



CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION  
**GRANDPARENTS NEWS**

*Dearest Holy Father, We bring you love and greetings from Grandparents all over the World*



**Catherine Wiley & her Grandson**  
testify to Pope Francis on the vocation  
of Grandparents worldwide.

**The Blessings of Long Life –  
Encounter with Grandparents and  
Elderly – Rome**

Advent  
**2014**

*Helping Grandparents to pass on the faith & to keep prayer at the heart of family life*

# A Message from the Founder

Dear Members & Grandparents

At this most special time of our year we bring you heartfelt wishes of faith, hope and love. The work CGA has continued to grow across the world and we thank you for your continued and steadfast support. It means so much to me personally to know that you are supporting the Mission and Purpose of CGA through your prayers, your valuable time and your resources.



We are ever grateful for the help and encouragement of our Members, Priests, Bishops, Cardinals and, in particular, the Pontifical Council for the Family. The Vocation of grandparents is a noble vocation and we do all we can to support them to 'Keep Prayer at the Heart of Family and to Pass on the Faith'.



The future of the CGA is reliant upon the voluntary donations we receive and for this we are ever thankful. The CGA exists to support the vocation of Grandparents. The work grows, please continue to help in any way you can.

May I take this opportunity to wish you and all your families the Peace and Joy of Christmas.

*May St Joachim and St Anne bless you, your children and your Grandchildren.*

*There is a candle lighting for your intentions at the Shrines of our Lady of Walsingham, and Knock in Ireland*

*Catherine Wiley*

Catherine Wiley  
Grandmother and founder  
of the Catholic Grandparents Association

**"As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well."**

**- Second Timothy 2:4-5**

## Spread The Word!

Do you realise the **POWER** of being a Grandparent?

Are you aware of how you **INFLUENCE** younger people?

Simple things like blessing yourself in public, saying the Angelus, Grace before Meals and using the Holy Water Font are minor Faith gestures that could have major results.



[catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)

## Catholic Grandparents Association testify to Pope Francis on the vocation of Grandparents worldwide.

### The Blessings of Long Life – Encounter with Grandparents and Elderly – Rome

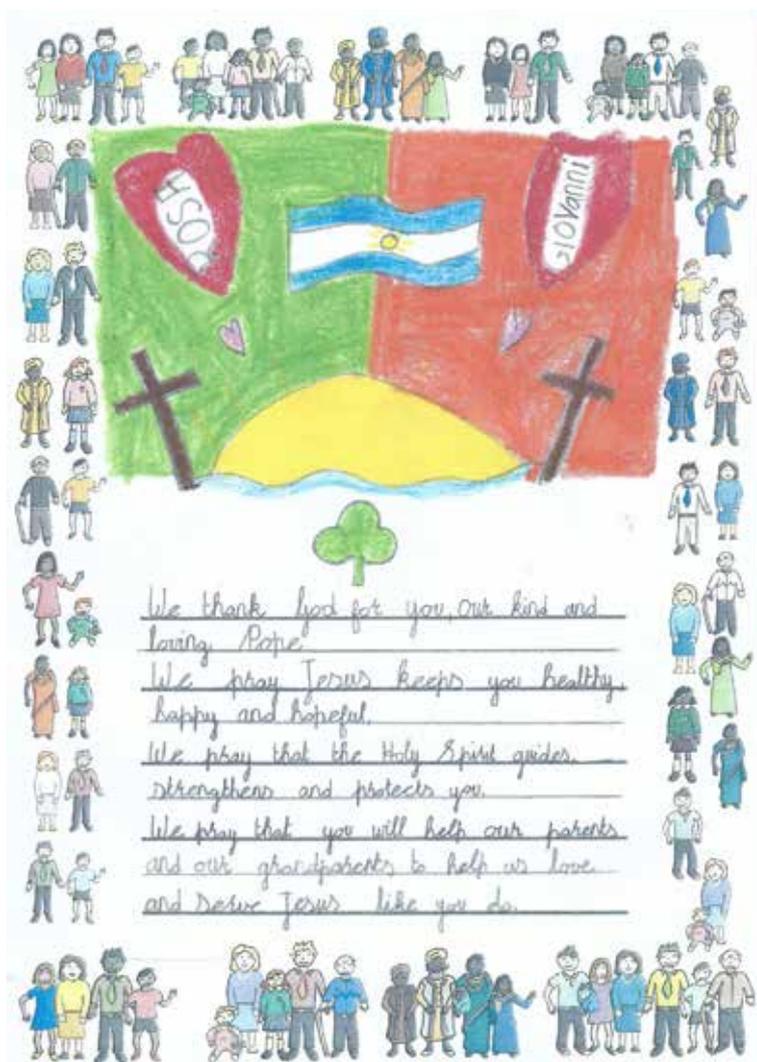
## 12 year old, English School Boy gives testimony to Holy Father Pope Francis

Catholic Grandparents Association Founder Catherine Wiley gave testimony to Pope Francis as part of the weekend celebrations in St Peter's Square Rome on Sunday 28th September.

In front of an estimated 80,000 people who had come to the Rome as part of this special event organised by the Pontifical Council for the Family, she spoke of the important vocation of grandparents and their courage and conviction in passing on the faith. She also had the opportunity to personally thank Pope Emeritus Benedict, who was making a rare personal appearance at the event, for the Universal Prayer for Grandparents which he had written specially for the Association in 2008.

Catherine was accompanied by her grandson Tom Slater who is 12 years old and a student at Ardingly College in the South of England. Speaking in Italian, Tom said of the important lessons in prayer that he had learnt from his grandparents and how these had helped him in his life. He also posed a question to Pope Francis asking him, 'You are like a grandfather to us, help us to understand how important the role of grandparents is today'.

Both Catherine and Tom received a blessing from Pope Francis.



Prayer presented by Catherine Wiley,  
Founder of the CGA on  
Sunday September 28th 2014 to His  
Holiness Pope Francis.  
From Rang 5/5th Class,  
Miss Galwey, Ballyroan Boy's School,  
Dublin, Ireland

*We thank God for you, our kind  
and loving pope,  
We pray Jesus keeps you healthy,  
happy and hopeful,  
We pray that the Holy Spirit guides,  
strengthens and protects you,  
We pray that you will help our  
parents and our grandparents to  
help us love and serve Jesus  
like you do.*

## CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ADDRESS TO POPE FRANCIS 28TH SEPTEMBER 2014 - “The Blessing of Long Life” ROME

Dearest Holy Father my name is Catherine Wiley, I come from Ireland.  
My husband Stewart and I founded the Catholic Grandparents Association.  
The Association for Catholic Grandparents grew, thanks to the Special Prayer for Grandparents which was written for us by Pope Benedict 16th, Thank you Dear Pope Benedict. Graci, Graci, Graci

This is my grandson Tom, from England.  
We bring you love and prayers from grandparents all over the world.  
For us the family is the first place in which we pass on faith. Today, our children are married and we have ten beautiful grandchildren who we love very much. Our parental vocation is not over, but has grown by embracing the wonderful call to be grandparents.

Like Jesus grandparents, Joachim and Anne, we too want to be examples of faith for our families, teaching them to put God in the first place, to love our neighbour, to forgive and not to be ashamed to ask for forgiveness. We have realised that to transmit faith we need courage and determination.

As grandparents, we have a unique opportunity: to sow faith which with time will bring fruit in abundance.  
Let us teach our Grandchildren to pray.



Pictured: Pope Francis with Archbishop Paglia with Catherine Wiley - Founder of CGA with her Grandson 12 year old Tom.

**Tom:**  
Hello Pope Francis,  
Dear Pope, my grandparents have taught and encouraged me to pray, always, but once, when I was truly frightened whilst on the plane, their example of prayer to God has really inspired me. Pope Francis, you too were a boy who has listened to the grandparents' wisdom. Today you are for us, the children, like a granddad and we love you very much. Help us to make people understand how important the grandparents are in the family.

Speaking after the event, Catherine Wiley said: *‘ It was honestly one of the most wonderful moments of my life for me and for my family, and the most important moment for the life and development of the Catholic Grandparents Association throughout the world. We feel very, very blessed and privileged for this opportunity to create awareness for the vocation of Grandparents to pass on the faith to their Grandchildren.’*





Catherine with Ron and Mavis Pirola Australia  
Catherine with and Grandparents from Malta Above: Andrea Bocelli



FC · GLI ANZIANI DAL PAPA

IRLANDA

ASSOCIAZIONE DEI NONNI CATTOLICI

## UN LUNGO VIAGGIO PER PARLARE DI FEDE

Viene dall'Irlanda e partecipa alla giornata del Papa dedicata ai nonni a buon titolo: **Catherine Wiley** ha infatti fondato nel 2009 la *Catholic Grandparents Association* (Associazione dei nonni cattolici) che affonda le radici nel 2002, quando lei colse il bisogno di **pellegrinaggi per i nonni**, molto sentiti e partecipati, presso i santuari mariani con l'intento di onorare sant'Anna e san Gioacchino, i nonni di Gesù: «Queste figure rappresentano la **vocazione di nonni** in un mondo sempre più secolarizzato dove la fede è in pericolo. Non dobbiamo essere la generazione che fallisce». Catherine sarà a Roma con Tom, uno dei suoi dieci nipoti, «I **nonni generalmente non hanno diritti speciali sui nipoti**. È riconosciuto che i genitori sono i principali educatori dei loro figli. Tuttavia, a causa dello speciale legame tra nonno e nipote, diventano anch'essi partecipi del ruolo dei genitori, camminando e sostenendoli». Principalmente con la fede, «che possono passare mantenendo la **preghiera al centro della famiglia**». E si può fare in tanti modi: «Dicendo grazie a Dio prima dei pasti, alla sera o con il Rosario. Gesti che possono diventare il modo in cui i semi della fede sono piantati e nutriti nei nipoti». La signora Wiley sa che la cultura può essere molto diversa da Paese a Paese: «Ma ovunque andiamo troviamo che **tutti i nonni vogliono il meglio per i loro nipoti**, e quindi vogliono mostrare loro l'amore di Gesù». O.V.



# La Asociación de Abuelos Católicos

Por Phil Butcher, Director de Expansión Internacional de la *Catholic Grandparents Association*

Hay casi exactamente doce años, por la oración de una abuela, nació la *Asociación de Abuelos Católicos* (*Catholic Grandparents Association*, CGA). Catherine Wiley, abuela con diez nietos, se encontraba rezando en el Santuario Nacional de Nuestra Señora de Walsingham, en Inglaterra, en la fiesta de la Natividad de Nuestra Señora. Su oración era bien sencilla: preguntaba qué podría ofrecer como regalo a la Madre de nuestro Señor una madre y abuela como ella. Encontró sorprendente encontrar esta respuesta: honrar a los padres de la Virgen, san Joaquín y santa Ana, los abuelos de Jesús. Haría peregrinaciones de los santuarios marianos en reconocimiento de la importancia de los padres de Santa María y de todos los abuelos, ayudándoles así en su vocación.

Desde entonces, en torno a la misión central de ayudar a los abuelos a “mantener la oración en el corazón de la familia y a transmitir la fe”, la CGA ha crecido y se ha convertido en una asociación verdaderamente internacional. Tiene unos estatutos respaldados por el arzobispo Michael Neary, de Tuam, en Irlanda. Por eso Catherine Wiley dice a menudo que la CGA fue concebida en Walsingham y vino al mundo en Irlanda. Trabajando en relación con el Consejo Pontificio para la Familia, como asociación privada de fieles, ha continuado desarrollando su estructura y fijado unas criterios de acción que le permitirán, bajo el auspicio de los obispos de cada lugar, convertirse en una parte de la vida normal de las parroquias.

