

WELCOMING OLDER PEOPLE

Ideas for and
from parishes



Growing Old
Grace-fully

Supporting later life
friendly parishes

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

FOREWORD —

✠ RIGHT REVEREND MARCUS STOCK, BISHOP OF LEEDS



In Britain and around the world, there are more people living into old age than ever before. When today's oldest people were born, the average life expectancy was just under 50 for girls and around 45 for boys. The idea of surviving to one hundred years of age or more was beyond most people's imagination. In 1901, there were only between 100 and 200 people in the whole of the United Kingdom who lived to become centenarians. In 2014, the number of centenarians in England and Wales was estimated to be 14,450!

Rather than recognising this as something to celebrate, it is hard to pick up a newspaper without seeing an article which bemoans the fact that we cannot afford to support and care for all the people who are living later into life. Are these articles just expressing the challenge of austerity or do they point to something deeper? In a world that glorifies the preservation of a youthful appearance over the face which accompanies old age, and places a greater value on the economic contribution we make to society above the innate dignity of human life, are such contemporary editorials revealing deeper fears of decline, diminishment and death?

As followers of Christ, we need to cherish the blessings which come with age whilst, at the same time, we work together to overcome some of its challenges. Our society appears to have lost its appreciation for the gift of wisdom which, though it is a virtue not necessarily absent from youth, is more likely to be a characteristic which escorts the gift of age.

The Church has a vital role in helping to counter the undervaluation of older people. At a parish level, this means providing more opportunities for all generations to meet together and value one another. This Guide is offering practical suggestions and real examples of how parishes in our diocese and beyond are exploring how we can learn from and care for older people.

I wholeheartedly support the vision and recommendations contained in this guide: Welcoming Older People – Ideas for and from parishes. I hope you will use it to consider how older people's gifts, wisdom, experience and prayers can help all of us to appreciate the precious gift of life and to live that life fully with God's grace.

✠ **Right Reverend Marcus Stock**

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HOW TO USE THIS PACK

All of us at Growing Old Grace-fully have worked hard to put together these resources because we believe deeply from our hearts in the need for the Church actively to cherish the blessings of ageing and to work harder to overcome its challenges.

We want this pack to be something that people can pick up and take to parish meetings, discuss with their parish priest and share with friends and colleagues in parish groups. We want this pack to help inspire practical actions that support the growth of later life friendly parishes in our own Diocese of Leeds, and beyond. We want the pack to be a helpful resource for Christians of all denominations.

We present these resources in a ring binder because we encourage you to add your own ideas and practical tips to the pack – ideas and tips that may come from your own parish or perhaps from other sources. We encourage you to use this pack as an ongoing guide that is not read once and then put on the shelf, but is used throughout the year and also passed on to any other interested people in your worshipping community.

It is our hope and our prayer that this pack really makes a positive difference when it comes to supporting older people and valuing their gifts. We would love you to share with us your responses to the challenges and opportunities that an ageing population and an ageing Eucharistic community present, so that we can share true stories and activities more widely.

With blessings,

The Trustees of Growing Old Grace-fully

April 2017

Ann West, Anne Forbes, Carol Burns, Cath Mahoney, Paul Grafton, Mgr Peter Rosser, Pippa Bonner

Edited by Rachel Walker, Growing Old Grace-fully Co-ordinator

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OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH



1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH



TO DO

1. **START** the conversation in your parish by talking to your parish priest and relevant parish groups, like the SVP Society.
2. **ASK** people how the parish could be better in welcoming older people using the 'Your Opinion Matters' Survey (page 1/5) to find out more.
3. **HOLD** a Quiz (pages 1/7–1/10) at some of your parish meetings to help people relax and enjoy thinking about the challenges and opportunities of being an older congregation.

Britain is an ageing society. Did you know that nearly 1 in 5 people in Britain are over the state pension age?

Of course, that brings challenges but we think it's also something to celebrate. Our extra years are a gift – God's gift of age.

A STARTING POINT

- Look around at Sunday mass and have a quick count of the number of older people. Is it more than half the congregation?
- How many of the essential parish jobs, from flowers to finance, are done by older people?

“I think of how many of you make yourselves available in parishes for a truly valuable service; some of you are dedicated to decorating the house of the Lord, others as catechists, leaders of the liturgy, others as witnesses to charity.”

