

GRANDPARENTS, COMMENTS BY POPE FRANCIS

Just as fine wine grows stronger with age, grandparents and other elderly Catholics “have the strength to leave us a noble inheritance,” Pope Francis said at early morning Mass today.

Celebrating the liturgy in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae, Pope Francis once again denounced a cultural tendency “to discard” the elderly “because they are a bother.”

Instead, “the elderly are those who transmit history to us, who transmit doctrine, who transmit the faith and give it to us as an inheritance,” the Pope said, according to Vatican Radio.

Pope Francis said that as a child, he heard a story of a family with a mother, father, many children and a grandfather, who would get food all over his face when he ate. The father bought a small table and set it off to the side so the grandfather would eat, make a mess and not disturb the rest of the family.

One day, the Pope said, the father comes home and finds one of his sons playing with a piece of wood. “What are you making?” says the father. “A table,” the son replies. “Why?” the father asks. “It’s for you, Dad, when you’re old like grandpa,” he says.

“This story has done me such good throughout my life,” said the Pope, who will celebrate his 77th birthday on December 17.

“Grandparents are a treasure,” he said. “Often old age isn’t pretty, right? There is sickness and all that, but the wisdom our grandparents have is something we must welcome as an inheritance.”

A society or community that does not value, respect and care for its elderly members “doesn’t have a future because it has no memory, it’s lost its memory,” Pope Francis added.

Vatican Radio) Pope Francis has sent a message celebrating the role grandparents play in the life of faith for a XVI Grandparents Day in Spain, which will be celebrated on Sunday, the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, who are the parents of the Virgin Mary, and therefore the grandparents of Jesus.

Pope Francis sent the message through the Apostolic Nuncio to the country, inviting the elderly to reaffirm their faith in the closeness of the Lord, “who does not abandon them in any situation”, and in the belief that they can still contribute, “with the influence of their words of wisdom and cherished gestures”, in the life and growth of the members of their own families, “at a level which is profoundly human, spiritual and of the faith.”

Pope Francis also thanked those who take care of the elderly. He told them they should have joyful satisfaction knowing that, in caring for them with love, they are working for the common good of society.

“Old age, in particular, is a time of grace,” said Pope Francis, “in which the Lord will renew His call: He calls us to preserve and transmit the faith, calls us to pray, especially to intercede; calls us to be close to those who maybe in need.” The Holy Father went on to warn against losing sight of and appreciation for the inestimable worth of those, who are in the twilight of life. “A people that does not have care for [the elderly], that does not treat them well, has no future: such a people loses its memory and its roots.”

The key role of grandparents in passing down the faith to a new generation was another major theme of Pope Francis' address, and the central theme of remarks made by the founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association, Catherine Wiley. [Click here for our exclusive interview with Mrs. Wiley.](#)

Please find Vatican Radio’s English translation of the Holy Father’s remarks, below.





(Vatican Radio) Vatican Weekend for Oct 10, 2015 features a report on the weekly general audience of Pope Francis, interviews with two cardinals attending the XIVth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, a look at St Peter's facade and echoes of the pontificate of St John XXIII.

Grandparent to give her testimony to the Pope

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(Vatican Radio) What is the role grandparents play in keeping prayer at the heart of the family in the 21st century and how important are they in passing down the faith to a new generation?

That is what grandparent and founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association, Catherine Wiley will be highlighting when she gives her testimony on the vocation of grandparents to Pope Francis on Sunday.

Listen to Lydia O'Kane's interview with Catherine Wiley

Catherine will be among forty thousand grandparents and elderly people who will meet the Pope in an event entitled "The blessing of a long life" which will take place in St Peter's Square.

The event organised by the Pontifical Council for the Family, will also see Pope Francis celebrate Holy Mass which will be concelebrated by more than fifty elderly priests from around the world.

Speaking to Vatican Radio about her testimony on Sunday, Catherine Wiley says she wants the focus of her words to the Holy Father to be about the unique role grandparents have in guiding grandchildren in their faith. "They (grandparents) really have a unique opportunity to pass on the faith to their grandchildren when they're small".

Pope Francis has spoken often during his pontificate about the importance of grandparents and Catherine says "that everybody thinks of the Pope as a grandfather figure and in fact my grandson will be asking the Pope a question and he will be telling him that the children of the world love him like a grandfather"

The Catholic Grandparents Association, which has offices in both England and Ireland was started by Catherine in 2009 after she successfully organised the first National Grandparents' Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham in England and the first Irish National Grandparents' Pilgrimage to the Knock Shrine in

September 2007. The pilgrimages are now held annually. The Pope's 7 most tender messages to grandparents

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During this year's feast of Jesus's grandparents, Saints Joachim and Anne, the Pope asked for a round of applause for grandparents.

1. GRATITUDE

POPE FRANCIS

July 26, 2015

"I want to greet all the grandmothers and grandfathers to thank them for their special place in families and for their importance to the new generations."

From the beginning, Pope Francis has been **very mindful of the elderly**. During the Mass at the start of his pontificate he asked for people to care for the elderly in particular since they are often pushed to the "margins of the heart."

A few months afterward, at World Youth Day in Brazil, he spoke to young people about the importance of listening to their elders.

2. CULTURAL EUTHANASIA

POPE FRANCIS

July 25, 2013

"This global civilization has gone too far, too far ... because such is the cult that has been built around the god of money that we are witnessing the development of a philosophy and a practice of excluding the two extremes of life that are the hopes of every community. The elderly aren't shown care because no one cares for them. But there is also a cultural euthanasia. No one lets them speak or act."

Pope Francis knows that grandparents play an essential role in the lives of children. And he knows this by experience thanks to the love of his grandmother Rosa. This is how he explained it in a catechesis dedicated to grandparents.

3. EXAMPLE

POPE FRANCIS

March 11, 2015

"The words of grandparents contain something special for young people. And they know it. The words that my grandmother gave me in writing the day of my priestly ordination I still carry with me, always, in the breviary. And I read them often and they do me good."

This is why he never tires of denouncing the abuses committed against the elderly, who are marginalized in society. He even says that this is a sin.

4. MARGINALIZATION

POPE FRANCIS
March 4, 2015

"It's horrible to see the elderly tossed aside. It's ugly and it's a sin."

The elderly are of particular importance in the Pope's eyes as the collective memory of communities, and, above all, of families.

5. TRANSMITTERS OF THE FAITH

POPE FRANCIS
November 11, 2013

"We pray for our grandfathers, our grandmothers, who so often play a heroic role in the transmission of the faith in times of persecution. When mom and dad weren't home or when they had strange ideas, which the politics of the time taught them, it was the grandmothers who passed on the faith."

In fact, the Pope thinks that the elderly are so important that he was the first to organize an event in the Vatican dedicated to them. It was a very special day, and with a very rare appearance by Benedict XVI, whom Pope Francis tenderly called a 'wise grandfather.'

6. WISDOM

POPE FRANCIS
September 28, 2014

"I have said many times that I enjoy living here, in the Vatican, because it's like having a wise grandfather at home. Thank you."

The Pope lamented the forgetting of and the violence towards the elderly and he explained that the experience of grandparents is irreplaceable.

7. TENDERNESS

POPE FRANCIS
September 28, 2014

"One of the most beautiful things in life, in the family, in our lives, is caressing a child and letting yourself be caressed by a grandfather or a grandmother."

The Pope backs up his words with deeds. In general audiences, meetings, and trips, **Pope Francis never misses an opportunity to greet the elderly or to listen to them.**

