was barren and prayed that she might conceive. In the Protoevangelium it gives the following account: “And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by, saying: Anna, Anna, the Lord has heard your prayer, and you shall conceive, and shall bring forth; and your seed shall be spoken of in all the world.” St. Anne promised to dedicate the child to the Lord. Her husband, St. Joachim, joined her in this commitment. It is from this account that the Early Church held that Mary was dedicated to serve in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem from a young age.

Like the holy women of the Bible, St. Anne is seen as a woman of Prayer, who loves the Lord and cries out to Him. She believes the promise given to her, and in thanksgiving commits to give back what she has received to service of the Lord. She was a holy example to the Blessed Virgin Mary, dedicated her to the Lord from the womb, and presented her to the Temple of God to be a servant of the Lord.

Importantly for us, we remember that the angel said to Anne, “the Lord has heard your prayer” and we pray that St. Anne would intercede for us – Praying for us to the Lord our God, that He may hear her prayer on our behalf.

The Feast Day of St. Anne and St. Joachim is celebrated on July 26 in the Anglican Church, July 26 in the Roman Church, and September 9 in the Orthodox Church.

Lord God of Israel,
who bestowed such grace on Anne and Joachim
that their daughter Mary grew up obedient to your word
and made ready to be the mother of your Son:
help us to commit ourselves in all things to your keeping
and grant us the salvation you promised to your people;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

– *Collect for the Feast of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne,*
Common Worship, Church of England