



## JUBILEE 2025 :OUR WORLD, A FAMILY OF FAMILIES" MARFAM THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY -



### JULY – GRANDPARENTS ARE FAMILY ROOTS

#### NOTES:

**Abbreviations** Pope Francis: LS = Laudato Si. AL = Amoris Laetitia. FT = Fratelli Tutti. DN = Dilexit Nos. SNC = Jubilee 2025 Spes non confundit

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**Fifth World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly**, Pope Francis chose the theme for the day on Sunday 27 July: "**Blessed are those who have not lost hope**" (cf. *Sir 14:2*). The Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life shares with everyone Pope Francis' invitation to celebrate the Day in every diocese, and to dedicate the celebrations of Sunday 27 July to the elderly, promoting visits and opportunities for encounters between the generations.

**OVERVIEW JULY. Grandparents are families' roots.** Old age is in many cultures and families recognized with respect, and the elderly are guarded by their offspring and the wider community, in animal and also in human society. Grandparents belong in families and are its historical memory. Not all grandparents are elderly, many are active in their own lives, while many others play a great role in the lives of their children, practically and spiritually. At the same time in the great circle of life there is a time for everything, from birth to death, for coming and going, for remaining and leaving. All these phases should be handled with patience, consideration and acceptance. The whole month can be dedicated to the needs of grandparents in particular, which could be material, emotional and spiritual also being aware that violence towards the elderly is too common. *Pope Francis: Very often it is grandparents who ensure that the most important values are passed down to their grandchildren and many people testify that they owe their initiation into the Christian life to their grandparents. AL 192. Our contemporary experience of being orphans as a result of cultural discontinuity, uprootedness and the collapse of the certainties that shape our lives, challenges us to make our families places where children can sink roots in the rich soil of a collective history. AL 193. May the elderly experience gratitude and the children encouragement.*

#### BLESSING AND PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS (at a special Mass or service)

**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 and all the families of the world. We ask you to grant us these gifts 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 and help us to be generous with our love and care for them in their old age. We ask this in Jesus' 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.

**Blessing of all elderly.** We pray for God's blessing of peace and contentment on all the elderly members of our families and community. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us of God's love and concern: "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you" (Is. 46:4 NIV).

## **MARFAM SUGGESTIONS FOR GRANDPARENTS' MONTH.**

This month, linked with the feastday of the grandparents of Jesus, Joachim and Ann on 26 July and the special Day for Grandparents and the Elderly on 27<sup>th</sup> July is an opportunity to reflect on the many different roles that grandparents play in our families, Church and society.

### **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 group of grandparents together to support them, show your concern for them, maybe loneliness, neglect, health or practical needs.

### **FOR GRANDCHILDREN**

- Pray for grandparents, thanking God for what they do for you, also praying for patience with them.
- 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.

### **FOR PARISHES, GROUPS.**

- Pray for grandparents at each Mass.
- Include grandparents month in weekly bulletin. Maybe share a story.
- One weekend or nearest to 26 July offer a special blessing for grandparents. See MARFAM prayer.
- Invite St Anne's sodality to care and support or grandparents.
- Organise a parish tea for grandparents and do some fun things,,,,,, invite oldest, youngest, "granny with the most" -- - grandchildren or talents etc what granddad taught me etc.

**July 1 Patriarchy.** Mrs Ndebele complained that the Old Testament is often quite patriarchal and almost always makes men the leaders and women as less capable. "At our age that isn't really true. We women may be inquisitive but also often more capable and energetic. Right? "Just think about the example of Lot and his wife. We've probably heard about them and the destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot negotiated a deal with the avenging angels and they were warned not to look back. As they were escaping the fire and destruction Lot's wife did stop and look back and so she was punished and turned into a pillar of salt. But was that really fair?"

*Scripture: The Lord overthrew those cities with their inhabitants and the produce of the soil. But Lot's wife looked back and she was turned into a pillar of salt. Read from Gene 19: 15-29. Pope Francis. The equal dignity of men and women makes us rejoice to see old forms of discrimination disappear and within families there is a growing reciprocity. AL54.*

**JUBILEE.** Saint Paul is a realist. He knows that life has its joys and sorrows, that love is tested amid trials, and that hope can falter in the face of suffering. Even so, he can write: "We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Rom 5:3-4 SNC4). **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 2. Married love in old age.** Ronald had been a catechist in his rural parish for many years and he liked to say that he had taught generations of children, including his own children and grandchildren. He shared in his family, "I feel like a real patriarch myself, just like Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. I'm also happy that my wife is still here with me. She is like Abraham's wife Sarah, still telling me what to do!" But he smiled at her. Mothibi, his grandson wanted to know. "Granddad wasn't Sarah complaining about the son of the slave woman. Was she jealous of the other woman? She wouldn't have known that Ishmael became the forefather of the Muslim religion?" "Yes, you young people now know more about that as there are so many more Muslims around then there were in my day. You'll have to teach me."

