



World Day  
for Grandparents  
and the Elderly  
**2026**

## Parish Resource Pack for The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

**26 July 2026**

*'I will never forget you'*  
**Isaiah 49:15**

 **Caritas**

Portsmouth Diocese



# Introduction



God's love forgets no one, but as Pope Leo XIV writes in his message for the 6<sup>th</sup> World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, *'The lives of many elderly people, in particular see to be covered by a veil that blurs the features of their faces and shrouds them in oblivion. This is what happens in homes where loneliness reigns and also in those care facilities where each person's uniqueness risks being reduced to a bed number or an illness.'*

We are an ageing population. 10 million people in the UK are aged 65 and over and there is a predicted 30% increase of people aged between 65 - 79 in the next 40 years.

- 86% people aged 85 and over have at least one long term health condition and more than half the people over 65 have at least 2 health conditions.
- 1.6 million people aged 65 and over have unmet needs for care and support. The vacancy rate for adult social care sector posts is currently 10.7%.
- One in five unpaid carers are aged 65 or above. Between 2018 and 2043, rural areas are projected to experience some of the largest increases in the proportion of one-person households containing an older person.



- The number of people aged 60 and over with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds has increased by 80% (to over 1 million) since the 2011 Census.
- One in three people in some coastal communities are aged 65+.
- 1.4 million people are expected to be living with Dementia by 2040.

Ten local authorities are projected to see significant increases (more than 8 percentage points) in the proportion of one-person households containing someone aged 85 years and over. Five are within the Diocese, East Hampshire, Hart, West Berkshire, Fareham and Test Valley.

Increased numbers of older people will impact the need of adult social care services. Where there is a lack of services, support will be given by family and friends. This can have a knock on effect to their financial and mental well-being as well as their relationship with the person needing care, when left without the support needed for the role. A list of support services can be found at the back of this pack.

There is much we can do to support the older people in our families, parishes and wider communities to ensure they know they are loved and their lives remain meaningful.

*The loneliness and abandonment of the elderly is not by chance or inevitable, but the fruit of decisions – political, economic, social and personal decisions – that fail to acknowledge the infinite dignity of each person.'*

Pope Francis.



For more information or to discuss how you might support older members of our communities contact us at [caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



# Reflections



Read the full [message](#) from His Holiness Leo XIV for the sixth world day for grandparents and the elderly.

26<sup>th</sup> July is the Feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Virgin Mary. There is no information about Mary's parents in the bible, but other writings give some details. Struggling to conceive, the couple prayed and fasted before an angel appeared to them to tell them that they would have a child. In gratitude, Anne promised to dedicate the child to God. You can read more at <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/joachim-and-anne/>

Listen to this [podcast](#) from CBCEW for the World Day for Grandparents and Elderly from 2024 with Bishop David Evans, lead Bishop for Marriage and Family Life. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/podcast/the-important-role-grandparents-play-in-a-healthy-society/>

A reflection on the lives of Simeon and Anna, available from this download at <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/world-day-for-grandparents-and-the-elderly/>

## Scripture references:

■ Isaiah 46:4

■ Psalm 92:14

■ Proverbs 23:22

■ Matthew 28:20

Holy Father

Who watches over every person  
Watch over me too when I am elderly.  
You have revealed your name to me in  
Christ,  
And You were not discouraged by my  
frailties.  
You hold me tenderly in your hands,  
And You caress my lines.  
You will never forget me!  
Grant that I may not fear my weakness;  
Help me learn to love it  
Just as You love it.  
Help me learn to listen to it  
Just as You listen to it.  
Help me embrace it  
Just as You have chosen it –  
You who, though all-powerful, clothed  
yourself in humility.  
May growing old strip away all our pride  
and all division  
So that we may live these years  
united in You.  
You will never forget us!  
Amen.

# Prayer



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 treasures 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 role 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

From <https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/eventi/2026/vi-giornata-mondiale-dei-nonni-e-degli-anziani.html>  
(left) and <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/prayers-for-grandparents-and-the-elderly-2021/> (above).

# Liturgy



Dedicate a mass. Ensure one of the Masses on Sunday, July 26, is dedicated to celebrating the Day with the grandparents and elderly members of your parish or community.

## **Suggested prayers for the faithful**

For Pope Leo: That the Lord may bless and protect his ministry, and that the Church may always be a welcoming home where every elderly person can hear the reassuring words: “I will never forget you”. Let us pray.

For all us elderly people: That we may not fear our frailty, but instead embrace it as a true vocation to prayer and reconciliation, bearing joyful witness to the Lord’s faithful love. Let us pray.

For young people: That, by reaching out to those who live in solitude or the isolation of care homes, they may become tangible signs of God’s tenderness, which watches over and nourishes us like a mother. Let us pray.

For all us grandparents: That we may serve as a source of wisdom for our families, passing on to new generations the treasure of a faith that rests securely in God’s everlasting love. Let us pray.

For an end to all wars: That the Lord may hear our earnest plea, bringing consolation to those who suffer and granting true, lasting peace for the future of the whole world. Let us pray.

From [Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life](#)



*‘At this place and time in history, there is great need for men and women who hear the cry of the poor and respond with mercy and generosity.’ Pope Francis*

# Parish Actions



- Connect with other local groups working in the area and see what the gaps are. Support might be needed to help people get to doctor/hospital appointments, pick up prescriptions, coordinate cleaning, shopping or gardening services. See what the gaps are and then discern how your parish might help?
- Host social groups, coffee mornings, lunch clubs or afternoon teas, drop in sessions to support the building of connections.
- Look for ways that people can still play a role in the parish including prayer networks.
- Organise lifts to help people get to Mass at weekends, Holy Days of Obligation, and special events.
- Run a telephone befriending service, such as a weekly phone call to an older person who is isolated and include inviting older people to get involved as volunteers.
- Consider running a Dementia support group and help make your parish a Dementia friendly church.
- Host carer group or information sessions and connect with carer organisations that can give guidance on information on services and support.
- Support people with digital access so they can stay in touch with family, friends and parish life.
- Find ways to bring different generations together, whether it is organising a tea, doing some gardening, playing games, listening to stories, creating memory books, sharing skills, volunteering together. We have much to learn from each other.
- Pray for people who are struggling in their older age.



# Additional Resources



**Support information flyer** <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Support-for-older-people-flyer.pdf>

**Dementia friendly church Information** <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Dementia-Friendly-Church-Resources.pdf>

**Dementia support leaflet from CSSA** <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Dementia-support-leaflet-CSSA.pdf>

## **Dementia awareness training via CSSA**

<https://training.catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/courses>

Please click SIGN UP, and enter your details accordingly. Please choose DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH under Diocese and PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE LEVEL 3 as the role. When inputting parish details please add both the location and the full name of your church. You do not need to add any detail under Group/Cohort/Community/Event.

**Creating a safe environment** [CSSA practice Guidance for creating safer environments.](#)

<https://catholicsafeguarding.org.uk/resources/parish-resources/> (scroll to organising and running church events section).

**Carer organisations** <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/Support-for-carers-flyer.pdf>

**Carer Workers Rights leaflet** <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/Care-Workers-Rights-Trifold.pdf>



For further information please contact [caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:caritas@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk). For safeguarding concerns, please contact [safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk).