



World Day
for Grandparents
and the Elderly
2025



Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

It is with great joy that we prepare to celebrate the *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, an appointment that, year after year, is entering more and more deeply into the pastoral life of our communities. This fifth edition marks a significant milestone, a sign of the growing awareness of the value of the elderly in the Church and society.

This year's theme chosen by Pope Francis, **'Blessed are those who have not lost hope' (cf. Sir 14:2)**, fits into the context of the Jubilee of Hope, and invites us to recognize in the elderly not only recipients of pastoral attention, but witnesses of hope and active protagonists of ecclesial life. Their life and faith experience is a valuable heritage, capable of enriching new generations and strengthening the community fabric.

The *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, established in 2021, is becoming a tradition that teaches our communities to increasingly put the elderly at the centre, not in an extraordinary or occasional way, but in a regular and structural way. It is a pedagogy that teaches us to recognize their irreplaceable role as keepers of memory, witnesses of faith and teachers of life.

This year, on the occasion of the Jubilee of Hope, we wish to emphasize one special aspect: the Father's limitless mercy is to be experienced by all, including those who, for reasons of health or age, cannot physically make a pilgrimage. Therefore, in the pastoral directions pages you will find a simple proposal for a Jubilee celebration to be held within the facilities where the elderly live.

This rite will enable them to obtain the Jubilee Indulgence, spiritually joining the universal Church and offering their sufferings and prayers.



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We are confident that this *Day* will be an opportunity to renew dialogue between generations, to strengthen bonds of solidarity and to witness that the Church is a welcoming home for all, especially the most fragile.

Aware of the variety of initiatives that have been taken at previous editions and those that will hopefully mark the fifth *Day* as well, we make the logo available for parishes and dioceses to use freely.

In this regard and in order to give more dissemination to what will be organized for the occasion, we ask you to kindly let us know about the various initiatives undertaken through the email **anziani@laityfamilylife.va** or our social channels via the hashtag **#ElderlyandGrandparents**

A **Pastoral Kit** is available on the website of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life at www.laityfamilylife.va

In the hope that the celebration of the *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* will help bring to all the elderly the closeness of the Church and the tenderness of the Lord, we send you our most loving greetings in Christ.

Card. Kevin Farrell

Prefect

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life

+ Dario Gervasi

Secretary

Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life



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Prayer for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

'Blessed are those who have not lost hope' (Sir 14:2)

How beautiful are these words of yours, Lord!

Help us to continue our pilgrimage through time,
animated by the hope that comes from You!

Help us in this divisive world,
to bring the hope of communion.

Help us in this world, wounded by wars,
to bring the hope of peace.

Help us in this world, which is dehumanizing,
to bring the beauty of an ancient smile.

Help us to be, for our grandchildren, for our loved ones
and for everyone we meet,
the memory of your tenderness.

Help us to bring, in a world distracted from You,
the Hope of a new life that only You can give!

For in You, Lord, nothing is lost

For in You, Lord, everything begins again! Amen



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Pastoral indications

We suggest that the celebration of the *Day* - as usual - be organized around two fundamental gestures:

1. **the celebration of a Eucharistic liturgy dedicated to the elderly**
2. **the visit to the lonely elderly in your community.**

On the occasion of the Jubilee of Hope, we suggest involving parish communities to **facilitate the participation of all elderly people - even those who rarely leave home - in Jubilee pilgrimages.**

For all those for whom it will not be possible to participate physically, based on what is established in the norms for granting the Jubilee Indulgence, we suggest that they carry out **a Jubilee celebration in the places where they live.**



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Visiting the lonely elderly

- In order to get the message of closeness and consolation that the *Day* seeks to express to everyone -even those who are most isolated- we suggest making a visit to the lonely elderly in your community and handing them the Holy Father's message.
- The visit, a tangible sign of a Church going forth, is a way to reiterate that the elderly, even the loneliest, are at the centre of our communities.
- The visit demonstrates the personal and communal choice not to abandon anyone.
- The visit can be an opportunity to bring a gift, such as a flower, and to read the *Day's* message and prayer together.
- The encounter between young and elderly, the friendship that can arise from it, shows how the Lord's mercy extends from generation to generation.



