

Catholic Grandparents Association

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

Spring Issue—May 2020

May is the month of Mary



Virtues of Mary

Humility

Lively Faith

Blind Obedience

Unceasing Prayer

Constant Self-Denial

Surpassing Purity

Ardent Love

Heroic Patience

Angelic Kindness

Heavenly Wisdom

The Angelus

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary . . .

Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary. . .

And the Word was made flesh.

And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary. . .

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be worthy of the promises of Christ.



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



Dearest Grandparents and Dearest Friends,

What a privilege to honor our Blessed Mother during the month of May. Through Mary, and her pious parents, the Grandparents of Jesus, our Ministry was born more than twenty years ago. We know that the arms and love of Grandparents can reach far and wide – and it has. Today, we have members and Ministries in 52 countries. We are most grateful for the virtues and grace of our Blessed Mother and our heavenly patrons, Saint Joachim and Saint Anne.

As we move through this *worldwide pandemic*, the need to embody the virtues of Mary has become more evident:

Blind Obedience as we've had to learn to trust those in authority

Heavenly Wisdom to make the right decisions for our health and those we love

Heroic Patience as we wait for our church doors to open and to fully partake in the Sacrifice of

the Mass

Ardent Love for our families and neighbors enabling us to endure long hours of isolation and loneliness

Constant Self Denial as our desire for Communion and Community grows daily

Lively Faith in knowing that we will get through this stronger than ever

All we need do is turn to her and she will answer.

As we've looked for more and different ways to help each other through this crisis, you, dear Grandparents, have amazed and overwhelmed us with your faith, wisdom and ingenuity.

In recent weeks, we have held several Zoom Video Meetings (see photo page)with some of our Ministry Leaders. It was been wonderful to gather Leaders from Ireland, the US, Spain and Gibraltar on our calls – Grandparents of varying ages from 50's-80's who have mastered yet another skill – the dreadful Internet. For the past two weeks we have begun our meetings reciting the Rosary together. What a beautiful experience and tribute to our Blessed Mother in her month.

On the other side of this pandemic, we envision the need for Grandparents Ministries in Dioceses and Parishes to be even more necessary. We have, therefore, increased our efforts and outreach. We are asking all of you to not only pray that this happens but to help us by beginning a Ministry in your Parish if there isn't one and suggesting the same for other Parishes.

Can you imagine the gift to our Holy Mother, honoring her parents, the Grandparents of Jesus, multiplied a hundred fold, a thousand fold? The time is now, dear Grandparents. Calling on the virtues and faith of our Blessed Mother we can and will make this a reality.

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.

Keep safe, keep well, and above all keep the faith.

Love and prayers,

Catherine Wiley

Catherine Wiley—Founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association



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

By Paul O'Brien

Life Coach, A.C.E. Personal Trainer & Biohacker



This current and unprecedented time of social isolation and 'lockdown' has been a challenging one for all of us. Seniors have been among the most affected, having been advised to stay within their homes in many countries since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Guidelines for visiting seniors have also been strict, adding a further edge to the feelings of isolation.

Consequently, mental health has become an even hotter topic. As social creatures, connecting with others is a primal need for humans. Mental health means experiencing a sense of well being about ourselves and our lives. It is characterised by general thoughts and feelings of content and a good ability to cope with the peaks and troughs of life, or resilience. When we can't connect, we experience feelings of loneliness, anxiety, stress and depression. Research tells us that our mental health can be adversely affected by social isolation, can lead to issues with thinking and memory and worsen medical conditions.

Hope Springs

Yet hope springs eternal. There is much you can do to support your mental health at home. This enforced hiatus from our normal routine offers the chance to reflect on what's important, take stock of what we've learned and chart our future course. From this perspective, this time is a gift, one way of God's grace entering our lives.

I also believe that, with a shift in mindset, seniors can truly thrive in these challenging times. Having grown up in a world that was simpler, but with its own unique hardships, seniors may have a level of resilience that many young people today are not equipped with. The benefit of your life's wisdom has always been valuable, and perhaps not fully appreciated. Now is the perfect time to share that wisdom with younger generations. What lessons can you pass on from your life story? How can you be of service with your knowledge? We are living in the 'knowledge as commodity' age and, as seniors, you have a wealth of it.

