

Catholic Grandparents Association

Newsletter - February 2021



CELEBRATING A WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

We can still hardly believe the news that we received on Sunday 31 January - that the Holy Father Pope Francis has instituted a Church-wide celebration of Grandparents. The first 'World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly' will be celebrated on Sunday 25 July this year and thereafter on the fourth Sunday of July, the date closest to the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, Grandparents of Jesus. We are overjoyed with this news as it is something that we have been praying and petitioning for in the CGA for many years. As our patron Archbishop Michael Neary said, this announcement comes at the end of a long process of engagement and discussion between the Catholic Grandparents Association and the Holy See.

Grandparents and the elderly are often overlooked but this new day in the Universal Church calendar is a momentous achievement for grandparents and the elderly and will hopefully reassure them that they are loved and that they are needed. It is refreshing also to note the renewed commitment by the Church for the pastoral care of the elderly, a group of people who have suffered greatly during the Covid-19 pandemic due to being isolated from family, from their faith and from many of their daily supports. I firmly believe that grandparents and the elderly are needed now more than ever, not just as teachers of the faith, but as fountains of wisdom and sensibility – qualities which our world needs these days.

The celebration of this new World Day of Prayer will be a momentous occasion full of joy and hope. We give thanks for our Holy Father, who has a great love for grandparents and the elderly, and who often talks about his own grandmother Rosa. We look forward to being part of this new annual celebration so as the charisms of grandparents and the elderly are brought to the fore and passed on to the next generation.

Please keep safe and keep well. Love, light and prayers.

Catherine Wiley, Founder of the CGA

REFLECTIONS FROM THE GRANDPARENTS' FAITH CAFÉ

The Grandparents' Faith Café met virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 9 February to reflect on the theme of 'Grandparents as Influencers'. Bishop Fintan Monahan, Bishop of Killaloe, was the guest speaker and he paid tribute to grandparents and the role they play not just in their families but in our parishes and in society too. He said, "I always think of grandparents as people who have the wisdom and perspective to have quality time to observe, to think and realise what is important, what has value, where we are coming from, where we ought to be going, who to recognise as important and who is worth giving time to. In many ancient cultures the wisdom of the elder is hugely respected. The senior citizen is approached for advice, wise council and direction."

Bishop Monahan continued, "I was so heartened last week with the news from Pope Francis of the Universal Day of Prayer for Grandparents and thank God for the great work of the Catholic Grandparents Association that helped in no small way to bring this about. I was further heartened today by the excellent document from the Academy for Life from the Vatican that focuses on the care of the elderly. It's a very insightful document that looks at our care of the elderly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It looks at the harsh reality of what it leads to 'abandoning the elderly' because of the 'culture of waste' prevalent in our society and has led to the 'massacre of the elderly' in the hundreds of thousands of elderly who have died during the pandemic. The document proposes the necessity of a 'global rethink of society's closeness to the elderly' and calls on the Church to take responsibility to take on a prophetic vocation in relation to care for the elderly. It finishes strongly with the claim that 'the level of civilization of an era is measured by the way we treat those who are weaker and more fragile' and 'through the eyes of the Gospel frailty can become a strength and instrument of evangelisation'."

Reflections at the Faith Café were delivered beautifully by Kathleen Mironchik and Jane Sweeney who spoke about the importance of being there as gentle and steady influencers in the lives of their grandchildren. 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 March on the theme 'Faith Heroes'. The guest speaker for March will be Lorene Hanley Duquin, author of *The Catholic Grandparents Handbook*. Registration (which is free of charge) is open now by email to info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

CGA MINISTRIES' NEWS

We received this wonderful prayer from Marie Egan, a grandmother of seven who is eagerly awaiting the safe arrival of her eighth grandchild in April. Marie tells us that she spends a lot of her free time in prayer. She has titled this pray *The Grandmother's Prayer*:

The Grandmother's Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Please teach and gift me with holiness, so that by my example, I can lead my family to God. You said in Leviticus (20:26),

“Ye shall be holy that ye will be mine.”

You are Holy indeed O Lord, the fount of all Holiness, in which I now place each member of my family, and future generations, so that they will never be separated from you.

