

# World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly

## 24<sup>th</sup> July 2022



World Day  
for Grandparents  
and the Elderly  
2022



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# **World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly**

## **Mass Text**

### **24<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

Pope Francis has established a World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which will take place for the second time on Sunday 24 July 2022 on the theme 'In old age they will still bear fruit (Ps 92:15)'. The World Day was established to be celebrated on the Sunday closest to the Feast Day of Saints Joachim and Anne on 26 July.

*The following text does not replace the Solemnity of the Sunday and can be adapted for use in the celebration of a Service of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly.*

#### **Collect**

O God, who by the grace of the Holy Spirit  
have filled the hearts of your faithful with gifts of charity,  
grant health of mind and body to your servants,  
for whom we beseech your mercy,  
that they may love you with all their strength  
and, with all their love, do what is pleasing to you.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

### **LITURGY OF THE WORD**

#### **First Reading**

A reading from the book of Ecclesiasticus

Ecc. 44:1, 10-15

Let us now sing the praises of famous men,  
our ancestors in their generations.  
But these also were godly men,  
whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten;  
their wealth will remain with their descendants,  
and their inheritance with their children's children.  
Their descendants stand by the covenants;

their children also, for their sake.  
Their offspring will continue for ever,  
and their glory will never be blotted out.  
Their bodies are buried in peace,  
but their name lives on generation after generation.  
The assembly declares their wisdom,  
and the congregation proclaims their praise.

The word of the Lord.

### **Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps. 92: 1-3, 12-15**

**Response:           How great are your works, O Lord!**

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praises to your name, O Most High;  
to declare your steadfast love in the morning,  
and your faithfulness by night,  
to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre. **R./**

The righteous flourish like the palm tree  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
They are planted in the house of the LORD;  
they flourish in the courts of our God. **R./**

They still bear fruit in old age;  
they are ever full of sap and green,  
to declare that the LORD is upright;  
he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him. **R./**

## Second Reading

A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians 4:10, 16-18

We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our body.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Even though our outer self is continuing to decay, our inner self is being renewed day by day. Our temporary light afflictions are preparing for us an incomparable weight of eternal glory, for our eyes are fixed not on what is seen but rather on that which cannot be seen. What is visible is transitory; what is invisible is eternal.

The word of the Lord.

## Prayers of the Faithful

### Celebrant:

Trusting in a God of faithfulness, we bring our prayers before Him.

1. We pray for the Church: may the lives and steadfast witness of the elderly bear witness to the generous love of the Lord. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
2. We pray for the elderly – bless them with good health, an active mind and the energy and enthusiasm to live life in all its fullness. May they be blessed with companionship and friendship and enriched by the love of their family. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
3. For married couples celebrating a long and fruitful marriage: daily renew the grace of your love within them. May they continue to know the joy of your presence in their work and the strength of your presence in their need. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

4. We pray for those in ill-health; may your steadfast presence be source of hope and encouragement. Strengthen them in their weakness and pain, and support them in times of difficulty. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
  
5. We pray for all who have retired from full time work. In gratitude for the contribution they made in the workplace, communities, and organisations. Bless them as they transition into retirement. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
  
6. For grandparents: may they know how to accompany their families with wisdom and may they learn to pass on the treasure of faith to their grandchildren and to the younger generations. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
  
7. We pray for children and grandchildren. May they always respect the elderly, value the wisdom of their years, and follow their example of faithfulness and love. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
  
8. ‘The elderly show us the tenderness, wisdom and love of God’, Pope Francis said. Enable them to love freely, instruct wisely, and find strength in frailty. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**
  
9. We pray for all who have died; we remember especially grandparents and all those we loved. May they be at peace with God in his heavenly home. We pray to the Lord. **R. Lord, hear our prayer.**

**Celebrant:** Heavenly Father, your steadfast presence has guided the course of humanity through the ages.

### **Prayer over the Offerings**

Have mercy, O Lord, on your servants,  
for whom we offer your majesty this sacrifice of praise,  
that through these holy gifts  
they may obtain the grace of heavenly blessing  
and the glory of eternal happiness.  
Through Christ our Lord.