**Scripture:** *God said to Abraham, "Do not be displeased because of the boy and because of your slave woman. Whatever Sarah says to you, do as she tells you, for through Isaac shall your descendants be named. And I will make a nation of the son of the slave woman also, because he is your offspring."* Read From Genesis 21:8-20. **Pope Francis:** *In the course of every marriage physical appearances change but this hardly means that love and attraction need fade. We love the other person for who they are, not simply for their body. The marriage bond finds new forms of expression and constantly seeks new ways to grow in strength.* AL 164. **JUBILEE.** *Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring.* SNC2 **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 3. St Thomas,** The members of the BBT (Born before Technology) club sometimes invited a priest to offer Mass for them on facebook. In their sharing afterwards Paulina said, "when Father raises up the host at the consecration I always say those words, 'My Lord and My God.' They are words of worship but for me there is also that matter of belief. I pray that God will increase my faith." George added, "not having an opportunity for Mass face to face for us oldies these days is a real challenge to my faith." Jess laughed and said, "Talking of faith and seeing, as my sight has almost gone as I walk around I can hardly see and I do certainly have to go "by faith and trust."

**Scripture:** *Jesus said to Thomas, "put your finger here and see my hands, and put out your hand and place it in my side. Do not be faithless but believing."* Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." John20: 24-29. **Pope Francis.** *A family marked by loving trust come what may helps its members to be themselves and spontaneously reject deceit, falsehood and lies.* AL:115. *Each year sees the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species, which we will never know, which our children will never see, because they have been lost forever. The great majority become extinct for reasons related to human activity.* LS33. **JUBILEE.** *"I believe in life everlasting". So our faith professes. Christian hope finds in these words an essential foundation. For hope is "that theological virtue by which we desire... eternal life as our happiness". The Second Vatican Council says of hope that, "when people are deprived of this divine support, and lack hope in eternal life, their dignity is deeply impaired, as may so often be seen today.* SNC19. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 4. Arranged marriages.** Fatima and Clive were aware that their daughter had embarked on a relationship with a young man from a very different background. "As an Indian family just choosing anyone is against our culture, something that we have been taught, and told our own children too. We don't want to force her into marriage either these days, but we have tried to lead her to choose a partner that we can approve of. It is a sadness for us in our old age if our children lose their culture."

**Scripture:** *Abraham told his servant, "I will make you swear by the Lord the God of heaven and earth that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell but will go to my country and to my kindred and take a wife for my son Isaac."* Genesis 23-24. **Pope Francis.** *Some societies still maintain the practice of polygamy, in other places arranged marriages are an enduring practice. In many places the practice of living together before marriage is widespread, as well as cohabitation which excludes any intention to marry. Surely it is legitimate and right to reject the older forms of the traditional family marked by authoritarianism and even violence, yet this should not lead to a disparagement of marriage itself but rather to the rediscovery of its authentic meaning and its renewal.* AL 53.

**JUBILEE.** *With renewed passion, let us demonstrate care and concern for adolescents, students and young couples, the rising generation. Let us draw close to the young, for they are the joy and hope of the Church and of the world!* SNC 8. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 5. Favouritism.** Mama Agnes had always done her best to avoid favouritism with her own children and was aware that it should be so with the grandchildren too. “Is there division or favouritism in our family” she would ask “or do the children see it as that? Is the mother or father the controlling one or can they be seen to work in unison with one another? Just look at the story of Isaac and Rebecca and their sons Esau and Jacob in Genesis chapters 25 – 27 where mother and father each seemed to favour a different child. Rebecca acted dishonestly and robbed the older brother of his rights. Some biblical writers do condemn Rebecca's deceitful act. However, this passage shows that God can work out his plan of salvation in any circumstances.

**Scripture:** *Rebecca had been listening while Isaac was speaking to his son Esau. So when Esau went out Rebecca said to her son Jacob. “Listen I overheard your father talk to you brother Esau. Do what I tell you.”* From Gen 27: 1 – 40. **Pope Francis.** *Parents (and parent figures) influence the moral development of their children for better or for worse. They should take up this essential role and carry it out consciously, enthusiastically, reasonable and appropriately.* AL 259. **JUBILEE.** *For the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters as a sign of the fruitfulness of their love ensures a future for every society. This is a matter of hope: it is born of hope and it generates hope.* SNC 9. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 6. Sunday 14C.** At the beginning of the month for grandparents and the elderly Fr Patrick first called up those couples who had been married for 40 years and more and asked some of them to share how being faithful in good times and in bad had deepened their relationship with one another and with God. Mike and Margaret had been married 52 years and were well known as, unlike many couples who worked separately, they had worked together for years in marriage and family ministry. Fr thanked them and promised the congregation that he would call on other grandparents during the month, even those who lost a partner or had never had a husband or wife.

**Scripture:** *At that time the Lord appointed 72 others, and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to come. He said to them, “the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few.”* Luke 10:1-20. **Pope Francis:** *Although the body ages, it still expresses that personal identity that first won our heart. Even if others can no longer see the beauty of that identity, a spouse continues to see it with the eyes of love. The marriage bond finds new forms of expression and constantly seeks new ways to grow in strength.* AL 164. **JUBILEE.** *All of us, however, need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen 1:26), cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone. This leads to a narrow individualism and the loss of hope; it gives rise to a sadness that lodges in the heart and brings forth fruits of discontent and intolerance.* SNC 9. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 7. Dreams.** Some of the elderly women and men had experienced dreams over the years and this was considered good and even important in their culture, although they could not always find a way to interpret them. Are they messages from ancestors, from God or some special intercessor? The group asked Fr Vusi to share his understanding with them about the whole issue of dreams in the Bible and in their lives.

