

## Saints Joachim & Anne

We know very little about Sts Joachim and Anne. The only recorded stories of them are from an apocryphal gospel dating from the 4th Century AD called the Protoevangelium of James. The legend told in this document says that after years of childlessness, an angel appeared to tell Anne and Joachim that they would have a child. Anne promised to dedicate this child to God. Whatever their names or the facts of their lives, we can assume that Mary was raised in a Jewish family home faithful to God and to the religious traditions of her day such that she was led to respond wholeheartedly to God's request with faith, "Let it be done to me as you will." (adapted from [www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints))

## JOIN THE CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION (CGA)!

Newly launched in Australia, its mission is 'to help grandparents pass on the faith and keep prayer at the heart of family life'. It encourages grandparents at a local parish level to come together to help one another to pass on the faith.

### IN THE WORDS OF GRANDCHILDREN

"I love my Grandma very much, she always helps me to draw nice pictures."

"Grandpa is a great bowler. We play lots of cricket in the back yard."

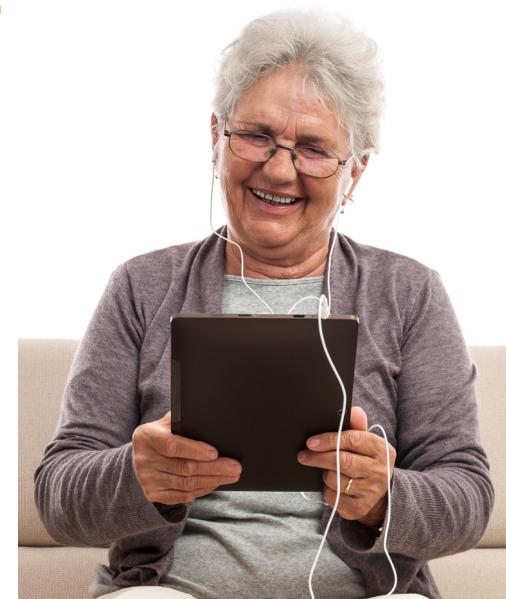
"I feel really special when Grandma and Grandpa come to my school presentation nights and soccer games."

"Grandma and Grandpa did a good job bringing up daddy, he is pretty well behaved."

### IDEAS FOR 'LONG DISTANCE' GRANDPARENTS

When distance sets them apart, it takes effort and creativity for grandparents to let grandchildren know of their love for them.

- Skype and Facetime are good, but prepare for it – have some particular news item to pass on each time; have a prompt to remind you at a regular time.
- Texting is quick and easy – make a note of things that pop up in the day to pass on, jot down jokes that you hear.
- Email is so quick – have a store of photos, news items from the week or articles you saw and attach one.
- Snail mail is great – so personal, especially if handwritten. Add riddles, jokes or photos. You can even write a story in serial form!



For more information on how to join, or to start a branch of the Australian Chapter of the Catholic Grandparents Association in your parish, contact the Sydney Archdiocesan Life, Marriage and Family Centre (02 9390 5283) or contact the Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council (02 9349 1710).

A resource of the Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council for the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

# Grandparents Great Presence



**IN TIMES OF RAPID CHANGE, POPE FRANCIS CONSTANTLY REMINDS US OF THE TIMELESS VALUE OF EACH GRANDPARENT AND HIS OR HER IRREPLACEABLE ROLE IN THE FAMILY AND IN SOCIETY. LET'S TAKE TIME TODAY TO REFLECT ON .....**

**GRANDPARENTS ALSO BENEFIT FROM GRANDCHILDREN. IT WORKS BOTH WAYS!**

As one grandfather said, "They keep us young. We can enjoy playing games with them that we would never play with adults. And they keep us learning. We relearn by reflecting back on our childhood formation and we have to keep up with their way of speaking and their internet technology." (George)

### GRANDPARENTS SPAN FIVE GENERATIONS

Grandparents usually can remember their own parents and grandparents as well as knowing the two generations that follow them. They are the only ones who carry with them the collective experience of five generations. This is a huge gift for grandchildren. Childrens' personal self-esteem is boosted by insights into their origins, by knowing their place in their family's history.

**GRANDPARENTS HAVE THE SPECIAL GIFT OF 'PRESENCE'**

The major faith influence of grandparents 'rubs off' from being around them. They don't have to be 'doing' so much as 'being' around – available to pick up children after school, playing backyard cricket, helping with homework, celebrating birthdays, reading stories, helping to build something.

