

Catholic Grandparents Association

Newsletter - January 2021

New Year Blessings from the Catholic Grandparents Association



This time last year as we welcomed in the new year, most of us had laid out all sorts of plans and had diaries full of gatherings, meetings, celebrations and perhaps even a holiday at home or abroad. A year later, as we look back on the strange and sometimes absurd few months that made up 2020, we find ourselves in a moment of pause and expectation. Many parts of our world are still ravaged by Covid-19 and many of us are in various stages or tiers of lockdown. Families and communities are suffering as the numbers dying from Covid-19 continue to rise. For many of us the daily statistics of deaths and new infections from the coronavirus, that we have grown accustomed to hearing on the news, have become the names of people we know and love. In the Catholic Grandparents Association we are mourning the loss of a generation of grandparents who will never pass this way again. It can be easy to become despondent and to lose sight of a way out of this pandemic. It can be difficult to imagine better times to come. But as we begin 2021, we do so with hope on the horizon in the form of various vaccines which are being administered to people around the world.

We are committed to being here for you in 2021 whether that is in the form of face to face gatherings, meetings, prayers and pilgrimages or whether we have to hold fast and connect with each other online. We are continuing to host the Grandparents' Faith Café online on the second Tuesday of every month. We will also be launching a new ministry resource document for use in meetings or by grandparents at home. We are delighted to announce that our Patron, Archbishop Michael Neary, the Archbishop of Tuam, will be celebrating a Mass each month for the intentions of all involved in the ministry of the Catholic Grandparents Association as well as for all grandparents around the world. You can read more about this Mass and the Faith Café in this newsletter. New Year Blessings to all our readers from all of us in the Catholic Grandparents' Association. Please stay safe and mind each other.

Catherine Wiley, Founder of the CGA

SENDING POSITIVE VIBES FROM THE GRANDPARENTS' FAITH CAFÉ

The Catholic Grandparents' Faith Café met virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 15 January. Fr Bryan Shortall, OFM Cap, Parish Priest of Priorswood Parish in the Archdiocese of Dublin, was the guest speaker at this month's café and he spoke on the theme of 'sending positive vibes' which is the title of his most recent book. In his address Father Bryan said, "Our grandparents made us what we are. It may sound like a cliché, but we stand on the shoulders of giants. Not just from a faith point of view but because they are the engine room of the family, the heartbeat of the home where the faith was transmitted. We felt safe when they were around. You are a source of strength for the young people when they are struggling because you have life's experience." Fr Bryan also reflected on the impact of Covid-19 on grandparents, saying, "Covid-19 is crucifying our society and is cocooning our grandparents in these days. Seeing pictures on television and on our social media of nanas and granddads meeting their grandchildren and great grandchildren from inside the living room windows is hard to watch. God grant that soon, our grandparents can hold us again and we can all hold each other with no fear."

Reflections at the Faith Café were delivered beautifully by Jim Martinez, Betty Murphy and Frank Burns. Jim shared a moving story about his son and how much how important his prayer life is to him for those times when you worry about your children. Betty shared a much needed virtual hug with everyone as she reflected on hope; and Frank delighted everyone at the Faith Cafe with some beautiful words of encouragement interspersed with poetry including the wonderful poem *Begin* by Irish poet Brendan Kennelly.



In her address, Catherine Wiley gave thanks for the New Year of hope as she reflected on where the Catholic Grandparents Association finds itself. She said the CGA "is in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing." She also welcomed many new faces to the Café as the word has spread about these important virtual gatherings.

You can read the full texts of the addresses and reflections on our website.

Save the date: The next Faith Café will take place on Tuesday 9 February on the theme 'Grandparents as Influencers'. The guest speaker for February will be Bishop Fintan Monahan, Bishop of Killaloe. Registration (which is free of charge) is open now by email to info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

CGA MINISTRIES' NEWS

We were delighted to receive this simple but very effective display from St Joseph's Catholic Church, New Paltz, New York. The display is focused on reaching out to families from the angle of grandparents and grandchildren. This was sent to us by Kathleen Mironchik from St Joseph's. Do send us your visuals of how you are reaching out in your parish to families and especially to grandparents.



81-YEAR-OLD GRANDMOTHER RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED MEDAL FROM THE POPE

After 35 years of dedication to serving her Church and her community, 81-year-old Anne Kelly was presented with the Benemerenti medal by Reverend Mark Cassidy at St Mary's The Immaculate Conception in Lochee, Scotland. The octogenarian was nominated by her fellow parishioners to receive the award given by the pontiff that acknowledges the services of an individual to the Catholic Church. In a scaled-down service on 13 December last, Kelly received the medal and certificate from Rome. The grandmother to 15 and great-grandmother to two said, "I'm absolutely delighted and I'm quite humbled by the honour." Congratulations Anne from all at the CGA!

ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL NEARY TO SAY MONTHLY MASS FOR THE INTENTIONS OF THE CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION

Archbishop Michael Neary, the Archbishop of Tuam and the Patron of the Catholic Grandparents Association will celebrate a Mass each month for the intentions of the Catholic Grandparents Association, its ministries around the world and all grandparents. The Mass will take place on the second Tuesday of each month. People are invited to share their prayer intentions with us for this Mass by using our Facebook Page or by email to info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com. Commenting on the announcement, Catherine Wiley said that she is most grateful to Archbishop Neary for his patronage and for his spiritual guidance for the mission of the CGA.



Archbishop Michael Neary

NEWS SNIPPETS

POPE FRANCIS AND POPE BENEDICT RECEIVE THE COVID-19 VACCINE

The first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine has been administered to Pope Francis and to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. Speaking in an interview on 10 January with Italy's TG5 news programme, Pope Francis said he believes that "morally everyone must take the vaccine". Pope Francis' remarks are the latest in a series of signals to the world's 1.3 billion Catholics that he and the Vatican strongly support the global vaccination effort.



POPE FRANCIS APPOINTS A NEW ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN

Photo credit: John McElroy



The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has appointed the Most Reverend Dr Dermot Farrell, until now Bishop of Ossory, as Archbishop of Dublin. Archbishop-elect Farrell replaces the Most Reverend Archbishop Diarmuid Martin whose request for retirement has been accepted by Pope Francis. We send our congratulations to Archbishop-elect Farrell and ask that you keep both of them in your prayers.

CONNECT WITH US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER



We have recently revamped our social media output to include some new content in the form of some thought provoking 'thought for the day' messages aimed at grandparents. Do give us a follow on Twitter as @CathGrandAssoc and find us on Facebook as 'Catholic Grandparents Association'.

Catholic Grandparents Association

Our Mission: Passing on the faith and keeping prayer at the heart of family life

www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org

Email: info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com

CELEBRATING AMORIS LAETITIA FIVE YEARS ON



On 19 March the Church will celebrate five years since the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* on the beauty and joy of love in the family. On the same day, Pope Francis will launch the Year "Amoris Laetitia Family", which will conclude on 26 June 2022, on the occasion of the Tenth World Meeting of Families in Rome with the Holy Father. For resources see www.laityfamilylife.va.