A lo largo de los años, CGA ha recibido el apoyo de tres Papas sucesivos. San Juan Pablo II en 2002 y Benedicto XVI en 2007 bendijeron las peregrinaciones de abuelos. En 2008, a petición de Catalina, Benedicto XVI escribió una *Oración por los Abuelos* específica. Desde el comienzo de su pontificado, el Papa Francisco se ha referido a menudo al impacto que su abuela Rosa tuvo en su vida personal de fe, a la importancia de los abuelos en la familia, en la Iglesia y en la sociedad. Durante la JMJ de Río en 2013, dijo: “*Qué importantes son [los abuelos] en la vida de la familia para comunicar ese patrimonio de humanidad y de fe que es esencial para toda sociedad. Y qué importante es el encuentro y el diálogo intergeneracional, sobre todo dentro de la familia... [Los ancianos] transmiten la experiencia y la sabiduría de su vida*”. Ese mismo día, 26 de julio, el Papa Francisco también deseó a todos un “*feliz día de los abuelos*”, señalando esa fecha como un día para considerar el papel de san Joaquín y santa Ana, los padres de María y abuelos de Jesús, en la vida de la Sagrada Familia. En la *Oración por los Abuelos*, Benedicto

XVI llama a los abuelos “*pilares fuertes de la fe evangélica, custodios de los nobles ideales hogareños, tesoros vivos de sólidas tradiciones religiosas... y maestros de sabiduría y valentía*”.

La espiritualidad de CGA brota del cuarto mandamiento, “*honrarás a tu padre y a tu madre*”, que por voluntad de Dios une a los abuelos en relación duradera con sus hijos, una vez que éstos se han convertido en padres. En una carta a CGA en la fiesta de la Sagrada Familia de 2013, el arzobispo Vincenzo Paglia, presidente del Consejo Pontificio para la Familia, nos recuerda que “*en virtud de su propia experiencia humana y espiritual, los abuelos son en colaboradores preeminentes de los padres en su derecho y deber primario y principal de educar a sus hijos*”.

Hoy vemos que los abuelos asumen un papel creciente en la familia. Gracias a Dios, en general viven ahora más tiempo, tienen más salud, pueden tener mejor situación económica y tienen una fe fuerte y firme, afirmada y desarrollada a lo largo de los años. Sin embargo, también comparten muchas de las preocupaciones que trae una sociedad cada vez más secularizada y la crisis del matrimonio. Hace poco Catherine nos recordaba que “*no podemos ser la generación que permita que la fe se extinga*”. Sabemos que el futuro de la Iglesia y de la sociedad pasa por la familia (cfr. Juan Pablo II, *Familiaris Consortio*, 75). Lo que fortalezca a la familia necesariamente fortalece a la sociedad. La relación entre abuelos y nietos es especial, construida sobre el amor, y a menudo muy distinta de la relación parental. Puede ofrecer muchas oportunidades para una conversación discreta que plante la semilla de la fe y la lleve a florecimiento. A los niños les encantan las historias, sobre todo las que les cuentan sus abuelos.



Sin embargo, sería equivocado suponer que todo en la vida familiar es idílico. Muchas veces las familias están separadas por la distancia y las rupturas. Eso es particularmente duro para los abuelos, que a veces no tienen derechos legales específicos para ver a sus nietos. Una pareja perdió a su hijo en un accidente de coche, su nuera volvió a casarse y se rompió todo contacto con los nietos. Sin embargo, debido a la iniciativa del “Día de los abuelos en las escuelas” puesta en marcha por nuestra asociación, en el que los niños invitan a los abuelos a sus colegios, se produjo la reconciliación de la familia y esos abuelos pueden ver a su nieto de manera natural y regular.



El Papa saluda a representantes de la Asociación el 28 de septiembre, durante el encuentro con los ancianos



El crecimiento de la CGA ha sido rápido. En los últimos tres años ha establecido grupos y contactos en muchos países, como Australia, Irlanda, Inglaterra y Gales, España, Malta, Filipinas y los Estados Unidos. En nuestra presentación en Australia, el cardenal George Pell dijo: *“Alabo vuestra diligencia y vuestro trabajo para fomentar este programa que intenta apoyar a los abuelos en el espíritu de san Joaquín y santa Ana... Elogio la misión de CGA de ayudar a los abuelos a transmitir la fe y a mantener la oración en el corazón de la vida familiar”*.

Muchas personas han pensado que, no siendo ahora abuelos, esta asociación no era para ellos. Eso está lejos de la verdad; estamos abiertos a toda clase de miembros, personas bautizadas que por sus fuertes lazos familiares se convierten en “abuelos de corazón”, incluidos tío-abuelos y muchos otros. Todos los miembros comparten el deseo de hacer lo mejor por los nietos.

CGA ha desarrollado en torno a tres sencillas líneas: la oración de grupo e individual, la relación con los colegios y las peregrinaciones a santuarios y lugares sagrados. Los grupos de oración individual incluyen siempre la *Oración por los Abuelos* escrita por Benedicto XVI; suelen incorporar un aspecto social, porque normalmente las pequeñas conversaciones alrededor de una taza de café o de te hacen que surjan las cuestiones difíciles. En los colegios, alentamos los “Días de los Abuelos”, y organizamos convocatorias de oración: una de ellas, reciente, ha atraído a 10.000 personas.

Las peregrinaciones han crecido significativamente. El fin de semana del 14 de septiembre de 2014 se han reunido más de 12.000 abuelos y nietos en el santuario de Nuestra Señora de Knock, en Irlanda. Estas reuniones son un testimonio poderoso sobre la importancia de la vocación de todos los abuelos.

En el futuro, CGA continuará consolidándose y extendiendo su misión y su objetivo de “mantener a la oración en el corazón de la familia y transmitir la fe”. Es fácil decirlo, pero es difícil ponerlo en práctica. En una reciente peregrinación, Catherine dijo: *“A menudo me preguntan cómo podremos hacerlo, como podremos transmitir efectivamente la fe a las generaciones sucesivas. Lo he pensado mucho, y siempre vuelvo a la misma respuesta: siendo capaces de enseñar a nuestros nietos a rezar. La bendición de la mesa, las oraciones de la noche, el Santo Rosario, son caminos para continuar construyendo la Iglesia en la tierra y garantizar que en el futuro nuestros nietos podrán cumplir su papel de transmitir nuestro patrimonio cultural y nuestra fe”*. ■

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# Catholic Grandparents Association - English Version

Just over twelve years ago, from the prayer of a grandmother, Catholic Grandparents Association (CGA) was born. It happened that Catherine Wiley, a grandmother of 10, was praying at the National Shrine to Our Lady in Walsingham, England, on the Feast of our Lady's Birthday. Her simple prayer was what could she, a mother and grandmother, offer as a present to the Mother of our Lord. The answer came in way that surprised her. It was to honour our Lady's Parents, St Joachim and St Anne, the Grandparents of Jesus. The call was to make pilgrimages to Marian Shrines in recognition of the importance Mary's Parents and grandparents everywhere and thus, to support the vocation of grandparents.

Since then, built on the central mission and purpose of supporting grandparents in "keeping prayer at the heart of the family and passing on the faith", CGA has grown to become a truly International association. CGA has Statutes endorsed by Archbishop Michael Neary, of Tuam, Ireland. Catherine therefore, often says that CGA was conceived in Walsingham and born in Ireland. Working in conjunction with the Pontifical Council of the Family as a Private Association of the Faithful, CGA has further developed its structure and issued a set of guidelines, which will enable CGA, under the auspice of Local Bishops, to become an intrinsic part of parish life.

Over the years, CGA has received the support of three successive Popes. In 2002 St John Paul II and 2007 Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI blessed the Grandparents Pilgrimages. In 2008, at the request of Catherine, Pope Benedict wrote a special Prayer for Grandparents. Since the beginning of his papacy, Pope Francis has spoken often, referring to the impact that his own grandmother Rosa had on his faith life, about the importance of grandparents in the family, in the Church and in society. During his Address at World Youth Day, in Rio, in 2013, Pope Francis said "How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society! How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family, where the elderly transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives." It was on this day, the 26th July, that Pope Francis also wished everyone a "Happy Grandparents Day", firmly establishing this day as the one where we can focus on the role that St Joachim and St Anne, Mary's Parents and the Grandparents of Jesus, had in the life of the Holy Family. In the Prayer for Grandparents, Pope Benedict calls all grandparents, "Strong pillars of Gospel faith, guardians of noble domestic ideals, living treasuries of sound religious traditions and teachers of wisdom and courage".

The spirituality of CGA derives from the 4th Commandment, to "Honour your father and mother", which, by God's will, binds grandparents in everlasting parental relationship with their own children who have become parents themselves. In his letter to CGA on the Feast of the Holy Family, in 2013, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Council for the Family, reminds us that "by virtue of their own human and spiritual experience, grandparents become preeminent collaborators of parents in their primary and principle right and duty to educate their children".

Today, we see grandparents taking on an ever increasing role in the family. Thankfully, grandparents are now, in general, living longer, are healthier, possibly more financially secure, and have a strong and firm faith which has been honed and developed over the years. However, they also share the many concerns that an increasingly secular society and the breakdown of marriage has brought. Speaking recently, Catherine reminds us that "we cannot be the generation who allows the faith to die out". We know that the future of the Church and society passes by way of the family. That which strengthens the family will inevitably strengthen society. The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is a special relationship which is built on love and often quite different from the parental relationship. This can afford many opportunities for gentle conversations which can plant seeds of faith and nurture them to flourish. Children love stories and none more than the ones that their grandparents can tell.



However, it would be wrong to suggest that all family life is idyllic. Often families are separated by distance and family breakdowns. This is particularly hard because often grandparents have no specific rights in law to see their grandchildren. In one such example, a couple lost their son in a car accident, their daughter-in-law remarried and all contact with their grandchildren was severed. However, following an initiative developed by CGA of “Grandparents Day in Schools”, where children invite their grandparents to school for the day, reconciliation in the family took place and these grandparents can now see their grandson on a regular and natural basis.



Phil Butcher and Family

The growth of CGA has been, by any standard, fast. Over the past three years CGA has established groups and contacts in many countries, including Australia, Ireland, England and Wales, Gibraltar, Spain, Malta, the Philippines and the United States. At the launch of CGA in Australia, Cardinal George Pell said, “I commend your diligence and work in fostering this program that strives to support Grandparents in the spirit of St. Joachim and St. Anne... I endorse CGA’s mission of helping grandparents pass on the faith and keeping prayer at the heart of the family life.”

Many people have said that because they are not actually grandparents, that this association is therefore, not for them. This is quite far from the truth and membership is open to all the baptised who, by their strong familial connections, become “Grandparents at Heart”. This includes great aunts, great uncles and many others. All members are connected by the desire to do the very best for grandchildren.

CGA has developed along three simple lines, group and individual prayer, contact with schools and pilgrimages to shrines and holy places.

Individual prayer groups have developed, which always include Pope Benedict’s Prayer for Grandparents. This also allows time for individual sharing and mutual support. Often there is a social side to this as well, as we realise that it is normally the little conversations, usually over a cup of tea or coffee, that enable difficult issues to be raised.

Our links with schools are twofold. We encourage grandparents days in schools -where one can experience a sense of connection between grandparents and their own grandchildren, and witness the support that grandparents give- and we organise also prayer appeals. One such appeal recently attracted over 10,000 individual prayers from grandchildren.

Pilgrimages have grown significantly and on the weekend of 14th September 2014, at the Shrine to Our Lady in Knock, Ireland, we welcomed over 12,000 grandparents and grandchildren. These gatherings become a powerful witness to the value and worth of the vocation of grandparents everywhere.