Tips to Thrive

This is an important perspective. It helps you to focus on the opportunity present, rather than the struggle. How can you share this knowledge? Here's how you can share your story and some tips on thriving at home:

1. Write your memoir – Yes, you! Why not? We're not talking about a bestseller. What a gift to your family this would be! The story of your life, in all its' richness and depth, captured for the enjoyment and benefit of future family generations. Not a writer? No problem. You can record your story into an audio device and have someone write it for you. Even better, why not ask one of your grandchildren to help you write it. You can connect online until you can meet in person. Imagine the joy of that experience as you tell your story to your fascinated grandchild!
2. Use technology – This is a great time to connect in a new way. Open a Facebook account, or ask a family member to set up a weekly family video call, where you can see and speak to those you love. Facetime and WhatsApp are to simple applications to use. I'm somewhat tech-phobic myself and I can use them!
3. Start a new hobby – break out that carpentry project you've been putting off. Create a patchwork quilt of your family's history, asking your family to contribute material. Start experimenting with photography. Use genealogy to trace your ancestry. If you're a reader, try a new genre you've been curious about. Get out into the garden. Download a birdsong App onto your phone to help identify and appreciate the birds that visit your garden. New projects are beneficial for brain health because they help build new neuronal pathways. This means your brain is growing rather than stagnating.
4. Exercise – regular exercise is proven to be beneficial for mental and physical health. Walk in your garden or neighbourhood. Do some mobility exercises at home. In a future article, I will share a simple exercise program you can do at home to improve posture and mobility. Don't forget that working in your garden, cleaning and jobs such as painting and grass cutting also count as exercise. The key is to focus on regular movement.
5. Set Your Goals – what do you want to achieve in the next year, the next three or five years? Goal setting is a powerful exercise and brings clarity and passion to your actions. In a future article, I will share a simple yet powerful goal-setting process.

Shine Your Light

I hope this article has shown, tough as the current situation may be, it also represents an opportunity for growth and contribution. Social isolation does not have to be a prison. With the right mindset and a willingness to learn and be open to new experiences, you may uncover a new passion for life. At the very least, you'll be caring for your mental health and supporting your loved ones as a strong role model. This is a time to add value, to share your knowledge and to shine your light. In doing so, you inspire others to shine theirs.

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Irish priest spends three-and-a-half days blessing 1,000 homes of isolated and elderly parishioners



A PARISH priest in Ireland has been busy delivering a symbolic message of hope to thousands of parishioners isolated or alone during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For three-and-a-half days, Fr Richard Gibbons, the rector of Knock Shrine in Mayo, has been driving around the local region, blessing the homes of local people far and wide.

Equipped with copious amounts of Holy Water, a Bible and his white cassock, Fr Gibbons visited some 58 townlands between Tuesday and Friday of last week.

Eager to offer some support and solace to the many believers unable to attend church under the current government lockdown restrictions, Fr Gibbons had originally intended to bless the Holy water fonts located in the parish.

However, he began to notice that wherever he went local people would come to their windows or doors in hope more than expectation.

After blessing a few of the houses on his route, word began to get round, prompting Father Gibbons to embark on a systematic blessing of the entire region.

“It took three and a half days to do, but the weather was fantastic and I had the time to do it as well,” he told the ***Irish Mirror***.

All told, Father Gibbons reckons he blessed 1,000 homes in the local area.

“The main idea was to help the people understand that we haven’t forgotten them and [we knew] that they’d like to see me in person as well,” he said.

He added: “I blessed every single house but if I saw somebody outside of the house or near it or farmers in their land I’d talk to them and just say hello and ask them how they were doing and that kind of thing.”

“Even with the social distancing there’s nothing to beat a face to face or a person to person connection and they really do appreciate it.”

A much-loved key worker in the community, Fr Gibbons once told ***The Journal***: “The joy that comes from truly Christian living comes alive each day we offer to people our hope, our presence, our prayers and even our laughter.”

https://www.irishpost.com/news/irish-priest-spends-three-half-days-blessing-1000-homes-isolated-elderly-parishioners-184000?utm_source=email

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Lord, Please Don't Let It End With Me



I am Kathleen Hale Mironchik, and along with Mrs. Donna Dietz, a Gran and Great Gran of 20, are co-coordinators of the Catholic Grandparents Association Chapter of St. Joseph Parish in New Paltz, New York.

