



23rd June 2023

Dear Friends in Christ,

This year's celebration of the *Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* will take place on **Sunday, July 23**, just days before *World Youth Day* in Lisbon.

Pope Francis has spoken of the significance and symbolism in the proximity of these two occasions.

The young and the elderly together, embody the life and wisdom of God, *Walking Together*. There is an 'unsurpassable need' Pope Francis says, 'for a relationship between the elderly and the young, where the former pass on wisdom and life experience; the latter strength and hope for the future.'

This year's theme is: "His mercy is from age to age" (Lk 1:50). Pope Francis has intentionally connected this to that of **WYD in Lisbon**, whose theme is taken from the same chapter in Luke: "Mary arose and went with haste" (Lk 1:39).

The Pope wants to emphasise the connection and dialogue between the young and old, describing how Mary sets out to visit her elderly cousin Elizabeth to "proclaim, in the Magnificat, the strength of the alliance between young and old."

This encounter between Mary and Elizabeth – two women who carry within them a promise of the future – is at the centre of Pope Francis' message to the young people leaving for WYD as well as his heartfelt message to grandparents and the elderly. "Mary's visit and Elizabeth's greeting open our eyes to the dawn of salvation: in their embrace, God's mercy quietly breaks into human history amid abundant joy".

In marking this celebration, I encouraged you to involve the young and the elderly in the liturgy; perhaps setting aside one of the Sunday Masses. This could extend to their proclaiming the Readings and Prayers of the Faithful, as well as in the Presentation of the Gifts – which might be made up of young and old, side by side as a meaningful, visual communication of the significance of this day and our prayer.

Attached are a resources: including an **Introduction to the Mass**, some suggested **Universal Prayers**, and a **Final Blessing**, all appropriate for the occasion.

The **Pope's Message** (in two formats) which you might also consider distributing electronically and/or in print is also attached along with the **Official Prayer Card**.

Please share these resources widely, with your schools and communities.

May the elderly have the joy of speaking and expressing themselves with the young, knowing that they are valued and seen. And the young, seek out the elderly to receive the wisdom of life and love from them.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Archbishop Christopher Prowse
Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn

The Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn