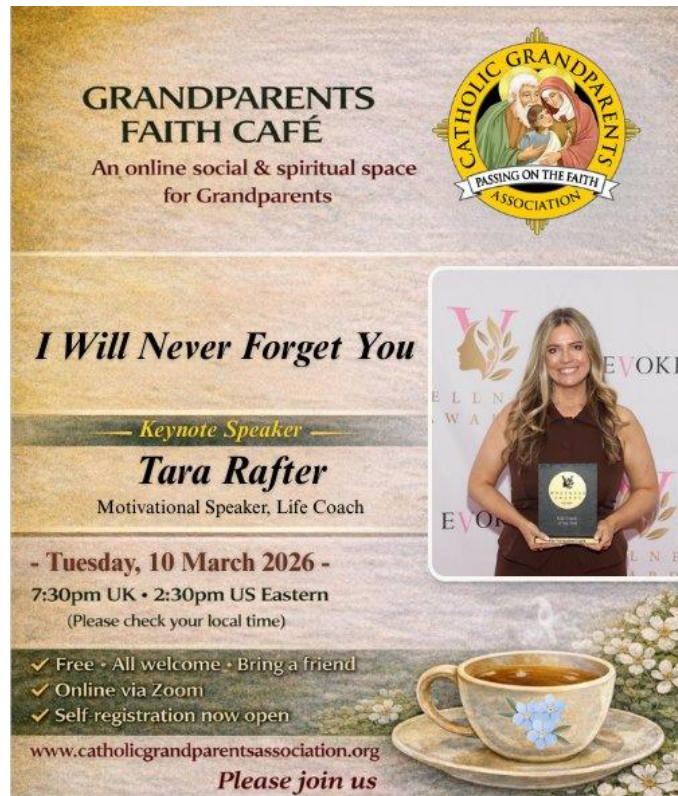


# CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION

## *Grandparents Faith Café*

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The poster features a textured, parchment-like background. At the top left, the text reads "GRANDPARENTS FAITH CAFÉ" in bold, followed by "An online social & spiritual space for Grandparents". To the right is the Catholic Grandparents Association logo, which is a circular emblem with a religious scene and the text "CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION" and "PASSING ON THE FAITH". Below this, the title "I Will Never Forget You" is written in a large, elegant font. Underneath, it identifies "Tara Rafter" as the "Keynote Speaker" and "Motivational Speaker, Life Coach". The event date and time are listed as "Tuesday, 10 March 2026" at "7:30pm UK • 2:30pm US Eastern". A list of bullet points includes "Free • All welcome • Bring a friend", "Online via Zoom", and "Self registration now open". The website "www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org" and the phrase "Please join us" are at the bottom. On the right side, there is a photo of Tara Rafter holding a book. At the bottom right, there is an image of a steaming cup of tea on a saucer with a floral pattern.

**GRANDPARENTS FAITH CAFÉ**  
An online social & spiritual space for Grandparents

**CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION**  
PASSING ON THE FAITH

***I Will Never Forget You***

*— Keynote Speaker —*  
**Tara Rafter**  
Motivational Speaker, Life Coach

**- Tuesday, 10 March 2026 -**  
7:30pm UK • 2:30pm US Eastern  
(Please check your local time)

- ✓ Free • All welcome • Bring a friend
- ✓ Online via Zoom
- ✓ Self registration now open

[www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)  
**Please join us**

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## ***“I Will Never Forget You”***

*Session Transcript*

**Tuesday, 10 March 2026**

7:30 PM UK • 2:30 PM US Eastern

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

◆ ABOUT OUR SPEAKER ◆

## ***Tara Rafter***

**Motivational Speaker · Life Coach · EVOKE Irish Life Coach of the Year 2025**

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Tara Rafter is a Master Neuro-Linguistic Programming Practitioner, Executive Coach, and speaker with a deep interest in faith, family, and the inner life.

Her work is informed by compassion-led approaches to healing and growth, including the teachings of Gabor Maté, with a strong emphasis on understanding the human nervous system, emotional resilience, and lived experience.

Tara was honoured as EVOKE Irish Life Coach of the Year 2025. She is passionate about the wisdom carried through generations and the quiet, often unseen ways love, faith, and values are passed on through presence, prayer, and example. She lives in the west of Ireland with her family.

