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For the elderly

**JULY**

**“We pray for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility”**



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## PRAYER INTENTION REFLECTION

ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

"THE RICHNESS OF MANY YEARS OF LIFE"<sup>8</sup>

Francis

31 January 2020

The “richness of many years” is a richness of people, of each individual person who has many years of life, experience and history behind them. It is the precious treasure that takes form in the life journey of each man and woman, whatever their origin, provenance, and economic or social condition. Life is a gift, and when it is long it is a privilege, for each one and for others. Always, it is always so.

When we think of the elderly and talk about them, especially in the pastoral dimension, we must learn to alter the tenses of verbs a little. There is not only the past, as if, for the elderly, there were only a life behind them and a mouldy archive. No. The Lord can and wants to write with them also new pages, pages of holiness, of service, of prayer.... Today I wish to tell you that the elderly *are also the present and the future* of the Church. Yes, they are also the future of a Church that, together with the young, prophesies and dreams! This is why it is so important that those advanced in years and the young speak to each other, it is so important.

The prophecy of the elderly takes place when the light of the Gospel enters fully into their lives; when, like Simeon and Anne, they take Jesus in their arms and announce the *revolution of tenderness*, the Good News of the One who came into the world to bring the light of the Father. That is why I ask you not to spare yourselves in proclaiming the Gospel to grandparents and the elders. Go to them with a smile on your lips and the Gospel

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<sup>8</sup> See full message:

[https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2020/january/documents/papa-francesco\\_20200131\\_congresso-pastoraleanziani.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2020/january/documents/papa-francesco_20200131_congresso-pastoraleanziani.html)

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in your hands. Go out into the streets of your parishes and seek out the elderly who live alone. Old age is not an illness, it is a privilege! Loneliness can be an illness, but with charity, closeness and spiritual comfort we can heal it.

God has a large population of grandparents throughout the world. Nowadays, in secularized societies in many countries, parents do not have, for the most part, the Christian formation and living faith that the grandparents have which they can pass on to their grandchildren. They are the indispensable link in educating children and young people in the faith. We must get used to including them in our pastoral horizons and to considering them, in a non-episodic way, as one of the vital components of our communities. They are not only people whom we are called to safeguard. They can be the protagonists of a pastoral evangelizing ministry, privileged witnesses of God's faithful love.

#### ADDRESS TO PARTICIPANTS IN A GATHERING OF SENIOR CITIZENS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS<sup>9</sup>

Francis

15 October 2016

The Church regards the elderly with affection, gratitude, and high esteem. They are an essential part of the Christian community and of society: in particular they represent the roots and the memory of a people. You are an important presence, because your experience is a precious treasure, which is essential if we would look to the future with hope and responsibility. Your maturity and wisdom, accumulated over the years, can help younger people in search of their own way, supporting them on the path of growth and openness to the future. The elderly, in fact, show that, even in the most difficult trials, we must never lose confidence in God and in a better future. They are like trees that continue to bear fruit: even under the weight of years, they can give their original contribution for a society rich in values and for the affirmation of the culture of life.

**December 2017**

<https://thepopevideo.org/for-the-elderly/>

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<sup>9</sup> See full message:

[http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2016/10/15/pope\\_francis\\_elderly\\_bear\\_witness\\_to\\_enduring\\_truths/en-1265369](http://www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2016/10/15/pope_francis_elderly_bear_witness_to_enduring_truths/en-1265369)

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