POPE FRANCIS, TALKING ON
GRANDPARENTS DAY,
2ND OCTOBER 2016

“Where would we be without grandparents, who deliver an estimated £7.3 billion of free childcare each year?”

GRANDPARENTS PLUS &
AGE UK REPORT, MAY 2013

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

We want this pack to support each parish in really thinking about the value of their older people.

The Bible reminds us, in the stories of Abraham and Sarah, as well as Simeon and Anna, that God expects new and surprising things from older people and that our way of looking at things is not God's way.

WHAT YOUR PARISH CAN DO

Every parish is different so there is no single 'right way'.

1. What groups, and also which people, in your parish might be interested

in helping to make older people feel valued? Here are some suggestions of who to approach for a chat:

- Parish priest
- Parish Council
- Religious Sisters
- St Vincent de Paul Society
- Legion of Mary
- Union of Catholic Mothers
- Parish prayer groups and other groups
- Older people in the parish who don't belong to any groups.

2. Ask people in the parish whether they think older people are valued and welcomed

and what suggestions they have to support people in later life. There's a simple Survey (Your Opinion Matters) on page 1/5 at the end of this Chapter to hand out.

If you would like some help in presenting the results to your parish priest or parish council, then please get in touch with Growing Old Grace-fully. We'll be happy to help. Call Rachel on **07702 255142** or email :

growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk.

3. There's a Quiz at the end of this Chapter on pages 1/7–1/10 (and an Answer Sheet for the Quizmaster) designed to **help people think a bit more about God's gift of age** in an entertaining way. You could use this to hold a **Quick Quiz** at some of your parish meetings. It might help to get people thinking more about the challenges and opportunities for the parish.

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

4. A basic starting point is to **make sure that everyone can get in and around the church and hall.**

Starter CHECKLIST:

- ☐ Can people who use pushchairs, wheelchairs and other mobility aids get in easily?
- ☐ Is there a loop system to help people with hearing loss?
- ☐ Are there large print hymn, mass books and copies of the bulletin available for people with sight loss?
- ☐ Is there good lighting?
- ☐ Are there any trip hazards such as mats or uneven flooring or heavy doors?
- ☐ Are the toilets easy to find and use?
- ☐ Is drinking water on tap at all times, as well as tea and coffee after services and at social events, to help prevent older people from getting dehydrated?



Further reading

Ideas from older people (pages 1/11-1/12)

Ideas for parish activities captured at a Growing Old Grace-fully Conference.

Parish Pledge for Older People (pages 1/13-1/14)

A list of 8 pledges, or intentions, for parishes to consider and act on, based on what people have told Growing Old Grace-fully they think is important when welcoming older people.

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

SOME DATES OF NOTE

	Church Dates	National Events
JANUARY		
FEBRUARY	2nd February Candlemas, presentation of the child Jesus – the story of Simeon and Anna.	
MARCH		
APRIL		
MAY		Dying Matters Week Dementia Awareness Week
JUNE	Feast of St Anthony of Padua, Patron Saint of Older People.	Volunteers' Week
JULY	Feast of Saints Anne and Joachim (<i>Grandparents of Jesus</i>).	
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER		
OCTOBER		1st October Older Person's Day 2nd October Silver Sunday
NOVEMBER	All Saints and All Souls Remembrance Sunday	
DECEMBER	The Pope's Prayer Intentions 2017: The Elderly	

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

YOUR OPINION MATTERS SURVEY

Britain, this Diocese and our parish are made up of more and more older people. We are an ageing society. As people of faith, we need to cherish the blessings of age as well as work together to overcome its challenges.

Would you spend 5 minutes telling us how you think this parish values older people? With your help, we can explore the question of what are the ingredients that can help us ensure a warm welcome for all those in later life.

Please circle the number that matches your level of agreement.

Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Neither Agree nor Disagree = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly Agree = 5

1. Older frail people participate fully in parish life. 1 2 3 4 5
2. There are activities that help the young learn from the old and vice versa. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Older people are offered new experiences. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Emotional and practical support is offered to carers. 1 2 3 4 5
5. People living with dementia are always made welcome. 1 2 3 4 5
6. When older people become too frail to attend Mass, their absence is noted and support offered. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Support is always offered when people have to cope with loss and bereavement. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Older people are listened to and their views help guide parish activities. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Parish volunteers are mainly older people. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Residents in Care Homes in our parish are visited and offered Holy Communion. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Please tell us one thing our parish could do better in welcoming older people.

