



## A RICH ABUNDANCE OF PATRONS

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As we know only too well July is the month of the year that seems to just drag on, what with thirty-one shortened days, cold weather, minus degree mornings and being rugged up with so much clothing we can find it hard to just move. We just want to get through the middle of winter and begin to pine for the warmer Spring and Summer days to come. Yet when we stop and take a closer look at the days of July themselves, we see that the month is full of some of the more powerful patron Saints of the Church. St Thomas the Apostle, St Benedict, St James, St Mary Magdalene, St Ignatius of Loyola and St Bonaventure are stand outs. Yet given all of these if it were not for two of the patron Saints of July, we might not have had these others at all. On July 26 we celebrate the Feast day Of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne and without them we may not have been able to welcome Jesus into the world, for they are Our Blessed Mother's parents.

We know only too well Mary's fundamental role in the salvation of humankind, not only did Mary say yes to being Jesus' mother but she was an abiding presence at the core of her Son's earthly mission. It was at Mary's prompting that Jesus changed the water into wine at Cana thus beginning His ministry. She was present with Him and the disciples throughout Jesus' journeys of preaching, healing and blessing even as Jesus died on the cross. After the Ascension Mary remained a vital member of the early Church encouraging, guiding and supporting its works. Joachim and Anne's feast day gives us an opportunity to reconnect with Our Lady and join with her as she journeys with her Son.

Mary has a central place within our Society as well. Blessed Frederic was born in Lyon France, a city that he loved and always called home. The citizens of Lyon have a deep devotion to Our Lady and Frederic was no exception. His devotion centred around the Notre Dame de Fourvieres a pilgrim's shrine which is on the western edge of Lyon overlooking the city and he often talked about visiting there and dedicating himself and his work to the patronage of Our Lady, 'to which I have been devoted since childhood'(1). At one-point Frederic suggested that the Society take Our Lady as its patron. As we know though at the Society's meeting in February 1834 it was Jean-Leon Le Prevost's suggestion St Vincent de Paul be made our patron and Frederic's recommendation that members place themselves under the protection of Our Lady. These were the first two proposals adopted at that meeting where also the feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8, was chosen as a day of solemnity for the Society.

**St Joachim and St Anne, pray for us**

ST ANNE AND ST JOACHIM