

Daily Homily
Sts. Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Memorial
Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time, Monday
26 July 2021
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Yesterday at all the Masses we had an intercession for grandparents and the elderly, and maybe this was a minor thing, that could have easily been missed, but it should not be overlooked. Pope Francis back in January established an annual special day of prayer for this instrumental group of people in the life of the Church, the world, and all families. He set the day for every year on the fourth Sunday of July, near the Memorial of Jesus' grandparents, Joachim and Anne. So yesterday was the first world-wide day of prayer for grandparents and the elderly.

[In the statement about this day, Pope Francis recalled the words](#) of the Prophet Joel who said, "It is important for grandparents to meet their grandchildren and for grandchildren to meet their grandparents because grandparents... will dream and have great desires, and young people – taking strength from their grandparents – will go forward and prophesy."

He recalled the elderly high priest, Simeon, and the widow, Anna, who was – night and day – in the temple praying and how, when they encountered the Holy Family, they were both moved by the Holy Spirit to speak a divine truth and to tell them heavenly wisdom.

"Their voice is precious because it sings the praises of God and safeguards the roots of peoples," he said. "They remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between generations, passing on the experience of life and faith to the young."

Pope Francis, who is 84, has said that, "Old age is a time of grace, the elderly and grandparents have the ability to understand the most difficult of situations: a great ability! And when they pray for these situations, their prayer is strong; it is powerful!"

This day is also in response and as a push back on the throwaway culture of our times that holds bias and prejudice toward the elderly. Pope Francis' intention in raising this day up as a day of prayer for them, will help the world community to know and feel the charisms of grandparents and the elderly for our times.

Pope Francis shared that he has a personal connection to bringing such a day about since it was his grandmother, Rosa, whom he attributes to having a major influence on his priestly vocation. And I will end with the Pope's grandmother's words. This is a note the Holy Father carries in his breviary that she wrote to her grandchildren:

"May my grandchildren, to whom I have given the best of my heart, have a long and happy life. But if there are days of pain or illness, or if the loss of a loved one fills them with despair, may they remember that a whisper of a prayer and a look to Mary at the feet of the cross, can be like a drop of balm on even the deepest and most painful wounds."