I once described us as a couple of “fierce grannies.” But we have to be fierce, don’t we, because we are fighting a battle. (And) That battle is from within. Within our families, and sometimes within our homes.

The Catholic Grandparents Association was founded by Mrs. Catherine Wiley. It is because of her tireless efforts, the CGA is now an international organization filled with Grandparents across the globe, who are of one mind, one heart and have one goal...fulfilling our motto: *Passing on the Faith and keeping prayer in the heart of family life.*

Sounds simple, right? A no-brainer. I don’t have to tell you how difficult this can be.

We raised our children in the Faith. We did the best we knew how. However, many of our children are choosing NOT to move forward with their Faith. Sadder still, many are choosing to abandon it altogether. (But) We pray that one day their Faith will be re-ignited, because we must believe it is still in their hearts.

It is because of these situations that many of our grandchildren are NOT being baptized and are not being given the same opportunities of Faith formation that we gave their parents. This is where we, as Catholic Grandparents, must come into the picture. If we don’t pass on our Faith to our grandchildren, where will our Faith be down the road, in the future and for generations to come? Where will it be?

I went on a personal pilgrimage to Ireland. When I arrived in Malahide, I was in front of St. Sylvester’s Church. This is the church where my Great-Great Grandparents were married 173 years ago, and where all their 11 children, including my Great Grandmother, were baptized. Talk about passing on the Faith. At the same time, I said in my heart: **Lord please don’t let it end with me.**

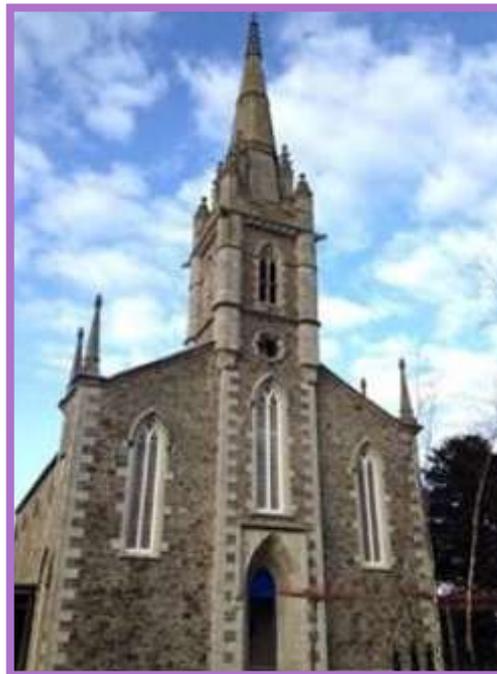
God has created each of us to do Him some definite service. Yes, a mission. Further, we are all called by our baptism to be evangelizers of the Faith. So, I am asking all of you here today, whether you are a grandparent or not, to make Passing on the Faith YOUR mission.

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Let us all keep the flame of Faith burning. Because when it comes to passing on our priceless gift of Faith, my brothers and sisters, failure is simply not an option. Our grandchildren are the future of our Faith. From them will come a new generation of priests, sisters, and other religious. Let us foster this Faith.

May God bless all grandparents, their families, and especially their precious grandchildren.

St. Sylvester's, Malahide, Ireland



Sylvester was chosen pope in succession to Pope Miltiades (311-314). His pontificate coincided with the reign of the first Christian emperor, Constantine.

Honoured as the bishop of Rome in the important years when the Christian Church was first tolerated and then legally recognised in the Roman empire. It was during this time that the emperor Constantine called councils at Arles and Nicaea to combat heresy and that ecclesiastical basilicas were built in Rome and throughout the empire.

Although the pontificate of **Pope Saint Sylvester I** was the tenth longest in history (twenty-one years), he himself does not appear to have a very clear profile. The first Christian emperor Constantine used him and the Christian religion to bring unity to the Roman empire at that point in history. But, like most of the early popes, Sylvester is venerated as a saint.

