

Weekly Message from Fr William for Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's

A very special greeting to all you grandparents and elderly on this second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. Thank you for all that you do and all that you are.

You are, in the words of Pope Francis, 'living signs of the goodness of God who bestows life in abundance'. In his message for this second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly he exclaims: 'Blessed is the house where an older person lives! Blessed is the family that honours the elderly!'

The pope's message for this day celebrates the blessings that old age can bring to you in later years, and to those around you, a 'season of enduring fruitfulness, a new mission' that awaits us.

Francis himself is 85 years old and counts himself among the Elderly to whom he addresses this message. 'We grandparents and elderly people have a great responsibility' he writes, 'to be witnesses to a way of life that is peaceful and attentive to those in greatest need. Let us hold in our hearts the little ones of Ukraine, of Afghanistan, of South Sudan...'

'Dear grandparents, dear elderly persons', he writes, 'we are called to be artisans of the revolution of tenderness in our world. Let us do so by learning to make ever more frequent and better use of the most valuable instrument at our disposal – prayer...It can accompany the cry of pain of those who suffer, and it can help change hearts. We can be the enduring chorus of a great spiritual sanctuary, where prayers of supplication and songs of praise sustain the community as it toils and struggles in the field of life.'

His message ends with a call to all of us to seek out those elderly persons who feel most alone, at home or in the residences where they live. 'Expecting a visit can transform those days when we think we have nothing to look forward to; from an initial encounter a new friendship can emerge.'

As we celebrate our own grandparents on this Sunday, and all the elderly of our parish, let us thank the Lord for the blessing they are to us and to our world, and let us keep them, and Pope Francis, in our prayers.

You can find the full text of Pope Francis' message for this second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly from a link on this Sunday's bulletin.

