

“Teachers of tenderness,” the Pope’s life project for the elderly

- *The Holy Father invites us to pray that the experience and wisdom of the elderly may help young people to look towards the future with hope.*
- *In his message, the Pope says that the elderly have “a great responsibility towards new generations.”*
- *For the elderly, “there are many plans for assistance, but few projects for existence,” Francis emphasizes in this video.*

(Vatican City, June 30, 2022) – The [Pope Video](#) for July has just been released with the prayer intention that **Francis** is entrusting to the entire **Catholic Church** through the [Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network](#). This month, the **Holy Father** prays “for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility.” This intention coincides with the celebration of the Second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which will be celebrated on Sunday, July 24, in Rome as well as in all the dioceses around the world.

A large generation

Speaking in the first person about the elderly, **Pope Francis** says: “There have never been so many of us in the history of humanity, but we don’t quite know how to live this new stage of life.” In recent decades, the number of persons over the age of 65 has grown unceasingly. This phenomenon of population aging particularly affects the most developed countries, where 25% of the elderly live alone. For the elderly, “there are many plans for assistance, but few projects for existence,” the **Pope** laments in this video, which was made in collaboration with the [Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life](#) and the [Fondazione Alberto Sordi](#).

A life mission for the elderly

In the context of a world with many wounds, the **Holy Father** points to a fundamental role for the elderly generation. “We elderly people often have a special sensitivity for care, for reflection, and affection. We are, or we can become, teachers of tenderness,” the **Pope** says. “In this world accustomed to

war, we need a true revolution of tenderness. We have a great responsibility towards new generations about this.”

Regarding the mission of the elderly in the world and in the Church, **Card. Kevin Farrell**, Prefect of the [Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life](#), said the following: “The Holy Father invites us to become aware of the relevance of the elderly in the life of society and of our communities, and to do so not sporadically, but structurally, with a regular pastoral outreach. That is to say, it’s not about rushing to deal with an emergency, but laying the foundations for long-term pastoral work that will require our involvement for decades to come. Beyond reaffirming the importance of fighting the throwaway culture, the Pope also seems to want to offer reference points for those who are experiencing the bewilderment of finding themselves getting along in years. For this reason, he has chosen to institute a World Day to be celebrated every year and which will mark the liturgical season: to say that the Church is near to the elderly.”

For his part, **Ciro Intino**, Director of the [Fondazione Alberto Sordi](#), explains: “Our society is getting older and older, and yet it tends to exclude and isolate elderly people, putting their identity and social role in crisis, especially regarding their relations with younger generations. Unfortunately, there is a lack of adequate responses to elderly people’s care requirements and existential needs. There is still a long road ahead in terms of social and sociomedical policies aimed at senior citizens, with the goal of limiting the condition of isolation which constrains too many elderly people today. The elderly are bearers of wisdom, knowledge, and culture: indispensable values which, through intergenerational dialogue, help ensure a future for our society and for the communities to which they belong. In order for these virtuous dynamics to take place, we need to activate synergies among the networks formed by families, friends, caregivers, and public, private, and charitable institutions. The *Fondazione Alberto Sordi* promotes these network pathways: offering, in this way, reasons for hope.”

Fr. Frédéric Fornos, S.J., International Director of the [Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network](#), commented on this intention: “Let us remember our grandparents and the elderly people who have shared their wisdom and their hope with us, gained from their own experience of life and faith. In the Gospels, the elderly Simeon and Anna recognized, in the baby that Mary in Joseph presented in the temple, the hope of an entire people. They are able to see and

hear what the great majority, rushing around in their busy lives, do not perceive. As Francis has reminded us in his catecheses on old age over these past three months, the alliance between generations, between the elderly and the young, is a blessing for society. Let us pray this month for this prayer intention of the Pope.”

The Pope Video is possible thanks to the generous contributions of many people. You can donate by following [this link](#).

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About The Pope Video

The Pope Video is an official global initiative with the purpose of disseminating the Holy Father's monthly prayer intentions. It is carried out by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer). **Since the year 2016, The Pope Video has had more than 178 million views across all the Vatican's social networks, and is translated into more than 23 languages, receiving press coverage in 114 countries.** The videos are produced and created by the team of The Pope Video of the Prayer Network, coordinated by Andrea Sarubbi, with the support of La Machi Communication for Good Causes agency. The project is supported by [Vatican Media](#). More information at: [The Pope Video](#)

About the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network is a Vatican foundation, with the mission of mobilizing Catholics through prayer and action in response to the challenges facing humanity and the mission of the Church. These challenges are presented in the form of prayer intentions entrusted by the Pope to the entire Church. The foundation's mission is inscribed in the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus, a mission of compassion for the world. It was founded in 1844 as the Apostleship of Prayer. It is present in 89 countries and is made up of more than 22 million Catholics. It includes a youth branch, the EYM: Eucharistic Youth Movement. In December 2020, the Pope constituted this pontifical work as a Vatican foundation and approved its new statutes. Its international director is Fr. Frédéric Fornos, SJ. For more information, visit: <https://www.popesprayer.va>

About the Dicastery for Laity, Family, and Life

The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life is responsible for the development of the apostolate of the lay faithful, for the pastoral care of young people, marriage, and the family, and for its mission according to God's plan, for the elderly, and for the protection and support of human life. For more information: <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/>. For information about the “*Amoris Laetitia* Family Year” visit: <http://www.amorislaetitia.va>

About the *Fondazione Alberto Sordi*



THE POPE VIDEO

Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



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The *Fondazione Alberto Sordi* was created in Rome in 1992 under the initiative of Alberto Sordi, who was its first Honorary President. It pursues two main objectives: promoting active aging and protecting the quality of life of the elderly. It carries out activities of general interest in the areas of formation, social and socio-health assistance for the elderly, and applied research through conferences, scientific publications, and personal services. It counteracts the phenomena of social exclusion and abandonment of the elderly. Considering them increasingly necessary and virtuous, it promotes territorial network pathways among third sector entities, private individuals, and public administration, enhancing the contribution of families, their communities, professional workers, and caregivers.

For more information: www.fondazionealbertosordi.it.

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