

## BEST PRACTISES AND MODELS FOR PASTORAL CARE OF THE ELDERLY

### KAMPALA ARCHDIOCESE IN UGANDA

**Introduction:** Kampala Archdiocese is one of the 19 Dioceses of the Catholic Church in Uganda. It is a Metropolitan Archdiocese, in communion with 4 other Dioceses: Masaka, Lugazi, Kiyinda – Mityana and Kasana Luweero. Kampala Archdiocese has in its Administrative Structure several Departments corresponding to the various forms of Ministry in the Church.

They are the following: Liturgy; Catechists; Children & Youth; Health; Pontifical Missionary Societies; Lay Apostolate Movements; Ecumenism & Interreligious Dialogue; Catholic Men's Guild; Catholic Women's Guild; Marriage and Family; Pastoral Councils headed by the Council of the Laity; Good Samaritan Ministry; Priestly and Religious Vocations; Education; Mass Media & Social Communications; Justice & Peace; Caritas & Environment; Finance; Land; Construction; Cemeteries.

In March 2024, His Grace Paul Ssemogerere (The Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese) moved a step ahead, when he instructed the setting up of a New Department of the Ministry with Grandparents & the Elderly. At the end of the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday (20<sup>th</sup> March 2024), the Archbishop announced Fr. Joseph Sserugga, as the first Director to this New Department; entrusted with the task of developing a New Form of Organized Ministry (Pro – Grandparents & the Elderly) within our Local Church.

This Paper is a summary of what we have done; what we are still doing; and good practices that have bore good fruit..

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| 1. | <b>The Magisterium of the Church</b> – At the onset in 2021, we acknowledged with gratitude the availability of the Church Teaching on the Pastoral Care of Grandparents & the Elderly. We pay special tribute to Pope Francis, for providing us with a wealth of Catechesis on the Vocation and Mission of Grandparents. We continually read and reflect on these rich Catechesis. We are grateful to Pope Leo XIV for carrying on this task and enriching us even further with messages, gestures, audiences and publications on the Pastoral Care of Grandparents & the Elderly. We derive knowledge and guidance from the rich fount of the Magisterium of the Church. It is our primary source and point of reference! |
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| 2. | <p><b>The Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life:</b> We thank the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. For us in Kampala Archdiocese, materials provided on the Web-Site of the Dicastery – under the section of the Eldery are a rich source of information and formation. I personally keep constant check on the website. I read and study the materials provided on the website. I endeavor to keep informed. The Dicastery organizes meetings and conferences at which a Representative from Kampala Archdiocese has now twice been invited. From these International meetings &amp; encounters, we have acquired experiences and knowledge. We have built confidence and delight in what we are doing as a Department. In a special way we thank Dr. Vittorio Scelzo for his closeness to us in Kampala Archdiocese, guidance and correspondence!</p>                                                                                                                  |
| 3. | <p>It is a good practice – to choose, view and consider the Pastoral Care of the Elderly – as an essential ministry of the Church’s Apostolate, within the Local Church. Bishops are servants of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for the hope of the World. <b>In Kampala Archdiocese, we are indebted to the Archbishop – His Grace Paul Ssemogerere</b>, for his particular pastoral attention to the concerns, needs, and hopes of the Elderly. This year 2026, the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal Fund is aimed at beginning the construction of a special center for the ELDERLY in the Archdiocese.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 4. | <p>It is a good practice to have <b>an Office/Department for the Pastoral Care of the Elderly</b>. In Kampala Archdiocese, we have an appointed Director in charge of the Ministry done with Grandparents and the Elderly. Our motto is: <b>‘In their old age, they will still bear fruit’ (Psalm 92: 15)</b>. Our mission is to instruct, inform, form, plan and do all that is good in enhancing the vocation and mission of the Grandparents &amp; the Elderly in the Archdiocese. For long, the African Cultural Context has been hailed at cherishing the Elderly as ‘seats of wisdom’. This is still true in many places. However, none today, can claim to be immune to the bad throw away society that exalts youthfulness and dismisses the Elderly as an unwanted burden. Our Office is attentive to the changing times, attitudes – especially among the Young. We are working to promote the culture where the Elderly are seen, respected and valued as a blessing.</p> |
| 5. | <p>It is good practice – to do a serious and <b>well organized animation program for all agents of evangelization</b>. In Kampala Archdiocese, the Office of the Ministry with Grandparents &amp; the Elderly has organized innumerable meetings &amp; seminars with Priests, Religious, and Parish Lay Leaders, at which the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|    | <p>Good News about the Vocation and Mission of the Grandparents &amp; the Elderly has been loudly proclaimed.</p> <p>We have prepared simple booklets that highlight important messages. We use the booklets to instruct, teach, inform and form. Kampala Archdiocese has 74 Parishes. Today more than 50 Parishes are fairly informed about the vocation and mission of Grandparents &amp; the Elderly. Our work is to continue educating the Parish Communities to recognize the Elderly, seek them out, &amp; preserve the memory, the roots.</p> <p>We strongly believe that it is precisely the Christian Community that must take care of the Elderly. Relatives and friends do a lot, but the community must be sensitized too. Together with the Parish community, we are working to uproot the hostile idea that the old are waste material to be discarded We have managed to animate the Young People and move them to cherish their Grandparents &amp; the Elderly. It is a good practice – to have a well-planned annual program of animation, celebration, and mission.</p> |
| 6. | <p>It is a good practice – <b>to embrace Synodality as a Pastoral Approach</b>, in doing ministry with Grandparents &amp; the Elderly. The Elderly must never be left alone! The Elderly must have a voice. They must speak – they should never be silenced! The Synodal approach encourages the virtues of listening, speaking out, dialogue, celebration, co – responsibility in mission, discerning and deciding; participation and journeying together. In Kampala Archdiocese, we are trying to enthuse all members – Laity, Priests, Bishops; as well various ecclesial departments, into learning how include the Elderly &amp; never exclude them. We guide on how to journey and work together with the Elderly. Never should the Elderly be left behind or abandoned!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 7. | <p>It is a good practice – <b>to establish Lay Leaders for the Parish Grandparents &amp; the Elderly</b>. These Lay Leaders must be chosen or appointed from among the Elders themselves. The Leadership of the Elderly guarantees a continued active presence of the Elderly; it encourages the visibility, vitality, advocacy, and fruition of individual charisms and community qualities of the elderly persons.</p> <p>Pope Francis said: <i>‘Even in old age, one can, or rather one has, to serve the community. It is good for the Elderly to continue cultivating the responsibility of serving, overcoming the temptation to step aside’</i> (General Audience Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2022).</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |

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| 8.  | It is a good practice – to have a <b>Pro – Poor Pastoral Arrangement</b> with particular attention to the Elderly. In Kampala Archdiocese, we have the Good Samaritans Department. We work in very close collaboration with the Parish Good Samaritans in caring for the Elderly who are poor and needy. The Parish Good Samaritans are the image of the Christian Community present to our brothers and sisters in need.                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 9.  | It is a good practice – to have <b>Spirituality</b> at the heart of Ministry with Grandparents & the Elderly. Spiritual Retreats for the Elderly are good! A Prayerful Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary is good! A Prayerful Devotion to the Holy Grandparents – Saints Joachim and Anne is good! In Kampala Archdiocese, the Association of Saints Joachim and Anne for Grandparents & the Elderly is grounded on Prayer; Devotion; Committed Service to and with the Parish Elderly; as well as fostering the intergenerational encounter between the Young and Old.                             |
| 10. | It is a good practice – to include the concerns, needs, and hopes of the Elderly within the <b>Financial Plans, Budgets and Reports</b> . In Kampala Archdiocese, the Department of the Ministry with Grandparents & the Elderly has a flow of activities financed by the Archdiocesan Treasury and the Parish Finance Committees. Individuals too, offer donations in kind. All to support the following activities: Annual Celebrations of the World Day for Grandparents & the Elderly; Spiritual Retreats for the Elderly; Outings, Meetings & Seminars; Aid to the Poor and Needy Elderly etc... |

**Conclusion:** I hope these good practices adopted in Kampala Archdiocese will go a long way in inspiring others. We continue to pray, listen, learn & serve. May our Holy Grandparents – Saints Joachim and Anne – pray for us!

**Fr. Joseph Sserugga – Director of the Ministry with Grandparents & the Elderly (Kampala Archdiocese)**

Prepared on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2026