



Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

National Natural Family Planning Awareness Week

(July 22-28, 2018)

“Generations of Love: Humanae vitae (1968-2018)” is the theme of this year’s Natural Family Planning Awareness Week, a national educational campaign of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to celebrate God’s design for married love and the gift of life and to raise awareness of Natural Family Planning (NFP) methods. “NFP,” as the U.S. bishops have written, is supportive of Catholic beliefs about married love because it “respects the God-given power to love a new

human life into being” (see, U.S. Bishops, *Married Love and the Gift of Life*).

NFP Week 2018 highlights the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of Blessed Pope Paul VI’s encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, in which he articulates the Church’s teaching about human sexuality, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. More information can be found on the USCCB’s NFP Program website: <http://www.usccb.org/nfp/awareness-week/index.cfm>.

Sts. Joachim and Anne, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Feast Day—July 26

Not mentioned in the Bible, Joachim and Anne are first named as the parents of Mary in the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, which may date from the second century. In this story, they are old and childless, like the Old Testament Hannah, mother of Samuel, when angels deliver the news that Anne will conceive a child. Anne was an especially popular saint in medieval England, and her feast was celebrated in the West by 1350; Joachim’s feast was authorized or suppressed by various popes, but was joined with Anne’s in 1969. They are the patrons of married couples; Anne is also the patron of childless women, expectant mothers, and miners.

“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!” —Pope Francis, Angelus, July 26, 2013

“Whoever really loves his partner loves not only for what he receives, but loves that partner for the partner’s own sake, content to be able to enrich the other with the gift of himself.”

(*Humane Vitae*, no. 9)



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