Comments:

Length of time lived in this parish:

Age: (Please circle) 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65-74 75+

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

GROWING OLD GRACE-FULLY QUIZ

The witness of Growing Old Grace-fully is to God's gift of age, both to older people themselves, to the wider Church and the whole community.

We hope this Quiz will help to open the discussion to consider God's gift of age, "the greatest triumph and challenge of the 21st century" (WHO 2002), and to reflect on how we are all responding to that challenge as part of the Church's mission.

Older people today

The expectations of older people have changed dramatically.

1. The average life expectancy in 1900 was 47 and it is now 87.
How much is the human lifespan increasing every day, as an estimate?
☐ 5 seconds ☐ 5 minutes ☐ 5 hours (Source: Nesta 2013)
2. How many million people in Britain are over the state pension age?
☐ 10 million ☐ 11 million ☐ 12 million (Source: Gov't Actuary's Dept)
3. What is the estimated percentage of the population that are over 85?
☐ 2% ☐ 5% ☐ 7.5 % (Source: Gov't Actuary's Dept)
4. The proportion of people with dementia doubles for every 5 year age group. What percentage of people aged 90 and over have dementia?
☐ 13% ☐ 27% ☐ 33% (Alzheimers Society, Statistics, 2009)
5. What is the chance of living in a long-stay hospital or care home for people aged 85+?
☐ 16% ☐ 20% ☐ 24 % (Source: Age UK, 2013)

Older people's value

Older people offer huge benefits to society.

6. There are 6.5 million unpaid carers in the UK, but how many are over 65?
☐ 500,000 ☐ 1 million ☐ 1.2 million (Source: CarersUK Briefing Oct 2015)
7. What is the estimated value of the informal care provided by older people every year?
☐ £1.8 billion ☐ £5.5 billion ☐ £11.4 billion (Source: Gov't Actuary's Dept)

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OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

GROWING OLD GRACE-FULLY QUIZ

8. What is the estimated amount of childcare that grandparents deliver free every year in Britain?

- ☐ £10 million ☐ £1 billion ☐ £7.3 billion (Source: Grandparents Plus/Age UK, May 2013)

9. What percentage of people aged 65 and over take part in volunteering or civic engagement?

- ☐ 25% ☐ 58% ☐ 90% (Source: Age UK Older People as Volunteers Review, 2013)

10. What is the estimated amount over 65s contribute to the UK economy AFTER deduction of costs and pensions?

- ☐ £10 billion ☐ £25 billion ☐ £40 billion

(Source: Women's RVS/King's Fund Ageing Report, 2012)

Older people and church

The UK is made up of an ageing population, and that includes the Church.

11. What was the estimate of the proportion of older parishioners in each Deanery?

- ☐ 50% ☐ 35% ☐ 25% (Source: CSAN Older People's Services, 2009)

12. What did the majority of Church Leaders identify as the main challenge facing older people?

- ☐ Mental health ☐ Poverty ☐ Loneliness & isolation

(Source: CSAN Older People's Services, 2009)

13. How many visits to older people do the St Vincent de Paul Society make in a year in the UK?

- ☐ 50,000 ☐ 65,000 ☐ 75,000 (Source: CSAN Older People's Services, 2009)

14. According to a recent survey by Dr Peter Brierley, Director of Christian Research, over a third of people aged 64–74 have a “sense of belonging to a church”. What proportion have this “sense of belonging” aged 85 or more?

- ☐ over half ☐ a quarter ☐ less than a fifth

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

GROWING OLD GRACE-FULLY QUIZ

THIS COPY IS FOR THE QUIZ MASTER

The correct answers are in bold and in colour.

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OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

GROWING OLD GRACE-FULLY QUIZ ANSWERS

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13. How many visits to older people do the St Vincent de Paul Society make in a year in the UK?

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1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH



IDEAS FROM OLDER PEOPLE IN ANSWER TO OUR QUESTION:

“What do you think our parishes can do to help welcome older people?”

“A regular midday/afternoon liturgy with food to follow – this might be Mass or a community-led prayer service.”

Two parishes are already doing this (see page 3/10 and page 6/5)

“Community celebrations of the Sacrament of the Sick (at least once a year), followed by a meal – with personal invitations to housebound people and help for them to get there.”

“Make sure that people understand how to request home visits, that housebound people are able to receive Holy Communion at home, and that those who give Communion are trained to respond with understanding to people with dementia.”

“Consider the needs of carers who may be worn down by looking after someone with little support. **An occasional get-together where carers can share their experiences**, be listened to and looked after with nice refreshments is not difficult to organize. Some carers may need help to find care for their loved one to enable them to attend.”

See page 7/3 for more information about Carers’ Support Groups

“Residents in care homes in the parish may have come from outside the area and may not be in a position to request visits from the priest or parish. **Make sure that care home staff have information about how to contact the parish** and what support is available for residents.”

“Acknowledging bereavement and offering support to people as they move into a different phase of life requires sensitivity and commitment but can help people to grieve and to avoid loneliness and isolation.”

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

“We could work with other local churches through Churches Together or with other faith communities to benefit people in the wider community. **A weekly/monthly afternoon tea/friendship club open to all local older people** would enlarge everyone’s social networks.”

“**Many parishes have halls which could be more fully used for social events** such as games sessions, talks, exercise classes, singing groups (whatever people say they would like) for older people and many older people have skills to lead these groups.”

“**Occasional group outings** to cinema, theatre, for coffee in a café, to places of interest, provide highlights for people who find it difficult to get out with friends. Transport will be needed.”

“Volunteering – doing something for others – is excellent for people’s own wellbeing. **Advertise local volunteer opportunities on the parish local information noticeboard.**”

“Support with IT – many older people use smartphones, tablets and computers very effectively to keep in touch with family and friends and for leisure; others might like to try. **Can the parish match people who are good with IT with people who would like to try it out?**”

All responses from older people, Growing Old Grace-fully Conference 2014.

1 OLDER PEOPLE AND YOUR PARISH

A PARISH PLEDGE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

A list of 8 pledges, or intentions, for parishes to consider and act on, based on what people have told Growing Old Grace-fully they think is important when welcoming older people.

1 We recognise that we need to listen and learn from older people's knowledge and skills and experiences.

"Ensure that older people can play a full part in parish life in whatever ways they choose."

2 We think about how we all might discriminate against older people in what we say and do so that older people are never made to feel invisible or can't join fully in parish life.

"We want a culture of 'warmth' in the parish – greet people, introduce ourselves, offer a kind word, engage with people."

3 We support and encourage activities between generations, so that young may learn from old and vice versa and that neither is seen as more important than the other.

"Opportunities for inter-generational involvement between younger and older people for example with the parish primary school and confirmation candidates."

1 WHAT DOES A LATER-LIFE-FRIENDLY PARISH LOOK LIKE?

4 We offer older people new things to do and think about rather than assuming they will always prefer the status quo.

"Clear information about parish services, activities and who to contact (in confidence) for more information or help or to volunteer."

5 We try to help older members to cope with the effects of physical and mental diminishment and support people experiencing feelings of loss.

"Notice when regular people are missing from Sunday Mass and check if they are OK, if they need any help or would like a visit or phone call."

6 We offer help to any older person struggling to come to mass.

7 We offer practical support to older carers of spouses, parents, other relatives and friends or of grandchildren.

"Recognize and celebrate the work of carers, by including them in the prayers of the faithful and during National Carers' Week in early June each year"

8 We recognise that the process of growing older can challenge our beliefs as we cope with losses and diminishment, and that this questioning needs a response.

"Specialist organisations such as Cruse exist to support people but parishes can contribute creative and sensitive support to individuals at times of need, and help people remember through community services."

Inspired by the Diocese of Hereford's Policy for Older People (July 2006).



2

VOCATION IN LATER LIFE



TO DO

1. **HOLD** a Thanksgiving Mass every year for all those in your parish who volunteer their gifts and time.
2. **CELEBRATE** Volunteers' Week at the start of June.
3. **HELP** people think about how they might use their gifts and talents in the parish.