His death and liturgical feast

Sylvester died on 31st December 335. He was buried in the Catacomb of Priscilla. This is the last day of the calendar year. In German-speaking countries and in others close to them, New Year's Eve is known as *Silvesterabend*. In other countries too, the day is usually referred to as Saint Sylvester's Day or the Feast of Saint Sylvester (in French as *la Saint-Sylvestre*).



Jeanne McGrath Rodwell

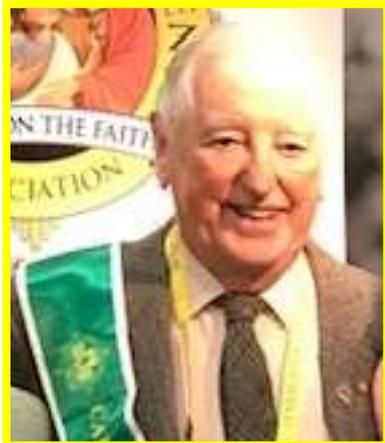
July 3, 2019

TAKE YOUR GRANDCHILDREN TO CHURCH DAY - The Catholic Grandparents Group of The Collaborative of St. Anne/St. Catherine, Westford & Littleton, MA, USA will host "Take Your Grandchildren to Church Day" on Sunday, July 28 at the 8:30 a.m. Mass at St. Anne's is to celebrate the feasts day of St. Anne and St. Joachim Grandparen of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Children and Grandparents are invited to meet at the Gathering space as you walk into church. Children can ca signs or grocery items as they process down the aisle and deposit the in baskets at the altar. There will also be a marked basket for hand m: Happy Grandparents Day cards for those living afar. Father will bless these addressed, and stamped cards. We will mail them out promptly Refreshments will be served after Mass in the Church hall. ❤️✝️



Saint Catherine's Saint Joachim and Saint Anne celebration 2019

LET IT NOT END WITH US



To experience living in the homes of our Grandchildren gives us an insight into their ways of coping with life.

Why should we sometimes feel a bit puzzled by their behaviour?

If we were to think back to our youth, I wonder did we bewilder our parents too?

So, let us nourish these "Seeds" by our example as best we can.

Let us reflect on the story of Jesus as a young boy being separated from his parents and found teaching the Scribes in the temple.

You cannot put old wine into new bottles!

What Grandparents Can Do Right Now

<https://www.dioceseofpueblo.org/news/what-grandparents-can-do-right-now>

Diocese of Pueblo

Being a grandparent is often described as one of the most fulfilling and rewarding aspects of a life well lived. How many grandparents describe the experience as "all of the fun and none of the hardship of parenting"? As Catholics, grandparenting takes on a bigger and more vital role than spoiling our beloved grandchildren with sweets and gifts. Grandparents have a powerful influence over the faith development of these precious souls. Many even find themselves alone in passing on the faith, if their children have stopped practicing.

Now, with social distancing and many grandparents members of the at-risk population, it is harder than ever. Without Sunday Mass and religious education classes to attend, how can grandparents continue to foster the faith in their grandchildren and be present to them?

According to Marilyn Henry of the Catholic Grandparents Association, an international organization that helps unite people as they pursue the vocation of Catholic grandparenting, there are specific crosses grandparents face in the current crisis.

"As a devout Grandmother of eleven ranging in age from 21-5, I have a vested interest in doing all I can to pass down my most treasured and only lasting gift - my faith. As volunteer Ministry Coordinator for the CGA, I hear and sense the sadness of Grandparents worldwide who feel like they're failing, even in "normal" times. Added to that now, is Grandparent's own anguish at being separated from the Sacraments which they love and depend on for strength and courage.

As we grow older, we especially look forward to events at which we can share our faith with our family - many of these are now postponed or will happen without a Grandparent present. After many years of prayer and hoping, my husband and I were to attend Confirmation of one of our granddaughters this April - which has now been postponed.

As we move through this crisis, we're reminded of the sacrifices of generations past whose faith carried them through famine, plagues, war and strife in a world we can only imagine through stories written and re-told. What will our grandchildren learn from us? We know that when we reach the other side of this unimaginable sadness, we will need each other more than ever."

We owe it to ourselves, our grandchildren, and our God to seek the opportunities in these trials and ask what God would have us do. Here are a few ways we can reach out.

