

Catholic Grandparents Association

Passing on Our Faith and Keeping Prayer at the Heart of Family Life

Spring Issue—April 2020

CHRIST HAS RISEN, ALLELUIA



There is a candle lighting for your intentions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock in Ireland



WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES AND GRANDCHILDREN
THE RICHEST BLESSINGS OF PEACE,
LOVE, JOY AND HOPE THIS EASTER
BLESS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY NOW AND FOREVER

Love & Prayers *Batharine Wiley*

& all at the Catholic Grandparents Association

Easter Letter to Grandparents



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Letter to Grandparents

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Dear Grandparents,

The peace of Jesus Christ be with you. In the world around us growth is taking place and nature comes to life after the death of winter. Trees are just beginning to bud forth. Birds are singing and busy building their nests. Yet in the midst of all this we endeavor to cope with the chilling challenge of Covid-19 and its consequences of death, disruption and disillusionment. We are living through a very traumatic time, not just for Ireland but for the whole world. The results will be far reaching in terms of physical and psychological health and the economic situation.

I know that for grandparents, like yourselves, this is a very testing time. I am very conscious of the bond that you have with your children and grandchildren. It is a huge sacrifice not to be able to visit them or enjoy visits from them. For grandchildren this is also a very difficult time, as it is indeed for all of us. However, thanks to modern technology and social media you can still keep in touch with your loved ones.

In many respects the world has been effectively shut down. Already, however, we witness the way in which this crisis brings out the best in people. Goodness, generosity and gentleness surface in a very powerful and profound way.

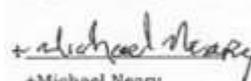
As we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ we are people of hope. The hopes of the earliest disciples of Jesus Christ seemed to run aground on Calvary and be buried with him in the tomb. The events of the Middle East over 2000 years ago provide us with a perspective on our present situation. Social distancing, closed doors and fear stalk the streets and thoroughfares of cities across the world. The followers of Jesus met in fear behind locked doors. It was

to this situation that Jesus came into their midst with the words "peace be with you". When the risen Jesus appeared to the disciples he carried the wounds of suffering, pain and death and these also remain the marks of the risen life. Prior to the onslaught of this virus we prided ourselves on the progress which humanity had made in various areas, medicine, science, technology and communication. We boasted of our maturity. Perhaps we are now beginning to realize that real maturity involves acknowledging that we are not self-reliant and that we depend on God. Easter reminds us that the God on whom we depend does not abandon us. This God enables us to take responsibility in the present and actively pursue means of containing the virus and finding a cure for it. As an Easter people we express our hope for and our belief in a new future. However, the future will have to include and make provision for the concrete memories of Covid-19 with which we cope today. Our faith in Jesus risen from the dead enables us to embrace both the honest reality of what is taking place and, at the same time, opens us to new possibilities. In the depth of helplessness our faith enables us to engage with God and trust in the Lord.

For nearly 2000 Easters, since Jesus rose from the dead, believers have been proclaiming that the tomb was empty. However, it is not the empty tomb that convinces people but rather the influence and the impact of Christ's presence in our lives today as we respond to the challenge of the Corona Virus.

May the Risen Christ take care of you and yours wherever they may be.

Yours sincerely,



+Michael Neary
Archbishop of Tuam.



Easter 2020

Please share a copy of this newsletter with your friends. Put it on Bishop's or Priest's desk.

A Letter from Catherine Wiley—Founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association



Dearest Grandparents and Dearest Friends,

I hope and pray that you are keeping safe and healthy in this sad, bewildering, anguishing time. As the world grows still with fear and sorrow, our hearts weep in solidarity with you. They break for sick and deceased family members, for those who are in hospital, separated and in isolation from their loved ones, those feeling vulnerable and afraid at this time. ***“Be not afraid, I am with you always.”***

The separation we feel from our Church and the Sacraments which we love and depend on so much, which has been our rock through the ages giving us the much needed courage to cope with all adversity is acute. Visions of empty churches break our hearts but the Church is within each and every one of us. The Churches are only empty physically but deployed into our homes and families which have now become true Domestic Churches. We’ll come through this together – *and be better for it*.

