

EDITORIAL

The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World

The 9th World Meeting of Families will be held in Dublin from 21 to 26 August 2018 on the theme “The Gospel of the Family: Joy for the World”. Pope Francis wants families to have a way to deepen their reflection and sharing of the content of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

The Pope wrote: “One might ask: does the Gospel continue to be a joy for the world? And also: does the family continue to be good news for today’s world?”

I am sure the answer is yes! And this “yes” is firmly based on God’s plan. The love of God is His “yes” to all creation and at the heart of this latter is man. It is God’s “yes” to the union between man and woman, in openness and service to life in all its phases; it is God’s “yes” and His commitment to a humanity that is often wounded, mistreated and dominated by a lack of love. The family, therefore, is the “yes” of God as Love. Only starting from love can the family manifest, spread and regenerate God’s love in the world. Without love, we cannot live as children of God, as couples, parents and brothers.”

He adds: “Every day, we have the experience of fragility and weakness, and therefore we all, families and pastors, are in need of a renewed humility that forms the desire to form ourselves, to educate and be educated, to help and be helped, to accompany, discern and integrate all men of good will.”

The organizations that make up our Crescendo Network, serving the elderly, are experiencing the fragility and the weakness but also the strength fruitfulness of love between human brothers and the love that God gives us.

Crescendo will be represented in Dublin by the local community of Little Sisters of the Poor. We thank them warmly.

Dominique Lemau de Talancé

POST

The elderly in India

India still has family as the primary care giver to the elderly and scope for training this lot provide support to the program. Presently, the elderly are provided health-care by the general health-care delivery system in the country.

There is a definite need to emphasize the fact that disease and disability are not part of old age and help must be sought to address the health problems. The concept of Active and Healthy ageing needs to be promoted among the elderly, which includes preventive, promotive, curative and rehabilitative aspects of health.

Today, the parents are having either a unique child or two or three children in the family, restricting the number of children so as to cope up with the education of children which is very dear today. To finance the education of the children, parents, husband and wife have to work hard to earn. When their children are growing, they are happy to have their parent, father or mother to take care of the children. When the elderly person becomes dependant, he/she becomes a burden or a nuisance. They do not know what to do and how to handle the situation.

The reasons:

- 1) When the elderly person becomes dependant and whose memory is lost cannot be left alone at home as both son and daughter-in-law go to work.
- 2) Financial difficulty to hire a care-taker for the elderly person.
- 3) Even if they are able to hire a care-taker, unable to leave the care-taker with the elderly

person alone for fear of theft in the home uncertain of the credibility of the care-taker.

- 4) At times the children love their parents dearly but are at a loss as not knowing what to do.
- 5) The children of the elderly person who reside abroad place them in Nursing Homes, the elderly miss the closeness of their children.

There exist also genuine families who take care of their own elderly people with great love and affection till the end of their lives which is a very edifying fact.



Little Sisters of the Poor in India

Old age Pension

Old age pension exists in India. The elderly are beneficiaries of "Senior Citizen's card" which permits them to have concessions on air, railways and road transports. They also have reduction on Income Tax, reverse mortgage, bank interest rates and cash withdrawn and paid through postman at their doorstep.

The dependence of elderly on family members is based on trust, reciprocity, and helplessness. However, they have been victimized in their own homes. Studies have shown that nearly 25% of the crimes against elderly are committed by their own family members, particularly by sons, daughters-in-law, neighbours, servant, etc., causes being land and property dispute, caste rivalries, and rural factionalism.

Over the years, government has launched various schemes with the intention of providing health, care, and independence of the elderly around the country. Year 1999 was observed as the International year for older persons by the United Nations general assembly. The same year, the Government of India launched National Policy on Older persons, the primary goal of which was overall well-being of the elderly, ensuring them a legitimate position in the society. It visualizes states in playing an active role in providing financial security, health care, shelter, welfare, and other needs of older persons, such as protection against abuse and exploitation. Following were the highlights of the policy:

- Special focus on elderly women to protect them from being a victim of age, gender, and widowhood

- 60+ as a phase of opportunity, choices, and creativity rather than dependency
- Age-integrated society to strengthen the bond between the young and the old
- Emphasizes the need for expansion of social and community services for older persons, particularly women: respite care homes, multi service centers, and mobile medical care.

Unfortunately, a lot of the proposals remain on paper.



Little Sisters of the Poor in India

The Homes of Little Sisters of the Poor in India

Our homes in India, according to our charism, welcome very poor old people without retirement. They are supported by the Little Sisters of the Poor with the help of the employees, Associates Jeanne Jugan and volunteers. A physiotherapy unit caters the needs of the elderly with a physiotherapist. The doctors render free service to the elderly. The elderly are given food, shelter, clothing and medical necessities along with love and affection that they so deserve during the declining years of their lives. The elderly Residents are happy and contented. But, we can always improve by giving our time to listen to them more often.

Little Sisters of the Poor in India

■ INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Council of Europe (Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development) : Human rights of older persons and their comprehensive care

Despite the growing trend towards strengthening the protection of older persons' human rights in recent years, this vulnerable group continues to suffer from widespread negative stereotypes which lead to age discrimination and social isolation and exclusion. Abuse of older persons remains a major problem and their access to good quality health care and long-term care, a challenge.

Older persons should have a minimum living income and appropriate housing to be able to live in dignity. Member States should integrate health and social-care services, ensure adequate training of health care professionals in geriatrics and appropriate assistance for informal carers. They should also foster intergenerational ties and promote active ageing by developing age-friendly environments. The abuse of older persons should be efficiently tackled, starting by raising public awareness of the issue, data collection and monitoring of long-term care institutions by an independent body.