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The preparation of the *Day* with the elderly

- The elderly are the main beneficiaries for the *Day's* activities. The Holy Father's message is addressed to them.
- It is important to make sure that as many elderly people as possible participate in person in the Sunday liturgy celebrated on the *Day*.
- The *Day* can be an opportunity to help the elderly and their family members convincingly resume the habit of attending Holy Mass together with the entire parish community.
- Elderly from the parish or from our own church reality can be invited for a time of reflection on the Pope's Message for the *Day*, which can be distributed to all participants.
- It would be desirable if, even from the *Day*, people begin to organize moments of reflection dedicated to the elderly in their community. The Pope's catecheses on old age could be used as handouts to accompany the meetings.
- Special prayers for youth and peace can be asked of the elderly. The ministry of intercession is a true vocation of old age.
- Through visits to the lonely elderly, the text of the Message can also be conveyed to those unable to attend the meetings.



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The preparation of the *Day* with the youth

- We suggest convening the youth in your community a few weeks before the *Day* to explain what it is about and to make sure they reach as many elderly people as possible with their visits.
- We suggest involving the youth in organizing one or more parties with the elderly in their community.
- The *Day* could be an opportunity to organize a meeting to hear some testimonies from the elderly.
- Young people can organize social campaigns to spread the contents of the *Day* using the hashtag **#ElderlyandGrandparents**



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Liturgical handout

- One of the Masses on Sunday, July 27, should be dedicated to celebrating the *Day* with grandparents and elderly in the parish or community.
- To encourage the attendance of the elderly at Holy Mass, community members can be involved to arrange transportation for those who are unable to move on their own.
- During the celebration, the youth from the parish or community can deliver the Holy Father's message to grandparents and the elderly.
- On July 27 and the days immediately preceding and following, liturgical celebrations of the *Day* can be planned within hospitals and residential homes for the elderly by involving members of the parish so that Holy Masses are appropriately animated.
- The collection of offerings at the Holy Masses of the *Day* can be dedicated to support projects in favour of poor elderly people in your community.



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Suggestions for the prayers of the faithful

- For Pope Leo XIV, that the Lord may bless and protect his ministry, and for the Church, led by him, that it may be more and more a welcoming home for grandparents and the elderly. Let us pray.
- For all of us elderly, that we may continue to look toward the future and that with our experience and prayer we may continue to strive to build a more fraternal world. Let us pray.
- For the youth to offer the bread of their vitality to the Lord, not keeping it for themselves but giving it to God so that He may multiply it and the world may rejoice in 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 to the next generation. Let us pray.
- For the end of all war in every part of the world. We implore 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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Jubilee celebration with the elderly unable to physically make the pilgrimage

The ***Norms for the Granting of the Jubilee Indulgence*** published by the Apostolic Penitentiary state:

'The faithful who are truly repentant of sin but who cannot participate in the various solemn celebrations, pilgrimages and pious visits for serious reasons (especially cloistered nuns and monks, but also **the elderly**, the sick, prisoners, and those who, through their work in hospitals or other care facilities, provide continuous service to the sick), can obtain the Jubilee Indulgence, under the same conditions if, united in spirit with the faithful taking part in person, (especially when the words of the Supreme Pontiff or the diocesan Bishop are transmitted through the various means of communication), they recite the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any approved form, and other prayers in conformity with the objectives of the Holy Year, in their homes or wherever they are confined (e.g. in the chapel of the monastery, hospital, nursing home, prison...) offering up their sufferings or the hardships of their lives;'

With this perspective in mind, we suggest that on the occasion of the *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* or a significant date for the diocesan community or the facility where the elderly live, a celebration be held to allow all those who cannot physically participate in the Jubilee pilgrimages to experience the Father's limitless mercy.