We are reminded also at this time of who we are and where we come from. This gives us renewed strength as we recall stories of the sacrifices of generations past and how their faith carried them through plague, famine, war and strife. What will our story say about us when we reach the other side of this unimaginable sadness? Together we can build an even stronger Church. We are called – the Mission is ours. Tell your stories and write new ones. Share them with us so that we can all benefit from your faith and wisdom.

In his address during the extraordinary Urbi et Orbi blessing at St. Peter in Rome on March 27, Our Holy Father implored us to reach beyond our own understanding saying, “The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people’s souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly “save” us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity”.

Beloved, through the grace of God and faithful Christians who came before us, we have the antibodies and courage to fight this invisible enemy. Some days it means digging deep and other days it’s right in front of us, but together we’ll get through this and we’ll help our precious families through it.

Please, dear Grandparents and Friends, take great care of yourselves physically, spiritually and emotionally. Together with the Diocese of Miami, who recently launched a Diocesan-wide Ministry for Grandparents, we have developed the attached list of suggestions to help keep you safe and healthy.

Although we have faced many challenges before, this one is different. We are all in this together and together we will not fail. Please continue to pray for each other as we enter the most holy of weeks and look forward to a glorious resurrection in our hearts, in our church and in our world. *Always remember you are the treasure.*

May the blessings of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne be with you and your family today and always. There is a candle lighting for your intentions at the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock in Ireland and at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in England.

Love and Prayers,

Catherine Wiley



Catherine Wiley—Founder, Catholic Grandparents Association

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Pope at Urbi et orbi: Full text of his meditation



Pope Francis meditated on the calming of the storm from the Gospel of Mark during the prayer service over which he presided on the steps of St Peter's Basilica on Friday evening. Here is the full text.

"When evening had come" (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people's gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying "We are perishing" (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus' attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples' faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus' trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (v. 38). *Do you not care*: they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: "Do you not care about me?" It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our pre-packaged ideas and

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forgetfulness of what nourishes our people's souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly "save" us, but instead prove incapable of putting us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: "Wake up, Lord!"

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: "Be converted!", "Return to me with all your heart" (Joel 2:12). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a time of choosing. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: "That they may all be one" (Jn 17:21). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is* 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (*Mt* 28:5). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (cf. *1 Pet* 5:7).



Credit—Mrmohock via shutterstock

Archdiocese of Miami Ministry for Grandparents

In collaboration with the Catholic Grandparents



ARCHDIOCESE of MIAMI

TAKING CARE OF YOUR PHYSICAL WELL-BEING DURING QUARANTINE



REST AND RELAX

Get plenty of sleep

Use this time to rest, refocus and reflect. Manage stress through relaxation activities and monitor your mental health. Stay connected with friends and family to avoid isolation.



PRACTICE GOOD NUTRITION

Ensure you are eating well

Eat a nutritious diet including plenty of fruits and vegetables. Take nutritional supplements as directed by your physician. Avoid excessive snacking usually brought on by anxiety from quarantine.



STAY ACTIVE

Exercise within reasonable means

Stay fit with light exercise, including spending time outdoors as weather allows. Take brisk walks around your neighborhood, ride your bicycle, do stationary exercises in your backyard or utilizing training videos.



PURCHASE ONLY WHAT YOU NEED

Ensure you have enough food and medications

Purchase supplies, food and medications but make sure to only get what you need. Several stores have special hours for seniors and the most vulnerable. You may also order online delivery or have family or friends bring your groceries to your home. Make sure you have enough medications on hand.



PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE

Wash your hand often

Maintain good hygiene at all times. Wash your hands as often as possible, especially after touching surfaces that may be contaminated. Clean and disinfect your home frequently and avoid unnecessary physical contact with people around you.



ARCHDIOCESE of MIAMI

TAKING CARE OF YOUR SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING DURING QUARANTINE



PRAY

Lean on Christ

Don't despair. Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. Relinquish control and use this time as spiritual growth. Acknowledge your despair and fear and look for ways to deal with it through prayer. Offer up your suffering to those in need.



