

Catholic Grandparents Association

Newsletter - April 2021



Ask Jesus what
he wants from you
and be brave.
- Pope Francis

April is always a season that feels hopeful and this year it arrived with a real sense of purpose for me. We celebrated Easter with its backdrop of blossoming Spring flowers in gardens and parks. Some of the Covid-19 restrictions have also been lifted and we are hopeful here in Ireland of a return in the very near future to public worship. This year, more than ever, after a dark Winter under the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, Easter and Spring have come just as we needed them. Our faith tells us that we are Easter People and that Alleluia is our song and we really need to sing that from the rooftops in these difficult times.

In the Catholic Grandparents Association we have just had a wonderful April Faith Café with grandparents from around the world gathering together *via* Zoom to hear from Archbishop Eamon Martin, the Archbishop of Armagh and the President of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference. The archbishop spoke to us about what and who we are called to be, especially in the lives of our grandchildren. His address reminded me of a phrase from Pope Francis who recently invited us to "Ask Jesus what he wants from you and be brave". What a wonderful anthem for us in the Catholic Grandparents Association.

Our preparations continue for the World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly with the launch this month of the 'Passing on the Faith Podcast' initiative for parishes, youth groups, schools and families. You can read more about it inside this issue.

The latest newsletter from the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, shared some updates on the *Amoris Laetitia Family Year* as well as some of the plans for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Our Holy Father Pope Francis intends to celebrate the evening Mass on Sunday 25 July for the Day of Prayer in St Peter's Square. We look forward to being united in prayer with Pope Francis and with grandparents and their families around the world on this momentous occasion. Please do keep an eye on our website and social media pages where we have lots of news and updates on our work.

Catherine Wiley, Founder of the CGA

REFLECTIONS FROM THE GRANDPARENTS' FAITH CAFÉ WITH ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN

The Grandparents' Faith Café met virtually *via* Zoom on Tuesday 13 April to reflect on the theme of 'Grandparents as Faith Connectors'. Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and President of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, was the guest speaker.

In his address Archbishop Martin highlighted the important role that grandparents play in passing on the faith in the family, saying, "We need to identify the kernel of what it is that we want to share and to connect young people with – what is our theme? What is it that we want to give our children and grandchildren? This is a question which St John answers beautifully in the opening lines of his first letter: *'Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life.'* (1 John 1:1) In other words what we wish to connect our young people with is the greatest story ever told – the story of Jesus; the story of our salvation! We wish to communicate our encounter and friendship with him so that they can themselves find him in their lives."



Reflections at the Faith Café were delivered by Deacon Ken Henry and Colleen Lowery from the USA. Colleen said, Grandparents have a vocation and a mission which is connected to the mission of the Church. We are called to go out into the mission fields of our homes, communities, and parishes, and share the Good News – most of which happens situationally, when we share our own story of faith with others."

In his reflection Ken said, "As Grandparents we have learned that you can't take much for granted though, our job is never complete - we plant the seed and we must continually fertilize it. Our grandchildren want to please us, and for this reason they listen to us - at least most of the time, and that makes it easier for us to engage them in our efforts. This is our chance to write our signature on the souls of our grandchildren, make it bold, clear and legible." You can read the full texts of the addresses and reflections on our website.

Save the date: The next Faith Café will take place on Tuesday 11 May on the theme 'Share My Joy: Mary's Message'. The guest speaker for May is Monsignor John Armitage, PP of St Margaret's Canning Town and former Rector of the Shrine at Walsingham. Registration (which is free of charge) is open now by email to info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

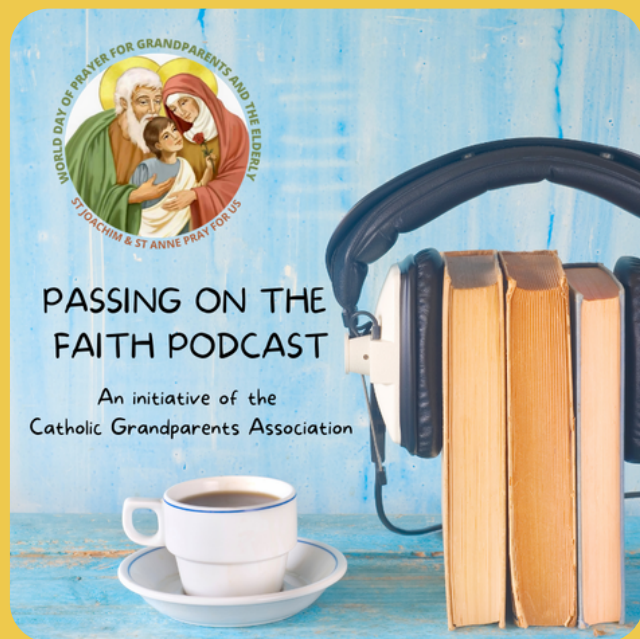


NEWS & RESOURCES

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY - PASSING ON THE FAITH PODCAST

