



They shall bear fruit in old age. They shall be fresh and flourishing.
PSALM 92: 12-15

Annual Review 2016-2017

About us

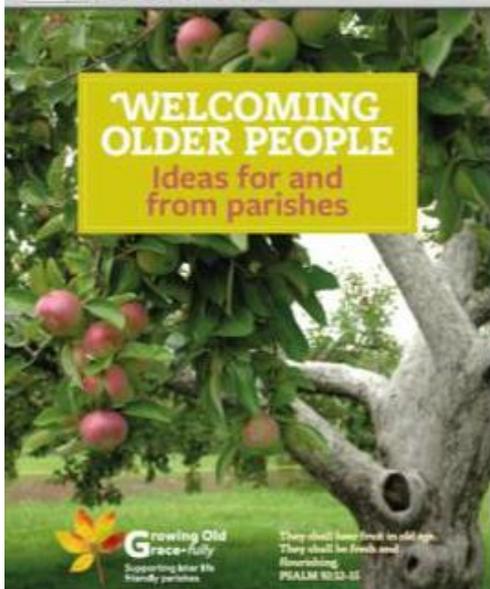
We are a small charity working across the Catholic Diocese of Leeds focused on **supporting Later Life Friendly Parishes**. We were formed to champion the idea that an ageing Church is not a failing Church. We have been raising awareness of the contribution of older people in our parishes and helping respond to their spiritual and practical needs since 2009.

Our work includes:

- **Sharing** best practice
- **Helping** create local solutions to local needs
- **Offering** spiritual and practical support and advice to parishes
- **Encouraging** dementia-friendly parishes.

Our achievements in 2016/2017...

1. Parish Pack – *Welcoming Older People: Ideas for and from parishes*



Our main focus has been the development of a Parish Pack which was launched on 4th May 2017. The pack has more than 80 pages offering a wealth of spiritual and practical ideas to support church communities in valuing older people and benefiting from their gifts.

There are 8 sections exploring:

- 1) Older people and your parish
- 2) Vocation in later life
- 3) Growing a dementia friendly parish
- 4) Being mortal
- 5) Bereavement & loss
- 6) Tackling loneliness
- 7) Caring for carers
- 8) Helpful contacts

The pack has been designed as a tool kit for Christians of all denominations, although some of the content is specific to Catholic teaching and tradition as well as to our own Diocese of Leeds. We have printed 300 copies which we are distributing free in the Leeds Catholic Diocese through a series of short events for parishes. The pack is also available for download on [our website](#) and the download has been promoted to all the different denominations through a press release to over 200 contacts. We are registering everyone who holds a printed copy or download of the pack, so we can survey them in the future to help us research the impact of the resource and use the learnings to develop the contents further.

We are very grateful to The Grail Society, The Linden Trust and Catholic Care Leeds for their generous support for the production of these resources. We also thank the (International) Society of the Sacred



Heart for their very generous on-going support for the work of Growing Old Grace-fully without which this pack could not have been written.

2. Increased reach through our website

[Our website](#) continues to help to build on the good work that is already taking place in parishes, and spread this good news so that parishes can learn from one another. Our website has had over **1,500** visitors in the last 12 months, a similar figure to the previous year when we launched the site, although this year people coming onto the site are spending more time looking at the content. The site traffic has been maintained by regular postings of events in our Diocese, examples of practical actions and reflections on the gifts and challenges of ageing, some of which are highlighted through emailing links to parishes and encouraging the free download of resources.

3. A network of 'friendly neighbours'

Over 540 people from parishes in our Diocese and beyond have asked us to keep in contact with them, so that we are continuing to build a network of 'friendly neighbours' to support the development of local solutions to local needs. We have also developed a contact list of over 200 national and local organisations and key contacts to help us spread news and relevant content.

4. Events

We have organised a number of events to encourage 'Growing a Dementia Friendly Parish', helping to create nearly 100 Dementia Friends in our Diocese since the start of this programme in the following parishes:

1. St Joseph, Pudsey
2. St Teresa Benedicta, Shipley
3. Blessed John Henry Newman, Leeds
4. St Joseph, Wetherby
5. Mary Mother of God, Bradford
6. Sacred Heart and St Joseph, Hemsworth

We have also visited the Parish of St Mary Knaresborough, in partnership with [Catholic Care](#), to support practical ways a parish can be more Later Life-Friendly.

Future plans

Marcus, our Bishop, has given his blessing for our Diocese to start the process of becoming a dementia friendly one. Our first step is to hold a Steering Meeting to explore how to approach this.

Would you like to have your say at that first meeting? We need to hear your thoughts and ideas. It does *not* mean you are volunteering to be part of any Working Group. Please call Rachel on **07702 255142** or email growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk if you have any suggestions to make.



To arrange a short session on '[Becoming a dementia friendly parish](#)' or '[Learning from and caring for older people](#)' please call Rachel on **07702** or email growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk