



delivering Mary reflect her status as a great mystic, realising that while she had wanted a son, this daughter was God's gift to her:<sup>[8][9]</sup>

Then, when she brought forth she said: My Lord! Truly, I brought her forth, a female. And God is greater in knowledge of what she brought forth. And the male is not like the female. ... So her Lord received her with the very best acceptance. And her bringing forth caused the very best to develop in her.<sup>[Quran 3:36–37 (https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2002.02.0006%3Aasura%3D3%3Averse%3D36) (Translated by Laleh Bakhtiar)]</sup>

## Beliefs

Although the canonical books of the New Testament never mention the mother of the Virgin Mary, traditions about her family, childhood, education, and eventual betrothal to Joseph developed very early in the history of the church. The oldest and most influential source for these is the apocryphal Gospel of James, first written in Koine Greek around the middle of the second century AD. In the West, the Gospel of James fell under a cloud in the fourth and fifth centuries when it was accused of "absurdities" by Jerome and condemned as untrustworthy by Pope Damasus I, Pope Innocent I, and Pope Gelasius I.<sup>[10]</sup> However, despite having been condemned by the Church, it was taken over almost *in toto* by another apocryphal work, the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, which popularised most of its stories.<sup>[11]</sup>

Ancient belief, attested to by a sermon of John of Damascus, was that Anne married once. In the Late Middle Ages, legend held that Anne was married three times: first to Joachim, then to Clopas and finally to a man named Solomas and that each marriage produced one daughter: Mary, mother of Jesus, Mary of Clopas, and Mary Salome, respectively. The sister of Saint Anne was Sobe, mother of Elizabeth. In the fifteenth century, the Catholic cleric Johann Eck related in a sermon that St Anne's parents were named Stollanus and Emerentia. Frederick George Holweck, writing in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907) regards this genealogy as spurious.<sup>[12]</sup>

In the 4th century and then much later in the 15th century, a belief arose that Mary was conceived of Anne without original sin. This belief in the Immaculate Conception states that God preserved Mary's body and soul intact and sinless from her first moment of existence, through the merits of Jesus Christ.<sup>[12]</sup> The Immaculate Conception, often confused with the Annunciation of the Incarnation (Mary's virgin birth of Jesus), was made dogma in the Catholic church by Pope Pius IX's papal bull, *Ineffabilis Deus*, in 1854.

The thirteenth century *Speculum Maius* of Vincent of Beauvais incorporates information regarding the life of Saint Anne from an earlier work by Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim Abbey.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Veneration

In the Eastern church, the  veneration of Anne herself may go back as far as c. 550, when Justinian built a church in Constantinople in her honor.<sup>[14]</sup> The earliest pictorial sign of her veneration in the West is an 8th-century fresco in the church of Santa Maria Antiqua, Rome.<sup>[10]</sup>

The Feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary had reached southern Italy by the ninth century. The cult of Saint Anne had developed in northern Europe by the twelfth century. A shrine at Douai, in northern France, was one of the early centers of devotion to St. Anne in the West.<sup>[15]</sup>

The *Anna Selbdritt* was a type of iconography depicting the three generations of Saint Anne, Mary, and the child Jesus. Emphasizing the humanity of Jesus, it drew on the earlier conventions of the Seat of Wisdom, and was popular in northern Germany in the 1500s.<sup>[16]</sup>

During the High Middle Ages, Saint Anne became increasingly identified as a maritime saint, protecting sailors and fisherman, and invoked against storms.<sup>[17]</sup>

Two well-known shrines to St. Anne are that of Ste-Anne-d'Auray in Brittany, France; and that of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré near the city of Québec. The number of visitors to the Basilica of Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré is greatest on St Anne's Feast Day, 26 July, and the Sunday before Nativity of the Virgin Mary, 8 September. In 1892, Pope Leo XIII sent a relic of St Anne to the church.<sup>[17]</sup>

In the Maltese language, the Milky Way galaxy is called *It-Triq ta' Sant'Anna*, literally "*The Way of St. Anne*".<sup>[18]</sup>

In Imperial Russia, the Order of St Anne was one of the leading state decorations.