Stay on top of technology

Grandparents run the gamut of skill sets when it comes to technology and social media. If you were waiting for a time to master these tools, this is it! Facetiming, Zoom meetings, texting, and social media connections can keep you and the grandchildren close when you can't visit. Without school, kids need to connect and so do you! Also, on social media, you can share edifying posts with them and help them grow in faith. You could even watch Mass together on livestream.

Marilyn tells us that with her grandchildren living in various parts of the country, some in college, and many with sports and activities, the pandemic created a rare opportunity for her to Zoom conference with all eleven of them at once. This is a great example of how God has rare opportunities waiting for us in this crisis, particularly in terms of building the Domestic Church.

Send a meaningful gift

We can't spoil our grandchildren in person, but what about ordering a gift to promote the faith? Books, online classes, movies to stream, rosaries, or religious imagery may really strike a chord with your grandchild as they navigate this confusing time. There are a plethora of Catholic educational toys on the market as well, even lego sets!

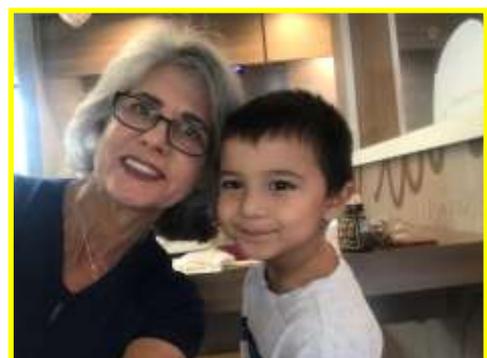
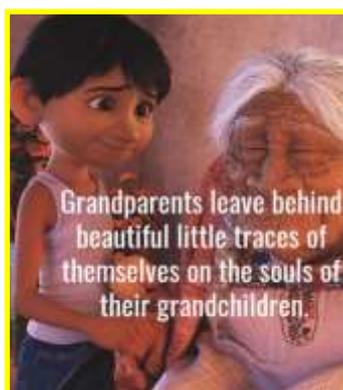
Marilyn gave her two young grandchildren a punch out Mass kit. Watching Mass on TV wasn't engaging for the five and nine year old. They felt more connected by following along with their kit. Their Mass experience went from passive to interactive. (See pictures below)

Connect

You don't need modern technology to simply call your grandchildren. Ask how they are doing. Listen if they are sad, scared, or frustrated. Let them know you love them and God loves them. Tell them you pray for them or offer to say a special prayer or novena. Invite them to learn a new prayer or devotion. Reassure them that you are safe and being careful and responsible. Many children are afraid of losing a grandparent to COVID-19.

For more information about the support groups and other ministries of the Catholic Grandparents Association, visit <http://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org/>

You can request to be added to their mailing list by emailing a request to info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com



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CGA Zoom Meeting from Around the World



CGA International Zoom Meeting, May 2020. Opening prayer by CGA Patron, Archbishop Michael Neary.

Left to Right: Jim Martinez, Ministry Leader, Houston, Texas, Marilyn Henry, CGA Ministry Coordinator, Archbishop Michael, Peggy Connaghton, Ireland, Catherine Wiley, CGA Founder, Jane Sweeney, CGA Board Member, Naples, Florida, Mary Cotter, Ireland, Betty Murphy, Ireland, Kathleen Mironchik, New Paltz, New York, Joyce Dillon, Ireland, Connie Noone, CGA Administrator, Ireland, David Quinn, Ireland, Jim Walsh, CGA Board Member, Ireland, Noreen Burns, Ireland, Monsignor Carlos Simon, Spain, Rosemarie Isola, Gibraltar

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Children's Activity Page

Cookies for Mary, the Blessed Mother

Sugar Cookie Recipe*

Adapted from SprinkleBakes.com

Yields about 3 dozen

Sugar cookie dough

¾ lb. unsalted butter (one and one half sticks of butter)

1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (225g) granulated sugar

1 egg

1 tsp. vanilla extract

3 cups (380g) all-purpose flour

Pinch of salt



In an electric mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, mix the butter and sugar together until just incorporated. Do not over-mix at this stage, or the cookies may spread while baking.

Add the egg and vanilla extract. Mix again on low speed, stopping to scrape down the sides of the bowl as needed.

