

CELEBRATING GRANDPARENTS AND ELDERLY DAY, 23 JULY 2022

THEME: "HIS MERCY IS FROM AGE TO AGE." LUKE 1:50

This is the 3rd ANNUAL World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly introduced by Pope Francis. His full message is available to download from <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/nonni/documents/20230531-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html>. See attached below a shortened summary. This year he focuses directly on the elderly and grandparents and grandchildren and youth who are celebrating World Youth Day, a few in Portugal and the rest of the youth here in SA.

NOTE: *Not all elderly are grandparents and not all grandparents are elderly. Both can be remembered in a variety of ways.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR MONTH FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

As 26 July is the feastday of the grandparents of Jesus, Joachim and Ann it is an opportunity to reflect on the many different roles that grandparents play in our families, Church and society.

FOCUS ON GRANDPARENTS FOR EVERYONE.

- Raise awareness of the importance of grandparents especially in the lives of families.

FOR GRANDPARENTS

- Daily prayer. Remember the grandchildren by name and consider their particular needs. Pray for the parents of your grandchildren and their needs.
- Call, email, invite for coffee/tea/ice cream/breakfast or whatever is convenient and share your love and concern for the grandchildren.
- Gather a group of other grandparents to share about your joys and concerns for your grandchildren and pray together. This can be formal or quite informal. It is natural that sometimes they want to brag while deep down they are concerned. See MARFAM Movement of Prayer of Grandparents for Grandchildren.
- Gather a few grandparents together, for support to show your concern, maybe loneliness, neglect, health & practical needs.

FOR GRANDCHILDREN

- Pray for grandparents, thank God for what they do for you, pray for patience with them, for forgiveness and understanding.
- Pray that those who have died will rest in peace.
- Call, email, visit them and bring them a little gift.

FOR FAMILIES

- Parents encourage the children to appreciate their grandparents, pray for and contact them.
- Parents deal with any issues between the generations.
- Parents involve and don't exclude the grandparents, your children and in-laws.

FOR PARISHES, GROUPS.

- Pray for grandparents at each Mass, especially weekend Masses.
- Include grandparents' month in weekly bulletin. Maybe share a story.
- One weekend or 23rd July offer a special blessing for grandparents. See MARFAM prayers.
- Give each a prayer card, or Beatitudes for Grandparents or Movement of Prayer for grandchildren.
- Invite St Anne's sodality to care and support of grandparents.
- Invite speakers to provide information on specific topics, finances, elder abuse and neglect, illness and dementia.
- Offer a retreat with a specific focus on grandparents.
- Organise a parish tea for grandparents and grandchildren and do some fun things,,,,,, invite oldest, youngest, "granny with the most" --- grandchildren or talents et.c what granddad taught me etc.

FOR SCHOOLS.

- In appropriate ways invite grandparent participation.
- Arrange for grandparents to visit at assembly and share their history and stories.
- As a community outreach look up and possibly adopt lonely grandparents

FOR THE ELDERLY IN GENERAL. Adapt the grandparent suggestions as appropriate.

SUMMARY OF MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE THIRD WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY 23

July 2023 **“His mercy is from age to age” (Lk 1:50)**

Dear brothers and sisters! “His mercy is from age to age” (Lk 1:50). This theme of the Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, takes us back to the joyful meeting between the young Mary and her elderly relative Elizabeth (cf. Lk 1:39-56). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth addressed the Mother of God with words that continue to echo in our daily prayer: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (v. 42). The Holy Spirit, who had earlier descended on Mary, prompted her to respond with the *Magnificat*, in which she proclaimed, the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation. That same Spirit blesses and accompanies every fruitful encounter between generations: between grandparents and grandchildren, young and old. God wants young people to bring joy to the hearts of the elderly, as Mary did to Elizabeth, and gain wisdom from their experiences. Yet, above all, the Lord wants us not to abandon the elderly or to push them to the margins of life, as tragically happens all too often in our time.

This year, the Day takes place close to World Youth Day. Both celebrations remind us of the “haste” (cf. v. 39) with which Mary set out to visit Elizabeth. They invite us to reflect on the bond that unites young and old. The Lord trusts that young people, through their relationships with the elderly, will realize that they are called to cultivate memory and recognize the beauty of being part of a much larger history. Friendship with an older person can help the young to see life not only in terms of the present. For the elderly, the presence of a young person in their lives can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth reminds us that, alone, we cannot move forward, much less save ourselves, and that God’s presence and activity are always part of something greater, the history of a people.

Our life is meant to be lived to the full, and our greatest hopes and dreams are not achieved instantly but through a process of growth and maturation, in dialogue and in relationship with others. Those who focus only on the here and now, on money and possessions, are blind to the way God works. His loving plan spans past, present and future; it embraces and connects the generations. For the young, this means being ready to break free from the fleeting present in which virtual reality can entrap us, preventing us from being productive. For the elderly, it means not dwelling on the loss of physical strength and thinking with regret about missed opportunities. Let us all look ahead! And allow ourselves to be shaped by God’s grace, which from generation to generation frees us from inertia and from dwelling on the past!

I encourage everyone to reflect on the meeting between Mary, the Mother of God and Elizabeth, the elderly mother of John the Baptist, between young and old, God points us towards the future that he is opening up before us. Next, I invite you to make a concrete gesture that includes grandparents and the elderly. Let us not abandon them. Their presence in families and communities is a precious one, for it reminds us that we share the same heritage and are committed to preserving its roots.

The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is a small but precious sign of hope. I renew my invitation to everyone – dioceses, parishes, associations and communities – to celebrate it as a joyful and renewed encounter between young and old. To you, who are preparing to meet in Lisbon or to celebrate World Youth Day in your own countries, I ask: before you set out, visit your grandparents or an elderly person living alone. Their prayers will protect you and you will carry in your heart this blessing. I ask the elderly to accompany by your prayers the young about to celebrate World Youth Day. They are God’s answer to your prayers, the fruits of all you have sown, the sign that God does not abandon us, but rejuvenates us with the Holy Spirit.

