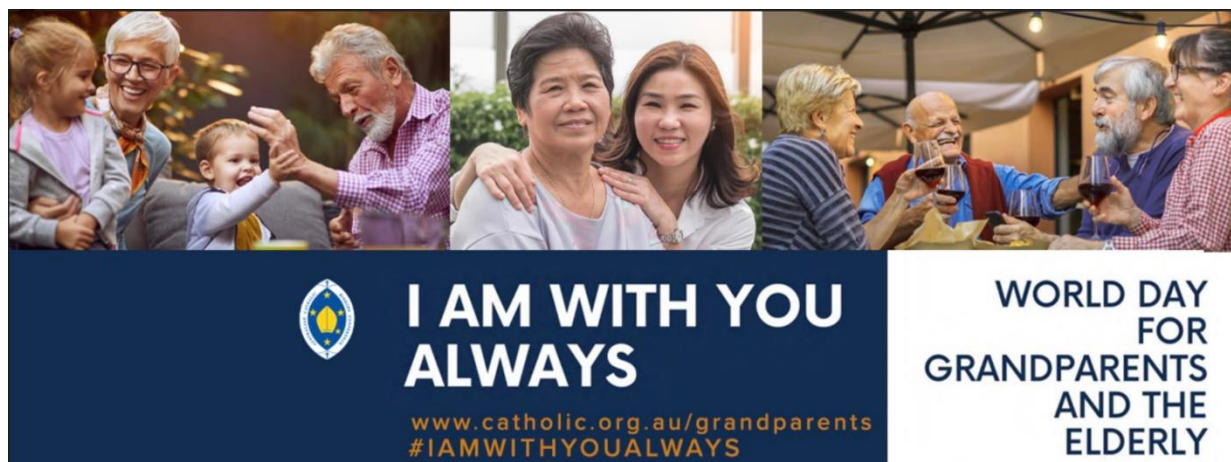


FIRST WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS & THE ELDERLY  
SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 25 JULY 2021



[www.catholic.org.au/grandparents](http://www.catholic.org.au/grandparents)

### I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS

The opening words of Pope Francis today are:

*'Dear Grandfathers and Grandmothers,  
Dear Elderly Friends,*

*"I am with you always" (Mt 28:20):  
this is the promise the Lord made to his disciples before he ascended into heaven.  
They are the words that he repeats to you today,  
dear grandfathers and grandmothers, dear elderly friends.*

*"I am with you always" are also the words that I,  
as Bishop of Rome and an elderly person like yourselves,  
would like to address to you on this first World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly.  
The whole Church is close to you – to us – and cares about you,  
loves you and does not want to leave you alone!*

All are invited to read the full message at:

[https://www.catholic.org.au/images/Message\\_of\\_Pope\\_Francis.pdf](https://www.catholic.org.au/images/Message_of_Pope_Francis.pdf)

Pope Francis concludes his Message  
with this prayer intention and blessing today:

*'I ask the Lord that, also through his example,  
all of us may open our hearts in sensitivity to the sufferings  
of the poor and intercede for their needs.  
May each of us learn to repeat to all,  
and especially to the young, the words of consolation  
we have heard spoken to us today: "I am with you always"!  
Keep moving forward! May the Lord grant you his blessing.'*

Let us now pause and pray for all our Grandparents and Elderly Friends.

[pause]

## VATICAN REFLECTION

In a Vatican Reflection on this historic day, we are reminded that Grandparents and Elderly Friends are

*'one of the vital components of our communities.  
They are not simply people whom we are called to safeguard.  
They can be the protagonists of a pastoral evangelizing ministry,  
privileged witnesses of God's faithful love".'*

*'In the parallel passage in Mark (6:41), the Lord Jesus entrusts the disciples with the task of distributing the loaves to the crowd. It is a task that he continues to entrust to the Church today. We alone cannot perform the miracle, but Jesus needs our hands so that the bread can feed those who need it. Let us think of how many elderly people in our parishes are ministers of the Eucharist or have other ministries, and how precious this is for the life and the liturgy of our communities.'*

## THESE NEXT FIVE SUNDAYS

During the three yearly Sunday Gospel Cycle of Matthew, Mark and Luke, the Church pauses in this **Year of Mark's Gospel** - the shortest Gospel – and proclaims the fourth Gospel – the Gospel of John.

In the next five weeks around the world, we listen to John Chapter 6.

The exception will be in Australia where the weekend of August 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> is the feast of our national Patron Saint – Mary MacKillop.

There are separate readings for her Feast.

With the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and letters of Paul already in existence by the time John's Gospel is written, John does not need to repeat much of what has already been said. He adds further detail to specific passages.

## PATTERNS WITHIN THE WAYS GOD ANSWERS OUR PRAYERS

John presents patterns.

One such pattern is the multiplication of loaves near the Passover feast, where the abundance of God's protection in the Exodus is celebrated.

We pause to reflect on the patterns within God's invitations to us.

We note the patterns in which God answers our prayers.

We note how God can answer a particular prayer not just once, but many times over several years.

We note how God answers our prayers in different ways, according to God's ways.

[pause]

God surprises us and blesses us abundantly.

## GOSPEL OF JOHN | CHAPTER SIX

In Chapter Six, we read over these weeks how Jesus surprised the disciples and the crowd.

He blessed them abundantly and invited them into the depths of his love.

Let us begin our reading of the first part of John 6.

### JOHN 6:1-15

- **Why were they seeking Jesus?**  
*'A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick.'*
- **What did Jesus ask of Philip in today's Gospel?**  
*'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?'  
He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.  
Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.'*
- **What does Jesus ask of us this week?**

[pause]

Jesus encourages us to talk to him.

Even though Andrew didn't have a solution, he shared with Jesus what he knew himself.

*'One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?'  
Jesus said,*

***'Make the people sit down.'***

*Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted.'*

Jesus works with what we have, in wonderful ways.

*'When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.'*  
*So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets.'*

The people do not yet understand who Jesus really is.

They want Jesus to conform to what they want – a king.

*When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'*  
*When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.'*

Our prayer is about doing God's will.

And as **Chapter Six of John's Gospel** unfolds, we discover more about the gift that Jesus offers us, the gift that nourishes us, the gift that answers our prayer – though sometimes not in a way we expect – the gift of Jesus himself.

### SAINT THERESE OF LISIEUX

Like last week, we conclude by turning to Saint Therese of Lisieux. This young woman accepted the gift of Jesus completely. In her autobiography *'The Journal of a Soul'*, she relates that each of us is different. St Therese says

*"I know that every soul cannot be alike.  
There must be different kinds...  
To me, He has revealed His infinite mercy,  
And I see all His other attributes in the light of that."*

As we reflect on John's Gospel Chapter Six, we find encouragement in the ways that Therese was moved by the Gospels.

*"the Gospels help me in my prayers.  
They are always showing me new ways of looking at things,  
And I am always finding hidden and mysterious meanings in them.  
I understand and, by experience,  
I know that the Kingdom of God is within us.  
... I Know that he is within me,  
He guides and inspires me every moment of the day.  
Just when I need it, a new light shines on my problems."*

Gifted by God in our lives, let us pray.

Fr Gerry

readings: <https://bible.usccb.org/bible/readings/072521.cfm>

image attributed to [www.LumoProject.com](http://www.LumoProject.com)