### **Prayer after Communion**

We pray, O Lord, that in receiving your Sacrament  
we may experience help in mind and body,  
so that, kept safe in both,  
we may glory in the fullness of heavenly healing.  
Through Christ our Lord.

### **Solemn Blessing**

May the God of all consolation order your days in his peace  
and grant you the gifts of his blessing.

**R. Amen**

May he free you always from every distress  
and confirm your hearts in his love.

**R. Amen**

So that on this life's journey  
you may be effective in good works,  
rich in the gifts of hope, faith and charity,  
and may come happily to eternal life.

**R. Amen**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**R. Amen**

## **BLESSING ON A LONG LIFE**

God of mercy,

You have given your children the gift of long life,

And they ask for your blessing.

Let them feel the tenderness and strength of your presence.

As they look back to the past,

let them rejoice in your mercy.

As they look to the future,

May they persevere in hope that does not fade.

To you be praise and glory for ever.

**Amen**

## **PRAYER FOR THE SECOND WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY**

I give thanks to you, Lord,  
For the blessing of a long life  
For, to those who take refuge in You, Grant always to bear fruit.

Forgive, O Lord,  
Resignation and disillusionment, But forsake me not  
When my strength declines.

Teach me to look with hope  
To the future you give me,  
To the mission you entrust to me And to sing your praises without end.

Make me a tender craftsman  
Of Your revolution,  
To guard with love my grandchildren  
And all the little ones who seek shelter in You.

Protect, O Lord, Pope Francis  
And grant Thy Church  
To deliver the world from loneliness. Direct our steps in the way of peace.

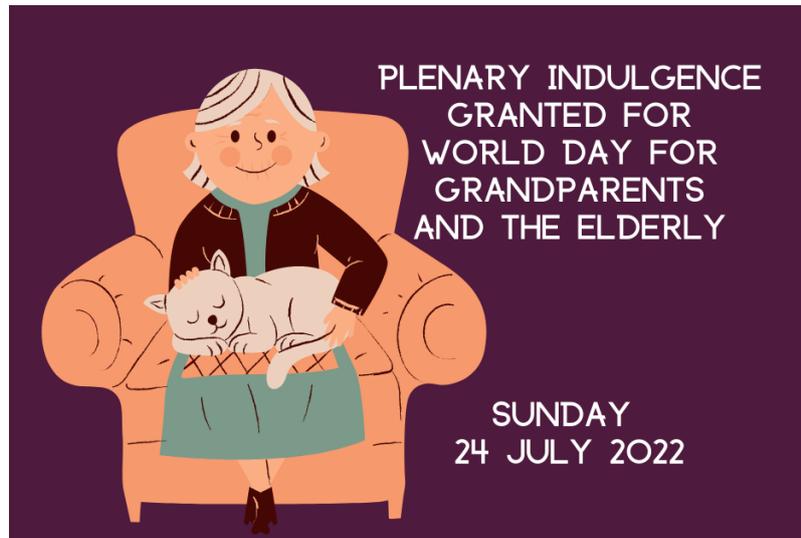
Amen.

## **POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT XVI'S PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS**

Lord Jesus,  
you were born of the Virgin Mary,  
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.  
Look with love on grandparents the world over.  
Protect them! They are a source of enrichment  
for families, for the Church and for all of society.  
Support them! As they grow older,  
may they continue to be for their families  
strong pillars of Gospel faith,  
guardians of noble domestic ideals,  
living treasuries of sound religious traditions.  
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,  
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits  
of their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus,  
help families and society  
to value the presence and role of grandparents.  
May they never be ignored or excluded,  
but always encounter respect and love.  
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed  
in all the years of life which you give them.  
Mary, Mother of all the living,  
keep grandparents constantly in your care,  
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,  
and by your prayers, grant that all families  
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,  
where you await all humanity  
for the great embrace of life without end. Amen!