In the future, CGA will continue to consolidate, develop and spread its mission and purpose, of “keeping prayer at the heart of the family and to pass on the faith”. Simple to say, but very often difficult to put into practice. Speaking at the recent pilgrimage, Catherine said, “I am often asked how can we do this, how can we effectively pass on the faith to successive generations. I have thought about this deeply and the answer always comes back to being able to teach your grandchildren to pray. Grace before meals, night prayers, the Holy Rosary, are all ways that we can ensure that we continue to build up the Church on earth and ensure that our grandchildren will be able to, in the future, play their part in passing on both our heritage and our faith”.

Phil Butcher  
CGA – Director for International Outreach

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# First Sunday of Advent - Homily, by His Eminence Cardinal Pell

St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney - 1 December, 2013 + Cardinal George Pell, Archbishop of Sydney

We are gathered here today to celebrate the first Sunday of Advent, the joyful period of prayer and penance when we prepare our hearts to receive the gift of God's Son. Today, in a special way, we also remember and thank God for the gift of grandparents. This day marks the official launch of the Australian Chapter of the Catholic Grandparents Association, whose simple but profound mission is "to help grandparents pass on the Faith and keep prayer in the heart of family life."

The Catholic Grandparents Association began in England in 2003, when an Irish grandmother of ten, Catherine Wiley, organised a pilgrimage of grandparents to the Marian shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. Ten years on, the Association has spread throughout Ireland and the UK, as well as the Philippines, Malta, parts of Africa and the United States.

It is not surprising that the Association has grown and spread so quickly throughout the world. You who are grandparents understand instinctively the great human, moral and spiritual challenges children face today in the world in which they are growing up. The immense cultural storms which have swept through society and the Church have contributed to a diminished sensitivity to the importance of faith which has touched almost every Catholic family in some way. For many Catholic children today, their grandparents may be the only practising Catholic members of their families. But even those children who are blessed with devout Catholic parents must grow to maturity in a highly secularised culture which radically competes for their hearts and minds and denies our need for God.

In his recent Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), Pope Francis commented upon this reality: "...in recent decades there has been a breakdown in the way Catholics pass down the Christian faith to the young. It is undeniable that many people feel disillusioned and no longer identify with the Catholic tradition. Growing numbers of parents do not bring their children for baptism or teach them how to pray. There is also a certain exodus towards other faith communities." (EG #70)

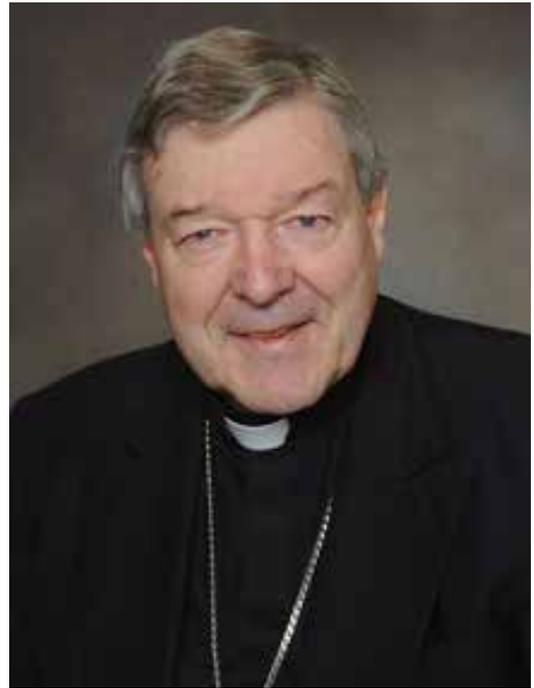
In his homily during Mass at Casa Santa Marta on the 19th of November, Pope Francis said that grandparents are a "treasure". He drew on the book of Maccabees, which tells of the death of the elderly Eleazar, who chose martyrdom rather than betray the faith. He prayed for all grandparents "who many times had a heroic role in the transmission of faith in times of persecution."

Many Catholics can testify to the profound influence of a grandparent on the development and nurturing of their own faith - sometimes an influence that is not fully understood or recognised until much later in life. The seeds you grandparents plant in childhood may not seem to bloom for some time, but they go deep into the soil.

Talk to your grandchildren about your faith - share your love for Jesus and Mary with them, your love for the particular saints to whom you have devotion. Encourage them to pray to their guardian angels and their patron saints, to know that Jesus is their greatest friend and Saviour. Let them know that he is the one who will always be there for them in moments of disappointment or sorrow or anxiety - the one who loves them beyond all human loves and will never fail them.

Share some of the simple but profound traditions of our Catholic faith - let them see you praying the rosary or Grace before meals. The rosary is a prayer that has been cherished and passed down from generation to generation, in which millions have taken comfort and found help and strength. As Lucia dos Santos, one of the children to whom Our Lady appeared at Fatima, said: "There is no problem, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot resolve by praying the Rosary."

With the many pressures of life today, mums and dads are often busy and pressed for time. One of the most precious gifts you can give your grandchildren is the gift of your time. A child needs someone to listen to him - someone who will understand and accept him for who he is.



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In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis quotes the 13th chapter of the Letter to the Hebrews: “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.” “The memory of our ancestors” - the Pope explains - “brings us to the imitation of faith.” Faith is a gift that is passed on from generation to generation. The lives and legacies of the martyrs and the saints illuminate this truth.

The Holy Father goes on to remind us of the impoverished nature of the society that does not care for its grandparents: “A people that does not care for its grandparents, a people that does not respect their grandparents, does not have a future, because they do not have a memory, they have lost their memory.” Sadly, too many of the elderly today are neglected by their own families and by the wider society. We must pray for a greater love and cherishing of grandparents and the elderly - that all may understand how precious is the wisdom and love they have to offer, how we are called to honour them for what they have sacrificed for us.

No one comes to faith alone. This is not only true of the Church as a spiritual family - the family of God - but true of the family in its biological sense. Even those of us who have come to the faith from non-Catholic or non-religious families owe a debt to our families and ancestors, who in some mysterious way planted the seeds of openness to the gift of faith, not knowing or even imagining where or how they would bear fruit. The mysterious operations of divine grace and Providence are present in every family. We thank God today for our grandparents and ancestors who laid the foundation of faith in our family.

A 2006 study from the University of Manchester investigated the transmission of religious faith within the family. It found that having grandparents who attend church regularly significantly increases the likelihood of a child becoming a regular churchgoer in adulthood. Even among children whose own parents attended church, the level of faith practice of their grandparents made a 36 per cent difference in whether or not these children would attend church regularly as adults.

Other studies have confirmed the benefits of a strong relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. A 2008 study from Oxford University found that grandparents often had more time than parents to help their grandchildren resolve problems and discuss future plans, which in turn encouraged children to be more resilient during times of stress. A study from Boston College, published earlier this year, found that grandparents and grandchildren who shared a close and supportive relationship experienced the lowest incidence of depression, compared with other groups. In particular, the researchers found that grandparents who “got stuck in and did things” with their grandchildren had the most positive impact on them.

Of course, a wise grandparent understands and accepts that he or she is not the parent and that there may be areas of their grandchildren’s upbringing with which they disagree. As a wise pastor, Johann Arnold, puts it in his book, *Why Children Matter*: “no matter how much we love our grandchildren, we must let our children find their own way of bringing them up”.

Above all, pray for your grandchildren. Sometimes grandparents are unable to see their grandchildren as often as they wish to, or enjoy the kind of relationship they hope for. But prayer is always possible, and always fruitful. Pray for your grandchildren - for their needs, their worries and their struggles. Pray that they might be blessed with good friends who will support and encourage them in their Catholic faith. Pray that God will give them the gift of a good spouse, or the gift of a religious or priestly vocation. Pray that they may come to know the beauty and joy of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Mary and the Saints. Teach them that they belong to the great family of believers that is the Catholic Church, and that this family will always accompany them in their journey through life’s joys and sorrows, its disappointments and victories.

In the beautiful words of Pope Francis, grandparents and the elderly “are those who carry history, that carry doctrine, that carry the faith and give it to us as an inheritance. They are like a good vintage wine who have this strength from within to give us a noble heritage.” As we begin this joyful season of Advent, let us ask Our Lady, and her parents Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, to intercede for all grandparents, that they may continue to have this strength - that God will bless and sustain them as they strive to pass on to us and to their grandchildren this noble heritage of the Catholic faith. During this time of Advent, may we all pray for the grace to understand more and more deeply the magnitude of the gift God has given us in His Son. And may the memories of our grandparents who handed on the gift of faith inflame our desire to share this gift with others.



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



# In Loving Memory

**Fr. Philip Graystone** died peacefully in Dorrington House Care Home at 11.30pm on Monday 15th September, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

On Monday 29th September, the body was received into the Slipper Chapel at Walsingham. The funeral followed on the 30th September. Concelebrated Requiem Mass in the Chapel of reconciliation, followed by burial in the grounds of St Mary's Church, Little Walsingham.

The funeral was beautiful in its simplicity and a true celebration of the life of a very special priest. Fr Philip always said he could 'do more for us in heaven than he could on Earth'. We thank him for his life and his guidance and we now have a strong intercessionary in heaven.



Father Philip Graystone

## Ireland's oldest man has died at the age of 108.

Luke Dolan, from Cloonfree, Strokestown, Co Roscommon, passed away on Sunday at Cloverhill nursing home. He had lived at home on the family farm until he was over 100. A keen GAA man, he attributed his longevity to a boiled egg every day, plenty of sugar in his tea and a devoted wife. He was also off the cigarettes for almost 50 years, having kicked the habit at 60.

One of seven children, he had one sister, Mary-Kate, who had lived to the age of 106. A father of seven himself, Mr Dolan's wife Peggy passed away in 2005 at the age of 85.



Luke Dolan

Sunday 9th November 2014

### **Mickie Berry,**

Johns Row, Westport. Beloved husband of Pauline, much loved father of Eamonn, Ann (Burns), Dolores (Brady), Frankie (Moyle), Paula (Crumlish) and Michelle (Mulleady) dearly loved grandfather and great-grandfather

Mick Berry

### **Gerard Gibson**

son of James and Catherine Gibson. Brother of Kenneth, Marie-Clare & Fiona.

He was 49 years old and died on 7th November following a tragic accident at home where he lived with his parents.

Gerard suffered from retinitis pigmentosa which progressively affected his field of vision.

Requiem Mass for Gerard was held at St. Ninian's Church, Dundee.

He was dearly loved by all his family and his many friends.

WEEKLY MASS AND PRAYERS WORLDWIDE  
ARE OFFERED FOR THE INTENTIONS OF ALL  
MEMBERS AND BRANCHES OF  
THE CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS  
ASSOCIATION



# Pope Francis' Meeting with Grandparents and Elderly

Peter and Mary Tiernan, Navan Branch Report for Rome Sept 28th, 2014

Truly it was a rare, unexpected and privileged experience to find ourselves in the presence of two living Popes - Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. This significant event occurred when we attended, together with 30 to 40,000 other pilgrims, the meeting of Grandparents and elderly with Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square on Sunday September 28th, 2014. An added bonus was that we did not have to endure long queues to gain entry as we had reserved seats right up beside the altar.

The whole occasion took six hours with the first two hours taken up with various preparations being made for the ceremonies, such as dressing the altar, the Papal Guards taking up their positions, the Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Priests from around the world taking their seats to concelebrate Mass with Pope Francis and Seminarians rehearsing their duties as they relate to the ceremonies. All this took place on the right of the altar while with other invited guests we took up our seats on the left between the Papal Throne and the altar. During this busy bustling time the sun shone down on St. Peter's Square which was packed with pilgrims. Throughout this period of preparation we were entertained by Andrea Bocelli, other singers and a choir. The excitement of expectancy was palpable. The ushers had their hands full too keeping us from seeking out vantage points for photographs. Before Mass began we were greatly surprised to see Pope Benedict pass quietly by to take his seat a short distance away. His frailty only allowed him to remain until after the addresses were made to Pope Francis.