In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour and salt. Add to the butter and egg mixture. Mix on low speed until a dough is formed and there are no longer any streaks of butter in the mixing bowl. The dough will often clump around the paddle attachment while being mixed. This is normal and a good sign that your dough is the right consistency. If your mixture does not come together and is crumbly, add ice cold water 1 tbsp. at a time until the dough clumps. Roll the dough flat between sheets of parchment paper and chill until ready for use, at least 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

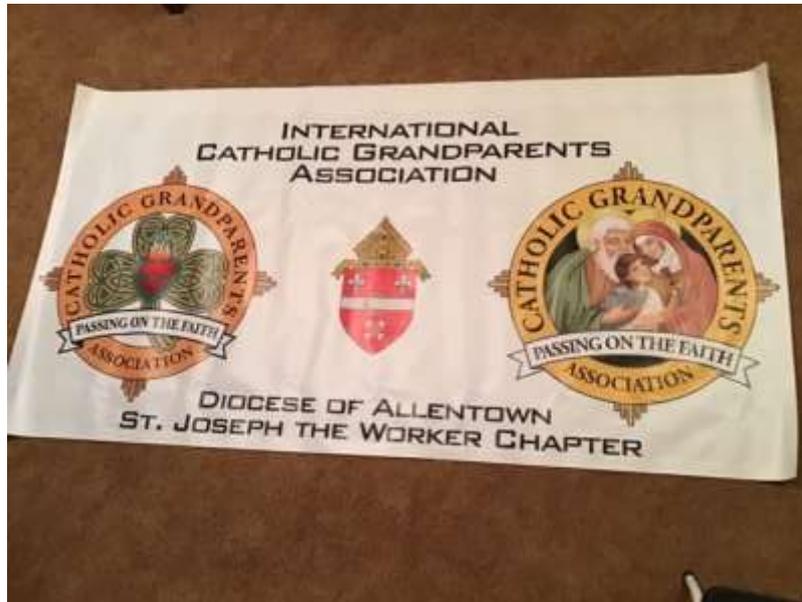
Use heart-shape cookie cutters to cut out the dough and transfer them to the prepared pans. Chill the shapes in the refrigerator for 15 minutes. Bake cookies for 12-15 minutes, or until the cookies are lightly brown on the edges. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack to cool completely before decorating.

Have fun decorating the Mary Cookies with your favorite colored icing, candies, and sprinkles.

*You may use a sugar cookie mix or another type of prepared sugar cookie dough to make the heart-shaped cookies.. Follow the directions on the package.



Resources Page



From Art and Jo Garcia, Ministry Leaders

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/>

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.*

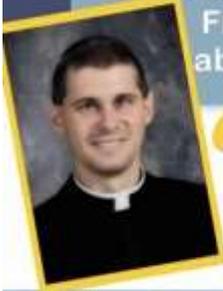
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Upcoming Events

ALL are Invited!

"Bother the Father"

Fr. Paul will answer our questions about our Catholic Faith & Church.



10 - 11:30 am
Saturday, June 13th
ZOOM Meeting

What are YOU wondering?
Submit Questions prior to June 6th
via email to smmahn@att.net

This VIRTUAL meeting will be via ZOOM. Need help? We are offering a "Zoom Tutorial" on June 12th.



CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION
PASSING ON THE FAITH

 Catholic Grandparents Association - St. Peter, Kirkwood MO

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

GRANDPARENT'S PRAYER



Infant Jesus and Mary our Queen and Mother, we come before you to place our grandchildren in your protective arms. Shield them from the evil spirits and the worldliness that is all about them.

O, Jesus, cover them with your precious blood. We plead with you to grant them the graces to know their vocation you have chosen

for them and the graces for them to follow it. Send their guardian angels to protect them always. St. Joseph, guide them. St. Anne, Grandmother of the Infant Jesus, watch over our grandchildren. We thank you. Amen.

Thank You to Judy Trudeau, CGA Ministry Leader, St. Patrick, Brighton, Michigan, US

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.



Pope Benedict XVI 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
roles 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!

Benedictus XVI

This Universal Prayer For Grandparents was composed by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI in 2008
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Presentation Medal—€95, \$95 Medals—
Sterling Silver €20, \$20 *Silver Plated €10,
\$10 * Gold Plated €10, \$10 Plus shipping,
medal only

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