ROSARY

Pray the Rosary daily

Maintain your prayer life and practice inner reflection by praying the rosary on a daily basis. You can also pray the rosary as a family remotely or call in to radio shows that pray daily. Find a quiet place at home and make it holy and sacred for prayer.



JOY

Find joy in the simple things

Open your windows and enjoy the sounds of nature. Listen to music or find pleasure in reading Catholic books to feed your soul. Count your blessings. Receive Spiritual Communion per your pastor's directives.



WATCH AND LISTEN

Stream daily mass

Many parishes are now streaming mass daily through their websites. You can also watch mass on EWTN, listen to Catholic radio stations/programming. Reflect on daily readings and watch Catholic videos on the internet. Avoid negative programming and try to look on the bright side.



TRUST

Believe that nothing is impossible to God

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" -Isaiah 41:10.
Know that God is in control!



ARCHDIOCESE of MIAMI

TAKING CARE OF YOUR EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING DURING QUARANTINE



STAY CONNECTED

Keep in contact with friends and family

It is very important to avoid isolation during this time. Rely on modern technologies to communicate with friends and family. Engage in daily phone calls, video chats if possible.



PLAY

Find ways to have fun

Board games and puzzles are always a great idea when you stay home. You may want to complete crossword puzzles, Sudoku games, or even play a board game with your family if they are with you.



JOURNAL

Tell your story

This is a great time to begin or continue a journal. Write about times in your life when you've depended on God to overcome strife. Write prayers or letters to your grandchildren or family members.



COOK

Try out new recipes

Cook and bake foods that bring back good memories of happy times together. Talk to your family about mealtime in the past, how food choices and cooking have changed. You may also learn new recipes and try new flavors.



ACTIVITIES

Keep your mind active

Revive old projects. Start coloring, crocheting, knitting or even basic hemming. Volunteer to make calls to residents of long term care homes. Write letters to friends and family. Stream on-line programs that bring you peace, joy and unity.



Please
Help us Protect
our
Seniors

Lord Jesus,
Look with love on Grandparents
(the world over).
Protect Them!
They are a source of enrichment
for families,
for the Church and for
all of Society.
Support them!
As they grow older...
Amen

CORONAVIRUS ADVICE

- Social Distance
- Avoid Crowds
- Wash your Hands
- 6 ft. Away from People
- Stay Home!



Archdiocese of Miami "Secretariat of Parish Life"

Photo: David Conroy, SanzCatholic.com

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A Granddaughter's Letter to Grandparents



It is during these difficult times that everyday worries fade, and one thought becomes our priority; the health and wellbeing of our family. Sitting at home, day after day, thoughts of homework or social issues drift into the background. Instead, one can see a role reversal within the family, with grandchildren feeling increasingly concerned for their grandparents welfare. It is this concern that highlights the true importance of Grandparents, and the pivotal role they play in our lives. Often grandchildren take their grandparents love and support for granted, but the time that isolation has given me has allowed me to reflect on my love and appreciation for all they do for us.

The Corona Virus has forced grandchildren and young people to put aside their wants and desires for the sake of protecting the elderly. Social distancing, although seemingly unnecessary for us, has never been more important when trying to protect grandparents. The love we have for them is shown through our behaviour during this pandemic. For young people, their efforts quite literally save lives of those in their family and their communities.

Suffering with anxiety, the scale of this global pandemic has caused many of us to feel lost and panicked. It is this time that we must unite as a family, and not underestimate the power of communication. Although we cannot see each other, modern advances such as FaceTime allow us to feel close to one another during this stressful and lonely time.

Our faith, as Catholics, places emphasis on loving thy neighbour. It is during this time that our true colours are shown, and the lengths we are willing to go keep those around us safe. This time in isolation should be used to reflect on what is most important to us; namely, our family. As many suffer the hardship of illness, or even death, it allows me to see the value of having family around us to give advice, lift our spirits, and care for us indefinitely. In my case, having my grandparents currently in Florida, the pandemic has made the distance feel even further. Despite not having physical contact, it is the love we feel for each other that allows us all to persevere on, every day. United in our prayers and thoughts for one another, resolute in the sacrifices we are making for the sake of our fellow man.