The ceremonies began with a number of elderly people giving witness. For example an Iraqi couple spoke of the religious persecution in their country, while others spoke of their involvement in charitable or social activities either as beneficiaries or as contributors. Then came Catherine and her 12 year old Grandson, Tom. Introducing herself in English as co-founder, with her husband Stewart, of the Catholic Grandparents Association, she identified herself as being from Ireland. Continuing in Italian she emphasised the role of Grandparents in passing on the faith to families, citing Jesus' Grandparents Joachim and Anne as examples. Significantly, Pope Francis returned to this theme in his homily when he stressed the importance of the witness of faith of the elderly. And Tom, in his address in Italian also, likened the Pope to a granddad who is loved very much. He made his words so personal and credible by reminding Pope Francis that he too was a boy who would have listened to his Grandparents. Finally he asked Pope Francis to help people to understand how important Grandparents are in the family. Their addresses were warmly received. Catherine got acknowledgement from Pope Emeritus Benedict when she referred to his composing the Grandparent's prayer.

As we exited St Peter's, a bit exhausted but jubilant, we happened to meet a group of Grandparents from Malta who were celebrating their foundation's first anniversary. No doubt there will be further contact.

We deliberately chose a hotel within a few minutes walking distance of St. Peter's which facilitated our attending Mass each day in the Basilica as well as savouring the atmosphere of St. Peter's Two Masses in particular made a special impression on us. In the case of one, attended by special needs people, the similarity between those attending (carers and the cared) and those we know at home are identical, despite differences in language and culture. In contrast, the second was a Mass for 41 students from the North American Pontifical College who were being ordained deacons. That was an enormous positive experience because we were witnessing an advanced step in the continuation of Priesthood.

So what were our thoughts as we headed home? Certainly very glad we were there was one. To be part of a group of 30 to 40,000 like minded people, in spite of difference in language and culture, was enormously affirming and highlighted the universality of the Church to which we belong. And yes we left more firmly committed as Grandparents to pass on our faith.

## Grandparents Day Palm Beach



**Grandparents Day Palm Beach - 18th October 2014**  
Sixth Annual Pilgrimage for Grandparents in Palm Beach Beach, it was full of joy and a great success. Bishop Barbarito also announced his Blessing on establishing the CGA here in the Diocese of Palm Beach.



Catherine Wiley presenting The Catholic Grandparents Association Statutes to Bishop Barbarito, Diocese of Palm Beach.

# 8th Annual Pilgrimage at Knock



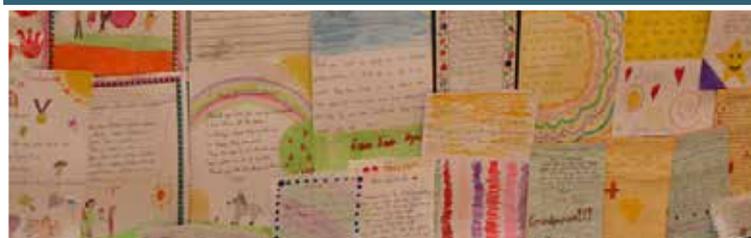
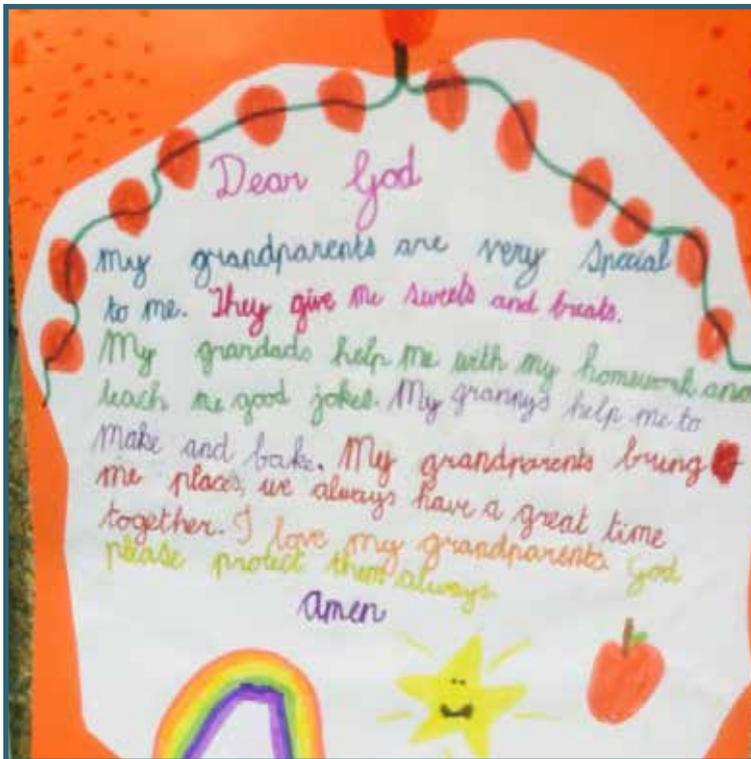
*“A wonderful occasion had by all”.*

It was a great day to remember full of Graces and Blessings for everyone. Over 12000 Grandparents and Families attended the 8th National Grandparents pilgrimage in Knock last weekend. On Sunday, September 14, feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, over 12,000 people attended the annual Grandparents Pilgrimage, in what has now become the biggest pilgrimage in Ireland. This was the eighth year for this growing gathering to attend the day of celebration at Ireland’s national shrine.

The day consisted of Healing of the Sick at 2.30 with the administration of the Sacrament, followed by a magnificent display of banners in the procession which included representatives from branches of the Catholic Grandparents Association from Ireland, UK and other parts of the world,

Holy Mass was concelebrated at 3pm, with bishops and priests from Ireland and abroad, chief celebrant being the papal nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Charles Brown. In his homily he acknowledged and affirmed all grandparents in their great vocation to hand on the Faith to grandchildren at this time. A reflection was given by Catherine Wiley, founder of the CGA. Her message to grandparents –“If you wish to pass on the Faith, you need to “teach your Grandchildren to pray!”. Fr Liam Lawton was guest soloist at the Mass, with St. Joseph’s School Choir from Castlebar, conductor Deirdre Lee and musical director, Una Nolan. A great day to remember, Grandparents left feeling empowered and encouraged and invigorated for their challenge.

We would also like to thank Father Richard Gibbons (4th from the left on top right photo) for his generous donation to The Catholic Grandparents Association.



Catherine Wiley founder of CGA presenting the Guidelines to Archbishop Charles Brown Papal Nuncio

Catherine Wiley with: From left to right - Bishop Anthony Farquhar, Bishop Kieran O'Reilly, Fr. Richard Gibbons, Bishop Brendan Kelly, Catherine, Bishop Denis Nulty, Archbishop Charles Brown, Bishop Brendan Leahy



## The Longest Married Couple Ireland

Following a nationwide search we have found the longest married couple who are James and Margaret Hurley from Co. Tipperary.

They will celebrate 73 years of marriage on the 30th September. Their granddaughter Sophie Fitzpatrick told us, "They got married when grandad was 18 and granny was 20. He always joked he married an older woman."



Photo James and Margaret Hurley, Celebrating their 70th Anniversary.

Grandad always worked hard as a farmer and later with his own sand and gravel company which gave employment to many. They were blessed with five children and now have 12 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. When I asked my Granny what was the secret to a long and happy marriage she said, 'when you marry your best friend it's easy... follow my mother's advice, when you have good health, mind it!'. Their advice for a couple marrying today is to work hard, respect one another and love your family, because they are the most important people in the world".

Sadly, James and Margaret cannot be with us today but we send them our warmest love. They will be presented later with a special certificate signed by the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Charles Brown. We will also be presenting certificates to those couples who closely followed our 'Longest Married Couple'

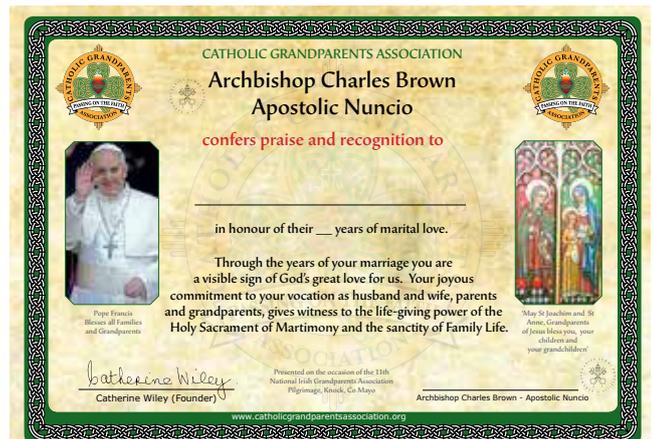
## The Longest Married Couples

- Mr. & Mrs. Eileen & Ned Cusack – 70 years married
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Walsh – 68 years married
- Terry & Betty Layton – 65 years married
- Mr. & Mrs. Kevin & Eileen Lamph – 64 years married
- Mr. & Mrs. Tommy & Sadie Gallagher – 60 years married

Certificate and Blessing The Longest Married Couple presented by

**CHIEF CELEBRANT**

Archbishop Charles Brown - Apostolic Nuncio



# 12th National Grandparents Pilgrimage to Walsingham and International Grandparents Day of Prayer.



*Saturday 26th July – Feast of St Joachim and St Anne*

Hundreds of Pilgrims came to Walsingham, England to celebrate the feast of St Anne and St Joachim, parents of Mary and Grandparents of Jesus. The day, which was organised by the Catholic Grandparents Association in collaboration with the Dioceses of East Anglia, Northampton, Westminster and Brentwood, was also the international Day of prayer for grandparents recognises both the vocation of grandparents and the key role that they play in families.

The day coincided with the International Day of prayer for Grandparents

During the day there were a wide range of activities including the ‘Walsingham Story’, which was a short play performed by local children and actors and told the story of ‘England’s Nazareth’. The play was such a great success that it will be restaged next year and a ‘touring’ version to be performed at local schools and other venues.



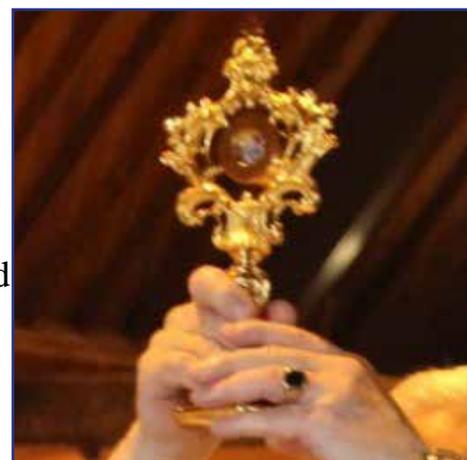
Msgr Carlos Simon Vazquez, Under Secretary Pontifical Council for the Family

The Mass, at which the Chief Celebrant was Msgr. Carlos Simón Vázquez, under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the Family, formed the main focus of the day. During the celebrations, Msgr. Carlos Simon presented Catherine Wiley, CGA Founder, with a relic of St John Paul II. After the mass hundreds gathered to venerate the relic. It is hoped that this will find its permanent home in Walsingham, the spiritual birthplace of the Catholic Grandparents Association and possibly be taken to other Shrines for special occasions.

Accompanying Msgr Carlos Simón Vázquez was also Fr Victor Ghio from Gibraltar who presented Catherine Wiley with the Supplementary Guidelines which support the Statutes of the Association and will ensure the ongoing development, structure and sustainability of the CGA as it develops throughout the world.

