JUBILEE CELEBRATION WITH THE ELDERLY UNABLE TO PHYSICALLY MAKE THE PILGRIMAGE

5th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

27 July 2025

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2025



DICASTERIUM PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA

The Norms for the Granting of the Jubilee Indulgence published by the Apostolic Penitentiary state:

'The faithful who are truly repentant of sin but who cannot participate in the various solemn celebrations, pilgrimages and pious visits for serious reasons (especially cloistered nuns and monks, but also the elderly, the sick, prisoners, and those who, through their work in hospitals or other care facilities, provide continuous service to the sick), can obtain the Jubilee Indulgence, under the same conditions if, united in spirit with the faithful taking part in person, (especially when the words of the Supreme Pontiff or the diocesan Bishop are transmitted through the various means of communication), they recite the Our Father, the Profession of Faith in any approved form, and other prayers in conformity with the objectives of the Holy Year, in their homes or wherever they are confined (e.g. in the chapel of the monastery, hospital, nursing home, prison...) offering up their sufferings or the hardships of their lives;'.

With this perspective in mind, we suggest that on the occasion of the Fifth World Day for *Grandparents and the Elderly* or a significant date for the diocesan community or the facility where the elderly live, a celebration be held to allow all those who cannot physically participate in the Jubilee pilgrimages to experience the Father's limitless mercy. • The celebration should be presided over by a priest, a deacon, the facility chaplain, a catechist or whoever usually takes care of the pastoral animation of the place.

• The celebration should be wellattended, if possible animated by songs, and special attention should be paid to the participation of all the elderly.

• Where necessary, the presiding person, together with some of the pastoral animators, should visit all the rooms in which the elderly unable to move from their beds are staying. With them recite the Our Father, the Profession of Faith and leave them a sacred image, prayer or sign reminding them of their participation in the jubilee event. Let no one be excluded from the celebration.

• Chaplains should make every effort to ensure that elderly people can receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist in the period leading up to the celebration. Opening song

Introduction

The presiding person says: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Participants respond:

Amen.

The presiding person says:

May the God of hope who in the Word made flesh fills us with all joy and peace in faith, by the power of the Holy Spirit, be with all of you.

Participants respond: And with your spirit.

Jubilee Prayer

The presiding person says:

Let us recite together the prayer written by Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the Jubilee:

Father in heaven,

may the faith you have given us

in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,

and the flame of charity enkindled

in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,

reawaken in us the blessed hope

for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us

into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.

May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos

in the sure expectation

of a new heaven and a new earth,

when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,

your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen One of the pilgrimage psalms is sung or recited, e.g.:

15 'Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?'

- 24 'The earth is the Lord's'
- 84 'How lovely is your dwelling place'
- 95 'O come, let us sing unto the Lord'
- 122 'I rejoiced with those who said to me'
- **136** 'Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good'

Reading of the Word of God

It is suggested to read:

A reading from the Letter of St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans (5:1 - 5)

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Meditation

You can follow this text or another similar one

The Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly falls within the Jubilee of Hope year.

Sometimes we confuse the virtue of Hope with a good chance that something we care about will happen. For example, we hope we don't get sick or that our favourite team wins and so on. Often, it is a matter of waiting for things that are likely to happen, but may not. Or we think of hope as a kind of optimism towards the future, as a characteristic of our character. How should we understand Christian hope, what we say is a theological virtue?

St. Paul, in his letter to the Romans, makes a point about Christian hope by reasoning about what it is based on. If hope were based only on our own strength and human attitudes we would have reason to doubt its consistency. Since, however, St. Paul sets as the foundation of hope the love of God [that] has been poured out into our hearts, we may well say that it is a work of grace and therefore does not fail. Our task is to welcome it and allow ourselves to be led and sustained by it. When Christian hope is allowed to act in our lives, it has extraordinary power. The Catechism of the Catholic Church writes: 'The virtue of hope responds to the aspiration to happiness which God has placed in the heart of every man; it takes up the hopes that inspire men's activities and purifies them so as to order them to the Kingdom of heaven; it keeps man from discouragement; it sustains him during times of abandonment; it opens up his heart in expectation of eternal beatitude. Buoyed up by hope, he is preserved from selfishness and led to the happiness that flows from charity.' (cf. C.C.(1818)

To know an elder who has cultivated hope in his/her life is a true light to the world. For behind a smile, an affectionate greeting, a word of encouragement from an elder to a younger person, there is like a reflection of a greater wisdom, which ultimately speaks of God's faithfulness over time. Pope Leo XIV wrote in the Message for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly:

The Book of Sirach calls blessed those who have not lost hope (cf. 14:2). Perhaps, especially if our lives are long, we may be tempted to look not to the future but to the past. Yet, as Pope Francis wrote during his last hospitalization, "our bodies are weak, but even so, nothing can prevent us from loving, praying, giving ourselves, being there for one another, in faith, as shining signs of hope" (Angelus, 16 March 2025). We possess a freedom that no difficulty can rob us of: it is the freedom to love and to pray. Everyone, always, can love and pray.

Elderly people who have experienced God's faithfulness over time can testify to the world to an ability that is becoming rare in this age of ours, the ability to look to tomorrow with hope!

True, there are many contexts in the world where this is not the case, and the elderly, instead of being esteemed, are put on the margins of communal living. The Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee highlighted this by recalling that:

The elderly, who frequently feel lonely and abandoned, also deserve signs of hope. Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society, which are called to cooperate in strengthening the covenant between generations.

Here I would also mention grandparents, who represent the passing on of faith and wisdom to the younger generation. May they find support in the gratitude of their children and the love of their grandchildren, who discover in them their roots and a source of understanding and encouragement." (Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee 2025, Spes non confundit, no. 14) We are invited to celebrate this Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly with a desire to start afresh from the hope that enlightens us all. For the life of the elderly to be truly appreciated in all its value, it is important that no one is left alone. Our elders should be regarded as the precious treasure that binds generations together and shows us how God is the Lord of the succession of every age and every era.

Pope Leo reminded us of St. Augustine's incisive phrase: Let our lives be good, and the times are good. We are the times; as we are, so will the times be!

If we can treasure the living teaching of faith and love of our elderly the times ahead will certainly be *better times*!

The Credo

Our Father

Prayer for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Final blessing

Long life blessing

God of mercy,

Who has given these, Your children, the gift of a long life,

Grant them your blessing.

Let them feel the sweetness and strength of your presence:

Looking back on the past,

Rejoicing in Your mercy;

And looking to the future,

Persevering with undying hope.

To you, glory and praise for evermore.

Final song

Distribution of the Message for the Fifth World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly





DICASTERIUM PRO LAICIS, FAMILIA ET VITA