**HOME LITURGY FOR DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND ELDERLY. 25 JULY 2021**

**“I am with you always” Pope Francis theme for the day.**

Pope Francis instituted this new commemoration in 2021, during the time of COVID-19. It is a time for the Church to commemorate and celebrate with grandparents and elderly members of families and communities in whatever ways possible. Parishes will offer what Masses or services they can, face-to-face or virtual.

This is a format for a home liturgy. It can be used in addition to a parish event or where a parish event is not possible. Ideally it can be done face-to-face with grandparents and grandchildren present, but even when they are not, it is good to make a time to remember them. It can be adapted or shortened and parts done on zoom or whatsapp, in families, groups or alone. It is based on the same theme of Pope Francis with readings of the day and includes prayers by and for the elderly and for grandchildren. Pope Francis also asks for prayer for him. Praying for grandchildren of course can be and is done at any time.

*Not only have they given life, but they contribute by their actions to building up their family (cf. Tit 2:2-5), and by their prayer and their life of faith, they spiritually enrich every member of their family and community. Africae Munus 48 Pope Benedict.*

**NEEDS.** Prepare, Invite beforehand. Missal, candle, Pope Francis message and prayer leaflets to use as appropriate, song, holy water.

**FORMAT.**

1. Light the candle and open with the Sign of the Cross and a welcome greeting and explanation. Talk about those present, those absent and why we are gathered here to remember them, thank and honour them.
2. Read Gospel for the day. John 6:1-15
3. Read Pope Francis message, (or short form or explain its contents.) He writes about dreams, memories and prayer.
4. Those present share thoughts about the readings and what these mean to you today.
5. Prayer as appropriate:
   1. Read Pope Francis’ Grandparent and elderly prayer which includes prayer for him.
   2. Read prayers for grandchildren, by grandchildren, for the deceased.
   3. Spontaneous prayers
6. Bless each one, with a sign of the cross on their forehead, with the holy water if available.
7. Sing or listen to a favourite hymn or song.
8. Conclude with the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be or other favourite prayers.
9. Thank everyone and enjoy with eats and drinks.

**WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY. “I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.”**

**MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS (summary)**

Pope Francis writes, “ Dear Grandfathers and Grandmothers, dear Elderly Friends,

“I am with you always” (Mt 28) the Lord promised before his Ascension. He repeats those words to you today. I, as Bishop of Rome and an elderly person too address them to you this 1st World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly. The whole Church is close to you, cares for and loves you. This is a difficult time of trial especially for the elderly as the pandemic swept down on us like an unexpected storm. Many of us fell ill, died or experienced the death of spouses or loved ones. Others are isolated and alone for long periods. The Lord is aware and close to you.”

Tradition tells how St Joachim, Jesus’ grandfather, was feeling estranged as he had no children. Thinking how their lives were useless, one sleepless night, while filled with worries and longing, an angel from the Lord brought him a message. “The Lord has heard you.”

Pope Francis reminds us how the Lord is with us even at our darkest moments, as in the pandemic, hoping that those most alone will also receive the visit of an angel. He suggests that angels may have the face of our grandchildren, family or close friends and how we value their hugs and visits even though that may still not be possible .

The Lord’s Word bring messages too and reading a passage from Scripture daily can bring comfort. It can also help us understand his message for our lives today. In every season of life we are called to be labourers in his vineyard. He is close now with new possibilities and ideas.

Today, at our older age, he still addresses us to “go and make disciples.” Our vocation is “to preserve our roots, pass on the faith to the young and care for the little ones.” No matter how old, whether alone or with a family, a young or older grandparent, independent or not there is a new vocation. Proclaim the Gospel and hand down traditions to your grandchildren.

Recognising our uncertainties he writes, “You may wonder. How can this possible, my energy is running out, how can I act differently, broaden my vision, care for the poor as well as my family? Isn’t my solitude a sufficiently heavy burden? Nicodemus asked, ‘How can a man be born when he is old?’ We can open our hearts to the working of the Holy Spirit who blows where he wills.”

He repeats his frequent previous observations that we will not emerge from the present crisis as we were before, but either better or worse and adds, “May this not prove to be another tragedy of history from which we learned nothing. If only we might discover once for all that we need one another and that in this way our human frailty can experience a rebirth. (Fratelli Tutti 35) We are all indebted to one another. We are all brothers and sisters. “

We all need to help build, in fraternity and social friendship, the world of tomorrow where we, together with our children and grandchildren, will live after the storm. We all have to take an active part in renewing our troubled society.

Pope Francis suggests especially to the elderly three pillars to support the new edifice. Dreams, memory and prayer. The Lord’s closeness will grant the strength for this journey. “Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men will have visions. “ (Joel 3:1) The young can take the dreams of the elderly, of justice, peace and solidarity, for the new vision to build a future together.

He reminds us of the many hardships of life that the elderly have endured and survived. Dreams are intertwined with memory; painful memories of war that must be shared, so the young can learn to value peace. “Keeping memory alive and sharing it with others is a true mission for every elderly person.”

He remembers his own grandparents who had to emigrate and leave everything behind. Many people have done so and continue to do so in hope for a better future. Some of those may be at our side, caring for us. Memory is the foundation of life and can help to build a more humane and welcoming world.

