







## 餘輝萬丈

進入二十一世紀，全世界除了未開發國家以及少數開發中國家，都必須面對因著少子化趨勢與人類壽命的延長，所帶來的高齡化社會現象。

### 社會對老年的態度

在談論逐漸老化的社會，媒體讓我們看到討論老年的問題，許多時都是聚焦在老年人對於社會帶來的財政負擔或商機。市場經濟歡迎退休人士，為銀髮族設計了一系列以他們為對象的食品或用品。這樣就很難看到「年老」的特殊意義。老年人的智慧就完全無法發光發熱。

### 年老的價值和意義

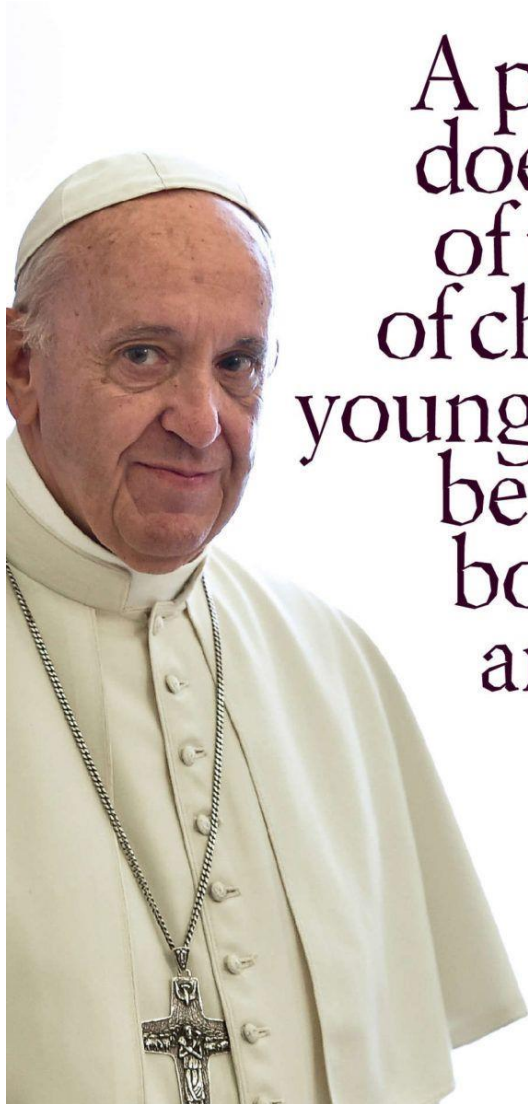
其實，「老年」跟每個生命階段一樣，都有其特別的價值，奧秘，智慧和悲傷。當人類生命變得脆弱，進入晚年時，人許多時都會質疑生命的價值。



而在思索「年老的價值和意義」的同時，也讓我們深思到生命的意義和價值到底在哪裡？

當我們重新認清「老年」的意義，並從信仰的角度去考慮年長者在現代社會中的地位和角色，對教會和家庭的參與，這個年齡所提供的貢獻，所具有的資源和所遇到的困難，就會發現老年人的價值。這樣我們才能透過尊重老年人，用正面的態度來保護埋藏在我們社會中的財富，讓老

年人活出老年的價值和意義。這樣，老年人才能夠真正成為整個社會和人類的祝福。



A population that  
does not take care  
of the elderly and  
of children and the  
young has no future,  
because it abuses  
both its memory  
and its promise.

Pope Francis

SleepingAngel.com

教宗方濟各在不同的場合，對「老年的價值和意義」，曾經清楚地指出

➤ 老年是一份恩寵、一項使命、一個召喚



『…在我們生命的各個階段祂都召叫我們跟隨祂，而且年老包含著一份恩寵、一項使命、一個真正來自上主的聖召。年老是聖召。年老還不是「收漿入船」的時候』。…『我們需要老年人的祈禱，因為這正是預留給老年人的使命和召喚，他們的

祈禱對教會而言是一項巨大恩典，也為整個人類社會注入了無比智慧，…老年人可以藉著祈禱為自己所得到的恩佑而感謝上主…為年輕一代的期待而代禱，可以提醒雄心勃勃的青年：缺乏愛的生命是貧瘠的；可以告訴膽小的青年：未來的苦惱可以被戰勝；可以教導過於自我的青年：給予比接受更快樂…我們需要祈禱的老年人，因為年老正是為此事而降臨我們身上的…』

（ 梵蒂岡新聞網 2015/03/11 教宗公開接見：年老是聖召 ）

**老年人的聖召是「守護根基、向青年傳遞信仰和照顧幼小」。**

『上主是永生的主，從未有退休的時候。因此，祖父母和年長者的聖召在於守護根基、向青年傳遞信仰和照顧幼小…宣講福音的使命、向子孫傳遞傳統的任務不存在退休的年齡…』



( 梵蒂岡新聞網 2021/06/22 教宗方濟各在首屆“世界祖父母和年長者日”視頻訊息中強調的 )

➤ **幫助長者回應天主的召叫，**

我祈求上主，在這個節日（首屆世界祖父母和年長者日）幫助我們的年長者在晚年歲月回應天主的召叫，尤其在這丟棄的文化背景中，向社會展示出祖父母和年長者臨在的價值。

( 梵蒂岡新聞網 2021/07/27 教宗方濟各主持誦念三鐘經後 )



**天主教導我們尊重祖父母，在他們記憶中存有民族的未來**

…「在我們所生活的時代，老年人不受重視。他們被遺棄，因為他們會造成麻煩。事實上，老年人帶給我們歷史、教義和信德，以遺產的形式將它們留給我們。老年人如同是成年老酒，飽含內在的力量，給予我們一份高貴的遺產。」…「年邁有時候的確不好，但是祖父母們所擁有的智慧是我們應該繼承的遺產。一個民族若不保護和尊重祖父母，這個民族就沒有未來，因為它丟失了記憶。」



( 梵蒂岡新聞網 2013/11/19 教宗方濟各：天主教導我們尊重祖父母 )

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人步入晚年，雖近黃昏，猶有餘輝，餘輝仍然照耀大地，散發溫暖。讓我們心存感激，緬懷每一位長者過往為自己的家庭、為社會作出的種種貢獻。

參閱：

教會也曾頒佈了兩份關注長者的文件，名為「長者尊嚴及他們在教會與世界的使命」1998 年（註一），「教宗給長者語」1999 年 10 月 1 日（註二）。

註一: The dignity of Older People and their mission in the Church and in the World. 1998 (From Pontifical Council for the Laity)

註二: Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Elderly. 1 Oct 1999

## Sunset's radiance

An ageing society, with its trends of declining birth rates and longer life expectancy, is what nearly all the countries of the world face, except for emerging and lower-income nations. In a telling sign of general attitudes in society, the media when addressing this phenomenon, tends to focus on the issues of financial burden or economic advantage. At best, older persons are a "business opportunity"; a market for products and services designed just for them in mind. What makes old age special is obscured!

### **The meaning and value of old age**

"Old age", like every stage of life, has its own special value, mystery, wisdom, joys, and sorrows. Many, entering "old age", finding their health and life becoming precarious, often question the value of their very existence.

Thinking about the "meaning and value of ageing", also makes us think about the meaning and value of life. We can only discover the value of old age when we reclaim its meaning and consider, from a faith perspective, the place and role of older people, their involvement in the Church and family, the contributions this age provides, the resources they have and the difficulties they encounter.

In discovering the value of the elderly, we discover the *treasure buried* in our society, and finding it, we want to protect and preserve it. By respecting the elderly and protecting them, they can live out their *third age* meaningfully and shine through as beacons of blessing to society and humanity, as they are meant to!

### **Old age is a grace, a duty, a calling**

Pope Francis has, on many occasions, made it clear the wealth that is old age. ... He (God) calls us to follow Him at all stages of our lives, and old age contains a grace, a mission, a true vocation... Old age is a vocation (...) and not the time to "pull the oars into the boat".

"We need old people who pray, for it is for this that old age has come upon us" ... "The prayers of grandparents and old people are a great grace for the



Church and an incomparable wisdom for human society as a whole, especially for those who are too busy ... In addition, the elderly can fill the gaps of ingratitude around us by praying “in thanksgiving to the Lord for the benefits received”; they can pray for the expectations of the younger generation and give dignity to the memory and sacrifice of our ancestors ... they can remind ambitious youth that life without love is boring and tell the cowardly youth: future distress can be overcome.” They “can teach the overly narcissistic youth: It is happier to give than to receive.”

(<http://zh.radiovaticana.va/news/11/03/2015>)

### **Preserving our roots, passing on the faith to the young and caring for the little ones**

The Lord is the Lord of the living, the One who never retires. Therefore, the vocation of grandparents and the elderly is in "proclaiming the Gospel (for) there is no age of retirement for the mission of preaching the Gospel and passing on the tradition to our children and grandchildren...

### **Helping the elderly to respond to God's call**

I pray that God will help our elderly to respond to God's call in their later years, especially in the context of a throwaway culture, and to demonstrate to society the value of the presence of grandparents and elders on this feast day (the first World Grandparents and Older Persons Day).

([Vatican News 2021/07/27 Pope Francis's Angelus Message](#))

### **Respecting our grandparents – *our repositories of memory***

"We live in a time when the elderly are not valued. They are abandoned because they cause trouble. In fact, the elderly bring us history, doctrine and faith, leaving them to us in the form of a legacy. Older people are like aged wine, full of inner strength, giving us a noble legacy." ... "It's not good to be old sometimes, but the wisdom of our grandparents is a legacy that we should inherit. A nation that does not protect and respect its grandparents has no future, because it has lost its memory."

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As we enter old age, although we are approaching dusk, there is still a residual glow, which still shines and radiates warmth. Spread that warmth ... Let us be grateful and remember each and every contribution that every older person has made to their families and to the community.

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See also:

- ✧ The dignity of Older People and their mission in the Church and in the World. 1998 (From Pontifical Council for the Laity)
- ✧ Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Elderly, 1 Oct 1999