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◆ SESSION PARTICIPANTS ◆

*Keynote Speaker*

**Tara Rafter**

*Host & Founder*

**Catherine Wiley**

*Closing Blessing*

**Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier**

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*With contributions from members joining from Ireland, the United States, Australia, South Africa, Malta, and beyond.*

◆ O P E N I N G P R A Y E R ◆

## ***Grandparents' Prayer***

*Written at the request of the Catholic Grandparents Association by Pope Benedict XVI*

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*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 role 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,  
for you await all humanity for the great embrace of life without end.*

**Amen.**

◆ W E L C O M E F R O M C A T H E R I N E W I L E Y ◆

## **Catherine Wiley — Founder, Catholic Grandparents Association**

Good evening, everyone, and a very warm welcome to our Faith Café in this beautiful month of March. It is always a blessing to gather together in faith and friendship.

Now that we are in the holy season of Lent, it is truly a beautiful time when the Church invites us to slow down, to reflect, and to draw closer to God. The Church reminds us of the three pillars of Lent: prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. But almsgiving doesn't always mean giving money — sometimes it is a kind word, a helping hand, a phone call, or a visit to someone who is lonely. Almsgiving comes in many shapes and forms.

This year, Pope Francis has given us a beautiful theme for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly: I Will Never Forget You. Scripture also says, from Isaiah: 'See, I have carved you on the palm of my hand.' He didn't say written — he said carved. As grandparents, we understand that deeply, because our children and grandchildren are engraved on our hearts. We carry them constantly in our prayers.

So many people today carry such heavy burdens — illness, addiction, loneliness, worries about children and grandchildren. Sometimes life can feel like what Scripture calls a valley of tears. But our faith reminds us that even in those valleys, God walks beside us.

Next Sunday we celebrate Mother's Day. We give thanks for our mothers and grandmothers — some gone to heaven, some still with us. We also remember stepmothers, aunts, godmothers, carers, and all those who quietly step into that role in someone's life and make them feel they belong.

We remember, too, St. Patrick — who was brought to Ireland as a slave and yet returned not with bitterness, but with faith and forgiveness, bringing the Gospel to the very people who had enslaved him. And with a small shamrock he explained the mystery of the Trinity: three leaves, one stem — three persons in one God. As simple and as profound as that.

Please remember to pray for our priests and for vocations. If we have no priests, we have no Eucharist, no sacraments. Let us hold them in our prayers this Lent.

And now, it is my greatest pleasure — and I say this with genuine pride — to introduce tonight's speaker. Tara Rafter is a Motivational Speaker and Life Coach, and she also happens to be my beloved niece. She is written on my heart. Over to you, Tara — we're not going anywhere.

## ◆ KEYNOTE ADDRESS ◆

**Tara Rafter — Motivational Speaker & Life Coach**

Thank you so much. It is a true privilege to be here. It never ceases to amaze me that technology allows us to be connected all over the world like this. I came racing down from Dublin this afternoon, and my taxi driver said he had never seen Dublin so quiet at that time on a Tuesday. I told him: that's the Lord. He asked what I meant. I said, I have to deliver a speech this evening for the Catholic Grandparents Association. So the Lord has cleared the M50 — the most chaotic road in all of Ireland — to make sure I could be with you. The Lord does, in fact, move in mysterious ways.

When I was thinking about what would be most valuable to share with you, I condensed it into five points. And because the brain learns by repetition — repetition creates neural pathways, and neural pathways become patterns — I took us through them twice this evening. Which is not just practical; it is neuroscience.

**Point 1: Your Words Shape the World Around You**

Your words, as grandparents, are like magic wands. When I trained in neuro-linguistics and began to understand how language impacts the brain, I was struck by its profound power. The words we speak to ourselves, and the words we speak to our grandchildren, very often become their inner voice in later life.

I work with people all over the world, and so often what holds them back is a negative or critical internal voice. But equally, when I sit with people in very senior positions who carry a deep inner sense of self-belief, and I ask — whose voice is that? — it is so frequently a grandparent's. Someone who saw them at their most authentic, who cheered for them when the world was being hard on them.

Beliefs are formed when information is repeated consistently, over time, by someone held in high regard. That is exactly what you are. The more you spend time with your grandchildren, the more the messages you give them — about faith, about love, about who they are — take root as the inner dialogue they carry for life. Even when you are not together, you are together. Your words carry legacy.