## PLENARY INDULGENCE FOR THE WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY 2022



In a decree published on Monday 30 May, the Apostolic Penitentiary – the Vatican tribunal responsible for issues relating to mercy and the forgiveness of sins in the Church – announced several grants of indulgences for those taking part in the second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which this year falls on Sunday 24 July.

A plenary indulgence, which may also be obtained in suffrage for the souls in Purgatory, is granted:

- to grandparents, the elderly, and the faithful who, motivated by a true spirit of penance and charity, will participate on July 24th in the solemn celebration that Pope Francis will preside over in the Vatican, or in the various functions that take place throughout the world;
- to the faithful who, on the same day, devote adequate time to visit, in person or virtually through the media, their disabled brothers and sisters in need or in difficulty (such as the sick, the abandoned, or the disabled)
- to the sick elderly and to all those who, unable to leave their homes for a serious reason, will unite spiritually with the sacred services of the World Day, offering to the Merciful God their prayers, the pains and sufferings of their lives, especially while the words of the Supreme Pontiff and the various celebrations are broadcast through the media

The grants of indulgence, “from the heavenly treasures of the Church,” are made under the usual conditions of sacramental Confession, Eucharistic confession, and prayers for the intentions of the Pope.

In the decree announcing the indulgences, the Apostolic Penitentiary also “firmly requests” priests to make themselves available, “with a ready and generous spirit,” to hear confessions so that “this opportunity to attain divine grace through the power of the Keys of the Church may be more easily realised through pastoral charity.”

Plenary Indulgence for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2022  
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(Source: [www.catholicbishops.ie](http://www.catholicbishops.ie))

## **MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE SECOND WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY**

24 July 2022

"In old age they will still bear fruit" (Psalm 92:15)

Dear Friends,

"In old age they will still bear fruit" (Ps 92:15). These words of the Psalmist are glad tidings, a true "gospel" that we can proclaim to all on this second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. 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.

Many people are afraid of old age. They consider it a sort of disease with which any contact is best avoided. The elderly, they think, are none of their concern and should be set apart, perhaps in homes or places where they can be cared for, lest we have to deal with their problems. This is the mindset of the "throw-away culture", which leads us to think that we are somehow different from the poor and vulnerable in our midst, untouched by their frailties and separated from "them" and their troubles. The Scriptures see things differently. 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!

Old age is not a time of life easily understood even by those of us who are already experiencing it. Even though it eventually comes with the passage of time, no one prepares us for old age, and at times it seems to take us by surprise. The more developed societies expend large sums on this stage of life without really helping people to understand and appreciate it; they offer healthcare plans to the elderly but not plans for living this age to the full. [1] This makes it hard to look to the future and discern what direction to take. On the one hand, we are tempted to ward off old age by hiding our wrinkles and

pretending to be forever young, while on the other, we imagine that the only thing we can do is bide our time, thinking glumly that we cannot “still bring forth fruit”.

Retirement and grown children make many of the things that used to occupy our time and energy no longer so pressing. The recognition that our strength is ebbing or the onset of sickness can undermine our certainties. The fast pace of the world – with which we struggle to keep up – seems to leave us no alternative but to implicitly accept the idea that we are useless. We can resonate with the heartfelt prayer of the Psalmist: “Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent” (71:9).

Yet that same psalm – which meditates on how the Lord has been present at every stage of our lives – urges us to persevere in hope. Along with old age and white hairs, God continues to give us the gift of life and to keep us from being overcome by evil. If we trust in him, we will find the strength to praise him still (cf. vv. 14-20). We will come to see that growing old is more than the natural decline of the body or the inevitable passage of time, but the gift of a long life. Aging is not a condemnation, but a blessing!

For this reason, we ought to take care of ourselves and remain active in our later years. This is also true from a spiritual standpoint: we ought to cultivate our interior life through the assiduous reading of the word of God, daily prayer, reception of the sacraments and participation in the liturgy. In addition to our relationship with God, we should also cultivate our relationships with others: first of all by showing affectionate concern for our families, our children and grandchildren, but also for the poor and those who suffer, by drawing near to them with practical assistance and our prayers. These things will help us not to feel like mere bystanders, sitting on our porches or looking out from our windows, as life goes on all around us. Instead, we should learn to discern everywhere the presence of the Lord. [2] Like “green olive trees in the house of God” (cf. Ps 52:10), we can become a blessing for those who live next to us.