Plans are well advanced for our event next year which will again be held on the Feast of St Joachim

and St Anne. Our Chief Celebrant will be Bishop Alan Hopes of East Anglia, the home Diocese of Walsingham. We also will welcome Bishop Peter Doyle who was appointed this year as Chair for Bishop’s Conference for England and Wales Committee for Marriage and Family Life and is the Patron for the CGA in England and Wales.



The Walsingham Story



Msgr Carlos Simon Vazquez presenting the Relic of St John Paul II to CGA Founder Catherine Wiley.

also Fr Victor Ghio from Gibraltar who presented Catherine Wiley with the Supplementary Guidelines



## Congratulations to Archbishop Eamon Martin

Archbishop Eamon Martin has become Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland after Pope Francis on Monday accepted the resignation of his predecessor, Cardinal Sean Brady.

For the past 16 months Archbishop Martin has been the Coadjutor Bishop of the Diocese, with the right of succession. Aged 52, the new archbishop is a native of Derry in Northern Ireland. He spoke to Susy Hodges about his feelings on his first day in his new post, the challenges facing the Catholic Church and the state of the Northern Ireland peace process.



## Congratulations to Rabab Palestinian Catholic Singer

The Catholic Grandparents Association wish Rabab and New Husband Luai Zaher a blessed and prosperous married future.

Luai and Rabab Zaher were married on 26th July 2014 the feast of Saint Anne and St Joachim, in the Basilica of Annunciation in Nazareth.

Please pray for their new family.

Visit their website <http://www.theholylandsounds.com/>

## Happy 107th Birthday to Michael Lambert picture with wife Mary

Michael Lambert of Clooneygrasson Ballintubber Castlereagh Co Roscommon who celebrated his 107th Birthday on the 5th October 2014 pictured with his wife Mary.

We wish him love and prayers and every blessing in the years to come.



## Diocesan Day Report by Betty Murphy

Maura and myself attended, in The Osprey Hotel, Naas, Co. Kildare, on the 2nd of Oct '14. We had been invited by Fr. John Cummins, ADM of Cathedral Parish Carlow, he had been appointed Vicar of Evangelisation in our Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin, by Bishop Denis Nulty, both of whom are great supporters of CGA and realize how important our Association, is in passing on the faith to our grandchildren.



Representatives of each parish were present on the day. During the Talks people were encouraged to visit the various stands around the room, and Bishop Nulty and Fr. John pointed out that the CGA were present as well. So between Talks people came to us and we spoke about CGA and gave out information and we asked if they would like to give a contact no. and Priest's name and Parish, so we did receive 11 inquiries on the day. It was a very successful day.

I would like to personally thank Maura Printer (Now retired) for the work she has done and for inspiring us to set up our Group In Carlow Cathedral Parish. Also to Catherine Wiley (Founder of CGA) for following through on her Inspiration in setting up the CGA and for helping Grandparents to feel inspired to pass on the Faith to their Grandchildren, and to all who work hard behind the scene in CGA. Grandparents, Lets pray for each other.

*This is Photo of our group and friends from our day at CGA Pilgrimage Knock Sept 14th.*

*Our Grandson Darragh announced to me, very proudly 'Nanny I signed up to be a Mass Server'.*

## Scoil Mhuire gan Smál Report by Betty Murphy

In February, I visited Scoil Mhuire gan Smál, a girls Primary School in Carlow, on Grandparents Day. It was wonderful to see that 150 Grandparents attended. The children conducted the prayer service. and sang for us. We had refreshments, and were invited to look around the school and see everything that was going on.

I had been invited by the teacher to go into 2nd class which was my granddaughter Kate's class, to speak to the children about what it was like when I was going to school, which happened to be the same school. S the teacher said to talk for about 15 minutes.

Well there was great interaction with the children, and I would look at the teacher and ask is that enough but she'd say keep going, so it lasted 1 hour, and then I said to the children, I'm finishing now but I will tell you a little true story. When I was about 7 years of age, (Their age), I asked my Mam for a square of red felt material, she was a dressmaker so I loved the feel of material, so as it happened I saw a pattern of a little Fawn in a Magazine. I asked my mam would she show me how to make it. So I cut out the pattern, I drew around it with a pencil, and then cut out the pieces, she showed me how to stitch the pieces together and gradually this little animal was beginning to form. I stuffed it with bits of material and sewed it closed, then sewed the eye, nose and mouth. Then put on ears. Well I loved this little Fawn. I would show it to my children and then Grandchildren now and again.

So I took the Little Red Fawn out of my bag to show them and they were delighted to see it, and then I said that about 10 year ago I wrote a Poem about making it, and I read the poem for them.  
The Poem, My Little Red Fawn.

*As I read the last two lines, tears came into my eyes, I was just their age when I made the little Fawn, never thinking I would ever get old, but now here I was a Grandparent. A little child came up to me with a little hankie and said 'Here Mrs Murphy dry your tears. - A very tender moment.*

I look a little worse for the wear,  
But I'm getting on now, you see,  
Though I'm supposed to be one year old,  
I came here in nineteen fifty.

For a fawn is a one year old deer,  
Beside my mother, the doe, I'd stand,  
She and my father, the stag, are long gone,  
But I live in Peter Pan land.

Would you believe, I was once a felt square,  
Left aside as an old rag would be?  
Along came a seven year old, and I'm glad,  
She saw something of what I could be.

She cut out my pieces and sewed them  
together,  
I gradually took on a new look,  
She stuffed me with pieces of cotton,  
This a whole day nearly took.

All was well, but I couldn't smell,  
Or hear, or see where I was going,  
So she stitched on a nose, eyes and ears,  
Now she can see something for her sewing.

From day one I was cuddled and loved,  
By my new Mam, who made me, you see,  
I never felt lonely if she had to go out,  
I knew she would always bring me.

Well I'm lucky I survived this long,  
And I hope that my end is not near,  
Mam calls me 'Her Little Red Fawn',  
And I call her my 'Old Mother Deer'.



PONTIFICIUM  
CONSILIUM PRO FAMILIA



Prot. n. 2014/717-II/21

Vatican City, October 22nd 2014

It is an essential part of the Church's duty to support and assist spouses in family prayer, attentive hearing of the word of God, and knowledge of the Bible. We know that every Christian home ought to have a Bible in a worthy place to be used for regular reading and prayer. So it is with joy that I welcome this latest initiative of the British group Two in One Flesh in providing brief online scriptural reflections on sacramental marital love in the light of the Sunday readings for Year B. Such a resource as MARRIAGE MATTERS comes at a timely moment in the life of the Church when there is fresh attention on the centrality of marriage in her mission. The Apostolic Exhortation Verbum Domini declares that "it must never be forgotten that the word of God is at the very origin of marriage' and that fidelity to God's word leads us to point out that marriage is in many ways under attack". It reminds us "the Word of God is a precious support amid the difficulties which arise in marriage and in family life". I pray that all who use this resource especially spouses will find renewed hope and trust in God's fidelity to them as couples and that like His precious Word, it will enable them to remain alive and active in their commitment to one another.

  
✠ Jean Laffitte  
Secretary

00120 STATO CITTÀ DEL VATICANO

Ufficio: Piazza S. Calisto, 16 - 00153 Roma - Tel. 06.698.87243 - Fax 06-698.87272 - E-mail: pcf@family.va

**MARRIAGE MATTERS** is a collection of 60 word snippets, adapted from the Sunday Mass Scripture Reading reflections found in I AM WITH YOU Year B. These can be placed in a Newsletter, Bulletin, Website or Blog. Simply 'cut and paste' and apply the relevant weeks reflection to the medium you're using. Our desire through this book is to support, encourage, inspire, challenge and motivate couples to deepen their relationship with one another and with God. It is for use by Organisations, Parishes and Diocese, nationally and internationally. Its sole purpose is to enhance relationships and heighten the profile of Marriage and its sanctity and significance in the life of the family, the Church, communities and Society as a whole.



Every Blessing from the Two In One Flesh group

For your copy visit:

<http://www.twainoneflesh.org.uk/marriagematters.html>

## Important Bible Verses For Grandparents to Learn

May 20, 2014 by Jack Wellman

Is there anyone more special than a grandparent to grandchildren? What are some important Bible verses for grandparents?

To read all please visit:

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2014/05/20/5-important-bible-verses-for-grandparents-to-learn/>

### Grandparents, A Godly Heritage

Second Timothy 2:4-5 “As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”

“As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.”

- Second Timothy 2:4-5

I have used this verse for mothers but it is equally of value to grandmothers because you can see that the roots of Timothy’s faith go back to his mother and his grandmother. I can assume that Timothy’s mother learned her godly roots from her own mother Lois, Timothy’s grandmother. As a grandfather myself, there are few things more joyful than spending time with my grandsons. No, it is not just “sugaring them up and sending them home” but it is playing catch, going to the park, or watching a movie with them. They do sleep good when we do send them home but they know that “paw paw” and “mam maw” love them and that we love God. That heritage is passed along by grandparents and those roots run deep throughout their life. That makes grandparents a rich, valuable resource for the future, just as it did Timothy.



### Snow on the Roof, Fire in the Cabin

Psalms 92:14-15 “They still bear fruit in old age; they are ever full of sap and green, to declare that the Lord is upright; he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.”

As we get older, we grandparents do get slower but there is nothing wrong with slow because steady but slow wins the race, so I have heard. As we grandparents age, we must have patience with ourselves and the parents and grandchildren should be more patient with them and allow grandma and grandpa time to speak for grandparents hold so much wisdom with their years of experience that time has taught them. You cannot teach experience and we can sit with them and learn so much. Grandparents, we have so much to pass on to our grandchildren. Grandparents may be old but let me show you that older is not any less than the best. Our best pecan and black walnut trees are the older ones. We have a one-hundred year-old pecan tree but we were told by someone from Georgia, where pecans are said to grow best, that ours were the sweetest they had ever tasted and the black walnuts from a one-hundred year-old tree are the best they had ever eaten. These trees, just like grandparents, “are ever full of sap and green” because they are rooted in the Rock and that Rock is God in whom “there is no unrighteousness.”

### God is with us Even to Old Age

Isaiah 46:4 “even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.”

God is said to be with us “even to [our] old age and He carries [us], bears [us] up” and saves us. When God spoke through Isaiah that He would be with them “to gray hairs” what He was saying was that His love is not diminished by time and our value to Him is not lessened by age or the accumulation of years. What a tender, loving God that, unlike many of the children of their grandparents, will not abandon them in their old age nor will He ever forsake them (Heb 13:5). What a great and precious promise by He Who is without age. Indeed, “Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life” (Prov 16:31) and their “Grandchildren are the crown of the aged, and the glory of children is their fathers” (Prov 17:6).



## How to Be a Better Grandparent

Tips on Building Great Relationships with your Grandkids

**Improving Emotional Health**As grandparents we all want to make the most of the precious family time we get to spend with our grandchildren. You can create deep, loving relationships with your grandchildren by sharing the things you love and by learning about what excites them. Whether you're a full-time grandparent, a step-grandparent, or a long distance grandparent living thousands of miles away, you can find new ways to strengthen family ties and provide your grandchildren with joyful memories and valuable life lessons.

## What's so grand about being a grandparent?

In no particular order, grandparenting is an opportunity to play, to love someone new, to appreciate the magic of a developing mind, and to be needed by someone again. Grandparents can:

- Share the things they're passionate about with a new audience.
- See the world in a new way through younger eyes.
- Experience games, music, nature, reading, and other interests in conjunction with a curious young mind.
- Provide expanded support and encouragement to their grandchildren.
- Use their breadth of experience to avoid the pitfalls they may have encountered as parents the first time around.
- Watch children develop through all stages of growth.
- Learn about their grandkids' music and passions.
- Provide input that parents cannot.