The Committee of Ministers should closely involve civil society in the examination of the implementation of its Recommendation CM/Rec(2014)2 on the promotion of the human rights of older persons. It should also consider the necessity and feasibility of drawing up a legally binding instrument in this field.

<http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=23538&lang=en>

Age Platform recently also worked on this topic: AGE joint seminar finds important gaps in the protection of older persons' human rights

<https://www.age-platform.eu/special-briefing/age-joint-seminar-finds-important-gaps-protection-older-person-human-rights>

Identifying the barriers that prevent older persons from fully enjoying their human rights and how to overcome them was the objective of a seminar organised jointly by AGE and the United Nations Human Rights Office (OHCHR) for the European region. Organised on 12 and 13 April 2018 at AGE's premises in Brussel, the seminar brought together a group of 35 AGE members, human rights practitioners and experts from the United Nations, researchers and advocates.

The day-and-a-half meeting was organised in view of discussing the topics that will be addressed at the [9th session of the Open-Ended Working Group on ageing \(OEWG\)](#) in New York from 23 to 26 July 2018, namely:

- The rights to autonomy and independence, and to long-term and palliative care.
- Normative elements of the right of older persons to equality and non-discrimination, and the right to live free from violence, neglect and abuse.

The OEWG, in place since 2010, is analysing the level of enjoyment of human rights by older persons and the relevance of a new international instrument to close gaps in protection.

Human Rights Council

Seminar on the protection of the family and the human rights of the elderly, June 11, 2018: Hélène Durand Ballivet, on behalf of VMI, Crescendo Network and other NGOs, made an intervention. She emphasized respect for the rights and dignity of the elderly.

■ NEWS OF THE CHURCH

Lay people, family and life: a cross-connect

"The skills of a Dicastery such as ours, for the Laity, the Family and Life, reveal themselves more and more in their link, in their transversal inter-connection. These are the words of Linda Ghisoni, Undersecretary of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, following the approval of the new statute, which came into effect on May 13, 2018.

"How could we speak of the family," continues the undersecretary, "without considering the baptismal vocation of the laity, without thinking of the formation of the laity? How to talk about human life in all its forms and educational challenges, without taking into account young people, the elderly, women and men in their relationships within the family, the Church, society?"

In our daily work emerges, with more and more evidence, that the Dicastery is placed at the crossroads of the vital centers of every contemporary man and woman.

■ NEWS OF MEMBER

AIC: CUBA: For many years, volunteers from local AIC groups have been providing meals to elderly, poor, abandoned, sick people. It should be noted that the state offers food to the elderly, but they often do not know how to move to look for them or cook them. The originality of this project is that volunteers collect food from the state for the elderly, cook it at home and invite an elderly person to eat at home. The goal of the project is twofold: to break the isolation and provide a healthy and balanced diet.

CICIAMS: Our President Geraldine Mc Sweeney was present at the beatification of Hanne Chrzanowska in Croatia. The CICIAMS member countries have received information on the XX World Congress: in Malaysia from 4 to 7 September 2018.

FIAMC: Pope Francis defends the humanization of medicine

Pope Francis received a delegation of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations in an audience on Monday, May 28, 2018. He defended the centrality of the patient, as well as the moral implications of medical practice

"Your work is a special form of Christian witness". Pope Francis thought it important to recall the various duties of a Catholic doctor. These go from the doctor-patient relationship to the missionary activity "to improve the health conditions of populations in the confines of the world".

This is necessary for the humanization of medicine, believes Pope Francis, integrating it into the field of "human ecology". It would not be acceptable for their role to be reduced to that of "simply executing the will of the patient or the needs of the health care system in which they work".

The Pope then mentioned the next Congress of Catholic Doctors in Zagreb, from May 30 to June 2, during which they will reflect on the theme of the "sacredness of life and the medical profession of Humane Vitae to Laudato si". Being a doctor is a true apostolate, which allows us to serve with dignity and holiness, he concluded.

Little Sisters of the Poor: 2018 marks the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first Little Sisters in Ireland (the first senior citizen welcomed to the Waterford Foundation, in February 1868, was a

100-year-old woman!), And to the United States of America (to Brooklyn, September 1868). Thanksgiving celebrations and various events are planned by our communities in both countries throughout this jubilee year. First friendly initiative: 3 banners showing Jeanne Jugan on the march, destined to travel through our three Provinces of the USA, were first spent in the original places of the Congregation: Cancale, Saint-Servan, La Tour St Joseph, before being shipped there. Young volunteers from Namur who, in April, made a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Jeanne Jugan, were delighted to be the "bearers", despite the rain and the wind. The rooting in the origins was thus meant, with an intergenerational note!

MIAMSI : The different movements of MIAMSI organize this year gatherings in their respective continents from the resolutions taken at the last General Assembly of 2016 and in connection with their difficulties and their questions.

Latin America: July 19-22 - ELAM in Cochabamba, Bolivia: The Latin American Secretariat launches a different proposal for the Latin American Meeting, which includes youth participation, with a program that reflects a vision of Church different from the one they are used to. The theme chosen is "A global challenge, to care for and build the Common House", inspired by the vision of Laudato Sí.

Inter-Islands Indian Ocean: 2-5 October: CENTER: "Promoting justice, and peace, in our islands! "

In their communiqué, the bishops of Madagascar mentioned the existence within the Forces of the Order of

elements who use their weapons and prerogatives to repress the people.

The question of Justice was raised on this occasion. "Justice is no longer credible," they stressed. Justice has become the property of wealthy people with a log of entregents well placed in the hierarchy of the State. Gabegie, the squandering of national wealth and corruption, were the words pronounced by the Most Reverend Philippe Ranaivomanana to point the finger at the current regime. "The culture of impunity is the origin of the lack of appeasement in the country."