**Scripture:** *Jacob dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to heaven and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And the Lord stood above it and said, “I am the Lord the God of Abraham and Isaac. I am with you and will keep you wherever you go and will bring you back to this land. Read the whole story in Genesis 28.* **Pope Francis.** *Knowing and judging past events is the only way to build a meaningful future. Memory is necessary for growth.* AL 193. *How important it is to dream together. By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams are built together. Let us dream as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home.* FT 8. **JUBILEE.** *25. In our journey towards the Jubilee, let us return to Scripture and realize that it speaks to us in these words: “May we who have taken refuge in him be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us.* **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 8 Family conflict.** When the group shared on their experience as grandparents they sometimes shared their sadness that there is conflict in so many families. It might be between brothers, or sisters, between the grandchildren or in the

extended families. "Without me around to keep the peace I wonder if our family would fall apart," Joan said. Granny Joyce loved watching wrestling on TV and she shared, "When I look at the wrestling it does make me think about family in-fighting also with us in-laws. I know that wrestling is a strange sport, lots of show but in reality wrestling is also a test of strength and skill. Learning the lessons of life is a bit like a wrestling match, even with God. Like Esau and Jacob as we heard already."

**Scripture:** *A man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. Gen 32: 33. Pope Francis.* It is one thing to sense a sudden surge of hostility and another to give in to it, letting it take root in our hearts. "Be angry but do not sin, do not let the sun go down on your anger." How? Just by a small gesture, a little something and harmony within your family will be restored." If we must fight evil, so be it, but we must always say "no" to violence in the home." AL 104. JUBILEE. I encourage bishops to take advantage of the precious ministry of the Missionaries of Mercy, , especially by sending them wherever hope is sorely tested: to prisons, hospitals, and places where people's dignity is violated, poverty abounds and social decay is prevalent. In this Jubilee Year, may no one be deprived of the opportunity to receive God's forgiveness. SNC 23. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 9. Family feuds.** The group was discussing when you do something wrong how often it will come back "to bite you" as May said. "I've seen it happen in our family too, especially with the grandchildren. They think they don't need anything from anyone but then they wish they were on better terms with their cousins. Like in the story of Joseph and his brothers who had been jealous of him as he was his father's favourite. They wanted to kill him, but he was rescued and became famous as the governor of Egypt. The brothers then had to humble themselves before him and come begging when there was famine in their land.

**Scripture:** *"In truth we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the distress of his soul when he besought us and we would not listen. Therefore is this distress come upon us."* Gen 42:21. Read the long story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis chapters 37 to 50. **Pope Francis.** Family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a spirit of sacrifice. There is no family that does not know how selfishness, discord, tension and conflict violently attack and at times mortally wound its own communion. We recognise that being able to forgive others implies the liberating experience of understanding and forgiving ourselves. AL 106-7, JUBILEE. We, however, by virtue of the hope in which we were saved, can view the passage of time with the certainty that the history of humanity and our own individual history are not doomed to a dead end or a dark abyss, but directed to an encounter with the Lord of glory. As a result, we live our lives in expectation of his return and in the hope of living forever in him. In this spirit, we make our own the heartfelt prayer of the first Christians with which sacred Scripture ends: "Come, Lord Jesus!" ( Rev 22:20). SNC 19. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 10. Forgiveness.** The St Anne's sodality meeting was reflecting on the readings. "What makes some people able to forgive or be more forgiving than others?" Mrs Sekonya asked. "It is so sad that there are times when division continues for years and years. Over generations it can even grow into a real feud." "I was very happy when my Joel decided to be the one to make peace with his brothers after they had argued for a long time about the family farm." "I wonder if animals bear grudges too, like elephants are supposed to never forget."

**Scripture:** *"I am Joseph your brother whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because you sold me, for God sent me before you to preserve life."* Gen 45:5. From the story of Joseph and his brothers Genesis 37-50. **Pope Francis.** Being able to forgive others implies the liberating experience of understanding and forgiving ourselves. Often our mistakes and criticism we have received from others can lead to a loss of self-esteem. We need to learn to pray over our past history, forgive ourselves in order to have the same attitude towards others. This assumes that we have experienced being forgiven by God. AL 107-8. It is easy to be tempted to turn the page, to say that all these things happened long ago and we should look to the future. We can never move forward without remembering the past; we do not progress without an honest and unclouded memory. We need to keep alive the flame of collective conscience, bearing witness to succeeding generations to the horrors of what happened." FT249. **JUBILEE.** The sacrament of Reconciliation is not only a magnificent spiritual gift, but also a decisive, essential and fundamental step on our journey of faith. There, we allow the Lord to erase our sins, to heal our hearts, to raise us up, to embrace us and to reveal to us his tender and compassionate countenance. There is no better way to know God than to let him reconcile us to himself (cf. 2

*Cor 5:20) and savour his forgiveness. SNC 23 **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 11. Closeness.** Anna asked herself, "Why is it often only for funerals that families come together? Long ago families were more close and met more often also across the generations. In those days many sons and daughters and wives and kids and all the men experienced a strong sense of belonging. The pace of modern life and the fact that many move around much more make it more difficult to keep in touch regularly and physically. But social media and cellphones do make it easier to communicate at least in that way. The value of family belonging still exists.