I urge everyone to understand the value that family holds in our hearts, no matter what family unit we have. This time should be used as a way to appreciate these relationships, that, in our day to day lives, have become overlooked or pushed aside. With continued demands from the government to socially distance, let us view this as an opportunity to re-orientate where we place value, and focus on the love within our family.

To put this crisis into perspective, I would rather not see my Grandparents for the next six months and then be able to see them for the years to come. I love them with all of my heart, and I cannot wait for the day that I can embrace them without the worry of the Caronavirus. To show your love, sometimes it is as simple as picking up the phone or writing a letter. The relief and joy I will feel when we finally reunite is what keeps me going during this troubling time.

Love Kate



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A Message from her Majesty Queen Elizabeth



“...While we have faced challenges before, this one is different. This time we join with all nations across the globe in a common endeavour, using the great advances of science and our instinctive compassion to heal. We will succeed - and that success will belong to every one of us.

We should take comfort that while we may have more still to endure, better days will return: we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again.

But for now, I send my thanks and warmest good wishes to you all”

Full Speech can be found on this link:

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2020/04/05/queens-coronavirus-speech-full-will-succeed-better-days-will/>

Sister Marie Dunne CHF

“My Guiding Light”

A tribute song to Grandparent’s, first launched at inauguration of Catholic Grandparents Association, Shrine of Our Lady of Knock, 2008.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpTNzyn0i_k&t=10s

During this time when we are surrounded by the Covid-19 Coronavirus, we are aware of the physical and social isolation so many are experiencing. I composed this song MY GUIDING LIGHT some years ago as a Tribute to Grandparents - recorded by Emma Humber. The video has been created with the current reality in mind. This week, we remember all grandparents who won't have their special Easter visit from their grandchildren. But they can be assured that they are a guiding light in the lives of the grandchildren. We also remember children who have lost their grandparents from the Corona-virus. May the loving memory of their grandparents live on in their hearts. [Marie Dunne CHF]



My Guiding Light A Tribute to Grandparents

Marie Dunne CHF

*You're my guiding light, you make all things bright
You show me the way, you teach me to pray
And to sing of God's love each day
You're my guiding star shining near and far
And we will never be apart
For you are always in my heart.*

*You are there to understand when I am feeling down
You are there to take my hand, you turn things all around
You listen to my stories, you share with me your own
You help me know what's right from wrong, as my life moves along*

*You're my guiding light, you make all things bright
You show me the way, you teach me to pray
And to sing of God's love each day
You're my guiding star, shining near and far
And we will never be apart
For you are always in my heart.*

*I love to spend my time with you knowing that you care
My life is so much better, knowing that you're there
You always greet me with a smile, no matter how you feel
I pray that God will bless you, for all you mean to me.*

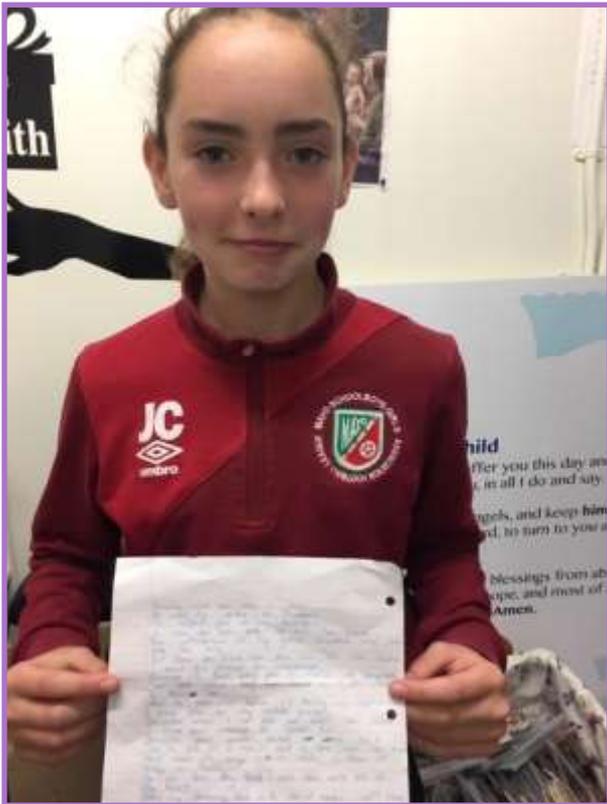
*You're my guiding light, you make all things bright
You show me the way, you teach me to pray
And to sing of God's love each day
You're my guiding star, shining near and far
And we will never be apart
For you are always in my heart.*