Usually, grandparents have the benefit of interacting on a level that is once removed from the day-to-day responsibilities of parents. This can make it easier to develop a close bond with grandchildren. From near or far, grandparenting can provide continuity in a child's life. Grandparents are often the family historians, and can add a rich sense of family tradition to a child's life. Additionally, contact with grandparents can teach children positive attitudes towards aging and help them develop skills to enhance their own lifelong learning.

Of course, not everything about being a grandparent is great all of the time. Becoming a grandparent at a young age can make some people feel prematurely old and, just as parents do, grandparents sometimes have to deal with colicky babies and moody teenagers. For most though, the benefits of being a grandparent far outweigh the drawbacks.



## Making the most of your grandparenting time

- Carve out one-on-one time. On occasion, spend time with individual grandchildren. It will give you an opportunity to bond, without competition, with one grandchild at a time.
- See the sights. Concerts and plays, movies, science centers and museums, parks or walks in the neighbourhood provide opportunities to be together and to exchange ideas and opinions.
- Play games. Board and card games are a unique opportunity to watch kids in action and to see how they operate in the world. Games also allow you to help your grandchild learn to be a good sport and play fairly.
- Communicate family history. Tell stories about games or trips you shared when the grandchild's parents were young. This is a great way to weave a 'tapestry' of shared experiences for the whole family.

For more information visit:

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/grandparenting/how-to-be-a-better-grandparent.htm>

# How To Nurture The Grandparent And Grandchild Relationship

By Patricia Babuka on October 22, 2011

My family has always loved Broadway musicals from “Sound of Music” and “Annie Get Your Gun” to the more contemporary “Wicked.” But now that I’m the CEO of GrandCamp Adventures, a company I started to help nurture the grandparent and grandchild relationship, I find the “The King and I” comes to mind most frequently.

I’m often asked by grandparents for tips on how to nurture their connection with their grandchildren, and parents ask me how to help nudge the grandparent and grandchild relationship. I tell them to take a cue from Anna, from “The King and I.” Her “Getting to Know You” lyrics apply to grandparents and grandchildren as much as to teacher and pupils.

Time spent getting to know “beautiful and new things” about one another is without question the way to connect.

**I have found that the best environment for developing this rapport is one where grandparent and grandchild do something together.**



## No Parents Allowed

Parents who recognize the importance of letting these relationships flourish on its own soon find they are benefiting all three generations:

Grandparents gain an opportunity to pass on their legacy of knowledge and traditions without the filter of the parent generation.

Parents enjoy time to pursue things without responsibility for their children.

Grandchildren discover that their grandparents not only know a lot, but are also fun to be with.

grandparent and grandchild Magic moments between grandparent and grandchild are the spontaneous result of shared experiences: experiences as simple as creating a secret handshake, cooking together or hiking a local trail. Many grandparents read storybooks to their grandchildren as a way to start conversations. Board games, card games and activities like treasure hunts are all fun, easy, ways to share time and get to know one another.



## Fun, Frequency, Familiarity

By keeping a few things in mind, grandparents can have a great rapport with their grandchildren:

**Fun:** Grandparents need to make sure that the things they do with their grandchildren are fun for both generations.

**Frequency:** These relationships need to be maintained over time through regular phone/Skype calls, visits and mail.

**Familiarity:** Grandparents need to encourage their grandchildren in the give and take of revealing likes and dislikes, favourite places and other things that form a true basis for knowing one another.

For most grandparents, it’s natural to be more involved with the grandchildren when they are very small. As the children get older and more independent — and very busy with friends and activities — it takes a real effort to maintain the relationship.

For more information please visit:

<http://www.howtolearn.com/2011/10/how-to-nurture-the-grandparent-and-grandchild-relationship/>

# The Catholic Grandparents Association



## Prayer Wall



This is a photograph of Norine Maher and her husband Paul with their grandson Alexander. Alexander has a lot of medical issues. He has severe scoliosis and needs major surgery in the 'not too distant' future. He has two important hospital visits to Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in the next two weeks.

Regards and God Bless,  
Norine Maher



*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,  
We will remember them.*

Please pray for  
Marguerite O'Kane who lost her  
mother-in-law in November 2014



**Stephen Stannard** Phil  
Butcher's Grandfather  
Died - 1st July 1914,  
Battle of the Somme



*Let us Pray*

@  
[catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)

# Grandparents Day 2014

## Diocese of Springfield MA



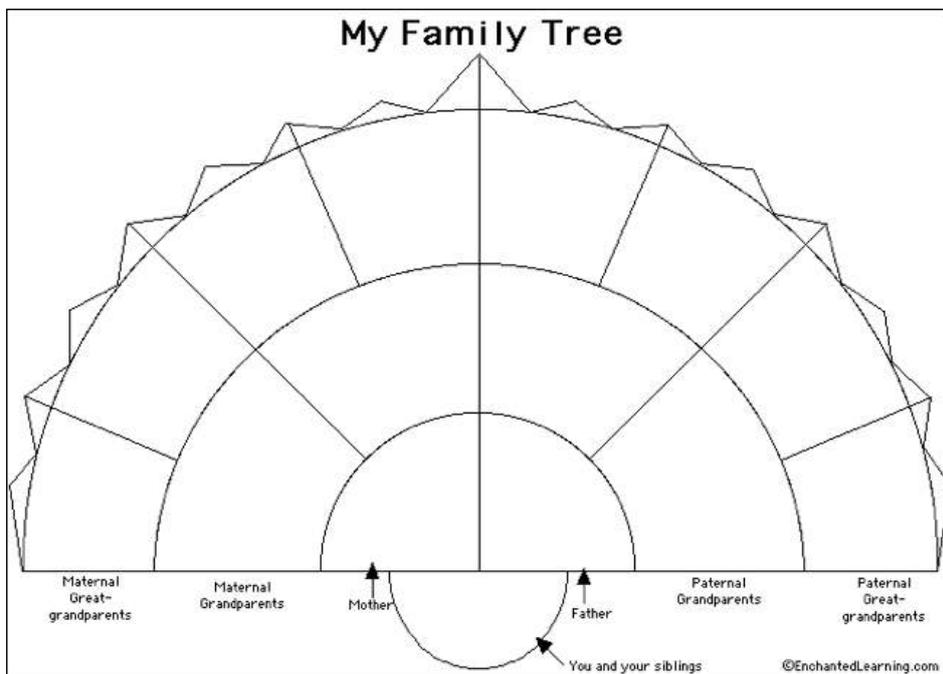
Leader Alicia Belanger with Fr. Anthony Gremlich, rector of The National Shrine of the Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, MA.

By Leader Alicia Belanger.

We did a prayer group service with our Grandparents this November, the month of all souls in purgatory whereby we all remembered OUR Grandparents who of course are with God either in purgatory or in heaven. They all filled out a family tree in which they backtracked their ancestry to their parents, Grandparents, and great-Grandparents ( if possible). These were pinned onto an altar banner which read GOD BLESS Grandparents.

Then, each grandparent placed a vigil light representing their Grandparents on the main altar during eucharistic adoration and as I read the Grandparent's names, the vigil light was lit. We then said a decade of the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary for their intentions and a short litany for the souls in purgatory. Everyone thought that it was very meaningful and were touched by it. Then we did our monthly novena to St. Joachim and St. Anne for our grandchildren's intentions.

Our next monthly gathering will be on the first Tuesday, Dec. 2nd . We will do our novena for our grandchildren and I'm advertising that we'll be having the appearance of a "special guest". The guest will be St. Nicholas and he will tell about his life, feast day and traditions coming up on Dec. 6th. In our Polish home, we always celebrated this day as "Little Christmas" and as kids we would put our winter boots outside the door on the evening before (Dec. 5th) and run down in the morning to find a little present along with fruit and nuts filling our boots. Hopefully the Grandparents will start it with their grandkids or tell their children to do it for their kids. I think that we'll hand out small advent wreaths to all the Grandparents and have a light advent lunch. I'll also be introducing them all about Bambinelli Sunday.



Prayer balloons to be launched at the end of Thanksgiving Mass for Grandparents



Celebrant Bishop Michael Rozanski and Fr. William Wallis, our priest of Catholic Grandparents Asso. in Westfield, MA



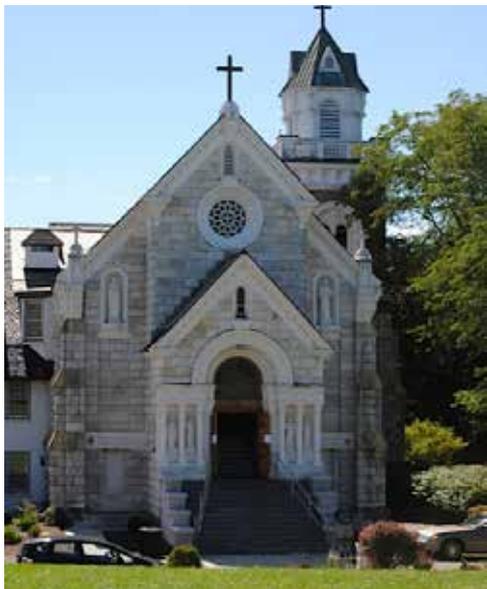
Grandparent Sandi Fitzsimmons with beautiful picture raffle prize



Psalm 23, youth singing group from Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament Parish in Westfield, MA entertaining grandparents to get the day off to a good start.



Grandchildren helping blowing out the candles on Our Lady's birthday cake.



The beautiful National Shrine of Divine Mercy Church



Rosary procession



Roxana winner of stuffed teddy bear raffle and Grandma Carolyn Boehm with their prize Teddy Bear.



St. Annes Feast Day 26th July 2014

## Pope confirms he will visit Philadelphia in September

By Francis X. Rocca Posted: 11/17/2014

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis said he would attend the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September, making it the first confirmed stop on what is expected to be a more extensive papal visit to North America.

The pope made the announcement Nov. 17 in a speech opening an interreligious conference on traditional marriage.

"I would like to confirm that, God willing, in September 2015 I will go to Philadelphia for the eighth World Meeting of Families," the pope said.

The announcement had been widely expected, since Pope Benedict XVI had said before his retirement that he hoped to attend the Philadelphia event. Popes typically fulfill their predecessors' publicly known travel plans, as Pope Francis did in July 2013 when he attended World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro.

Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, who was in Rome for the families meeting, told Catholic News Service the announcement was "a surprise in the sense that it was announced so early; you know usually they don't make these announcements -- four months out is the typical and here we are 10 months away, and the Holy Father said he is coming to Philadelphia."

"The Holy Father has said that he's going to be coming to Philadelphia for quite a few months," he told Catholic News Service. "He's been telling me that personally, but for him to announce it officially that he is coming so early is really quite an unusual thing, so it's going to re-energize our efforts. There's lot of enthusiasm already, but I think 90 percent of the enthusiasm's based on the fact that the Holy Father will be with us, and now that he's said that I expect that there will be even a double amount of enthusiasm ... and I'm very happy about that."

Catholicphilly.com reported the archbishop noted that Pope Francis has focused "on the many challenges that families face today globally. His charisma, presence and voice will electrify the gathering.

"As I've said many times before, I believe that the presence of the Holy Father will bring all of us -- Catholic and non-Catholic alike -- together in tremendously powerful, unifying and healing ways. We look forward to Pope Francis' arrival in Philadelphia next September, and we will welcome him joyfully with open arms and prayerful hearts."

To read more visit:

<http://www.thebostonpilot.com/article.asp?ID=172525#>



### CGA Mornington branch in Mornington, Co. Meath.

Now you can visualize us all! As you can see we are a mixture and delighted that we have two men in our midst! We are really establishing ourselves and now have a Secretary and Treasurer (we collect one euro 'tea money' for expenses).

Our topic for our last meeting was 'The Nativity' and ways of telling stories to young children. It gave me the idea (this am at 7!) that perhaps we could have a display of cribs in our Parish Rooms. Sunday after mass would be best as we have a children's Liturgy group in our parish and they 'entertain' the little ones at 11.30 mass. I need to put it to the meeting.