**Scripture:** *Jacob and all his offspring he brought with him into Egypt. Joseph made ready his chariot and went to meet Israel his father, fell on his neck and wept. Israel (Jacob) then said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face and know that you are still alive."* Gen 46: 28-30 *From the story of Jacob, Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37 to 50. Pope Francis.* Our elderly are men and women, fathers and mothers, who came before us on our own road, in our own house, in our daily battle for a worthy life. "How I would like a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old". AL 191. In highly industrialized societies, where the number of elderly persons is growing even as the birth rate declines, they can be regarded as a burden. The care they require often puts a strain on their loved ones. The elderly who are vulnerable and dependent are at times unfairly exploited for economic advantage. AL 48. **JUBILEE.** Sacred Scripture states: "You have taught your people that the righteous must be kind, and you have filled your children with good hope, because you give repentance for sins, so that... when we are judged, we may expect mercy" ( Wis 12:19.22). In the words of Benedict XVI: "At the moment of judgement we experience and we absorb the overwhelming power of his love over all the evil in the world and in ourselves. The pain of love becomes our salvation and our joy". SNC 22 **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 12 Family roots.** In their own families the older people shared, "A number of our generation were immigrants, but today many of our children even of different races, emigrate to different countries to find a better life, to escape from conflict and war, for safety and security or for greater wealth. How strong are your ties to the actual land of your birth and does it really matter?" "I may still see myself as a Hollander, an Indian or Malawian, but I wonder whether our children and the grandchildren will feel the same connectedness."

**Scripture:** *Joseph said to his brothers. "I am about to die but God will visit you and bring you out of this land to the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. You shall carry up my bones from here."* Gen 50: 24-26 *Read from Genesis 37 to 50. Pope Francis.* Our contemporary experience of being orphans as a result of cultural discontinuity, uprootedness and the collapse of the certainties that shaped our lives, challenges us to make our families places where children can sink roots in the rich soil of a collective history. AL 193. The word culture points to something deeply embedded within a people, its most cherished convictions and its way of life. It has to do with their desire, interests and ultimately the way they live their lives. **FT216 JUBILEE..** What, then, will become of us after death? With Jesus, beyond this threshold we will find eternal life, consisting in full communion with God as we forever contemplate and share in his infinite love. All that we now experience in hope, we shall then see in reality. SNC 21. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 13 Sunday 15C.** Fr Patrick began his homily by asking, "How many Good Samaritans are there here in our parish. We may not all have had a chance to pick up someone along the road who has been hijacked but many of us will have made sacrifices for others, even for strangers when they could just have turned away. I want to thank especially the grandparents, mainly grannies I know, who have spent much of their lives, and their pension money, caring for grandchildren. Sometimes you have made a definite choice to help where you could, but for others too there was little choice as little ones were abandoned by their mothers and often by fathers or succumbed to different diseases. In these various ways we all have a chance to be a Good Samaritan.

**Scripture:** *Read Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Pope Francis:* Let us look to the example of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' parable summons us to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our respective nations and of the entire world, builders of a new social bond. This summons is ever new, yet it is grounded in a fundamental law of our being, we are called to direct society to the pursuit of the common good, its political and social order, its fabric of relations, its human goals. **FT 66, JUBILEE.** we live our lives in expectation of his return and in the hope of living forever in him. In this spirit,

*we make our own the heartfelt prayer of the first Christians with which sacred Scripture ends: "Come, Lord Jesus!" ( Rev 22:20). SNC 19. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 14 Xenophobia.** When the elderly men met from time to time their conversation was different from that of the women. "When I was reading the story of the Israelites in Egypt it made me think of the foreigners in our land. Things were very different then." "Is it really? Is xenophobia not a form of oppression of the foreigners also when we make them work so hard for us." "And we do that in many ways, as they often get paid less than locals." It sparked off quite a debate about the history of foreign labour and of justice, dignity and rights.

**Scripture:** *The Egyptians were in dread of the sons of Israel. So they made the people serve with rigour and made their lives bitter with hard service. Exodus 1:13-14* **Pope Francis.** *Migration is another sign of the times to be faced and understood in terms of its negative effects on family life. In accompanying migrants the Church needs a specific pastoral programme addressed not only to families that migrate but also those family members who stay behind. AL 46. JUBILEE. Exiles, displaced persons and refugees, whom international tensions force to emigrate in order to avoid war, violence and discrimination, ought to be guaranteed security and access to employment and education, the means they need to find their place in a new social context. SNC13. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 15. Population control.** Mr Naicker had been in Justice and Peace groups for many years. He told his family, "If you think about it the Egyptians were forcing birth control on the Israelites way back then. Nowadays influential nations are promoting that for poorer nations, even tying aid packages to birth control or reproductive health as they call it." There wasn't much discussion. The older members did not understand this situation fully but Maysie, a sociology student, really understood how population control has been a weapon and oppressive force used throughout history."