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A Prayer for Granny Helen By Jessica and A Million Rosaries



Granny won't you take a look,
at all my smiles on Facebook.

I've added you as my friend,
So now you can keep up with the trend.

You cant travel to my football games because your legs
are too sore,
But now and FaceTime you can see me score.

I've sent you the photos on messenger, because I don't
want you to miss me anymore.

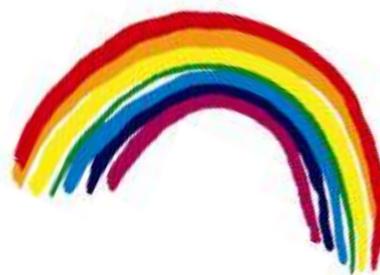
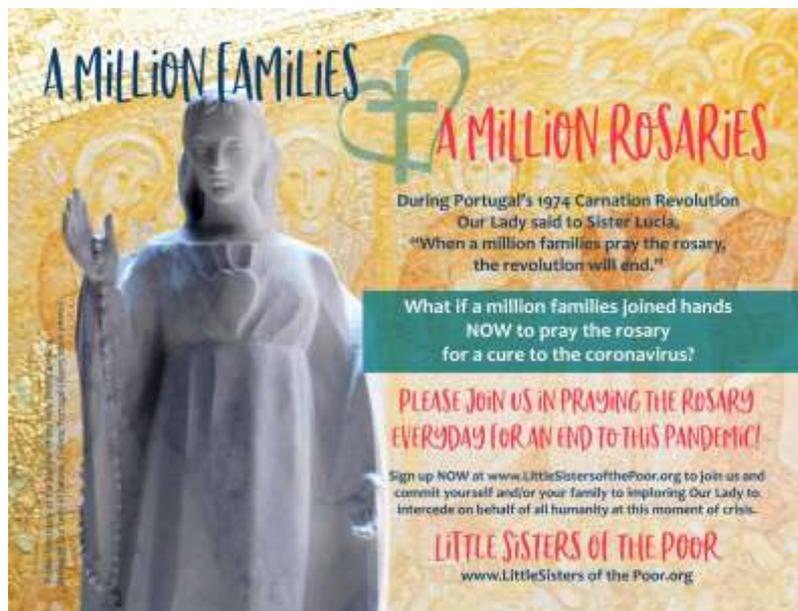
Dear God please keep her safe as I still have to teach
her,
How to take a selfie and hashtag on Twitter.

I ring you on my mobile phone,
Because when I call you we won't feel alone.

I have your number on speed dial, Because when I hear
your voice it makes me smile.

She's one in a million and I love her so much,
and when I'm away social media is how we keep in
touch.

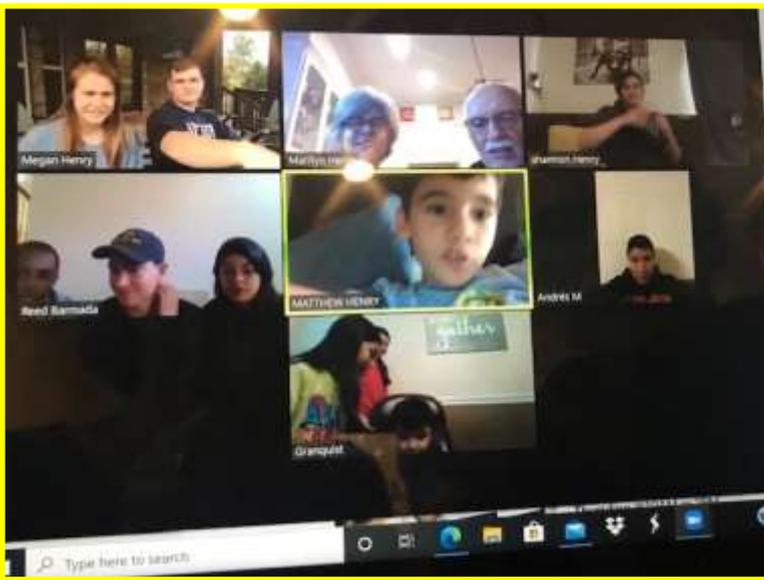
So on this day God I asked you with all my heart,
Bless my granny and with social media we will never
be apart.