We had our first meeting on September 23rd. We will now have meetings on the first tuesday of the month taking a break for the summer months.

Back Row (left to right):

Margaret Floody, Raphael Mahon, Maurice Byrne, Maura Byrne, Norine Maher (Chairperson), Bernadette McHugh (Secretary), Anne Burke, Patricia Mooney.



Front Row (left to right):

Eithne Killeen, Bridget Callan (Treasurer), Joe Connolly, Margaret Kelly, Jacinta Coyle, Fr. Willie Cleary (Curate and Spiritual Director).

# Mum's Christmas Pudding *Dating from 1950's*

4 oz. Self Raising Flour  
6 oz. Raisins  
6 oz. Sultanas  
6 oz. Currants  
1 oz Almonds  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg  
½ teaspoon mixed spice  
Grated rind of 1 orange  
4 oz breadcrumbs

8 oz dark soft brown sugar  
5 oz. suet  
2 oz mixed peel  
1 medium carrot, grated  
3 eggs  
2 tablespoons treacle  
1 small wineglass sherry or brandy  
Some dark beer (Guinness) if mixture  
(or you!) get too dry.



Pictured  
Phil's Mum c1970

Prepare dried fruits (you may wish to get these already mixed). You may wish to soak the fruit in the sherry or brandy overnight first. Prepare the breadcrumbs using day old bread in a food processor. Sieve flour, salt and spices, add grated orange rind, breadcrumbs, sugar, suet, dried fruit peel, nuts and grated carrot. Beat the eggs and pour into the ingredients. Mix thoroughly (make a wish), gradually add treacle, and sherry or brandy to make a soft dropping consistency. Divide the mixture between two medium sized greased pudding basins, cover with greaseproof paper and a pudding cloth and boil or steam for 3 to 4 hours. Give the pudding a further 3 hours boil on the day it is to be eaten. Puddings are traditionally allowed to mature for 12 months but if you make them now they will still be excellent. It's also traditional to light them with brandy – great fun but be careful! This is a traditional recipe handed down from my Mum and very popular with our grandchildren on Christmas Day!



## Phil Butcher

Director – International Outreach - Catholic Grandparents Association

## **MEMBERS NEEDED** for New West Clare branch of The Catholic Grandparents Association



Please contact:  
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Postal Address:  
**Kilofin, Labasheeda,  
Ennis, Co. Clare**

Telephone: 087 9174402

## First Meeting for our First Grandparents Group in Pompton Lakes, NEW JERSEY, USA

by *Dianne Sarno*  
November 11th 2014



The meeting on the eleventh went very well, since Christmas is an easy topic. We had seven attendees, including two grandfathers. Counting the four great grandchildren of one couple, we represented 18 grandchildren in all.

The ideas were great so now we have to implement them. The book *Bambinelli Sunday* made us aware of the Pope in St. Peter's Square blessing the Baby Jesus from the children's nativity sets. Fr. Frank agreed to bless the Baby Jesus from the families' nativity sets on Sunday, December 21st, after the 12:00 Mass.

We stressed the importance of having carols sung in our own homes as well as in our neighbourhoods. So we are going to do that (weather permitting) on the evening of Dec 21st. I am going to make up some simple songbooks with the lyrics to the songs that the members suggested. We want to focus on ways to Keep Christ in Christmas.

May God bless you all and the wonderful work of the CGA.



# LORD, TEACH ME HOW TO GROW OLD

Help me to recognise  
the good things in my life;  
grant me the courage to  
accept my limitations  
ceding my place to others  
without resentment or complaint.  
May I grow out of my attachment  
to things,  
seeing in this process a wise law  
of Your Providence which  
regulates time and presides over  
the life of generations.  
Grant Lord,  
that I may still be of some use  
to the world,  
through doing my small jobs,  
but more importantly through  
the witness of my patience and  
goodness,

my serenity, my joy and peace.  
Give me, Lord, Your strength  
to face up to the difficulties  
of each day,  
and especially to sickness and to  
loneliness.  
May the last years of my mortal life  
be a happy sunset.  
In prayer and charity,  
understanding and hope,  
may I know how to grow old and  
to die with the kind of serenity and  
courage that You, Lord, showed on  
the cross,  
so that one day I may rise  
to the glory of Your Father and our  
Father,  
and to meet those who have  
gone before me!  
Amen.

## Scottish Catholic Grandparents Association Mass 2014



Sunday 17th August saw Grandparents from dioceses throughout Scotland gather to celebrate the 4th annual Scottish Catholic Grandparents Pilgrimage at Carfin Lourdes Grotto, Scotland's National Shrine to Our Blessed Lady, in the Diocese of Motherwell.

Prior to Mass, Una Delaney, co-ordinator of the SCGA, warmly welcomed all the assembled.

Parish priest and administrator of Carfin Grotto, Fr Francis McGachey, hosting the pilgrimage day, welcomed Principal Mass celebrant Bishop of Paisley, John Keenan and concelebrants Fr Benny McHale from Ireland, Canon William Dunnachie, Fr Dominic Towey and newly ordained Fr Martin Delaney, all of Motherwell Diocese.

School children from St. Mary's, Coatbridge carried up and presented their decorated placards honouring their grandparents during the entrance procession of the Mass, which proved to be a joyful family celebration spanning all generations.

Cantor Claire Pitcathley led the congregation beautifully throughout Mass. Before the offertory the concelebrants administered Anointing and Blessing of the Sick to those in need. The offertory gifts were then taken up by four generations of the McAleer family.

Mass was followed by praying together a Scriptural Rosary led by Fr McGachey. All present were united in an occasion of great graces, blessings and empowerment to continue the work of passing on the faith to the younger generations.

19th November 2014

Catherine Wiley Founder of The Catholic Grandparents Association presenting the Guidelines and statutes to  
Right - BISHOP AGNELO RUFINO GRACIAS - AUXILIARY BISHOP OF BOMBAY

Left - BISHOP DOMINIC SAVIO FERNANDES - AUXILIARY BISHOP OF BOMBAY



**50th Anniversary XXXVIII International Eucharistic Congress Prayer presented to Catherine Wiley.**

Father in Heaven,

fifty years ago we had the privilege of hosting the International Eucharistic Congress in Bombay, when Blessed Paul VI the Vicar of Christ came here to join the rest of the world in adoring the Eucharistic Lord. We thank you for those glorious days, when the Archdiocese experienced many blessings.

We thank you for all the graces you have showered on our Archdiocese over the past fifty years. We pray that the Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress that we are now celebrating result in a deeper understanding of Eucharist, a more personal meeting with him in the Sacrament of love and a greater enthusiasm to live the abundant life you offer us in the Eucharist.

Bless our families, our parents, our brothers and sisters, our children and our grandparents. May we experience the presence of Jesus in our homes: his peace, love, joy and unity. Protect us from all harm, heal those who are sick, strengthen those who are weak; guide our children to study well and grow in your wisdom and understanding. Bless our country, our city and our leaders. May we all be nourished by the Bread of Life, journey together in our mission of spreading Your Kingdom of truth, justice and love. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord and Kings.

Amen

## The Carlow Cathedral Group



are now formed 2 years. We started off very simply, and month by month we grew into a caring and sharing group, getting more confident. We have 15 members. We are helping our Grandchildren to pray their little prayers. During the last year, we visited the schools for Grandparents Day. We had a beautiful Celebration of Mass on the Feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, 26th of July. We had a full bus for the CGA. Pilgrimage to Knock accompanied my our new Bishop Denis Nulty.

At the moment we are putting together a Programme (with the help of Faith Development Services), to go into 2 Primary schools to teach the children how to say the Rosary, so it's been a busy year.

## *Prayers written by an Irish Grandmother over 100 years ago*

O make my beloved ones holy  
And pleasing dear Lord to Thee.  
May they live a life that will merit  
Thy face in glory to see.  
May none of us O my sweet Jesus,  
Be missed from Thy chosen band,  
But all who have lived here  
together,  
Be one in our Fatherland.  
And O may we meet those in  
Heaven,  
Who to our hearts have been dear.  
May all we have loved be united,  
In that bright Eternal Sphere.

# THE MARY PAGE

UNIVERSITY of  
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## Q: What is the Fiat Rosary?

**A:** The Fiat Rosary is named after Cardinal Leon Suenen's Fiat Movement, which encourages total openness to God in imitation of Mary. Fiat is the word Mary used in response to the angel's announcement that she would become the mother of God. In a still other and even more profound meaning, it signifies Jesus' own faithful obedience to the Father in Heaven. Jesus' yes is dramatically revealed in Jesus' words, " ... not my will but yours be done." For us fiat means to live in spiritual communion with the angels and saints in heaven, participating with them in a faith harmony based on faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

The movement is a voluntary association with a spiritual program that links the Holy Spirit and Mary. It considers evangelization a normal part of one's growth in Christ. There are no rules, no obligations or dues, each person participates in whatever way he or she chooses. But it is important that as Mary we kneel before the Holy Spirit in humble quest of transfiguration through his transforming grace.

The Fiat Rosary is an alternative to the classical fifteen-decade or Dominican rosary. It is shorter (seven-eight minutes), includes only part of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, and comprises fewer Hail Marys. Here is its structure:

### 1) Joyful Mysteries (beginning with a blue bead):

Annunciation (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Visitation (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Nativity (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

### 2) Sorrowful Mysteries (beginning with a red bead):

Agony (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Carrying of the Cross (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Crucifixion (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

### 3) Glorious Mysteries (beginning with a white bead):

Resurrection (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Descent of the Holy Spirit (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

Assumption of Mary (three Hail Marys and Glory Be)

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*Whatever  
language we  
pray in—we  
know our  
prayers are  
always heard*



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# Grandparents: An antidote to Family Breakdown

An interview with José Aste, the Mexican founder of the group “Grandparents for the Family”, the experience of support for the elderly presented in recent days on our site



## The promoter of the experience

Dr. José Aste Tönsmann, 83 years old, is an ophthalmologist, born in Peru, who has been living in Mexico since 1978. After obtaining a PhD in Philosophy, specialized in Systems Engineering and Operations Research, from Cornell University (USA) in 1979, he began studying the eyes of the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe by means of digital image processing. He discovered the representations of 13 people imprinted on the cornea of the image, which appeared miraculously on St. Juan Diego's tilma. Now a retired grandfather, Dr. Aste is engaged in both social and religious work. He has four children and nine grandchildren.

## The Interview

1) Dr. Aste, can you tell us once again what the two areas of the preparation—i.e. religious and human—provided to the participants of the group “Grandparents for the Family” consist in?

Considering the special conditions that characterize old age, we can put them into two groups: physical and spiritual. The latter normally arise from a sense of concern for the elderly, almost always generated by loneliness, when they feel put aside and forgotten by their children, relatives and friends; but equally significant reasons to feel spiritually depressed can be a sense of futility and the proximity of death.

On the other hand, we cannot help but consider the particular physical condition of those who are living this moment of human existence, often marked by progressive disability, pains and ailments. In order to respond adequately to these specific conditions of our age group, “Grandparents for the Family” follows a program that includes activities that we could call “religious and human preparation.”

Under the religious aspect, at every meeting we seek to strengthen our love and devotion to the Lord Jesus, continually asking Him for the gift of His Divine Presence, which allows us to not feel alone any more, and to be able to offer all our sorrows, asking Him to make us able to live in the service of others until the last moment of our lives. In this area, pilgrimages and retreats are very important, for they indeed help to strengthen of our faith.