In the United States, the Daughters of the Holy Spirit named the former Annhurst College in her honor.<sup>[19]</sup>

of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré

### Feast

26 July (Roman Catholic),<sup>[1]</sup>

9 September (Eastern Orthodox)<sup>[2]</sup>

### Attributes

Book; door; with Mary, Jesus or Joachim; woman dressed in red or green<sup>[3]</sup>

## Commemoration

By the middle of the seventh century, a distinct feast day, the Conception of St. Anne (Maternity of Holy Anna) celebrating the conception of Mary by Saint Anne, was observed at the Monastery of Saint Sabas.<sup>[20]</sup> It is now known in the Greek Orthodox Church as the feast of "The Conception by St. Anne of the Most Holy Theotokos", and celebrated on 9 December.<sup>[21]</sup> In the Roman Catholic Church, the Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim is celebrated on 26 July.

### Feast Day

#### Roman Catholic Church

- 26 July

#### Eastern Orthodox Church

- 25 July: (Dormition of the Righteous Anna, the Mother of the Most Holy Theotokos)
- 9 September: (Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Mother of God)
- 9 December (The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God)

#### Anglican Communion

- 26 July: Anne is remembered (with Joachim) in the Church of England with a Lesser Festival on 26 July.<sup>[22]</sup>

#### Lutheranism

- 26 July

#### Coptic Orthodox Church and Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church<sup>[23]</sup>

- 7 November (The Departure of St. Anna (Hannah), the mother of the Theotokos)

#### Armenian Apostolic Church

- 9 December (The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God)
- Tuesday, 2nd week after Dormition of the Mother of God<sup>[24]</sup> (with Joachim)<sup>[23]</sup>

#### Syro-Malabar Church<sup>[25]</sup>

- 26 July (Anne and Joachim)

#### Syro-Malankara Catholic Church<sup>[26]</sup>

- 9 September (Mar Joachim & Martha Anna)

#### Maronite Church<sup>[27]</sup>

- 9 September (St. Anne and Joachim, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary)

### Relics

The alleged relics of St. Anne were brought from the Holy Land to Constantinople in 710 and were kept there in the church of St. Sophia as late as 1333.<sup>[12]</sup>

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, returning crusaders and pilgrims from the East brought relics of Anne to a number of churches, including most famously those at Apt, in Provence, Ghent, and Chartres.<sup>[10]</sup> St. Anne's relics have been preserved and venerated in the many cathedrals and monasteries dedicated to her name, for example in Austria, Canada,<sup>[28]</sup> Germany, Italy,<sup>[29]</sup> and Greece in the semi-autonomous Mount Athos, and the city of Katerini.<sup>[30]</sup> Medieval and baroque craftsmanship is evidenced in, for example, the metalwork of the life-size reliquaries containing the bones of her forearm. Examples employing folk art techniques are also known.

Düren has been the main place of pilgrimage for Anne since 1506, when Pope Julius II decreed that her relics should be kept there.

### Patronage

Mothers, grandparents, pregnant women, children, unmarried people, teachers, carpenters, child care providers, seamstresses, lacemakers, secondhand-clothes dealers, equestrians, stablemen, miners, lost things, moving homes, poverty, sterility, Brittany, Canada, Detroit, Taguig, Triana, Seville, Hagonoy, Bulacan, Barili, Cebu, Molo, Iloilo City, Kurunegala Catholic Diocese, Sri Lanka, Fasnja, Tenerife, Mainar, Marsaskala



Saint Anne with Mary as a child

## Patronage

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The Church of Saint Anne in Beit Guvrin National Park was built by the Byzantines and the Crusaders in the 12th century, known in Arabic as Khirbet (lit. "ruin") Sandahanna, the mound of Maresha being called Tell Sandahanna.

Saint Anne is patroness of unmarried women, housewives, women in labor or who want to be pregnant, grandmothers, mothers and educators. She is also a patroness of horseback riders, cabinet-makers<sup>[15]</sup> and miners. As the mother of Mary, this devotion to Saint Anne as the patron of miners arises from the medieval comparison between Mary and Christ and the precious metals silver and gold. Anne's womb was considered the source from which these precious metals were mined.<sup>[31]</sup>

She is also the patron saint of: Brittany (France), Chinandega (Nicaragua), the Mi'kmaq people of Canada, Castelbuono (Sicily), Quebec (Canada), Santa Ana (California), Norwich (Connecticut), Detroit (Michigan),<sup>[32]</sup> Adjuntas (Puerto Rico), Santa Ana and Jucuarán (El Salvador), Berlin (New Hampshire), Santa Ana Pueblo, Seama, and Taos (New Mexico), Chiclana de la Frontera, Marsaskala, Tudela and Fasnía (Spain), Town of Sta Ana Province of Pampanga, St. Anne in Molo, Iloilo City, Hagonoy, Santa Ana, Taguig City, Saint Anne Shrine, Malicboy, Pagbilao, Quezon and Malinao, Albay (Philippines), Santana (Brazil), Saint Anne (Illinois), Sainte Anne Island, Baie Sainte Anne and Praslin Island (Seychelles), Bukit Mertajam and Port Klang (Malaysia), Kľúčové (Slovakia) and South Vietnam. The parish church of Vatican City is Sant'Anna dei Palafrenieri. There is a shrine dedicated to Saint Anne in the Woods in Bristol, United Kingdom.

