

Catholic Grandparents Association

Newsletter - December 2020



A child is born to us! A son is given to us! (Isaiah 9:6)

It has been a difficult year for the Catholic Grandparents Association due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We have been unable to host our gatherings or attend many of the wonderful events we were invited to participate in this past year. But all of that pales into insignificance when you consider the most devastating aspect of the Covid-19 pandemic which has been how it has impacted the generation of people we minister to. We are hugely concerned at the loss of so many grandparents and what that means for their families, communities and for the Church! We mourn the tragic loss of life as result of the pandemic. We are finishing our year in prayer for all those who have died and for those who are grieving for them. A special Mass has been said for these intentions.

We are also finishing the year with a renewed energy and focus on bringing grandparents together in the online spaces. We have held international meetings with CGA colleagues online and hosted the first ever Grandparents' Faith Café on Zoom. We have also reinvigorated our social media and website output.

Looking forward to 2021 we will be enhancing and improving our offering of CGA ministries in parishes and dioceses. While we are hoping to return to physical meetings and events at some stage in the New Year, we realise that in the short term we will have to retain much of our online offerings. We will host the Grandparents' Faith Café online on the second Tuesday of every month.

So, whilst 2020 has been difficult, we look forward to a brighter and more positive new year. And as we reflect on the year that has been and make our final preparations for Christmas, we are reminded of what's important - love, family, faith and hope! Wishing you and all our CGA family a very Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Catherine Wiley, Founder of the CGA

THE GRANDPARENTS' FAITH CAFÉ IS OPEN!

The Catholic Grandparents' Faith Café was declared open by Catherine Wiley, Founder of the CGA, on Tuesday 15 December. Catherine was joined by grandparents and friends from across Ireland, England, Scotland, and from Texas, Missouri, California, Illinois, Florida and New York, for the first ever virtual meeting at the Faith Café which took place over Zoom.

Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, was the guest speaker at the inaugural event and he shared some much needed Advent hope with those attending. He also shared a concern he has about the impact of Covid-19, saying, "I have heard many stories of grandchildren setting up laptops and tablets for their grandparents to follow Mass. No one likes being cocooned, isolated, quarantined, but it is for a greater good. With the amount of deaths from Covid-19, I am worried that we could be losing a generation. Losing the grandparents generation."

Reflections at the Faith Café were delivered beautifully by Marilyn Henry and Mike Mahn, both of whom are involved in grandparents' ministries in the USA. In her reflection, Marilyn said, "My five grown children like to remind me about a word I used with them a lot when they were growing up and they were faced with a difficulty – the word is "adjust" and boy have we had to these past months - but we've adjusted with great courage and creativity because one thing that has remained constant is our gift of faith which gives us hope of better days."

Mike spoke very movingly about how much we have missed as people of faith during the pandemic. He said, "During this Advent season, we can refocus our faith by relying on our Domestic Church. We can bring the Word into our family life by seeing our home as our Church. We can view our dining table as an extension of the altar. When we sit around our dining room table, and light our Advent candles, we can reflect on our faith. We can pray, together, as a family."

In her address Catherine Wiley said, "Those of you who know the Catholic Grandparents Association know that we have a practical, spiritual and social side. Most of the time these three boxes are not necessarily ticked by the events we host, so what I loved from the very beginning about the Faith Café idea is that we can tick all three boxes because the Faith Café is social, spiritual and practical. My role here this evening is to listen to the realities of your lives as Grandparents and respond through the CGA. The Grandparents Faith Café is your space. For now we meet online *via* Zoom but please God at some stage in the new year we will be able to host these as face to face events."



You can read a full report and see more photos on the Faith Café event on our website.

CGA MINISTRIES' NEWS

On Saturday 13 December Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, spoke at a special event organised by the CGA in Dublin. The event saw a socially distanced small number of family members listening to Archbishop Okolo as he shared some of his memories of his Christmas childhood. He then blessed the Baby Jesus ahead of Bambinelli Sunday. The blessing took place in Our Lady Help of Christians church on the Navan Road in Dublin.



'AROUND THE DIOCESE' PODCAST FEATURING COLEEN LOWRY



Coleen Lowry, Ministry Leader of the CGA in the Diocese of Joliet, Illinois, has recently spoken about the importance of passing on the faith. She was speaking on an episode of the Joliet diocesan podcast which you can listen to on our website.

The CGA was established in the Diocese of Joliet in 2019 with the blessing of Bishop Richard E. Pates. Members meet monthly - during the pandemic, it's mostly been *via* Zoom. For more see www.dioceseofjoliet.org.

DICASTERY OF LAITY, FAMILY AND LIFE'S INVITATION TO SHARE #AGIFTOFWISDOM THIS CHRISTMAS

The Vatican's Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life is asking young people to post on social media a memory, a piece of advice, or a "gift of wisdom" they have received from one of the elderly people with whom they have formed a bond in recent months.

Unfortunately, in many cases, because of the health regulations in force as a result of Covid-19, visiting can only take place remotely, via telephone, video calls, and messaging. But it is possible to participate in their campaign by posting the wise words of grandparents and the elderly on social media using the hashtag #AGiftOfWisdom.



PRAYER PETITIONS



We invite you to share your prayer petitions with us via email or on our social media pages. These will be included at a special Mass which will be taking place on the second Tuesday of every month. Email: info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com.

NEWS SNIPPETS

SHARING THE WISDOM OF TIME IS COMING TO NETFLIX

Netflix has commissioned a four-part documentary series based on *Sharing The Wisdom Of Time*, the book edited by Father Antonio Spadaro, and published by Loyola Press in 2018 with contributions by Pope Francis. The series will recount tales of the lived experiences of older people, told through the eyes of the younger generation. Women and men aged 70 and over from all around the world will journey with and share their diverse experiences with young filmmakers under the age of 30 who are from the same country as them. The series will also feature Pope Francis in an exclusive interview, offering a unique point of view that will serve as the common thread throughout the four-part series. The show comes from Simona Ercolani and production company 'Stand By Me', partner of Asacha Media Group. The series will be released in 2021.



CARDINAL DOLAN GIVES THANKS FOR ALL GRANDPARENTS

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the Cardinal Archbishop of New York, gave a beautiful reflection on 17 December in which he said, "Saints Joachim and Anne were the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Although we celebrate their feast day in July, it's appropriate to think of them during this Advent season as the grandparents of Jesus." He went on to give thanks for all grandparents during this Advent and Christmas season.

POPE FRANCIS PROCLAIMS A YEAR OF ST JOSEPH

With his new Apostolic Letter *Patris corde* (With a Father's Heart), written against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, Pope Francis recalls the 150th anniversary of the declaration of Saint Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church.

To mark the occasion, the Holy Father has proclaimed a 'Year of Saint Joseph' from the 8 December 2020, to the 8 December 2021. You can read *Patris corde* on our website.

CONNECT WITH US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER



We have recently revamped our social media output to include some new content in the form of some thought provoking 'thought for the day' messages aimed at grandparents. Do give us a follow on Twitter as @CathGrandAssoc and find us on Facebook as 'Catholic Grandparents Association'.

Catholic Grandparents Association

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

www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org

Email: info@catholicgrandparentsassociation.com