

## Reflection Wednesday week 16 Sts Joachim and Anna 2023

**St Anna and St Joachim.** A 2<sup>nd</sup> century tradition gives these names to the parents of the Virgin Mary. The cult of St Anna became popular in the 6<sup>th</sup> century in the East and in the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the West. Anna is the patron saint of Brittany; Joachim was added much later. It is generally believed that the names are authentic although not provable. Mary's parents brought her up capable of responding to God's request to become the mother of Jesus. Consenting to the incarnation she took the most important decision ever taken by any human being. The fact that she took it is, to a great extent, the work of her parents. The Holy Spirit gave her the strength to take the decision; but her parents' training gave her the wisdom to choose. Those among us who have children must seek to bring them up to the best of our ability, to meet challenges that, like Anna and Joachim, are beyond our imagination.

Anna and Joachim remind us to be thankful for all the help we have been given by our parents and others in living our faith and being ready to respond to the word of God who calls us to be good news. It is through Mary that we learn clearly that with the Holy Spirit's help the Word of God will take flesh in our own lives as a gift for others.

**Pope Francis** asked us to celebrate our grandparent last Sunday: *"It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents. The prophet Joel says: grandparents, before their grandchildren, will dream and have great desires, and young people, taking strength from their grandparents, will go forward and prophesy. Grandparents' voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and safeguards the roots of peoples. They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young."*