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- The celebration should be presided over by a priest, a deacon, the facility chaplain, a catechist or whoever usually takes care of the pastoral animation of the place.
- The celebration should be well-attended, if possible animated by songs, and special attention should be paid to the participation of all the elderly.
- Where necessary, the presiding person, together with some of the pastoral animators, should visit all the rooms in which the elderly unable to move from their beds are staying. With them recite the Our Father, the Profession of Faith and leave them a sacred image, prayer or sign reminding them of their participation in the jubilee event. Let no one be excluded from the celebration.
- Chaplains should make every effort to ensure that elderly people can receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist in the period leading up to the celebration.



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Opening song

Introduction

The presiding person says:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Participants respond:

Amen.

The presiding person says:

May the God of hope
who in the Word made flesh
fills us with all joy and peace in faith,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
be with all of you.

Participants respond:

And with your spirit.



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Jubilee Prayer

The presiding person says:

Let us recite together the prayer written by Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the Jubilee:

Father in heaven,
may the faith you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of charity enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed hope
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole
cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.
To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.
Amen



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Psalm

One of the pilgrimage psalms is sung or recited, e.g.:

- 15 'Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?'
- 24 'The earth is the Lord's'
- 84 'How lovely is your dwelling place'
- 95 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord'
- 122 'I rejoiced with those who said to me'
- 136 'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good'

Reading of the Word of God

It is suggested to read:

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans (5:1 - 5)

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.



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Meditation

You can follow this text or another similar one

The *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* falls within the Jubilee of Hope year.

Sometimes we confuse the virtue of Hope with a good chance that something we care about will happen. For example, we hope we don't get sick or that our favourite team wins and so on. Often, it is a matter of waiting for things that are likely to happen, but may not. Or we think of hope as a kind of optimism towards the future, as a characteristic of our character. How should we understand Christian hope, what we say is a theological virtue?

St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, makes a point about Christian hope by reasoning about what it is based on. If hope were based only on our own strength and human attitudes we would have reason to doubt its consistency. Since, however, St. Paul sets as the foundation of hope *the love of God [that] has been poured out into our hearts*, we may well say that it is a work of grace and therefore does not fail. Our task is to welcome it and allow ourselves to be led and sustained by it.

When Christian hope is allowed to act in our lives, it has extraordinary power. The Catechism of the Catholic Church writes: 'The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.' (cf. C.C.C.1818)

To know an elder who has cultivated hope in his/her life is a true light to the world. For behind a smile, an affectionate greeting, a word of encouragement from an elder to a younger person, there is like a reflection of a greater wisdom, which ultimately speaks of God's faithfulness over time. Pope Leo XIV wrote in the *Message for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*:

The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, "our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope" (Angelus, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.



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Elderly people who have experienced God's faithfulness over time can testify to the world to an ability that is becoming rare in this age of ours, the ability to look to tomorrow with hope!

True, there are many contexts in the world where this is not the case, and the elderly, instead of being esteemed, are put on the margins of communal living. The Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee highlighted this by recalling that:

“The elderly, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope. Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society, which are called to cooperate in strengthening the covenant between generations.

Here I would also mention grandparents, who represent the passing on of faith and wisdom to the younger generation. May they find support in the gratitude of their children and the love of their grandchildren, who discover in them their roots and a source of understanding and encouragement.” (Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee 2025, *Spes non confundit*, no. 14)

We are invited to celebrate this *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* with a desire to start afresh from the hope that enlightens us all. For the life of the elderly to be truly appreciated in all its value, it is important that no one is left alone. Our elders should be regarded as the precious treasure that binds generations together and shows us how God is the Lord of the succession of every age and every era.

Pope Leo reminded us of St. Augustine's incisive phrase: *Let our lives be good, and the times are good. We are the times; as we are, so will the times be!*¹

If we can treasure the living teaching of faith and love of our elderly the times ahead will certainly be *better times!*

¹ ‘Mala tempora, laboriosa tempora, hoc dicunt homines. Bene vivamus, et bona sunt tempora. Nos sumus tempora: quales sumus, talia sunt tempora’. (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 80)





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The Credo

Our Father

Prayer for the *Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*

Final blessing

Long life blessing

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.

Final song

Distribution of the *Message for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*



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