

THE ELDERLY HAVE EARNED RESPECT IN ALL CULTURES

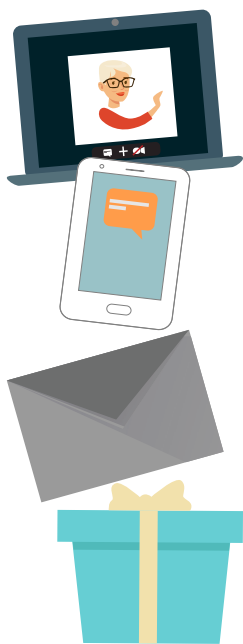
“When a grandfather dies, a whole library is buried with him” (African proverb).

“Our grandmother used to tell us stories of our dreamtime. Much of our sense of being part of a people comes from her” (Aboriginal parent).

Children and the elderly build the future of peoples: children because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives

Pope Francis - Angelus, Rio de Janeiro, 26 July 2013, quoting Aparecida Document , 447.

Long Distance (Tech-savvy) Grandparents



Whats App, Facetime, Zoom...

...and a host of other apps are good but prepare for them. Have a news item or interesting fact to pass on at each video-chat. Put a prompt in your calendar to remind you at a regular time.

Texting is quick...

... and perfect for passing on jokes, today's photo or interesting quotes. Get your grandkids to show you how to include emojis and gifs to take it up a level.

Email is so easy...

... and perfect for sharing an attachment from a store of photos, news items or interesting family history.

Snail mail is slow...

...yet unsurpassed in communicating your personal attention and delivering the delight of a physical letter or package.



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Celebrating Grandparents and the Elderly

Pope Francis has proclaimed the First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, to be held on Sunday 25 July 2021 (Feast of Sts Anne & Joachim, grandparents to Jesus).

In announcing this, Pope Francis has chosen the theme *“I am with you always”* (cf. Mt 28:20) to express the closeness of the Lord and the Church to every older person, especially in these challenging pandemic times.

This promise of closeness and hope is one that can be shared by young and old alike. Not only are young people called upon to be present in the lives of grandparents and older people, but the elderly also have a mission – to pass on their faith.

Each of us, whether married or single, religious or priest, share this mission. Let's reflect on the particular ways in which this is lived out by grandparents and the elderly.

THE OLDER GENERATION: THEY'VE 'SEEN IT ALL BEFORE'

In the confusion of a pandemic, older people are the ones with the longest experience of unpredictable and challenging times. They are survivors whose experiences often include migration, war, droughts, bushfires, financial recessions, business failures, to name just some. They can provide perspective in the face of uncertainty.



GRANDPARENTS: OUR PERSONAL BANK OF MEMORIES

Memories help us understand who we are. And when planning for the future, we call on our memories to help us to prepare. The elderly often can remember their own parents and grandparents as well as knowing the two generations that follow them. Only **they** carry with them the collective experience of five generations. That's a huge wealth on which to draw.

THE ELDERLY: GOOD FOR MENTAL HEALTH

The mental health of young people is enhanced by knowing their place in their own particular family's history. In the early days of Canberra, as young families moved there for work, a sociological challenge was the relative lack of the older generation. In today's world, the range of contacts of youth are hugely increased by modern social media but very often these are limited to their own narrow age range. The presence of the elderly can help to reduce that imbalance.

THE ELDERLY ALSO BENEFIT FROM THE YOUNG: IT WORKS BOTH WAYS.

Both generations benefit from each other. As one grandmother said, 'We enjoy playing kids' games that we would never play with friends of our age. And we enjoy taking the grandkids to movies that we would never watch on our own. So while we're teaching them things, they're helping us to keep abreast of new trends and new technologies. They keep us young.'



CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION

An international movement with the mission 'to help grandparents pass on the faith and keep prayer at the heart of family life'. It encourages grandparents at a local parish level to come together to help one another to pass on the faith. For more information: contact Ron & Mavis Pirola | rm.pirola@marriagerc.org

We know very little about Sts Joachim and Anne. Whatever their names or the facts of their lives, we can assume that Mary was raised in a Jewish family home, faithful to God and to the religious traditions of her day such that she was led to respond wholeheartedly to God's request with faith, "Let it be done to me as you will."



SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE,
PRAY FOR US; PRAY FOR OUR
GRANDCHILDREN WHO ARE SO DEAR TO US

GRANDPARENTS HAVE THE GIFT OF 'PRESENCE'

Grandparents often have time to 'do' things, like driving kids to school or sport, playing games or teaching them to cook or build things, reading stories. But their main gift is their presence - just 'being around'. Their own love and care and their observations are all part of creating a culture of security and care for the younger generations.



WHEN GRANDCHILDREN DON'T PRACTICE THE FAITH

The loss of faith practice of grandchildren can be a deep source of sorrow. Pray. Pray with trust daily for each grandchild by name.

Tell grandchildren you are praying for them, especially that they come to know the love of Jesus.

Pray for forgiveness for the times you haven't been the best grandparent.

Preach without words - be the kind of person you want your grandchildren to become: trustworthy, respectful, generous.

Be joyful - talk about the good that others do, eg care for the poor, respectful of others.