Pope Francis writes of prayer as a precious resource; “a deep breath that the Church and the world urgently needs.” He refers to his predecessor Pope Benedict a saintly, elderly person and man of prayer who said, ‘the prayer of the elderly can protect the world, helping it, perhaps more effectively than the frenetic activity of many others.’ In these difficult times for our human family, sailing in the same boat, across the stormy sea of the pandemic, your intercession for the world and the Church has great value. It inspires in us the trust that we will soon come to shore.”

To conclude the Holy Father addresses himself to, “Dear grandmother, dear grandfather, dear elderly friends.” He refers to Blessed Charles de Foucald, a hermit living in Algeria, but who desired to feel himself a brother to all and who interceded for the poor. (FT 287) Finally Pope Francis asked that we all open our hearts in sensitivity to the sufferings of the poor.

“May each of us learn to repeat to all, and especially the young, the words of consolation we have heard spoken to us “I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS!” Keep moving forward! May the Lord grant you this blessing.”

Pope Francis.

***POPE FRANCIS’. PRAYER FOR THE FIRST WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY 2021***

I thank You, Lord,

for the comfort of Your presence: even in times of loneliness,

You are my hope and my confidence,

You have been my rock and my fortress since my youth!

I thank You for having given me a family and for having blessed me with a long life.

I thank You for moments of joy and difficulty,

for the dreams that have already come true in my life and for those that are still ahead of me.

I thank You for this time of renewed fruitfulness to which You call me.

Increase, O Lord, my faith,

make me a channel of your peace,

teach me to embrace those who suffer more than me,

to never stop dreaming and to tell of your wonders to new generations.

Protect and guide Pope Francis and the Church,

that the light of the Gospel might reach the ends of the earth.

Send Your Spirit, O Lord, to renew the world,

that the storm of the pandemic might be calmed, the poor consoled and wars ended.

Sustain me, Pope Francis, in weakness and help me to live life to the full in each moment that You give me,

in the certainty that you are with me every day, even until the end of the age.

Amen.

***A MOVEMENT OF PRAYER BY GRANDPARENTS FOR GRANDCHILDREN.*** *Use at any time.*

Bring to mind each of your grandchildren and their special qualities and needs.

**PRAY:**

Heavenly Father, I give you praise for the great gift of life you have given to me.

With gratitude, wonder and awe I acknowledge that it is through my life that you granted life to my children; they are mine, ours and yours.

They in turn have become the parents of our grandchildren, and some of us are already blessed with greatgrandchildren in your wonderful chain of life.

It is for all these young ones that I thank you and I pray for them today.

Some of them are strong in faith, others strong in body,

Some are beautiful in looks, others beautiful in spirit.

Some are disabled, disfigured, or destroy their own beauty.

The world in which they live is different from the world in which we lived.

Sometimes we do not understand their world and their ways and we need your gift of forgiveness so that we can be at peace.

You have given them to us to love and to hold in prayer, so I earnestly pray today that through my intercession no evil will befall them and that the hopes and dreams we have built up over the years will be theirs too.

May your kingdom come, in their lives and in ours. May St Joachim and St Anne, the grandparents of Jesus pray with us. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

***GRANDCHILDREN’S PRAYER.***

Lord, today we bring to you in prayer our grandparents.

They may be here with us now, or may already have died and are now at peace.

As parents, they gave life and cared for our own parents.

We thank you for them and for that gift.

We thank you too for the memories they created and that they have shared with us.

They were born into a world different to ours.

As times have changed they may have struggled to keep up and sometimes lost touch.

Forgive us for the times we have been impatient with them.

Help us to be generous with our love and care for them in their old age.

Bless with eternal rest those grandparents who have died.

Bless all grandparents with peace and contentment and an acceptance that their lives were well spent in your service.

We ask St Joachim and St Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, to pray with us as we offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

***GRANDPARENTS PRAYER***

Heavenly Father, I worship you and give you praise for the great gift of life you have given to me.

With gratitude, wonder and awe I acknowledge that through my life you granted life to my children. They in turn became the parents of my grandchildren and some of us are already blessed with greatgrandchildren in your wonderful chain of life.

I pray in a special way for ……………………………………. And for their special needs.

The world in which they live is different from my world. Sometimes we do not understand each other. We need your gifts of acceptance and forgiveness so that we can be at peace.

We need your gifts of love and joy in our family and all families.

I ask St Joachim and St Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, to pray with us as we offer these prayer in Jesus’s name. Amen

***BLESSING OF GRANDPARENTS****:* We pray for God's blessing on the grandparents of our families and community: Bless with eternal rest those grandparents who have died.

Bless all grandparents with peace and contentment and an acceptance that their lives were well spent in your service.

We ask St Joachim and St Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, to pray with us. In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***COMMUNAL PRAYER FOR THE DEAD.***

*(By changing the wording to “I” and mentioning the deceased one’s name it becomes a personal prayer for them.)*

God, Our Father, we remember in prayer those who have had a special place

in our hearts and in our lives and are now no longer here with us.

We thank you Lord, for the gift of life we have shared together.

We ask forgiveness for the hurts we caused and forgive our loved ones too. .

Comfort us through the memories they leave us.

May those memories give us courage for our journey into the future.

Grant them a place of peace and joy in your kingdom

where there is no more suffering and grief.

And when each of us is called to depart from this life

May we be reunited with them in eternal happiness. Amen