Think about a time in your own life when someone said something to you that you still remember. Notice how instantly it comes to mind — right there beneath the surface. Now ask yourself: what words do you want your grandchildren to remember from you?

When leaving home growing up, my mother always said: 'God bless you, and I love you. Mind yourself and be good.' I now say that to my son. No matter where I went in the world, or how hard the road got, her voice would appear in my mind — and with it, the knowledge that God was blessing me in that moment.

**Point 2: Regulation Comes Before Resolution**

When someone is upset — whether a child or an adult — the first thing we need to offer is calm, not answers. Your state in any interaction will dictate what happens next. Children borrow the nervous system of the adults around them. If you are chaotic or anxious, they feel it. If you are calm and steady, they feel that too.

Emotions are energy in motion — which means if they come up, they must come back down. And when we name them, we assist the taming of them. So when your grandchild comes to you distressed, try saying: 'I can see that you're really upset by that. That must be really hard. Help me to understand what that feels like for you.' In that moment, they feel seen, heard, and understood. And that is what every human being wants, at any age.

A simple regulation tool for yourself: take a slow breath in through the nose, and a longer exhale through the mouth. The signal that sends to your internal nervous system is: I am safe. Sometimes the greatest gift we can give a grandchild is our own calm presence.

### **Point 3: The Power of Your Presence**

So often we think we need grand gestures to make a difference to our grandchildren. But the world is moving at the fastest pace it has ever moved, and what people crave most is simply for someone to sit with them. To listen. To notice them. To step into their world.

Children spell love T-I-M-E. A study of children aged 8 to 12 asked them: how do you know that you are loved? Not one mentioned a gift or a birthday cake. Every child said: I know I am loved when someone takes the time to play with me.

And you don't have to be physically present. If you connect by Zoom or FaceTime, keep a notebook nearby. When they tell you three things happening in their world, write them down. The next time you call, ask: how did you get on with that concert at school? In that moment, they feel seen and understood. That is what unconditional love looks like in practice.

You are the constant in a world that is constantly in flux. The same chair, the same radio station, the familiar smells and sounds. These things are not small. They are where safety lives.

### **Point 4: Passing on the Faith in Ordinary Moments**

Faith is rarely passed on through big speeches. It is passed on in the tiny rhythms of ordinary life: grace before meals, lighting a candle, saying a prayer when someone is sick, blessing yourself when an ambulance goes by. Children watch how we live the faith far more than they listen to what we say.

My son Kai is ten years old. When an ambulance passes with sirens on, he automatically blesses himself and says, 'God bless the person in the back of the ambulance.' He learned that by watching his father and me do it every time. At his school, there is a statue of Our Lady. Every morning now he says: 'Please Mary, let me have a good day.' These tiny gestures will transcend generations.

What small habit could you form with your grandchild that will last? It doesn't need to be grand. You could light a candle together on a FaceTime call, either side of the world. Keep it simple, and it will last.

### **Point 5: You Matter More Than You Know**

Many grandparents wonder if they are still needed — if they are still making a difference. You are. You may never fully see the impact you have on your grandchildren, but the love, the faith, and the kindness you give them becomes part of the tapestry they carry forth in the world.

Dr Gabor Maté, one of the leading global trauma therapists, talks about how humans bury their authenticity in place of acceptance. But grandparents see us at our most authentic selves. Children feel safe enough with you to take off all the masks they wear for the world. That is a sacred gift.

Please look after yourself. I speak about the four legs of the chair: physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual. All four must be tended to. You cannot pour from an empty cup. Your wellbeing matters — not just for you, but for everyone who loves you.

Pope Francis' message says it so beautifully: I Will Never Forget You. God does not forget us. And the love we give to our families is never, ever wasted.

## ◆ QUESTIONS &amp; DISCUSSION ◆

*The following is an edited transcript of the open discussion that followed Tara's address.*

**On Emotional Regulation — Kathleen G.**

Thank you, Tara — that was brilliant. The point about self-regulation struck me most. I have a granddaughter who, until recently, had extraordinary fits of rage. I never knew what to do. What you said is so profound yet so simple: 'I can see that you're upset. Would you like to tell me about it?' That just takes the tone down and lets her see she can talk rather than scream. Thank you so much for that tool.