Having a vocation is often seen as being called to be ordained as a priest or a deacon, or being called to religious life. But a vocation is something every one of us has. It just means we are called to use our God given gifts and talents in everything we do: in our work, family life, church and community commitments. So this calling does not stop when we retire from paid work.

“Your vocation, your life work, is where your deep gladness meets the world’s deep need.”

FREDERICH BUECHNER

VOCATIONS ARE KEY TO PARISH LIFE

Where would our parishes be without the volunteers, many retired, who continue to use their gifts and talents to do the essential parish jobs, from flowers to finance to leaders of liturgy?

As we get frail and can do less, we can continue to pray for others. This too is a calling. Our parishes, and the world, need the prayers of the older generations. Some parishes run a Prayer Sponsor programme where volunteers in the parish are given a person to pray for, and an outline of how this works is on page 2/6.

“The prayers of the world’s grandparents and older people are a great gift for the Church and they offer a great infusion of wisdom for all of society, too, especially for [those who are] too busy, too occupied, too distracted.”

POPE FRANCIS

WHAT YOUR PARISH CAN DO

Here are some ideas to help your parish think about how to celebrate, and also help discover, vocations for retired people.

1. **Hold a Thanksgiving Mass** for all those in your parish who volunteer their gifts and time to offer a truly valuable service. Your parish could send a special personalised invitation to all these people, which might include:
 - Readers
 - Servers
 - Catechists
 - Liturgy leaders
 - Eucharistic Ministers
 - Church cleaners and caterers
 - Those who arrange the flowers
 - Those on the Parish Council
 - The choir and musicians, including the organists
 - Members of Prayer Groups
 - Members of parish organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) and the Legion of Mary.

You could also invite everyone who has retired from paid work that year through the parish bulletin, parish notice boards and, for those who have one, through your parish website.

2. **Celebrate Volunteers' Week** at the start of June (5th–11th June 2017) by inviting different community groups, Diocesan groups and local organisations to each have a stall. You could also invite two or three representatives from some of the key organisations to talk about their work and how volunteering helps both the volunteers and the beneficiaries.

Your local Volunteering Centre will be able to help you. The website www.ncvo.org.uk has a place to search by postcode to find your nearest Volunteering Centre www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre. Contact details for Catholic Societies and Organisations can be found on the Leeds Diocesan website www.dioceseofleeds.org.uk under Services.

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration across the UK of the fantastic contribution of millions of volunteers. The website has lots of practical resources around volunteering: www.volunteers.org.

2

VOCATION IN LATER LIFE

3. Help people think about how they might use their gifts and talents in the parish:

- “Finding our calling when we retire” could be a theme for a Prayer group
- Encourage people to use their skills in the parish:
 - To help run an exercise class
 - To help pass on the faith: volunteering for First Communion and Confirmation classes, running a children’s liturgy, training servers.*
 - To develop a Bereavement Group or ‘Sitting Service’ for Carers *
- Our parishes need the older generation’s prayers. A Prayer Sponsor activity can support children making their first Holy Communion for example. See page 2/6 for an outline of how this works.

***Creating a Safe Environment.** Anyone in contact with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the parish or parish organisations must have gone through the diocesan safeguarding checks. For all guidance and forms in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults please see www.csas.uk.net/resource-area. Your Local Authority will also be able to offer guidance and resources in relation to safeguarding.

4. Organise a quiet day of prayer, reflection and discussion for older people to help people in ‘finding newness in later life’. Growing Old Grace-fully can help organise this and suggest experienced people to lead it.



FURTHER READING

What are the third and fourth ages of life? (page 2/5)

Two stories (pages 2/7–2/8)

Ann's story of her own calling to journey to Peru at 70, to experience life with the Cross & Passion Sisters in the barrios of Villa el Salvador for three months.

Rachel's story of how the wisdom of older people has helped her – because old age enlightens, not simply ourselves but those around us.

Prayer Sponsors (page 2/6)

An outline of how to run this activity in a parish.

Recommended books

Sister Joan Chittester, *The Gift of Years: Growing Old Gracefully* (Bluebridge, 2010)

Not only accepting but also celebrating getting old, this inspirational and illuminating book looks at the many facets of the ageing process, from purposes and challenges to struggles and surprises. Central throughout is a call to cherish the blessing of ageing as a natural part of life that is active, productive, and deeply rewarding.