Dear grandparents, elderly brothers and sisters, may the blessing of the embrace between Mary and Elizabeth fill your hearts with peace. I give you my blessing. And please, pray for me. FRANCIS

A GRANDPARENT BLESSING AND PRAYER AT A PARISH MASS

- On the designated weekend include grandparents and grandchildren in the liturgy, for readings, bidding prayers, procession etc. .
- Preach on the theme or invite a shared homily.
- Invite testimonies at the “notices” slot and conclude with the prayers and blessing.
- OPTION. Grandchildren could say a prayer.
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- OPTION. The whole congregation can say a prayer (we all have grandparents to remember) .

Grandchildren's prayer:

Heavenly Father, I praise and thank you for the gift of life, for my family and today especially for my grandparents. They may be here with us now or may have died and are now at peace. As parents, they gave life and cared for our own parents. I thank you for the memories they created and for everything they shared with me. Their world was different to ours today and they may have found it difficult to keep up. Forgive me for the times I have neglected them and been impatient with them. Help me to be generous with them, with my time, my love and care for them in their old age. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Grandparents' prayer :

Heavenly Father, I give you praise and thanks for the great gift of life you have given to me. With wonder and awe I acknowledge that through my life you granted life to my children and they in turn became the parents of my grandchildren.

The world in which they live is different from my world and 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 so that together we may live your plan for our family, all the families of the world and all of creation. We ask you to grant us these gifts in Jesus' name. Amen.

Blessing: 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.

We bless all grandparents in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Add blessing intercessions for all the elderly.

Visit www.marfam.org.za blessings, reflections, beatitudes, Movement of Prayer and more. See *FAMILY FAITH FOCUS* daily reflection booklets, *FAMILY MATTERS* E-NEWSLETTER, Listen to Radio Veritas Wednesday 9-10.

BEATITUDES FOR GRANDPARENTS REFLECTIONS FOR SHARING also available.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES. In conjunction with:



2023 MARFAM FAMILY YEAR PLANNER

Theme: OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES

JULY THEME: GRANDPARENTS ARE FAMILIES' ROOTS

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A simple MOVEMENT OF PRAYER OF GRANDPARENTS FOR GRANDCHILDREN

We know how grandparents are seriously concerned about their grandchildren, young and older. They are often close but also often find it difficult to understand one another. Older people may have more time and a greater desire for a deeper prayer life. They also feel helpless and no longer useful in life. This movements can help grandparents to recognise the important contribution they can still make in the lives of their families no matter how far away. There is no formal structure or procedure but it is nice to be able to share with others and form a group for mutual support. Specific Bible passages can be used or the reading for the day. A valuable part of this movement is to strengthen our relationship with God and with our grandchildren through the awareness that is created and the love than can blossom.



Step 1. Bring to mind each of your grandchildren and reflect on their special qualities and their needs.

Put up their photographs or other mementoes, share with any others present.

Step 2. Select and read and share on a scripture passage. What is God saying to me?

Step 3. Pray the Grandparents Prayer. Add any special prayers.

Grandparents' prayer :

Heavenly Father, I give you praise and thanks for the great gift of life you have given to me. With wonder and awe I acknowledge that through my life you granted life to my children and they in turn became the parents of my grandchildren.

The world in which they live is different from my world and 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 so that together we may live your plan for our family, all the families of the world and all of creation. We ask you to grant us these gifts in Jesus' name. Amen.

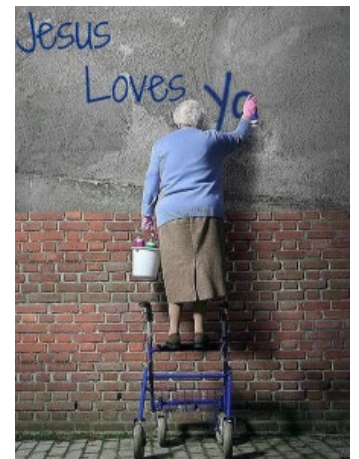
A GRANDPARENT'S LOT

*No doubt there's much that's changing in the families of today
We gather not for Sunday lunch where cousins meet and play
At grandp's house we'd meet and share for each to have their say
On joys and struggles facing us along more quiet ways.*

*The grandp's of today may live alone or have some kids to stay
It could be that they have no kids at all or that they're far away.
Or maybe it's our lot to grandparent in another way.*

*I've seven grandkids but that's not all, it could change every day
There could be more than just one cat, four dogs, 2 love-birds..... who's to say!*

With love from Granny Toni



BEATITUDES FOR GRANDPARENTS

Blessed are the poor in spirit as they will not see their grandparents as a mealticket to the future.

Blessed are the gentle,, as they will recognise and be patient with the weaknesses of old age.

Blessed are they who mourn, and who comfort the bereaved and lonely in their loss.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, that the old and weak will not be cast aside but be treated with dignity and respect.

Blessed are they who are merciful and who forgive the old for the faults and failings of yesteryear.

Blessed are the pure in heart, who see the old and young as they really are.

Blessed are the peace-makers and the agents for reconciliation between generations.

Blessed are they who accept with grace the wisdom of old age.

Blessed are they who can look back on a life of integrity and know they are loved.

Blessed are they who do not judge their young, so that they will not be judged.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because they do what is right, standing up with courage to defend what they have learned through the years.

Blessed are the old and the young, children, parents and grandparents who acknowledge with gratitude the great gift of life they have been given to share.

..... for the Kingdom of God is theirs.

TRowland MARFAM 26 July 2001