**Scripture:** *"Throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrews, but you may let all the girls live." The woman conceived and bore a son and when she saw that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. Read Exodus 1:22- 29.* **Pope Francis.** *The decline in population due to a mentality against having children and promoted by the world politics of reproductive health creates a situation in which the relationship between generations is no longer ensured but also the danger that over time this decline will lead to economic impoverishment and a loss of hope in the future. AL 42. Instead of resolving the problems of the poor and thinking how the world can be different some only propose a reduction in the birth rate. Developing countries face forms of international pressure which makes economic assistance contingent on policies of reproductive health. To blame population growth instead of extreme and selective consumerism on the part of some is one way of refusing to face the issues. LS50 JUBILEE. Looking to the future with hope also entails having enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it. Sadly, in many situations this is lacking. A first effect of this is the loss of the desire to transmit life. A number of countries are experiencing an alarming decline in the birthrate as a result of today's frenetic pace, fears about the future, the lack of job security and adequate social policies, and social models whose agenda is dictated by the quest for profit rather than concern for relationships. SNC9 . **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 16. God talk.** In a family discussion Amy asked, "Gran, I see Moses as a real 'larger than life' character. Nothing simple or ordinary about him, from his birth to his death." "Yes, there are people like that, some good people but also some evil ones. Think of St Francis, Mahatma Ghandi, JF Kennedy, Nelson Mandela and Hitler, not even to mention any other local figures. Do you think God communicates with his people in unusual ways too, giving them tasks to perform or his future plans for them?" Basil followed on with, "Or do evil people communicate with the devil? We know there is a spirit world. It kind of sounds blasphemous, but could it be true?"

**Scripture:** *Read Ex 3:1-10. When the Lord saw Moses coming over to look God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses."* **Pope Francis.** *Many families show us that it is possible to approach the last stages of life by emphasizing the importance of a person's sense of fulfilment and participation in the Lord's paschal mystery. A number of elderly people are cared for in Church institutions where materially and spiritually they can live in a peaceful family atmosphere. AL48 JUBILEE. The Jubilee indulgence, thanks to the power of prayer, is intended in a particular way for those who have gone before us, so that they may obtain full mercy. Indeed, the indulgence is a way of discovering the unlimited nature of God's mercy. Not by chance, for the ancients, the terms "mercy" and "indulgence" were interchangeable, as expressions of the*

*fullness of God's forgiveness, which knows no bounds. SNC23. . **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 17** Amy and her gran continued their conversation. "Knowing someone by name does in a way give you a sense of power of them, as well as a sense of reverence and respect. Knowing someone's name does make for a stronger relationship than just knowing about them. We even go around name dropping to show some power." "Like when you say, "When I was having lunch with the Premier I told him that the pot holes in our town are a disgrace." "But never mind that, did you know that the Jewish people even now don't use God's name as they see that as very disrespectful."

**Scripture:** *Read Ex 3:11-17. God replied, 'I am who am. This is what you shall tell the Israelites. I AM sent me to you. " Ex 3:14. Pope Francis. If a family is centred on Christ he will unify and illumine its entire life. Moments of pain and difficulty will be experienced in union with the Lord's cross. Moments of joy, relaxation, celebration and even sexuality can be experienced as a sharing in the full life of the resurrection. AL 317 The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. LS 240 JUBILEE: In our journey towards the Jubilee, let us return to Scripture and realize that it speaks to us in these words: "May we who have taken refuge in him be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. SNC 25. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 18.** The elderly ladies knew their Bible quite well so Joan wanted to do a little quiz with them. "Who knows the 9 plagues that God sent to the Egyptians to try to persuade them to let the Israelites go?" Veronica knew but added what she thought was more relevant. "How important are the details of religious practices to people these days? I believe one should commemorate the spirit of an event and then try to relive it in a present-day setting?" Some agreed that rituals can lose their meaning, others did not. All accepted that the actual content of a celebration has important symbolic meaning but really only if people understand the meaning of the symbol.

**Scripture:** *"Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the tenth day of the month they shall take, every man, a lamb according their father's house, a lamb for a household. Kill the lamb in the evening and eat the flesh that night, roasted with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. From Ex 11:10 to 12:14. Pope Francis. We must be bold enough to discover new signs and new symbols, new flesh to embody and communicate the word and forms of beauty which are valued in different cultural settings. EG167. Life for all its confrontations is the art of encounter. I have frequently called for the growth of a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions. Each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable. FT215. JUBILEE: I would mention grandparents, who represent the passing on of faith and wisdom to the younger generation. May they find support in the gratitude of their children and the love of their grandchildren, who discover in them their roots and a source of understanding and encouragement. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 19.** With a name like Abrahams the family had been Jewish for generations, but like many some of them had converted to Christianity somewhere along the way. At the same time the Jewish feasts, especially the Passover, was precious to them, especially the elderly who appreciated how it had become part of Christian tradition too. Their three generations regularly joined their Jewish friends and their family to share the Passover meal.

**Scripture:** *The time that the sons of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. And at the end all the hosts of the Lord went out of the land of Egypt. This was a night of watching by the Lord, so this same night is a night of watching kept to the Lord by all the sons of Israel throughout their generations. Exodus 12:37-42. Pope Francis: The Second Vatican Council stated that lay spirituality will take its particular character from the circumstances of married and family life. AL313. From our faith experience and from the wisdom accumulated over centuries, but also from lessons learned from our many weaknesses and failures, we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. FT274. JUBILEE. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises. .SNC 25. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 20. Sunday 16C.** Fr Patrick reminded the congregation that there would be a special gathering of all the elderly after Mass on Sunday 26-27<sup>th</sup>, at the feast of Joachim and Ann. They would discuss the role of grandparents and of all the elderly. "After all you don't choose to be a grandparent. It's what your children do to you!" he laughed. "But seriously, we do appreciate how much work is done by these grannies, women and the sodalities too. We thank you. Those are the Marthas in the parish. But what about the Mary's, as we hear in the gospel? Is sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to him and absorbing his message more important? And what would we expect the grandfathers to do? I leave you to think and share with one another for yourselves. Tell me later what you think."