**Tara Rafter**

You are so welcome. Remember that a child borrows the nervous system of the adult. If we go in feeling helpless or overwhelmed, we feed back into the loop. Come down to their level. Offer physical touch if they're comfortable. Look them in the eye and say quietly: 'I will be here whenever you are ready.' And later, when the outburst has passed, say to her: 'Where is the big feeling now?' She will say it's gone. And you say: 'See? It passed.' The next time, even if she is afraid of her own reaction, she will begin to understand that it will pass. That is very empowering.

**On Presence & Legacy — Ron & Mavis P. (Australia)**

That was beyond brilliant. Our group once asked grandchildren to write down three things they appreciate about their grandparents. The answers were incredibly powerful — they revealed a presence the grandparents hadn't fully appreciated. Also, our daughter is travelling abroad right now, and through all the family's concern on WhatsApp, she keeps writing: 'I'll light a candle for you.' When you mentioned that, we suddenly thought: where did she learn that from?

**Tara Rafter**

It's extraordinary how it carries across. Small traditions literally transcend time. And don't underestimate presence — in a world moving at this pace, boring is beautiful. The same cup of tea, the same music in the background. The soothing that happens in a person's nervous system when there is certainty — that is peace. That is what you create.

**On Children & Mass — Carole O.**

Is there a time we might put children off faith by bringing them to Mass too young? And what about grandchildren with additional needs?

**Tara Rafter**

There's no right or wrong age. What matters is how we frame it. When Kai was small, we said: we're going to visit God in His house. Make it a familiar, happy place. If they talk or need to move, let them. Our local priest said something I love: 'There's no nicer sound in the church than young little voices beginning to make friends with God.'

Watch that it's not your own anxiety or fear of judgment getting in the way — children feel that. Regulate first, then enter. For children with additional needs, use it as an opportunity for conversation: how do

you feel in there? What would make it easier for you? That is acknowledging their experience rather than criticising it. That is love in action.

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### **On Children Who Won't Come to Mass — Catherine W.**

What about when adult children or grandchildren simply don't want to come to Mass — and you don't know how to handle it without causing tension?

#### **Tara Rafter**

It's an opportunity for conversation rather than confrontation. Ask: what is it about it that you don't enjoy? And remember — their relationship with God is not limited to a church building. That is a tiny piece of something much larger. In my own life there have been chapters when I went religiously, and others when I did not. And I believe that when I knock and say, hiya, it's me again, sorry I only come when something's wrong — the love is unconditional. There is no judgment. So show them that faith is far more than attending Mass. It can be lighting a candle, being kind to a neighbour, sitting with someone who is lonely.

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### **On Supporting Our Priests —**

I wish you had been at our priest meeting today. What you have described — normalising a difficult situation, naming the emotion to tame it — is exactly what our priests need. Many are feeling very insecure about resources, about the future, about the demands placed upon them. They are defending their identity and their vocation, and that is a very deep kind of vulnerability.

#### **Tara Rafter**

When what is being criticised is someone's identity — something they have given their entire life to — they will defend. The most valuable thing in a conversation like that is to say: I can see you feel the need to defend. That must feel very scary. What is it you feel you are protecting? And suddenly the conversation moves inward — and that changes the tone entirely.

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### **On Repairing a Relationship — Susan M.**

I have a thirteen-year-old grandson, and I haven't always been a calm presence around him. Is it too late to mend the relationship?

#### **Tara Rafter**

It is never too late. Find neutral ground — a drive, a milkshake, somewhere calm — and say to him: I've been meaning to talk to you. I've been doing some work on how I show up around you. And then tell him how you intend to show up from now on. In that moment you have created certainty for him. You have shown him it matters to you. You have given him something he can anticipate — and that is where safety lives. We're not promising a magic formula; we're saying: let's try this together, because you mean a lot to me.

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### **On Love & Family Complexity — Catherine Wiley**

Many grandparents have children in same-sex relationships, and this can cause real difficulty in faith-filled families. How can we hold onto love and also hold onto honesty?