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Resources Page

The Domestic Church



Staying connected in times of distancing

Henry Family Zoom conference call. *“Pap & Ghee”* were delighted to gather all eleven of their grandchildren, (22-5) from four different state for a video call. In normal times, a rarity with school, sports and activities.



I deas for sharing your Faith with your Grandchildren and keeping them happy and busy

Ask them to write letters and draw pictures for people in Care Homes. Have them recycle cards. Make videos for Grandparents—record songs and dances to send to Grandparents and other relatives. Send videos about the Saints—videos about Easter.

Grandparents—Tell your story

Record your story of your life and Faith for your Children and Grandchildren as a legacy of this moment in time - Generations will thank you for it

Grandparents Ministries—*While we can't meet in person, we can meet by conference phone calls and video conferencing to pray together for each other, our families, our Church and Our World.*

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Blessing dedicating the statue of Our Lady of Knock with Pope Francis at St Peters Basilica in Rome



Beautiful New Statue of Our Lady of Knock blessed by our Holy Father Pope Francis at Saint Peters Basilica in Rome, 8th August 2019 with Archbishop Michael Neary and Father Richard Gibbons



Jane Sweeney, Catherine Wiley, Archbishop Michael Neary and Marilyn Henry



Father Richard Gibbons, Rector of Knock, Archbishop Michael Neary, a great day for Knock, Ireland in Rome.



Catherine Wiley, Dr. Linda Ghisoni and Prof. Gabriella Gambino from Dicastery of Laity, Family & Life



Our Lady of Walsingham Pray for Us

Our Lady of Knock Live Stream Services:

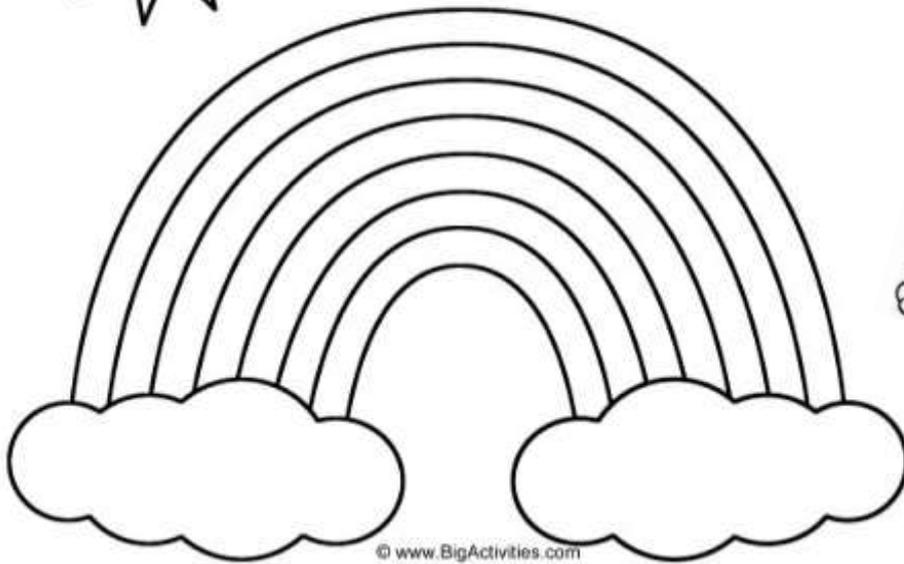
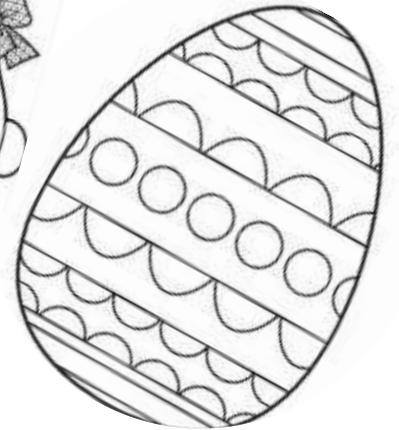
<https://www.knockshrine.ie/watch-ceremonies-online/>