**Scripture:** *Read Luke 10:38-44. "Martha you are anxious and troubled about many things. One thing is needed. Mary has chosen the good portion."* **Pope Francis:** *The fraternal and communal demands of family life are an incentive to growth in openness of heart and thus to an ever fuller encounter with the Lord.* AL316 **Jubilee.** *We live our lives in expectation of his return and in the hope of living forever in him. In this spirit, we make our own the heartfelt prayer of the first Christians with which sacred Scripture ends: "Come, Lord Jesus!" ( Rev 22:20).* SNC 19. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 21. Making choices.** "Procrastinating and changing our mind are what many of us do much of the time. Give us some examples," Phumla challenged the others. "I missed out on a job because I couldn't decide." "I studied for 2 years and then decided to change courses." Looking at Gran, Granddad shared, "I should have married her when we first met, 45 years ago, rather than so late in life, when both of us had been married to someone else. Do we rely enough on God in our decision making so that we can make good choices, so as to give God glory?"

**Scripture:** *In those days when the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed. "What is this we have done that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he pursued the sons of Israel as they went forth and overtook them as they camped by the sea.* Exodus 14:5-18 **Pope Francis.** *Trust in God recognises God's light shining beyond the darkness. It enables a relationship to be free, without a need to control, dominate or oppress.* AL 110. *The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable development, for we know that things can change.* LS13. **JUBILEE 25.** *The image of the anchor is eloquent; it helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus.* **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 22<sup>nd</sup>. St Mary Magdalen.** "My granddaughter chose Mary Magdalen for her confirmation patron. It seemed a bit odd, but I did ask her why. You know what she said? 'There are so many people out there, good and bad ones. Mary Magdalen may have been a prostitute. We don't know why, but she, more than the others, was open to hearing Jesus' message and became one of his closest friends. I always want to be open to hearing Jesus, no matter what happens to me in future,' she said.

**Scripture:** *Jesus explained, "The seed that was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it and bear fruit.* Matt 13:18-23. **Pope Francis..** *Christ has taken unto himself this material world and now is intimately present to each being, surrounding it with his affection and penetrating it with his light. May the power and the light of the grace we have received be evident in our relationship to other creatures and the world around us.* LS 221.

**JUBILEE:** *All our actions need to be put under the "political rule" of the heart. In this way, our aggressiveness and obsessive desires will find rest in the greater good that the heart proposes and in the power of the heart to resist evil.* DN 13. **Act and pray.** *For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 23.** Grandma Beatrice had become very health-conscious. She also worried a lot about the grandchildren's eating habits as they grew older, especially Jocelyn who seemed to be sick too often. "You should eat properly," she told the girl, "I better feed you at least once a week and teach you, so you don't depend on take-aways after work." "Thanks gran, I do appreciate your concern, but I'm really Ok" was the reply as she muttered under her breath. "I love her but she is such a fuss-pot."

**Scripture:** *The Lord said to Moses, "I have heard the murmurings of the sons of Israel, say to them 'at twilight you shall eat flesh and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.'* Exodus 16:1-15.

**Pope Francis:** *"Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways. You shall eat the fruit of the labour of your hands; you shall be happy and it shall go well with you.* AI 8. *In the home where husband and wife are seated at table,*

children appear at their side like olive shoots, full of energy and vitality. AL 14. **JUBILEE:** Echoing the age-old message of the prophets, the Jubilee reminds us that the goods of the earth are not destined for a privileged few, but for everyone. The rich must be generous and not avert their eyes from the faces of their brothers and sisters in need. SNC16. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 24. God's presence.** Granny Lerato talked sometimes about her dreams, seeing and hearing God and also remembering her dream when she wakes up. "That's weird," her granddaughter said, "and scary too. I don't know that I would want to experience that." "Dreams are part of our culture you know," Granny explained. Others shared how they feel God's presence in prayer, sometimes in the beauty of nature or its awesome forces and in the closeness of relationships, even when there are difficulties there. "The important thing is to be open to God, remember that God is present. In that way we can really grow to love God more and learn to listen to his voice."

**Scripture:** *The Lord said to Moses, "Behold I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe you for ever."* Exodus 19:9-10. **Pope Francis.** Family prayer is a special way of expressing and strengthening faith. A few minutes each day, a few simple words, asking for help in showing love, giving thanks for life and blessings and asking Our Lady for her protection. AL 318 *An expression of attentiveness to God is when we stop and give thanks to God before and after meals. This beautiful custom, a moment of blessing reminds us of our dependence on God for life.* LS 227 **JUBILEE/DN 16 :** *The heart of Jesus, living and present, our mind, enlightened by the Spirit, grows in the understanding of his words and our will is moved to put them into practice. Only the heart is capable of setting our other powers and passions, and our entire person, in a stance of reverence and loving obedience before the Lord.* **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 25. Commandments.** Before they started their prayer meeting they shared, "We hardly hear the word command these days, do we? Is that part of our "rights culture? I can't even command the grandchildren to go to the shop for me." "It's like laws too. Do we really still respect "the rule of law?" "Laws and commandments are meant to be for the common good and for order in society. Just go through the 10 Commandments and you will see. We used to know them off by heart. If we don't obey them there will be the disorder instead of order, as can clearly be seen."