Amen



FROM AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR TO THE WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2022

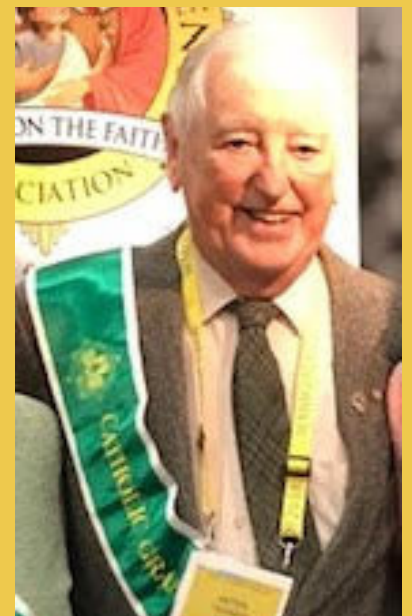


The Dicastery for Laity Family and Life has prepared a special brochure for use as part of the journey through the 'Amoris Laetitia Family Year' which begins on 19 March 2021 and concludes on 26 June 2022 with the celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Rome. The brochure is full of ideas for groups involved in ministry to grandparents and families. Click on www.laityfamilylife.va to download the brochure.

DEATH OF PROFESSOR PETER TIERNAN, CGA BOARD MEMBER

As we prepared to go to print with this newsletter, the sad news reached us of the death of Professor Peter (Peadar) Tiernan, a member of the Board of the Catholic Grandparents Association.

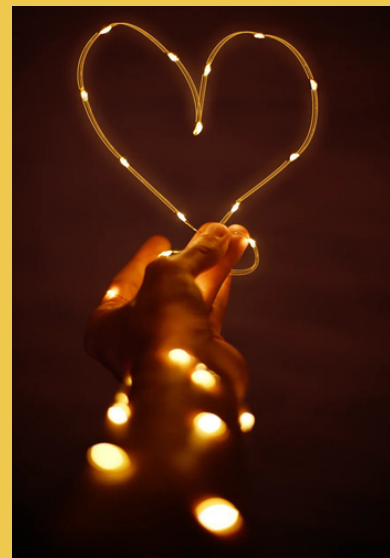
Peter was in his 91st year when he passed peacefully on 13 February in his daughter Róisín's home, in the loving care of his family with his beloved wife Mary by his side. Peter was the much loved father of Cairtriona, Eóin, Aileen, Lorcan and Róisín. He was a beloved member of the Catholic Grandparents Association family and he will be dearly missed. Please pray for him and for those who grieve him. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.



NEWS SNIPPETS

RENEWING FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE - POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR LENT 2021

Pope Francis focuses on the three theological virtues in his Lenten message for 2021, inviting the faithful to “renew our faith, draw from the living waters of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God.” The Holy Father says, “This Lenten journey... is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Jesus.” He goes on to say that the journey of conversion, through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, “makes it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope, and effective charity.” You can read his message in full on our website www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.



TAKE A VIRTUAL VISIT TO KNOCK SHRINE THIS LENT

Knock Shrine will host a new series of online discussions to help engage Christians during Lent, under the title 'Living Christian Faith – Lenten Conversations'. Chaired by Father Eamonn Conway DD, a priest of the Archdiocese of Tuam and Professor of Theology at Mary Immaculate College, the conversations will explore a different theme each week and guest speakers will discuss some of the important questions we all face in living out our faith.



The discussions will be streamed online via the Knock Shrine website and Facebook page, offering people from all over the world the opportunity to engage in relevant topics and to hear from a range of people, from those in public life such as Baroness Nuala O'Loan and Senator Ronan Mullen to groups of young teachers and members of the clergy. The talks will be streamed at 8.30pm every Thursday during Lent. To tune in to the live stream, just click onto www.knockshrine.ie.

CONNECT WITH US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

You can connect with us on Twitter as @CathGrandAssoc and find us on Facebook as 'Catholic Grandparents Association'. We share a daily thought for the day and a range of other helpful resources. So do give us a follow or a like!

Catholic Grandparents Association

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

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