



First World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly

Pope Francis has inaugurated the first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly for July 25th 2021. The theme of this day of celebration is from the Gospel of Matthew: “I am with you always” (Mt. 28.20).

In his message for this occasion, Pope Francis wrote: “I am well aware that this Message comes to you at a difficult time: the pandemic swept down on us like an unexpected and furious storm; it has been a time of trial for everyone, but especially for us elderly persons. Many of us fell ill, others died or experienced the death of spouses or loved ones, while others found themselves isolated and alone for long periods.”

A number of parishes in our archdiocese have outreach programs for seniors: I encourage parishes to look for creative ways to include and support our senior citizens who are at risk of isolation. A tip sheet is coming out with some ideas for parishes to put a new focus on their seniors.

Ottawa Cornwall Catholic Seniors (OCCS) is a new initiative in our diocese to encourage seniors at the parish level to help each other live meaningful lives in the later years of life. We have a new place on the diocesan website with training videos for creating ministries for seniors and projects like phone trees, general information on parish seniors activities in the diocese, and community resources available for frail seniors. More content will be posted as it becomes available.

The English tab is: <https://en.archoc.ca/seniors>

The French is: <https://fr.archoc.ca/personnes-agees>

There are many achievable things we can do to support our senior parishioners and to remind them that they are not alone or forgotten.

Patricia Marsden-Dole has been working closely with parishes on ways to support our senior citizens). She is a good resource person for parishes seeking ideas for programs or easy to implement ideas (pmarsdendole@archottawa.ca).

This new international day honouring the elderly and grandparents will now be celebrated every year on the 4th Sunday of July. I encourage parishes to mark this special day, honouring our older brothers and sisters and seeking their wisdom, guidance and prayers. May we not only remember Jesus Christ’s promise “I am with you always” but also be his instruments, bringing this message to those most in need of a compassionate presence. May God bless you.

Sincerely,

✠ Marcel Damphousse
Archbishop of Ottawa-Cornwall