



World Day  
for Grandparents  
and the Elderly  
2024



## Fourth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

With the celebration of its fourth edition, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly continues to be an important occasion for the life of our ecclesial communities and is enriched with new meaning.

Attending to our grandparents and the elderly is not only a sign of gratitude and affection, but a necessity in the construction of a more human and fraternal society. The Holy Father invites us to recognise their value and to do so permanently, not just occasionally. It is not a matter of celebrating an anniversary once a year, but of making the elderly feel like an integral part of our Christian family and our common history. The successive generations of elderly people must be taken seriously, and the Church must give them appropriate pastoral attention.

This year's theme, "Do not cast me off in my old age" (cf. Ps 71: 9), recalls the heartfelt plea to the Lord not to be left alone in old age. All too often, in fact, loneliness is a bitter companion in the lives of the elderly due to numerous contingent situations, such as the migration of children or the crisis of families, or due to the individualistic mentality that makes those who are advanced in years feel like a burden. It seems that everyone takes for granted that there is a time in life when one remains alone. It is a habit and a mentality to which, with resignation, even the elderly do not object.

Yet, as the Holy Father reminds us, God never abandons His children. Not even when strength wanes or life seems less productive. Indeed, in the Bible, growing old is a sign of blessing. The loneliness and abandonment of the elderly is not inevitable, rather the result of wrong choices that do not recognise the infinite dignity of each and every person.





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Following the example of Ruth who did not abandon her mother-in-law, Naomi, we are called to walk a new path and imagine a different future for our elderly. Our hope for the celebration of this event is, therefore, that every Church community will strive to experience ‘a day without loneliness’ by visiting the elderly, involving them, and listening to their stories and testimonies of faith.

Aware of various initiatives that have transpired during previous editions and those that, we hope, will also feature throughout the fourth edition, we make the logo available to parishes and dioceses for free use.

In this regard, in order to facilitate greater publicity about what this occasion will entail, we kindly ask that you enlighten us about various initiatives in place by emailing [anziani@laityfamilylife.va](mailto:anziani@laityfamilylife.va) or by using [#elderlyandgrandparents](https://twitter.com/elderlyandgrandparents) on social media channels.

The Pastoral Kit is available on the website of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life [www.laityfamilylife.va](http://www.laityfamilylife.va)

In the hope that the fourth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly will foster a fruitful dialogue between young and old, we send cordial greetings in the Lord.

**Card. Kevin Farrell**

*Prefect*

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

**Gleison De Paula Souza**

*Secretary*

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life





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## Pastoral Guidelines

We suggest that the celebration of the *Day* - as usual - be structured around two fundamental elements: **the celebration of a Eucharistic liturgy dedicated to the elderly, and the visitation of lonely elderly people within one's own community.**

### Visiting lonely elderly people

- In order for the message of closeness and consolation - the message that the *Day* wants to express - to reach everyone, including those who are most isolated, we suggest paying a visit to the lonely elderly people within one's own community and sharing the Holy Father's message with them.
- The visit, a tangible sign of the outgoing Church, is a way to reaffirm that the elderly, even the loneliest, are at the centre of our communities.
- The visit manifests the personal choice, following the example of the young Ruth, not to abandon anyone.
- The visit can be an opportunity to bring a gift, such as a flower, and to read the message and prayer of the *Day* together.
- The encounter between young and old, and the friendship that can arise, shows how the mercy of the Lord extends from generation to generation.



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## Preparing for the *Day* with the Elderly

- The elderly are the main target group of the *Day's* activities. The Holy Father's message is addressed to them.
- It is important to ensure that as many elderly people as possible attend and participate in the Sunday liturgy celebrated on the *Day*.
- The *Day* can be an opportunity to help the elderly and their families get back into the habit of participating in Holy Mass together with the entire parish community.
- The elderly of the parish or of one's own ecclesial reality can be invited for a moment of reflection on the Pope's message for the *Day*, which can be distributed to all participants.
- It would be desirable to start organising moments of reflection dedicated to the elderly in one's own community, even after the *Day*. The Pope's catecheses on old age could be a useful resource to accompany the meetings.
- Older people can be asked to offer special prayers for young people and for peace. The ministry of intercession is a real vocation of the elderly.
- By visiting the elderly, the *Day's* message can also be conveyed to those unable to attend the meetings.



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## Preparing for the *Day* with Young People

- We suggest calling the young people of one's community a few weeks before the *Day* to explain its significance and to ensure that they reach as many elderly people as possible with their visits.
- We suggest involving young people in the organisation of one or more parties with the elderly of their community.
- The *Day* could be an opportunity to organise a meeting to hear some testimonies of elderly people.
- Young people can organise social campaigns to spread the contents of the *Day* by using the hashtag **#elderlyandgrandparents**.



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## Liturgical Resources

- One of the Masses on Sunday 28 July should be devoted to celebrating the *Day* with grandparents and the elderly of one's parish or community.
- To facilitate the presence of the elderly at the Holy Mass, members of the community can be involved in organising transport for those who are unable to travel alone.
- During the celebration of the *Day*, young people can deliver the Holy Father's message to grandparents and the elderly in their own parish or community.
- On 28 July, and the days immediately preceding and following, liturgical celebrations of the *Day* can take place inside hospitals and residences of the elderly to ensure that parish members are involved and that Holy Masses are appropriately animated.
- The collection of offerings at Holy Masses on the *Day* can be dedicated to support projects in favour of poor elderly people in one's own community.



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## Suggestions for the Prayers of the Faithful

- For Pope Francis, that the Lord may bless and protect his ministry, and for the Church led by him, that it may be a more welcoming home for grandparents and the elderly. Let us pray.
- For all us elderly people, that we may continue to look towards the future and, with our experience and our prayers, that we may continue striving to build a more fraternal world. Let us pray.
- For young people, that they may offer the bread of their vitality to the Lord, rather than keeping it for themselves, so that He may multiply it; and that the world may rejoice in the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old. Let us pray.
- For all us grandfathers and grandmothers, that we may be a source of wisdom for our families, and that we may learn to pass on the treasure of faith to our grandchildren and to the newer generations. Let us pray.
- For an end to every war in every part of the world. We beseech the Lord to grant consolation to those who have lost loved ones, healing to the wounded, a return home to prisoners, and that ways of dialogue and peace be found everywhere. Let us pray.



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## Final Blessing

### *Blessing for a long life*

God of mercy,  
Who has given these, Your children, the gift of a long life,  
Grant them your blessing.  
Let them feel the sweetness and strength of your presence:  
Looking back on the past,  
Rejoicing in Your mercy;  
And looking to the future,  
Persevering with undying hope.  
To you, glory and praise for evermore.