

FIRST WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS & THE ELDERLY

SUNDAY 25 JULY 2021

Dear grandmothers and grandfathers, dear elderly brothers and sisters,

On this First World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, we give thanks to God for each of you and the many gifts He grants to us through you.

The theme for this First World Day, as chosen by Pope Francis, is: “I am with you always” (cf. Mt 28:20). Despite these uncertain and turbulent times, the Lord and the Church are close to you, dear grandmothers, grandfathers and elderly persons. The Holy Father wishes to remind the whole world that the voice of the elderly “is precious’ [...] ‘because it sings the praises of God and preserves the roots of the peoples.”[1]

These past many months have been marked with significant challenges. All over the world, many elderly people have experienced terrible isolation. Families, grandchildren, mothers and fathers, friends and neighbours have been separated, distanced, and many have lost loved ones.

It has been difficult to navigate these times without being physically present to one another: how we have missed not being able to visit one another, to hold hands, to give and receive hugs, to gather around tables to share a meal and enjoy one another’s company.

[Click here to view the video message](#)





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We have relied on the digital world, telephone calls, and hand-written letters as a way to unite us, to communicate and to lighten the load, and for that, we are thankful.

At the end of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus reassures the disciples that he will be with them always, as they are sent forth to preach the Good News and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. When we read this scripture passage, the promise that we are never alone rings true today, just as it did for the disciples. We rejoice in the great gift that you, grandparents and the elderly, are for the Church and society. You are keepers of the faith, steadfast and persevering. Saint John Paul II wrote that the elderly are "guardians of our collective memory [...] which support and guide life in society." [2]

Very often, you are our storytellers. Grandchildren and younger generations gather at your side, hoping to better understand our families, our histories, our communities, and our world. Please continue to share with affection, tenderness and enthusiasm the ways the Lord has walked with you your whole life. Accompany your grandchildren by showing them how to sow and nurture the seeds of faith.

Your stories, your experiences, your ups-and-downs allow young people to dream and value that there is lasting truth, goodness and beauty throughout the seasons of life. While you recall and connect with the past, you stand as powerful witnesses to our present and future. Pope Francis reminds us that you have a mission of evangelization, proclamation and prayer. Let the joy of the Gospel continue to transform your lives so that you may continue to encourage those who suffer and are lost. Pray for an outpouring of grace upon your families and your communities.

**A Message from the Standing Committee for Family & Life,
Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCBB)**



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Just as you help young people to believe in their dreams for the future, our wish is that you too, will continue to contemplate the wonder and beauty of God's gift of life. Please do not be discouraged by the pandemic and its effects. As we mutually support and help one another, we will heal from heartache caused by sadness and isolation.

On this special day for Grandparents and the Elderly, we pray that young people draw close to you, spend time with you, pray for and with you. As you journey through this stage of life, let us walk with one another, each of us holding our fragilities and limitations.

Together we praise the Lord of life and love with the words of the psalmist, "You show me the path of life, in your presence there is fullness of life" (Ps 16:11).

On behalf of the CCCB Standing Committee for Family and Life, THANK YOU from the bottom of our hearts!

Standing Committee Members

The Most Rev. Christian Lépine (Chairman)

The Most Rev. Christian Rodembourg, M.S.A.

The Most Rev. Douglas Crosby, O.M.I.

The Most Rev. Gérard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.

Dr. Alisha Montes

Mme Dominique Rainville

Mme Katerine Perrault


Mrs. Teresa Hartnett

Sister John Mary Sullivan, FSE

Mrs. Michelle Dabrowski (Director of the CCCB Office for Family and Life)



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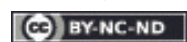
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Endnotes

[1] Vatican News, “Pope establishes World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly”, 31 January 2021. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-01/pope-establishes-world-day-for-grandparents-and-the-elderly.html>

[2] Pope John Paul II, Letter To The Elderly, 1999. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_01101999_elderly.html

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