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**Tara Rafter**

Love is honest. You can be in a loving relationship with someone and still have boundaries. They can come to your home, be part of your life — and you don't have to abandon what you believe. On neutral ground, not in a heated moment, you can say: I love you — and, not but — and here is how I feel. Love can coexist alongside honesty. What erodes a relationship is pretending, because then you are abandoning yourself. And the other person senses that absence of truth. You have a right to your values. And you have a right to love.

**On Estrangement — Peter T.**

What if the other person simply will not communicate — there is nothing from the other side?

**Tara Rafter**

Then you can respect what that person has chosen, and still choose to love. You can still send a birthday card. Still write a letter. Still pray for them. Still do all the things that love would do, even when it is not reciprocated. And that gives you peace in your heart. When estrangement goes deeper, that is a moment to seek support — a counsellor or psychotherapist who can help open the door gently.

**On Lighting a Candle in Joy — Noreen B. (Galway)**

My father always walked us to the gate when we were leaving. He would always say: 'Safe journey, God bless you, and I'll see you in three weeks' time.' And the grandchildren still ask: when are we going back to Nanny and Grandad's? Because they know Grandad will be waiting.

Last Saturday I brought granddaughters and nieces to Dublin to see a show. Walking back, we found a little old church. I said — come on, let's light a candle, because we've had a wonderful day. All eight of us went in. Even the teenagers, ages 14 to 16. The priest came and talked to us about the history of the church. Now the grandchildren have decided: every time we come to Dublin, we're going to that church.

**Tara Rafter**

I love that so much. So often we light a candle when something is wrong. What you did was light a candle in gratitude — in joy. And now it is a tradition. That is exactly what I mean when I say faith is passed on in ordinary moments. You didn't give a speech. You walked into a church together on a happy afternoon. And that will stay with those children for the rest of their lives.

**A Voice from the Floor — Betty M.**

I want to say — I was that child. The youngest of ten, spending a lot of time alone in my imagination. One day I wanted to go out on my bicycle, and my mum said no. The others laughed at me. And then my mum said quietly: 'Do not say a word to Betty. At the end of the day, she'll be better than any of you.' I didn't appreciate it at the time. But as life went on, whenever I had something really hard to do, I would say: Mam, would you be proud of me if I did this? And when I'd be finished, I'd put my hand on my heart and hear her say: yes, Betty, I'm very proud of you. I modelled my life on my mum, because she modelled hers on Our Lady. I love being a grandparent. And as George Bernard Shaw said — we don't stop playing because we get old. We get old because we stop playing.

**Tara Rafter**

I'm proud of you, Betty. Your mother said one thing, to the right person, at the right moment — and it has carried you through a whole life. That is legacy. That is love.



◆ CLOSING BLESSING ◆

## **Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier**

*Archbishop Emeritus of Durban, South Africa*

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### *A Prayer for Those Who Care for Others*

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

*Most generous God,  
fill us with compassion and concern for others,  
young and old,  
that we may look after one another in these challenging times.*

*Bring healing to those who are sick, depressed, or worried,  
and above all, be present to them.*

*May those who have died rest in your eternal embrace.  
Comfort their families, friends, and communities,  
and strengthen and protect all who care for the sick.*

*Give wisdom to our leaders,  
especially those in healthcare and government,  
that their decisions may serve the well-being of all.*

*We pray in gratitude for those  
who, in the days ahead, will continue to work for the sake of us all.  
Bless them and keep them safe.*

*Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

*May Almighty God bless you,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

**Amen.**

◆ FIVE TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS SESSION ◆

*As shared by Tara Rafter*

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- Your words are like magic wands — they become your grandchildren’s inner voice long after you are apart.
  - Regulation before resolution: your calm state is a gift you can choose to give in any moment.
  - The power of presence: children spell love T-I-M-E. Stepping into their world is how they know they are loved.
  - Faith is passed on in ordinary moments — a grace before meals, a candle lit, a blessing at the door.
  - You matter more than you know. You are the anchor, the constant, the lighthouse in the storm.
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◆ NEXT GRANDPARENTS FAITH CAFÉ ◆

**Tuesday, 14 April 2026**

*Featuring:*

**Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier**

*Archbishop Emeritus of Durban, South Africa*

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Register free at: **[www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org](http://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org)**

*Free • All welcome • Online via Zoom*

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***“I will never forget you.”***

*— Isaiah 49:15 • Theme of the World Day for Grandparents & the Elderly*