News



This graphic for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2024 features the theme for the July 28 celebration: "Do not cast me off in my old age," a passage from Psalm 71. (CNS/Courtesy of Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life)

by Catholic News Service

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Pope Francis has chosen a line from Psalm 71 — "Do not cast me off in my old age" — as the theme for the 2024 celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly.

In a note announcing the theme for the day, which will be celebrated July 28, the Vatican said the choice was "meant to call attention to the fact that, sadly, loneliness is the bitter lot in life of many elderly persons, so often the victims of the throwaway culture."

Francis celebrated the first World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in 2021 and decreed that it be observed each year on the Sunday closest to the feast of Sts. Joachim and Anne, Jesus' grandparents.

As the Catholic Church prepares for the Holy Year 2025, Francis has asked Catholics to focus on prayer, which is why he chose the prayer of an elderly person from the Psalms for the theme, the Vatican said in a statement released Feb. 15.

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"By cherishing the charisms of grandparents and the elderly, and the contribution they make to the life of the Church, the World Day seeks to support the efforts of every ecclesial community to forge bonds between the generations and to combat loneliness," the statement said.

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life, said the theme is a reminder "that, unfortunately, loneliness is a widespread reality, which afflicts many elderly people, often victims of the throwaway culture and considered

a burden to society."

Families and parishes, he said, "are called to be at the forefront in promoting a culture of encounter, to create spaces for sharing, listening, to offer support and affection: thus, the love of Gospel becomes concrete."

"Our communities, with their tenderness and affectionate attention that does not forget its most fragile members, are called to manifest the love of God, who never abandons anyone," the cardinal said.

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