**SINCE THE START OF HIS PONTIFICATE,  
POPE FRANCIS HAS CONSTANTLY  
EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF  
GRANDPARENTS AND OF CHILDREN:**

*"How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society! How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family. Children and the elderly build the future of people: children because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives."*

*"A people that does not care for its grandparents, a people that does not respect their grandparents, does not have a future, because they do not have a memory, they have lost their memory".*

*"Grandparents are a treasure"*

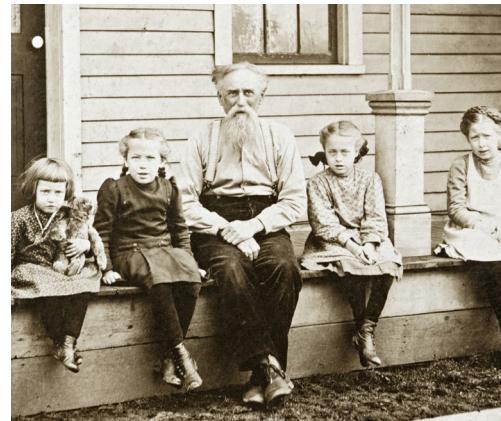
**THE GIFT OF GRANDPARENTS IS FOUND IN ALL CULTURES**

*"When a grandfather dies, a whole library is buried with him" (African proverb). "Our grandmother used to tuck us into bed and tell us stories of our dreamtime. Much of our sense of being part of a people comes from her" (Aboriginal parent).*



**GRANDPARENTS HAVE GIFTED US WITH THE ORIGINS OF OUR FAITH TRADITION**

For centuries, much of the Old Testament was passed down through the generations by an oral tradition. Grandparents were a revered part of that. Some of them are known by name, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, Moses, Miriam and Eleazar, to name but a few.



**GRANDPARENTS HELP US TO INTEGRATE FAITH AND LIFE'**

They have a breadth of experience that helps them to see the inevitable ups and downs of life in better perspective. In particular, faith helps one to recognise the hand of God in daily events. Their very presence helps us to appreciate what is important in life and to sift out the distractions. Their faith allows them to thank God and to trust in him in all the daily events.

**GRANDPARENTING CAN ALSO BE A TIME OF LOSS AND SUFFERING**

The deepest hurts can come when we love most deeply. Grandparenting can be a time of loss and unfulfilled dreams. The inability to pass on our dearest values, our faith, can weigh heavily on us. We can experience a sense of helplessness when it seems that all one can do is to stand, like Mary and John at the foot of the Cross.

**"EVERY CHILD DESERVES GRANDPARENTS WHO LOVE THEM UNCONDITIONALLY.  
EVERY GRANDPARENT NEEDS TO LOVE AND BE LOVED."**



**GRANDPARENTS ARE 'GOOD COMPANY' FOR OUR CHILDREN**

We want our children to 'keep good company'. What better 'company' than grandparents! Apart from parents, no one else loves their grandchildren more than grandparents and no one else yearns more to pass on their faith to them. And they do it so naturally – for example by being present at the milestones of family life (birth, Baptism, First Communion, weddings, funerals).

**GRANDPARENTS HELP TO BRING OUT THE CENTRALITY OF OUR FAITH**

In the rush and challenge of daily life, we can lose sight of the fact that life is a pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland. Old age is an important stage on the journey. It can be difficult to face. However, faith gives the certainty that those who believe in Christ "shall never die" (Jn 11:25). Being with grandparents who live this faith is a great gift to younger generations.

**GRANDPARENTS ARE OUR BEST RESOURCE OF MEMORIES**

They are each family's 'Central Bank' of memories. "Every now and then I think of something about the past that I want to check on. Now that my grandmother has passed away, it is too late to ask. It's part of the loss of her presence." (Robert)

**GRANDPARENTS PROVIDE THE LESSONS OF LIFE**

At times we all have to face illness, relationship difficulties, financial challenges, death of loved ones. Grandparents have 'seen it all'. Their experiences, even their own mistakes and setbacks, help us to develop a balanced view of how to move forward. When the grandparents have lived lives of faith, their experiences, even in different times, are invaluable guideposts.

**GRANDPARENTS GIVE HOPE**

Faith brings joy. Grandparents with the gift of faith have a quiet joy that is a sign of hope to younger generations. That joy comes from a lifetime of decisions to thank God in all things, to trust at all times. Each expresses it in his or her own unique way and provides it as a gift for grandchildren.

**'Grandparents Are A Treasure'**

(Pope Francis)