Old age is no time to give up and lower the sails, but a season of enduring fruitfulness: a new mission awaits us and bids us look to the future. “The special sensibility that those of us who are elderly have for the concerns, thoughts and

the affections that make us human should once again become the vocation of many. It would be a sign of our love for the younger generations”. [3] This would be our own contribution to the revolution of tenderness, [4] a spiritual and non-violent revolution in which I encourage you, dear grandparents and elderly persons, to take an active role.

Our world is passing through a time of trial and testing, beginning with the sudden, violent outbreak of the pandemic, and then by a war that is harming peace and development on a global scale. Nor is it a coincidence that war is returning to Europe at a time when the generation that experienced it in the last century is dying out. These great crises risk anaesthetizing us to the reality of other “epidemics” and other widespread forms of violence that menace the human family and our common home.

All this points to the need for a profound change, a conversion, that disarms hearts and leads us to see others as our brothers or sisters. We grandparents and elderly people have a great responsibility: to teach the women and men of our time to regard others with the same understanding and loving gaze with which we regard our own grandchildren. We ourselves have grown in humanity by caring for others, and now we can be teachers of a way of life that is peaceful and attentive to those in greatest need. This attitude may be mistaken for weakness or resignation, yet it will be the meek, not the aggressive and the abusive, who will inherit the earth (cf. Mt 5:5).

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”; [5] 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 Saint Joseph, who was a loving and attentive father – the little ones of Ukraine, of Afghanistan, of South Sudan...

Many of us have come to a sage and humble realization of what our world very much needs: the recognition that we are not saved alone, and that happiness is a bread we break together. Let us bear witness to this before those who wrongly

think that they can find personal fulfilment and success in conflict. Everyone, even the weakest among us, can do this. The very fact that we allow ourselves to be cared for – often by people who come from other countries – is itself a way of saying that living together in peace is not only possible, but necessary.

Dear grandparents, dear elderly persons, we are called to be artisans of the revolution of tenderness in our world! Let us do so by learning to make ever more frequent and better use of the most valuable instrument at our disposal and, indeed, the one best suited to our age: prayer. “Let us too become, as it were, poets of prayer: let us develop a taste for finding our own words, let us once again take up those taught by the word of God”. [6] Our trustful prayer can do a great deal: it can accompany the cry of pain of those who suffer, and it can help change hearts. We can be “the enduring ‘chorus’ of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise sustain the community that toils and struggles in the field of life”. [7]

The World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to proclaim once more, with joy, that the Church wants to celebrate together with all those whom the Lord – in the words of the Bible – has “filled with days”. Let us celebrate it together! I ask you to make this Day known in your parishes and communities; to seek out those elderly persons who feel most alone, at home or in residences where they live. Let us make sure that no one feels alone on this day. Expecting a visit can transform those days when we think we have nothing to look forward to; from an initial encounter, a new friendship can emerge. Visiting the elderly who live alone is a work of mercy in our time!

Let us ask Our Lady, Mother of Tender Love, to make all of us artisans of the revolution of tenderness, so that together we can set the world free from the spectre of loneliness and the demon of war.

To all of you, and to your loved ones, I send my blessing and the assurance of my closeness and affection. And I ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me!

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 3 May 2022, Feast of the Apostles Philip and James

FRANCIS

[1] Catechesis on Old Age – 1. The Grace of Time and the Covenant of the Ages of Life (23 February 2022).

[2] Catechesis on Old Age – 5. Fidelity to God’s Visitation for the Next Generation (30 March 2022).

[3] Catechesis on Old Age – 3. Old Age, A Resource for Lighthearted Youth (16 March 2022).

[4] Catechesis on Saint Joseph – 8. Saint Joseph, Father of Tenderness (19 January 2022).

[5] Homily at the Mass for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly (25 July 2021).

[6] Catechesis on the Family – 7. Grandparents (11 March 2015).

[7] Ibid.