Our Lady of Walsingham Live Stream Services:

<https://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/>

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Children's Activity Page



© www.BigActivities.com

How did the pretzel get its shape?

One legend has it that the pretzel was invented by an Italian monk in the year 610 A.D. to reward young children for learning their prayers. He folded strips of bread dough to resemble the crossed arms of praying children with the three openings representing the Holy Trinity.

Photo & blog, CGA Ministry Leader, Colleen Rooney



FOODSANDFESTIVITIESOFTHECHRISTIANYEAR.BLOGSPOT.COM
April 7, Dessert Pretzels for Easter
Dessert Pretzels During Holy Week we will be making som...

Letter from the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the heart of this "unexpected and furious storm, we realized", as Pope Francis reminded us, "that we are on the same boat". Inside there are also the elderly. Like everyone else, they are fragile and disoriented. Our concerns and grateful thoughts go to them today, to return at least a little of that tenderness with which each of us has been accompanied in life and that the maternal caress of the Church reach each of them.

Their generation these days - difficult for everyone - is paying the highest price for the Covid-19 pandemic. Statistics tell us that in Italy more than 80% of the people who lost their lives were over 70 years old.

A few weeks ago, Pope Francis said that "loneliness can be a disease, but with charity, closeness and spiritual comfort we can heal it". These words help to understand that, if it is true that the coronavirus is more lethal when it encounters a debilitated body, in many cases the previous pathology is loneliness. It is no coincidence that we are witnessing the death, in terrible proportions and ways, of many people who live far from their families, and in truly debilitating and disheartening conditions of solitude.

For this reason, it is important that we do everything possible to remedy this condition of abandonment. This, in current circumstances, could mean saving lives.

During this special time there are many initiatives in this sense that the Church is putting in place in favor of the elderly. The inability to continue making home visits has led to finding new and creative forms of presence. Calls, video or voice messages or, more traditionally, letters addressed to those who are alone. Parishes are often engaged in the delivery of food and medicines to those who are forced not to leave the house. Almost everywhere, priests continue to visit homes to dispense the sacraments. Many volunteers, especially young ones, are working generously to continue or even begin fundamental networks of solidarity and care.

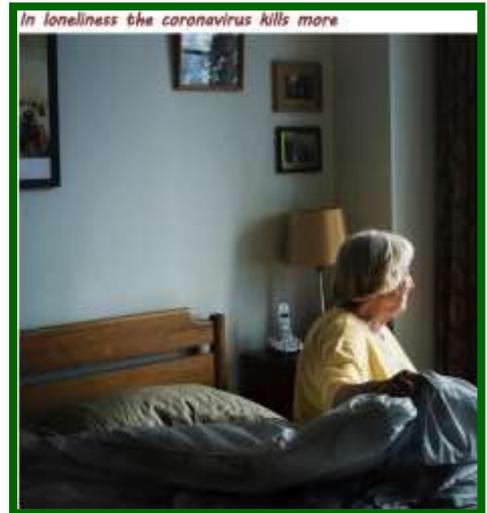
But the gravity of the moment calls all of us to do more. As individuals and as local churches, we can do much for the elderly: pray for them, cure the disease of loneliness, activate solidarity networks and much more. Faced with the scenario of a generation hit so severely, we have a common responsibility, which stems from the awareness of the invaluable value of every human life and from gratitude to our fathers and grandparents. We must devote new energies to defend them from this storm, just as each of us has been protected and cared for in the small and large storms of our lives. We cannot leave the elderly alone, because in solitude the coronavirus kills more.