We are delighted to introduce the Passing on the Faith Podcast, one of the many initiatives we have in place for the World Day of Prayer for Grandparents and the Elderly.

We are inviting parishes to engage with their youth groups, schools and with families to capture in digital format some stories from grandparents and the elderly living in their parishes. By recording these stories in audio or video format, parishes, schools and families can create a living sound and vision archive of the grandparents in their parish. There are so many wonderful stories that our grandparents and elders can share with us. So, get recording and let's hear what grandparents and elders have to tell us about faith, life, love and more! Details of how to take part are available on www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.



WE MUST TEACH CHILDREN HOW TO MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS - POPE FRANCIS

"Have you seen the way children make the sign of the Cross?
"We must teach them how to do it well, because that is how Mass begins, that is how life begins, that is how the day begins!"

Pope Francis



WWW.CATHOLICGRANDPARENTSASSOCIATION.ORG

Pope Francis has often repeated a simple plea asking families to teach children the Sign of the Cross. At a General Audience in 2018 he said, "Have you seen how children make it?" He lamented that many children make some sort of gesture without understanding or knowing what they are doing. "They do not know how to make the Sign of the Cross! Teach them to do it in the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the] first act of faith of a child," he said.

CARDINAL DOLAN REMINDS US OF THE BEAUTY OF OUR CATHOLIC PRACTICES IN NEW FACEBOOK VIDEO SERIES

The Cardinal Archbishop of New York, Timothy Dolan, has just begun a new series on his Facebook Page in which he is discussing some of the beautiful Catholic practices that many people have forgotten. In his first video he speaks about the Holy Water Font, saying, "When we enter the church, we dip our finger in holy water and make the sign of the Cross. We are reminded of our baptism." This series is well worth following. All you need to do is give his page 'Timothy Cardinal Dolan' a LIKE on Facebook. We will also be sharing them on the CGA's Facebook Page too.

NEWS SNIPPETS

GRANDPARENTS: A LOST YEAR DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Coronavirus pandemic represents a lost year of time for grandparents across the world. While there has been lots of connection online, nothing beats the time that grandparents get to spend with grandchildren. The School for European Grandparents (EGPE), based in Paris, has surveyed its members to find out how grandparents felt during the Covid-19 crisis. The survey is also looking at the financial contribution that grandparents make within their families in the context of childcare. In France, 16 million grandparents - that is to say half of the French population aged 56 years of age or older - support intergenerational solidarity in their everyday lives e.g. 23 million hours of childcare per week were given for grandchildren and half of the surveyed parents also receive financial assistance from grandparents. It is hoped that the outcome of the EGPE research will feed into a policy debate on the real economic weight represented by family solidarity at a European conference next June. See our website for more.



BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

Two very special men in the life of the CGA celebrated their birthdays on 16 April. We send our greetings to Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who wrote our beautiful Prayer for Grandparents, and to our patron Archbishop Michael Neary of Tuam Archdiocese.

CGA WEBSITE REVAMP

We are currently in the process of a Spring clean on our website. It remains live and available. Do let us know what additional resources you would like to see for you and your ministry group on the website: www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2022 IN ROME



The 10th World Meeting of Families will take place in Rome from 22-26 June on the theme: "Family love: vocation and path of holiness". The Catholic Grandparents Association looks forward to being part of the WMOF2022 and to hearing how you are preparing. Email us: info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

CONNECT WITH US ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

You can connect with us on Twitter as @CathGrandAssoc and find us on Facebook as 'Catholic Grandparents Association'. We share a daily thought for the day and a range of other helpful resources. So do give us a follow or a like!

Catholic Grandparents Association

Our Mission: Passing on the faith and keeping prayer at the heart of family life

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