I also think that in order to complete this course, which fully engages the elderly person, it is also essential to introduce them to the latest scientific discoveries and theories concerning the creation of the universe, human evolution, and so on, in such a way that they may respond with valid arguments (especially to their grandchildren and children) in face of the pseudo-scientific knowledge that is now so abundant in our society.

Another task that characterizes our “human” preparation intended for the elderly concerns the field of biological knowledge, which deals with questions closely linked to old age such as nutrition, medical care and advice to avoid health problems. In addition to this, we also teach them to socialize and to face the different difficulties in encounters with others.

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## *Grandparents: An antidote to Family Breakdown continued:*

### **2) How important is technology training for a grandparent today?**

I believe basic training in the field of technology is a good thing for four reasons: first of all, it gives grandparents great advantages, especially when it comes to communication and socialization, as well as when they look for information; technological know-how also shows them that “not everything that is new is bad” and that if we use technology properly it can bring significant improvements for all mankind; the third positive aspect is that a course of this kind can help the elderly to understand the mentality of children, youth and adults, by making them share an environment in which the latter are often immersed; finally, the fourth point is that the technological tools make it easier for grandparents to communicate with youth and adults, and so the future generations can better appreciate their advice and experiences, the result of a lifetime.

When teaching grandparents and elderly people how to use technology, the key is to avoid delving too deeply into the concepts, talking at length about the theory, because that only leads to a form of rejection of the notions; there should instead be useful hands-on instruction: instead of confusing the grandparents with the contents of an “instruction manual,” it is advisable to get them to use the computer for some kind of work that interests them (for example, writing their memories, or finding a recipe, etc.), showing them how to write, highlight a title, put capital letters, insert a picture, and so on.

### **3) In your opinion, what are the challenges that modernity will place before grandparents in the nearest future? What strategies can be used to face and overcome these challenges?**

As a senior and as a grandfather, I believe that modernity is making us face basically two types of challenges: the first one comes from the growing attention to young people and to everything that is new and fast, from now largely globalized concepts of “discarding” or “used and broken”, which are creating ideas and policies that are hitting the elderly hard, keeping them from “reminding” the new generations of the benefits of forms of life and work that are increasingly absent today and should instead be retrieved and adapted to current conditions. In order to prevent this kind of damage, I think that it is necessary to begin by large gatherings of elders and grandparents, who are self-aware and positively active, able to produce coordinated and consensual proposals and viewpoints, so that they may be listened to by the society and be taken into consideration when decisions, and especially political ones, are made.

Next, another challenge comes from the daily attacks against the family. Marriage is being discredited by the secular culture, and it is likely that the divorce-rate will continue to climb and the marriages “forever” decrease. The role of grandparents, who replace parents working outside the home and raise their grandchildren, will always be ever more complicated, because in the near future, as is easy to foresee, the number of children of divorced parents, single mothers and same-sex couples will grow significantly.

Therefore, I think that, in addition to asking the Church to make more convinced efforts to restrain drifts by the means of important tools such as the World Meetings of Families, it is desirable to develop many similar initiatives even at the diocesan level. I think, in fact, that the celebration of days dedicated to the elderly, and especially to grandparents, could help greatly to overcome, to a great extent, the decline of the Christian family.

### **4) Are you satisfied with the progress of your group of grandparents? Have you found some weak points in recent years? And if so, how have you tried to remedy them?**

I think that, when forming and coordinating a group of people with different goals and defined characteristics, it is never possible to be completely satisfied, and this is even truer when the participants have special traits, as grandparents do. The daily obstacles that we encounter most commonly often appear when we try to get all the grandparents in a parish to participate in the group, when reminding about the meetings and supporting them when they are ill, as well as in the continuous efforts to find moments and resources to make the results of their meetings more visible.

Moreover, in regard to the organization, a particular problem—solved by the replacement of the steering committee—emerged only once, when they forgot to keep alive and present the idea that the group of grandparents was born to meet the demand of elderly people who want to be and feel useful by making theirs, in everyday life, the lessons generated by the intertwining of their experiences in dialogue. Moreover, this is very easy, and the results are visibly results, as is seen in most of the centers and groups for the elderly, where the guests are together simply to share pleasant moments, without anything being asked of them, and come into play directly, enriching the experiences of all, by telling about their own lives.

**5) Have you ever thought about publishing—in a review, a book or on the internet—the experiences of your grandparents—perhaps grouped by themes—, so that families can consult them and find answers to their problems?**

I think that the internet is a great way, without major expenses, to share the experiences and advice of a group of grandparents on the problems that the family faces today. With this in mind, some time ago, I launched the blog-lab “Marriage Maintenance” (<http://mantematri.blogspot.mx>), intended precisely to make one of the results of the group of grandparents accessible: the importance of considering one’s marriage within the context of daily life.

In fact, a couple daily faces problems, joys, sorrows, encounters and disagreements in the family or the couple. In this case, then, the workshop, developed with my wife and presented free of charge on the internet, gives married couples the opportunity to examine the state of their marital relationship in such a way that they can, from time to time, to make some “adjustments,” in view an ever deeper and more responsible union.

**6) What are the future plans of your “Grandparents for the Family”? Have you considered, for example, broadening the base of this experience through partnerships with other parishes or groups, both nationally and internationally?**

For some time now we have been trying to diffuse the concepts that constitute the foundation of “Grandparents for the Family” and especially to promote the idea of the participants’ sense of being and feeling useful, so now different groups of elderly people, who have accepted this vision, are practicing it. With time, then, I hope to compose a kind of “manual” to help both the formation of new groups and their coordination.

In addition, with our parish priest, Father Daniel Garcia, we are preparing a day for seniors and grandparents at the parish level, which, however, may be joined by other parishes of the deanery of the Diocese of Cuernavaca. In my view, this first experience of a celebration dedicated to the elderly will serve as a pilot-event for a day that we would like to organize for next year, in this case at the national level, involving all of Mexico (we’ve talked a bit about this with La Salle University in Mexico City).

As one can see in the wiki page that we are using for the planning and implementation of the project (<http://jornadaancianosyabuelos.wikispaces.com>), the Day for grandparents organized by our parish will be subdivided into three distinct dates (to make it easier for the elderly to participate): the first part, “Encounter with God for the Elderly and Grandparents,” will take place on Wednesday, December 3rd; then, the spiritual-religious aspect of old age will be addressed at the second encounter on the program, under title “The Mission of the Elderly,” which will be in Lent next year. Finally, the third meeting, which will focus on “Relations of the Elderly with the World,” has been scheduled for Easter Day 2015.

**7) What advice would you give to anyone wishing to undertake a creative initiative like yours, in favor of the elderly?**

In my view, it is essential that the experiences that want to take their inspiration from us have a steering committee to organize them and make the decisions. That having been said, there should always be an effort to use the different skills and abilities of the committee members. It should be remembered that each person has his/her own mission in life together with specific knowledge of the world, and directing them towards the success of the group can be very useful. There may also be some young people on the committee who enthusiastically help with the formation and the proper functioning of the group; however, the major decisions should preferably be taken by the grandparents and the elderly. I want to emphasize that it is very difficult for young people to understand our needs and our vision of life.

Moreover, I advise them to not be too picky about the rules and discipline of the group. The most important thing is in fact to participate, to be and feel useful.

It should also be kept in mind that it is preferable for members of the group to participate in the activities because they are interested in them, not out of obligation. Therefore, the Steering Committee organizing the project needs to make the program interesting and useful, both to grandparents and to society.

A last recommendation, finally, is to write down and share the results and proposals made during the group sessions. In fact, it must not be forgotten that the experiences of grandparents in communion can be very useful for children, young people and adults today.



Pontificium Consilium pro Familia



[catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)

## SIMPLE PRAYERS

### Christmas Novena

HAIL, and blessed be the hour and moment  
At which the Son of God was born  
Of a most pure Virgin  
At a stable at midnight in Bethlehem  
In the piercing cold  
At that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee,  
To hear my prayers and grant my desires

(mention requests here)

Through Jesus Christ and His most Blessed Mother.

(Say 15 times each day)

### Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed by thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done  
on earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day, our daily bread  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.

### Grace Before and After Meals

**Before:** Bless us, O Lord! and these Thy gifts,  
which we are about to receive from Thy bounty,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen

**After:** We give Thee thanks for all Thy benefits,  
O Almighty God, who livest and reignest world  
without end. Amen.  
May the souls of the faithful departed, through  
the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

### Glory Be To The Father

Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.

### Angel Of God

Angel of God,  
my guardian dear,  
to whom God's love commits me here,  
ever this day be at my side,  
to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen

### HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.  
Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is  
the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

### GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and  
to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

# Celebrating Advent with your Grandchildren

## Looking forward to Bambinelli Sunday

Christmas is a wonderful time for all children and also for grandparents.

There will be many schools which will have a nativity play where undoubtedly many kitchen 'tea towels' will double as shepherd headdress!



However, the season of Advent, the four weeks preceding Christmas, is a time of preparation. The word Advent comes from the Latin 'adventus' which means a 'coming or arrival'. It is in this very special time that we should prepare to celebrate the Birth of Our Lord.

One tradition that we have continued in our home, is to have a Crib (in fact we probably have three!).

It is really good to get all children or grandchildren coming to the house to gradually 'build' the crib over the weeks of Advent, adding the characters one by one. We also have an Advent wreath with candles that are lit on each Sunday during Advent and we can say a prayer and invite any who are visiting to also say one.

The third Sunday of Advent is often referred to by its Latin name, Gaudete Sunday, which indicates that it is a day of 'rejoicing.' Traditionally the purple candle in the Advent Wreath is replaced with a pink or 'rose' one and for the Mass the priest may wear rose coloured vestments

Pope Francis reminds us that 'In the liturgy, the invitation to rejoice, to arise, resounds repeatedly, because the Lord is near, Christmas is near. Like a mother, the Church encourages us to follow faithfully the spiritual path in order to celebrate the feast of Christmas with renewed exaltation.'

There is an old Italian tradition also that on this Gaudete Sunday families are invited to bring to church the Baby Jesus from their home cribs to be blessed. This is known as 'Bambinelli Sunday'. Why not try to develop this in your own parish?

So, Advent becomes a time of preparation, rejoicing and awakening as we eagerly await to celebrate that first Christmas morn and welcome Jesus into our lives, our homes and our communities.

Speaking at last year's Bambinelli Sunday Pope Francis reminds us all, "Dear children, when you pray in front of your manger scene, also remember me as I remember you, may the Virgin Mary help us to hasten our steps toward Bethlehem to meet the Child that is born for us, for the salvation and joy of all men. The joy of the gospel is not just any joy, it is the joy that comes from knowing you are welcomed and loved by God.

This joy truly remains even in suffering, because it is not superficial, but goes down to the depths of the person who commits himself to God and trusts in Him."

***Gaudete, Gaudete Christus est Natus  
Ex Maria Virgine, Gaudete!***

***Rejoice, Rejoice, Christ is Born of the Virgin Mary, Rejoice!  
Happy Advent everyone!***



## PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS

Lord Jesus,  
you were born of the Virgin Mary,  
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.

Look with love on grandparents  
the world over.

Protect them! They are a source of  
enrichment for families, for the Church  
and for all of society.

Support them! As they grow older,  
may they continue to be for their families  
strong pillars of Gospel faith,  
guardians of noble domestic ideals,  
living treasuries of sound religious traditions.  
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,  
that they may pass on to future generations  
the fruits of their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus, help families and society to  
value the presence and roles of grandparents.

May they never be ignored or excluded,  
but always encounter respect and love.

Help them to live serenely and to feel  
welcomed in all the years of life which  
you give them.

Mary, Mother of all the living,  
keep grandparents constantly in your care,  
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,  
and by your prayers, grant that all families  
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,  
where you await all humanity for  
the great embrace of life without end.

Amen!

*Benedictus PP XVI*



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