## In art

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### *Christ in the House of His Parents*

In John Everett Millais's 1849–50 work, *Christ in the House of His Parents*, Anne is shown in her son-in-law Joseph's carpentry shop caring for a young Jesus who had cut his hand on a nail. She joins her daughter Mary, Joseph, and a young boy who will later become known as John the Baptist in caring for the injured hand of Jesus.

### Iconography

The subject of Joachim and Anne *The Meeting at the Golden Gate* was a regular component of artistic cycles of the Life of the Virgin. The couple meet at the Golden Gate of Jerusalem and embrace. They are aware of Anne's pregnancy, of which they have been separately informed by an archangel. This moment stood for the conception of Mary, and the feast was celebrated on the same day as the Immaculate Conception. Art works representing the Golden Gate and the events leading up to it were influenced by the narrative in the widely read *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine. The Birth of Mary, the Presentation of Mary and the Marriage of the Virgin were usual components of cycles of the Life of the Virgin in which Anne is normally shown here.

Her emblem is a door.<sup>[15]</sup> She is often portrayed wearing red and green, representing love and life.<sup>[3]</sup>

Anne is never shown as present at the Nativity of Christ, but is frequently shown with the infant Christ in various subjects. She is sometimes believed to be depicted in scenes of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple and the Circumcision of Christ, but in the former case, this likely reflects a misidentification through confusion with Anna the Prophetess. There was a tradition that Anne went (separately) to Egypt and rejoined the Holy Family after their Flight to Egypt. Anne is not seen with the adult Christ, so was regarded as having died during the youth of Jesus.<sup>[33]</sup> Anne is also shown as the matriarch of the Holy Kinship, the extended family of Jesus, a popular subject in late medieval Germany; some versions of these pictorial and sculptural depictions include Emerentia who was reputed in the 15th Century to be Anne's mother. In modern devotions, Anne and her husband are invoked for protection for the unborn.

### Virgin and Child with Saint Anne

The role of the Messiah's grandparents in salvation history was commonly depicted in early medieval devotional art in a vertical double-Madonna arrangement known as the Virgin and Child with Saint Anne. Another typical subject has Anne teaching the Virgin Mary the Scriptures (see gallery below).

## Gallery

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*Birth of St. Anne*, by Adriaen van Overbeke (c. 1521–1525)



Basilica of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, Quebec, Canada



*Christ in the House of His Parents* by John Everett Millais, 1849–50





Coptic, 8th century, National Museum in Warsaw



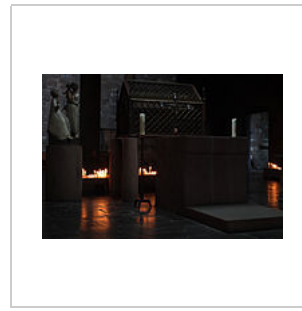
German, 15th century. Anne holds Mary and Christ



German, 15th century, Legends of St Anne



German, 16th century. Relief of the St. Anne's Head, Annakirche Dueren



German, 16th century. St. Anne's Shrine, home of St. Anne's Head, Annakirche Dueren



Annunciation to Anne mosaic, 12th century, Chora Church, Istanbul



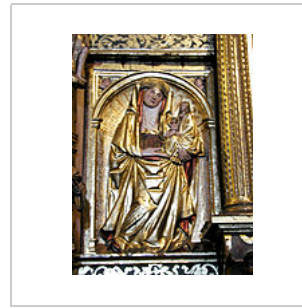
The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne in the Cathedral Museum of the Church of Santiago de Compostela



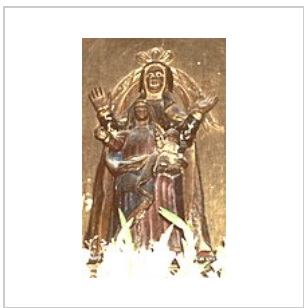
A Belgian Virgin and Child with Saint Anne (labeled *Ste Anne Trinitaire* by the museum)