Richard Rohr, *Falling Upwards: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (SPCK, 2012)

A new way of understanding one of the most profound of life's mysteries: how our failing can be the foundation for our ongoing spiritual growth.

W H Vanstone, *The Stature of Waiting* (Morehouse, 2006)

We set great store by activity and busyness. This classic of spiritual writing transforms our understanding of the experiences of illness, being out of work, or feeling inactive and powerless.

Nouwen and Gaffney, *Ageing: the Fulfilment of Life* (Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1999)

Moving and inspirational thoughts on what ageing can mean to all of us. It is a warm, caring book that shows us how to make the later years a source of hope rather than a time of loneliness.

“When the elderly no longer can bring us into contact with our own ageing, we quickly start playing dangerous power games to uphold the illusion of being ageless and immortal. Then not only will the wisdom of the elderly be hidden from us, but the elderly themselves will lose their own deepest understanding of life. For who can remain a teacher when there are no students willing to learn?”

WHAT ARE THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH AGES OF LIFE?

Have you heard people in later life referred to as ‘Third Agers’ or ‘people in the Fourth Age of life’?

Peter Laslett (1915–2001), a British historian, adapted the French concept of the Four Ages of Life (www.thirdagecommunity.weebly.com) highlighting the Third as a new and distinctive stage.

It might be helpful to give a brief outline of all **Four Ages of Life**.

1. **FIRST AGE:** our youth to roughly our early 20s, when we develop the skills and knowledge needed to support the maturity and independence that Second Age requires.
2. **SECOND AGE:** from our 20’s to mid-life, when we strive to earn a place in the adult world of responsibility and typically seek to enjoy the security, status and other external markers of our achievements, however modest.
3. **THIRD AGE:** roughly age 50+ when our roles in our family and work are likely to change, giving us time to take particular note of what is really important to us and how we want to ‘spend’ the time remaining to us. We might want to revisit/reclaim some of what we neglected along the way, clear out unwanted baggage, heal old wounds and see where we want to grow to become more balanced and whole.
4. **FOURTH AGE:** this is described by Laslett as a period of dependency, frailty, and ultimately death. For Christians this is considered to be the last stage of our earthly life, which allows us to review and revel in the fullness of our lives with ‘no regrets’ and to prepare for whatever comes next. This time of ever more heightened awareness and growing acceptance of our mortality can lead us to the peace and joy of surrender. All of our life is in one sense a preparation and prelude for this stage.

PRAYER SPONSORS

Our parishes, and the world, need the older generations' prayers. Pope Francis remarked how wonderful it was that Pope Benedict XVI "chose to spend the final stretch of life in prayer and listening to God." In the same speech, he went on to say that prayer is "truly a mission for grandparents, a vocation for older people".

You might consider running a Prayer Sponsor activity to support children making their first Holy Communion or preparing for Confirmation. Each person in the parish who wants to be part of the programme is given someone to pray for. They never need to meet so there is no safeguarding to consider.

Peter Thompson has developed a simple Prayer Partners Programme using special Prayer Cards:

- There is a special GIFTING Mass or service where the special prayer cards are blessed by the priest and handed to people who have promised to pray for someone.
- Each person receiving the card (and their family – if they have one) are invited to 'promise' to keep it safe and bring it out at special times of year, for example on their birthday, during Advent and Lent, Holy Week and Pentecost.

"Our parish liked the idea and did feel it was a good way to unite in prayer. Our parish priest said he thought it may be a good idea to take prayer themes into nursing homes that some of our congregation visit."

PARISHIONER FROM ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, BILLINGHAM

"We have a number of elderly and housebound parishioners who are in our programme and they say they love the feeling that they are doing something special to support someone else and do feel a connection with them, even though they don't meet. That makes them feel less isolated."

PARISHIONER FROM ST. PATRICK'S, ELLAND

Peter can be contacted on **0743 453 0134** or email peter@nurturing-potential.com

2

VOCATION IN LATER LIFE

Life is a journey, an adventure. Sr Joan Chittester writes in her book *The Gift of Years* that each period of our life has its own purpose. This is the time to let go of our fantasies about staying forever young and our fear of getting older and discover the beauty of what it means to age well. It is a new stage of life which can be a time of blessing.