**Scripture:** *Read Exodus 20:1-17 the 10 Commandments. In those days God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. You shall have no other gods before me."* Exodus 20:1. **Pope Francis** One authoritative source of oversight and coordination is the law, which lays down rules for admissible conduct in the light of the common good. The limits which a healthy, mature and sovereign society must impose are those related to foresight and security, the elimination of corruption and reduction of pollution by business activities. LS 177 **JUBILEE.** The first sign of hope should be the desire for peace in the world. May the Jubilee remind us that those who are peacemakers will be called "children of God" (Mt 5:9). The need for peace challenges us all, and demands that concrete steps be taken. May diplomacy be tireless in its commitment to seek, with courage and creativity, every opportunity to undertake negotiations aimed at a lasting peace. SNC 8. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 26. St Joachim and St Anne.** We know almost nothing about Mary's parents, the grandparents of Jesus except what is in one of the apocryphal gospels. Maybe they lived in the same village and Jesus could go and visit after his lessons. Maybe they did grandparent things, played a game, told stories and watched as he grew up. Maybe they were there to support Mary in the very difficult times that lay before her. Creating scripture imaginative meditations about them is a good thing as it helps us see with different eyes and understand things in a different way.

**Scripture:** *Let us praise the famous and our fathers in their generation. These were men of mercy whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten; their prosperity will remain with their descendants and their inheritance with their children's children.* Sirach 44: 1, 10-15. **Pope Francis:** One fruit that we are called to bring forth is protecting the world. "Our grandparents held us in their arms and carried us on their knees. Now is the time for us to carry on our own knees – with practical assistance or with prayer alone – not only our own grandchildren but also the many frightened grandchildren whom we have not yet met and who may be fleeing from war, or suffering its effects. Let us hold in our hearts – like St Joseph, who was a loving and attentive father – the little ones of Ukraine, of Afghanistan, of South Sudan. From Message for Grandparents and Elderly 2022. To which must be added the little ones of Gaza, Israel, Iran and more. **JUBILEE/DN22.** We need only to see and listen to the elderly women – from both sides – who are at the mercy of the devastating conflicts. It is heart-breaking to see them mourning for their murdered grandchildren, or longing to die themselves after losing the homes where they spent their entire lives. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

The Holy Father has chosen the theme of the Fifth World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly, to be held this year on Sunday 27 July: "Blessed are those who have not lost hope" (cf. *Sir* 14:2).

**July 27. Sunday 17C. Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.** Fr Patrick said, "The theme Pope Francis chose for the 2025 special day for Grandparents and the Elderly is "Blessed are those who have not lost hope." Isn't that a nice clever positive choice. When Pope Francis gave us *Amoris Laetitia*, his letter about the family, he did also include the elderly as well as grandparents who may not be very old at all. So their needs can be quite different but they certainly both need to be cared for, treated with love and avoid becoming alone and lonely, or a burden to others especially their children or grandchildren. Much of the time it is the other way round, with grandmothers mainly spending their time, energy and money caring rather than being cared for. Today more grandparents live alone and some live with their children, as was much more common before. Wherever they are they all need to be remembered from time to time and encouraged not to lose hope during this special Jubilee year. Today is such a time, and we can think of all grandparents, also in honour of the grandparents of Jesus, as well as older people too.

**Scripture:** *Read and reflect on Luke's version of the Our Father. When you pray say, Our Father. Luke 11:1-13.* **Pope Francis:** *The elderly who are vulnerable and dependent are at times unfairly exploited simply for economic advantage. AL48. In old age they can still bear fruit." Ps 92:15) the theme for the second World Day. They run counter to what the world thinks about this stage of life, but also to the attitude of grim resignation shown by some of us elderly people, who harbour few expectations for the future. A long life – so the Bible teaches – is a blessing, and the elderly are not outcasts to be shunned, but living signs of the goodness of God, who bestows life in abundance. Blessed is the house where an older person lives! Blessed is the family that honours the elderly! Blessed are they who do not lose hope." 5<sup>th</sup> World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in Jubilee year 2025. A society that has no room for the elderly or discards them because they create problems has a deadly virus. AL 193 **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

#### **EXTRACTS FROM US CATHOLIC CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS.. "THE BLESSING OF AGES" Pastoral Message on Growing Older Within the Faith Community.** An extensive statement dealing with many areas of care for the elderly.

1. Older people are as diverse, if not more so than other generational groups.
2. They are women and men; they are single (never-married, widowed, separated, or divorced), married, religious and clergy; they are from all races and ethnic backgrounds; they have a wide range of abilities and interests. They can differ in age from each other by twenty or more years. They defy stereotyping. They challenge the faith community to be as inclusive as possible in parish programming—for example, by remembering that older men, less numerous than older women, may need different types of service and social activities.
3. Older people need a mix of activities that connect them with each other as well as the larger faith community.

