

LENT AND THE ELDERLY

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*



“A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY”

During Lent, a spiritual journey is outlined for us that prepares us to relive the Great Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ. This is done primarily by listening to the Word of God more devoutly and by practicing mortification more generously, thanks to which it is possible to render greater assistance to those in need.

“A SPECIAL DIVINE GIFT”

This year ... I wish to bring to your attention a theme ... from Deuteronomy: *“Loving the Lord ... means life to you, and length of days...”* (30:20)... According to the Biblical understanding, reaching old age is a sign of the Most High’s gracious benevolence. Longevity appears, therefore, as a special divine gift.

“LOVING WELCOME”

It is upon this theme that I ... ask you to reflect during this Lent, in order to deepen the awareness of the role that the elderly are called to play in society and in the Church, and thus to prepare your hearts for the loving welcome that should always be reserved for them.

“FULL POTENTIAL”

One sees in society today a lengthening of the human life span and a subsequent increase in the number of the elderly. This demands a more specific attention to the world of ... “old age,” in order to help its members to live their full potential ...

“GREAT CONCERN”

The care of the elderly, above all when they pass through difficult moments, must be of great concern to all the faithful, especially in the ecclesial communities of Western societies, where the problem is particularly present.

“A PRECIOUS GIFT”

Human life is a precious gift to be loved and defended in each of its stages. The Commandment, “You shall not kill!”, always requires respecting and promoting human life, from its beginning to its natural end. It is a command that applies even in the presence of illness and when physical weakness reduces the person’s ability to be self-reliant.

“THE LIGHT OF FAITH”

If growing old, with its inevitable conditions, is accepted serenely in the light of faith, it can become an invaluable opportunity for better comprehending the Mystery of the Cross...

“ALMOST USELESS” OR TREASURED?

What would happen if the People of God yielded to a certain current mentality that considers these people, our brothers and sisters, as almost useless when they are reduced in their capacities due to the difficulties of age or sickness? Instead, how different the community would be, if, beginning with the family, it tries always to remain open and welcoming towards them.

“LOVING UNDERSTANDING”

During Lent, aided by the Word of God, let us reflect upon how important it is that each community accompany with loving understanding those who grow old.

“AN EVER MORE PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE”

Mary, our guide on the Lenten journey, leads all believers, especially the elderly, to an ever more profound knowledge of Christ dead and risen, Who is the ultimate reason for our existence.

(Source: Lenten Message, dated September 8, 2004)

*To obtain this monthly bulletin insert for your parish, or to receive
a catalog of other publications and tapes, please write or call:
Presentation Ministries, 3230 McHenry, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211, (513) 662-JESU*