ANN'S STORY

“We are the first generation to enjoy having time, health, and sufficient pension for many years after retirement. While I am aware that life is not a level playing field, and for some old age is very challenging, I do believe strongly that it is our job to change the view of old age held by the young. I think that being open to change, and being prepared to step outside one's comfort zone, are key elements in challenging the 'old age as decline' model.

I went to Peru when I was 70, to experience life with the Cross & Passion Sisters in the barrios of Villa el Salvador for three months. I didn't really imagine what it would be like. Certainly, if I had listened to friends who thought it was very risky, I might have thought twice about it.

My life after Peru is different. My faith in the Church, which is all of us, has been restored by witnessing the love which those priests and nuns have for the people in their care and for each other. I want what those nuns have. I want to love and feel loved by God and see that love in other people.

I must say I was glad to come home to England in May, with all the trees coming into leaf and the neat English gardens. However, we have not got what the parishioners in Villa El Salvador have and the Joy of the Gospel sadly is not as evident in churches I go into in this country. Still, I am hopeful that the Spirit is moving in the Church and that we shall be part of that renewal, particularly in our later years, and be part of the adventure of evangelization.”

TWO STORIES

2

VOCATION IN LATER LIFE



Old age enlightens, not simply ourselves but those around us. The later years of a person's life can be a burden if we allow ourselves to believe that not being as fast or as busy as we used to be is some kind of human deficiency. These years can be a blessing when we come to understand that it is the quality of what we are that makes us valuable members of society, not how fast or busy we are.

TWO STORIES

RACHEL'S STORY

“I can't speak about being old as I'm 51, but I do want to say what I've gained from being with older people. Some of the encounters I've had, particularly with those older people who are quite frail, are helping me to want to try and loosen my grip on my own programmes for happiness. I think I'm trying to learn to let go. I'm trying to learn that true happiness isn't in the places I have pursued happiness – the winds of ambition, the earthquake of success, the fire of achievement.

There are so many older people I've met that I would like to say 'thank you' to, but I've picked one person in particular. I got to know Brother Thomas about three years ago. Brother Thomas is a monk who went into the monastery in 1949 and is now 89 years old*. Whenever I meet him, he's always supremely himself, never afraid to laugh at himself, offering no judgements and completely unselfconscious in appearance and manner, but as steady as granite. His body and his memory are not what they were, but there's something luminous about him.

I am full of uncertainties and unable to give any very satisfactory account intellectually of what I believe, but I am very grateful that I have had the chance to spend time with Brother Thomas, who helps me make the connection. He is a native of the world to which I want to belong, and he starts where God starts – *'with the rather sad and shop-soiled reality of being human which God seeks to make glorious'* (Rowan Williams).”

*Brother Thomas Taylor, 1927–2017. RIP.



GROWING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH

3

GROWING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH



TO DO

1. **BOOK** a 45 minute Dementia Friends session for your parish.
2. **AIM** to have at least one Dementia Champion, trained by the Alzheimer's Society, in your parish who can help create more Dementia Friends.
3. **ORGANISE** a Quiet Mass once a month; a relaxed service where everyone can come and worship.

How many people have been affected by dementia that you know? Because it's a condition that can affect our memories and change our behaviours, it doesn't just affect the person living with it. It can affect everyone that knows them, loves them and helps to care for them.

“There are 850,000 people living with dementia in the UK and 700,000 friends and family members caring for them. Over 24 million people know a family member or friend living with dementia.”

ALZHEIMER'S RESEARCH UK, 2015

Dementia causes the cells of the brain to die more quickly than in normal ageing. This leads to a general decline in a person's abilities. Individuals may be forgetful, especially of recent events, and they may be muddled about time or place and have difficulty carrying out familiar tasks. Behaviour may be unusual or challenging.

Dementia is more likely to occur as we get older and so, as we are living longer, it has become more common. But there are still a lot of misunderstandings about dementia. Our parishes have a huge role to play in helping people live well with dementia. We all need to work towards being more dementia friendly so that everyone feels they are not just included in parish life, but that they really belong.

Is it possible for loving church communities to get it wrong and, with the best of intentions, be dementia UNfriendly? Read Mavis's Story on page 3/5.

