



World Day  
for Grandparents  
and the Elderly  
2023



# Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

In celebrating its third edition, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly proves to be a regular event in the life of our church communities and takes on new meanings.

Caring for grandparents and the elderly, in fact, is not only a duty of gratitude and affection, but a necessity for building a more humane and fraternal society. The Holy Father invites us to recognize their value in transmitting faith and hope to the new generations and to do so in a way that is not a one-time event, rather a permanent one. That is, it is not a matter of celebrating our elderly loved ones once a year, but of making them feel as an integral part of our Christian family and our common history. After all, in many places in the world they are the point of reference for communities and the keepers of memories. Within our communities, therefore, a change of mentality is necessary, overcoming those prejudices that make the elderly appear as passive and useless people and getting used to a pastoral care marked by reciprocity and sharing.

The third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which will be celebrated on July 23, 2023, will have the theme, "His mercy is from age to age" (Lk 1: 50). This verse reminds us that God's mercy is manifested in history through the testimonies of those who have experienced it and passed it on to their children and grandchildren. Grandparents and the elderly are called to carry this mercy, to tell through words and life how God has been faithful to His promises and how He continues to love His people. They are also called to receive God's mercy, and to allow themselves to be comforted by His fatherly love that never abandons them. The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is an occasion to once again express with joy that the Church wants to celebrate together with those whom the Lord -- as the Bible says -- has given "a full life".



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This year's *Day* is characterized by its close connection with the World Youth Day, which will be held in Lisbon from 1 to 6 August. This relationship is evident in Pope Francis' message to elders, inviting them to pray for and bless the youth who will participate in the WYD, and to young people, urging them to visit and listen to the grandparents and the elderly in their community. The Pope stressed that between the two generations there is a communion of life and faith, a mutual giving and gratitude, a witness of hope and charity.

Below we are providing some simple guidelines that, we hope, will be helpful in organizing the next *Day*, certain that each of you will want to creatively find the most appropriate way to celebrate it from your own pastoral context.

Mindful of the variety of initiatives that have been carried out at previous editions and those that, we hope, will mark the third *Day* as well, we are making the logo available for parishes and dioceses to use freely.

The Pastoral Kit is available on the website of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life at <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/eventi/2023/iii-giornata-mondiale-dei-nnonni-e-degli-anziani.html>

Hoping that the third *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* will help create a fruitful dialogue between the young and the old, we send cordial greetings in the Lord.

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*Secretary*

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

**Card. Kevin Farrell**

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# Pastoral guidelines

## Visiting the elderly who are alone

- In order for the message of closeness and consolation that the *Day* seeks to express to reach everyone - even those who are most isolated - we suggest making visits to the lonely elderly in your community and deliver the Holy Father's message to them.
- The visit, a tangible sign of the Church that goes forth, is a way to reaffirm that the elderly, even the loneliest, are at the center of our communities.
- Visits express the personal choice to get up and go quickly towards others (cf. Lk 1:39), just as Mary did to visit the elderly Elizabeth.
- The visit may be an opportunity to bring a gift, such as a flower, and to read the *Day's* message and prayer together.
- Visiting an elderly person is one of the possibilities for obtaining the Plenary Indulgence granted on the occasion of the *Day*.
- The encounter between young and old, the friendship that may ensue, manifests how the Lord's mercy extends from generation to generation.
- In order to spread the message of the *Day*, pictures of the visits can be posted on social media with the hashtag **#ElderlyAndGrandparents**



## Preparing for the day with the elderly

- The *Day's* activities are mainly directed towards the elderly. The Holy Father's message is addressed to them.
- It is important to make sure that as many elderly people as possible personally participate in the Sunday liturgy celebrated on the *Day*.
- After the pandemic, in many contexts, participation of the elderly in Sunday Mass has declined. The *Day* can be an opportunity to help the elderly regain the habit of attending Mass in person.
- The elderly people from the parish or from one's own church can be invited for a reflection to discuss the Pope's message for the *Day*, which can be distributed to all participants.
- The elderly people may be asked to offer a special prayer for the youth and, in particular, for those who will attend the WYD in Lisbon as well as for a successful outcome of the event.
- Through visits to the lonely elderly, the text of the message can also be conveyed to those unable to attend the meetings.
- All the grandparents and all the elderly who participate in the *Day* can be entrusted with the Holy Father's prayer intentions together with the special intentions of their own community.



## Preparing for the day with the youth

- The youth from one's own community may be summoned a few weeks before the *Day* to explain it and to be sure that they reach as many elderly people as possible through their visits.
- It is possible to ask the youths leaving for the WYD in Lisbon - or who will be celebrating WYD in some other way - to pay a visit to a lonely elderly person before setting out.
- Young people can organize social campaigns to promote the *Day's* highlights using the hashtag #ElderlyAndGrandparents

## Plenary Indulgence

- The Apostolic Penitentiary has promulgated a decree granting Plenary Indulgence on the occasion of World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.
- For the elderly, Indulgence can be obtained by attending one of the Masses celebrated to observe the *Day*.
- Given that some elderly people are unable to attend Mass in person for health reasons, Indulgence is also extended to those who take part in it through television, radio or the web.
- Indulgence is also granted to all those who, on the occasion of the *Day*, perform a 'work of mercy by visiting an elderly person.



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## Liturgical resources

- One of the Masses on Sunday, July 23, may be dedicated to celebrating the Day with the grandparents and the elderly people of the parish or community.
- In order to encourage the elderly people to attend Mass, community members can get involved by arranging transportation for those who are unable to move on their own.
- During the celebration, the young people of the parish or community can deliver the Holy Father's message to grandparents and the elderly people.
- On July 23 and the days immediately before and after, liturgical celebrations on the *Day* can be planned within hospitals and residences for the elderly, involving, where possible and in compliance with health regulations, members of the parish so that the Masses can be appropriately animated.
- The collection from the Day's Masses may be offered to supporting projects for the poor elderly people of one's community.



## Suggestions for the prayers of the faithful

- For all of us elderly, that we may know how to be witnesses of the Lord's mercy that extends from generation to generation. Let us pray.
- For the youth, so that they may "quickly" set out to meet the elderly and manifest God's tenderness to them. May the world thus be filled with the overflowing joy of a new embrace between the youth and the elderly! Let us pray.
- For all of 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 the next generation. Let us pray.
- So that no elderly person may be discarded or abandoned any longer, so that there may be consolation for the lonely and healing for the sick. That the Church may know how to offer the balm of closeness and mercy to the weakest elderly. Let us pray.
- So that the Church, wherever it celebrates today the World Day dedicated to them, will be more and more a welcoming home for grandparents and the elderly, and for Pope Francis, may the Lord bless and protect his ministry. Let us pray.
- So that grandparents are able to look in wonder at their grandchildren, listening to them and standing beside them as "teachers of life," with humility and wisdom. Let us pray



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## Final blessing

### The Blessing of Long Life

God of mercy,

Who has given the gift of long life to Your children,

grant them Your blessing;

let them feel the sweetness and strength of Your presence:

Turning back to the past

let them rejoice in Your mercy

and looking to the future

Let them persevere in the hope that does not die.

Praise and glory to You for ever and ever.