Those living inside residential homes deserve special attention: we hear terrible news about their conditions every day and thousands of people have already lost their lives. The concentration in the same place of so many fragile people and the difficulty of finding the protective devices have created very difficult situations to manage despite the self-sacrifice and, in some cases, the sacrifice of the staff dedicated to assistance. In other circumstances, however, the current crisis is the result of a care and therapeutic abandonment that comes from afar. Despite the complexity of the situation we live in, it is necessary to clarify that saving the lives of the elderly who live within residential homes or who are alone or sick, is a priority as much as saving any other person. In countries where the pandemic has presently had only limited consequences, it is still possible to take preventive measures to protect them. In those where the situation is more dramatic, it is necessary to take action to find urgent solutions. This affects the future of our ecclesial communities and our societies because, as Pope Francis recently said, "the elderly are the present and tomorrow of the Church".

In the suffering experienced by us all these days, we are called to see the future. In the love of many children and grandchildren, and in the care of those assisting and of volunteers, we can see in them, so to speak, the compassion of the women who went to the tomb to care for the body of Jesus is once again revived. Like them, we are scared and, like them, we know that we cannot help less than living - while keeping the distance - the compassion that He taught us. Like these women, we will soon understand that it was essential to remain close to those in need, even when it seemed dangerous or useless, confident of the words spoken by the angel, inviting us not to be afraid.

So let us join in prayer for grandparents and the elderly around the world. Let us gather around them with our thoughts and hearts, and when possible, let's act, so that they be not alone.

Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life



Left to right—Bishop Denis Nulty, President of Marriage, Family and Life in Ireland, Cardinal Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and Father Alessandro, First Secretary to the Dicastery.



Prof. Gabriella Gambino, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Dr. Linda Ghisoni from Dicastery of Laity, Family & Life

Please share a copy of this newsletter with your friends. Put it on Bishop's or Priest's desk.

May Saint Joachim and Saint Anne, parents of Mary, Grandparents of Jesus, bless all families now and forever



Our Exclusive Medal

Our beautiful, exclusive new medal of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne with their grandson, Jesus is now available.

In Keeping with the charism which is the Catholic Grandparents Association, our exclusive medal has at its' center, the Child Jesus holding a Red rose representing the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Mystic rose. Jesus is surrounded by His Grandparents, St. Joachim and St. Anne so that together, three generations, Grandparents, parents and children are represented as one family symbolizing the communion of the Holy Trinity.

Working with renowned arts and craftsmen in Rome, this exquisite design came to fruition after many years of searching for the image that would truly depict the beauty, selfless love and devotion that Grandparents have for their grandchildren. It is our hope that this beautiful image signifying God's plan for the sanctity and unity of familial generational bonds will bring great joy, encouragement and support to Grandparents in passing on their faith.



Presentation Medal—€95, \$95 Medals—Sterling Silver €20, \$20 *Silver Plated €10, \$10 * Gold Plated €10, \$10 Plus shipping, medal only

Wishing each and every one of you a blessed, holy and happy Easter with love from all of us



PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS

Lord Jesus,
you were born of the Virgin Mary,
the daughter of Saints Joachim and Anne.
Look with love on grandparents the world over.
Protect them! They are a source of enrichment
for families, for the Church and for all of society.
Support them! As they grow older,
may they continue to be for their families
strong pillars of Gospel faith,
guardians of noble domestic ideals,
living treasuries of sound religious traditions.
Make them teachers of wisdom and courage,
that they may pass on to future generations the fruits
of their mature human and spiritual experience.

Lord Jesus,
help families and society
to value the presence and role of grandparents.
May they never be ignored or excluded,
but always encounter respect and love.
Help them to live serenely and to feel welcomed
in all the years of life which you give them.
Mary, Mother of all the living,
keep grandparents constantly in your care,
accompany them on their earthly pilgrimage,
and by your prayers, grant that all families
may one day be reunited in our heavenly homeland,
where you await all humanity
for the great embrace of life without end. Amen!

Beneditus II Ep

Pope Francis' prayer to Mary during Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary,
you always shine on our path
as a sign of salvation and of hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.
You, Salvation of the Roman People,
know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross,
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



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