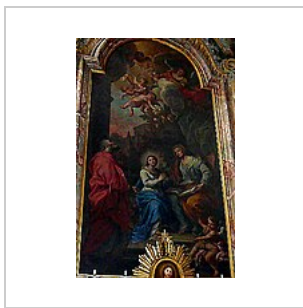
A French Virgin and Child with Saint Anne (15th-century) from Languedoc-Roussillon



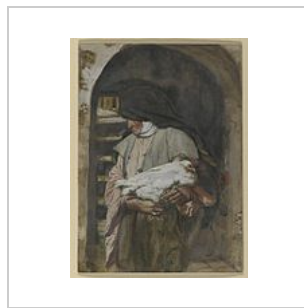
A Spanish Virgin and Child with Saint Anne influenced ultimately by Greek "Hodegetria" icons



The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne from Oaxaca, Mexico



St. Anne Teaching the Virgin to Read, Church of San Giuseppe alla Lungara, Rome



*Saint Anne*, James Tissot, Brooklyn Museum



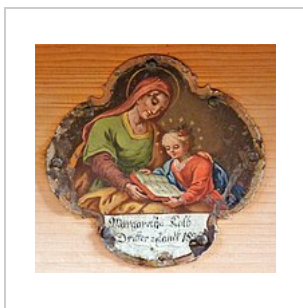
Saint Anne (Die Heilige Anna) with child Jesus, by Otto Bitschnau, 1883<sup>[34]</sup>



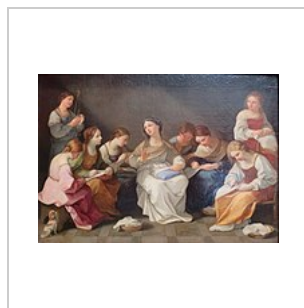
*The Holy Family with Saint Anne and Saint-Jeannet* by El Greco (c. 1600), conserved in the Biblioteca Museu Víctor Balaguer



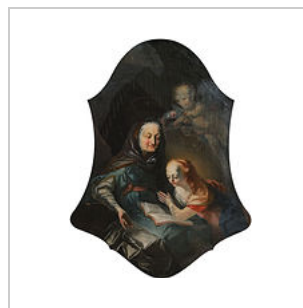
*Saint Anne and Virgin Mary*. Josef Moroder-Lusenberg school (c. 1890) in Badia



*The instruction of the Virgin Mary*. Catholic parish church of St. Martin in the district of Dillingen (Bavaria).



*The Education of the Virgin*. Guido Reni (1640-1642)



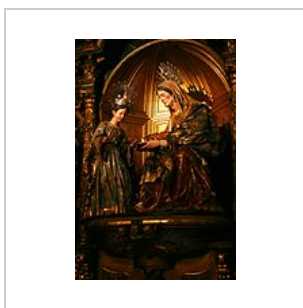
*St. Anne teaching St. Mary*, Josef Winterhalder the Younger



*The education of the Virgin*, Eugène Delacroix (1842)



*The Education of the Virgin Mary*, Jean Jouvenet (1700)



*Mary and St. Anne*. Iglesia del Salvador, Seville



*Education of Virgin Mary*, Parish church Saint Vinzenz



Saint Anne with Virgin and Child, ca. 1400-1425

## Music

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- Marc-Antoine Charpentier composed 2 *motets* :
  - *Pour Ste Anne*, H.315, for 2 voices and continuo (around 1675)
  - *Canticum Annae*, H.325, for 3 voices, 2 treble instruments, and continuo (around 1680).
- Johann Sebastian Bach composed a prelude and fugue :
  - Prelude and Fugue in E-Flat Major, BWV 552 (published 1739)

## See also

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- Church of Saint Anne, Jerusalem
- Church of St. Ann (disambiguation)
- The Line of Saint Anne
- Portal, Catholic patron saint archive
- Statue of Saint Anne, Charles Bridge
- St Anne's College, Oxford
- Virgin and Child with Saint Anne
- Feast of the Conception of the Virgin Mary

## Notes

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1. "O my Lord! I do dedicate into Thee what is in my womb for Thy special service: So accept this of me: For Thou hearest and knowest all things." (Quran 3:35).

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## External links

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- Brief Franciscan Media article on "Sts. Joachim and Ann" (<https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saints-joachim-and-anne/>)
  - "Saint Anne" (<http://www.christianiconography.info/anne.html>) at the Christian Iconography (<http://www.christianiconography.info>) website
  - "Here Followeth the Nativity of Our Blessed Lady" (<http://www.christianiconography.info/goldenLegend/maryNativity.htm>) from the Caxton translation of the Golden Legend
  - The Protevangelium of James (<http://www.christianiconography.info/protevangelium.htm>)
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