**July 28 Anger and frustration.** Old Mrs Petersen had been a teacher for more than 40 years and still loved to think about the "good old days" when kids listened and didn't answer back. "Yes, but I'm sure there were times too when they made you really angry and you wanted to throw things at them. Like a blackboard duster!" "What's that?" Peter wanted to know. "A sign of the times I would say!"

**Scripture:** *Moses came down the mountain with the two tablets of the commandments in his hands. As he drew near the camp he saw the calf they had made and the dancing. Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets down and broke them on the base of the mountain. Ex 32:19. Read Exodus 32. Pope Francis.* A child who does something wrong must be corrected but never treated as an enemy or an object on which to take out one's own frustrations. Al 269.

**JUBILEE.** Signs of hope are also needed by those who are the very embodiment of hope, namely, the young. Sadly, they often see their dreams and aspirations frustrated. We must not disappoint them, for the future depends on their enthusiasm. SNC8. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.

**July 29. St Martha.** It seems that St Martha, the happy housekeeper, has somewhat of a bad name, maybe because Jesus said that her sister Mary who sat at his feet listening to him had chosen the better part. But many of us Martha's feel fulfilled doing what we do. There can even be between the different sodalities competition to do the most "charitable work." There are many of us, in the church and volunteer projects and in our families, good women, often older women,

who cook and bake and clean and sew. We all agree those are important and very necessary tasks. And yet it still seems as if Jesus put a higher value on non-material things.

**Scripture:** *A woman name Martha welcomed Jesus into her house. She had a sister called Mary, who sat down at the feet of the Lord and listened to him. Now Martha who was distracted with all the serving said, "Lord do you not care that my sister is leaving me to do the serving all by myself? Please tell her to help me." But the Lord answered, "Martha, Martha you worry and fret about so many things and yet few are needed, indeed only one. It is Mary who has chosen the better, part. It is not to be taken from her." Luke 10:38-42* **Pope Francis:** *Listening to the elderly tell their stories is good for children and young people, it makes them feel connected to the living history of their families. AL 193. JUBILEE/DN 31* The Second Vatican Council *teaches that, "every one of us needs a change of heart; we must set our gaze on the whole world and look to those tasks we can all perform together in order to bring about the betterment of our race". For "the imbalances affecting the world today are in fact a symptom of a deeper imbalance rooted in the human heart] In pondering the tragedies afflicting our world, the Council urges us to return to the heart. It explains that human beings "by their interior life, transcend the entire material universe; they experience this deep interiority when they enter into their own heart, where God, who probes the heart, awaits them, and where they decide their own destiny in the sight of God". **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 30.** Patience announced to her group with a sense of pride. "Although my daughter was a single mom and had a tough time I feel very proud of my granddaughter Carol. She has been a very committed Catholic as a teenager, hasn't slept around and was lucky to meet this super guy Peter, who was the same. They did marry quite young and I started getting worried when no babies arrived for a while. After two years when they came to show me their first little girl I was really struck by the look of wonder and awe on their faces at the sight of this little miracle. It just made me think they had been talking with God."

**Scripture:** *When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of the covenant in his hand he did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Exodus 34:29-35.* **Pope Francis:** *Children once born begin to receive, along with nourishment and care the spiritual gift of knowing with certainty that they are loved. This love is shown through the gift of their personal name, the sharing of language, looks of love and the brightness of a smile. In this way they learn that the beauty of human relationships touches our soul, seeks our freedom, accepts the difference of others, recognises and respects them as a partner in dialogue. Such is love and it contains a spark of God's love. AL 172.* **JUBILEE.** *Surely we need to "abound in hope" (cf. Rom 15:13), so that we may bear credible and attractive witness to the faith and love that dwell in our hearts; that our faith may be joyful and our charity enthusiastic; and that each of us may be able to offer a smile, a small gesture of friendship, a kind look, a ready ear, a good deed, in the knowledge that, in the Spirit of Jesus, these can become, for those who receive them, rich seeds of hope. SNC 18. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*

**July 31.** "When I was a child we were often encouraged to "pay a visit" and pop into church and say hello to Jesus in the tabernacle. "Is that only for Catholics?" Mrs Jansen asked, "I was brought up as a Methodist and we never did that." "We believe that Jesus is truly present there in a special way in the consecrated hosts that are kept there. Just like in the Old Testament Tabernacle for the Jewish people."

**Scripture:** *Moses erected the tabernacle, he laid its base and set it up in frames, its poles and pillars and spread the tent over it. He brought the Ark of the Covenant into the Tabernacle. Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled it. In the daytime the cloud of the Lord was seen whereas at night fire was seen in the cloud. Exodus 40: 16-21.* **Pope Francis:** *We can say that alongside revelation contained in sacred Scripture, there is a divine manifestation in the blaze of the sun and the fall of night. Paying attention to this we learn to see ourselves in relation to all other creatures. I express myself in expressing the world. In my effort to decipher the sacredness of the world, I explore my own. LS 85* **JUBILEE:** *The Jubilee will thus be a Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade, our hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relationships, in international relations, and in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation. May the witness of believers be for our world a leaven of authentic hope, a harbinger of new heavens and a new earth (cf. 2 Pet 3:13), where men and women will dwell in justice and harmony, in joyful expectation of the fulfilment of the Lord's promises. SNC 25. **Act and pray.** For the needs of families, especially grandparents and the elderly.*