

Report on aging has much to ponder

Tom Gallagher | Jan. 11, 2010 NCR Today

Bloomberg reports today on a [United Nations study on aging](#) [1]: "The elderly will outnumber children for the first time in 2045, ratcheting demand on nursing homes and increasing the burden on working-age people to support retirees, a United Nations report found."

"The proportion of the world's population older than 60 years will reach 22 percent over the next four decades from 11 percent in 2009 and 8 percent in 1950, the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs said in the report, titled World Population Ageing 2009."

"The ranks of the elderly are expanding 2.6 percent a year, three times faster than humanity as a whole, mostly because people are living longer and having fewer children. The trend will affect economic growth, savings, investment, consumption, labor markets, pensions and taxation, the UN found. It will also influence living arrangements, housing demand, migration trends and the need for health-care services."

This reality requires all of us -- with our citizen's hat on and our Catholic faith hat on, so to speak -- to take stock of this trend and react accordingly. The low birth rate in Europe has been widely reported. The U.N. report broadens that discussion and makes it a global trend.

What does this report and trend, coupled with the growing disinterest in formal Catholicism in the U.S. (according to recent Pew and other polls) say about the Catholic view of marriage, procreation, economics, strategic planning, health care, aging, euthanasia and so on?

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[1] <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601124&sid=aiQAoY4FpyVA>