WHAT YOUR PARISH CAN DO

- 1. Learn a little bit about what it's like to live with dementia** by holding a Dementia Friends session. A Dementia Friends session lasts about 45 mins, is upbeat and gives everyone a chance to join in. Participants learn five things everyone should know about dementia. The session helps people in the parish think about how they turn the understanding into action. No action is too small as it's the little things we say and do that can help to create dementia friendly parishes.

You might want to start by talking to members of the Parish Council and see if this can be put on the Agenda. Your St Vincent De Paul Society (SVP) might also be interested in having a Dementia Friends session.

Growing Old Grace-fully's trained Dementia Champion can run a Friends Session in your parish. Call Rachel on **07702 255142** or email growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk. You can also contact the Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends team at dementiafriends@alzheimers.org.uk or call their helpline on **0300 222 1122** and ask for a Champion to come and run a session for you.

- 2. Aim to have at least one Dementia Champion in your parish.** You could start this by asking if there's anyone in the parish who is already a Dementia Champion. You could put a notice in the Bulletin and also ask your priest to make an announcement at Sunday mass. You could consider becoming a Dementia Champion yourself, or ask fellow parishioners if they would like to become a Champion.

Having Champions in the parish means you can run your own Friends sessions. Champions can help make sure that the Eucharistic Ministers, SVP members, Bereavement Group members, Deacons and Clergy are all Dementia Friends. For some helpful pointers about giving communion to people with dementia go to page 3/8. For pointers on visiting people with dementia go to page 3/9.

Becoming a Champion is easier than you might think and it involves attending a FREE one day's training session run by the Alzheimer's Society. The training sessions are run locally all over the Diocese. The Alzheimer's Society provides all the resources you need, including Dementia Friends badges. Go to www.dementiafriends.org.uk to find a free training session taking place near you, contact Dementia Friends team at dementiafriends@alzheimers.org.uk or call the Alzheimer's Society helpline on **0300 222 1122**.

- 3. Organize a Quiet Mass once a month.** The Parish of St John Mary Vianney have been holding a monthly Mass for those living with memory loss and their carers for over two years. It is a relaxed service where everyone can come and worship and many older people come who aren't living with memory loss.

“I love coming here. I see a lot of people I know and it’s nice to catch up with people and have time to talk. Normally people have to dash off after Mass on Sunday.”

MARGARET, PARISHIONER

“My little boy, who is two, attends each month and is often the centre of attention (which he loves). Carers have spoken about their loved one enjoying watching little ones play and entertain them.

I would encourage every Parish to offer support to those with dementia. It does make a difference, both to the person living with dementia and their carers, who may be sharing the experience of worship with their loved one for the first time in many years.”

HILLARY, PARISHIONER AND ORGANISER

To read a step by step summary of how this Mass got started, go to page 3/10.

Can you also think about other opportunities to offer support and help people with dementia really belong? One parish held a Dementia Friendly Carol Service at Christmas which was popular with everyone:

- The Service was only 30 minutes long
- It featured only well-known carols
- Everyone sung along to all the carols – there was no choir
- There was a mince pie and tea after the service
- One of the attendees told us “Everyone left with a smile on their face”.

4. Plan to become a dementia friendly parish. This means you can display the ‘daisy’ symbol in your church and on parish literature:

To join, you need to complete an Action Plan for your parish and register this Action Plan with the local Dementia Action Alliance (DAA), who provide a template plan. An example of a parish Action Plan is included on pages 3/11–3/13. You may well be doing things already which can be included in your plan.

3

GROWING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH

Your parish will be joining over 3,000 groups and organisations of all sizes (including Growing Old Grace-fully) who are all working to become dementia friendly, including churches, dioceses and many other faith groups.

Go to www.dementiaaction.org.uk/join_the_alliance and search for your nearest local alliance, who will be happy to help you.



RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Revd Gaynor Hammond, *Growing Dementia-Friendly Churches*. Available at £5 from www.fiep.org.uk or email faithinelderlypeople@yahoo.co.uk

A practical guide for all churches who are seeking to be welcoming, inclusive and nurturing communities.

Dave Pulsford and Rachel Thompson, *Dementia: Support for Family and Friends* (Jessica Kingsley, 2013).

A book that sets out clearly the progression of dementia from its early phase to its moderate phase to its advanced phase, as well as facing the end of life.

Christine Bryden, *Who will I be when I die?* (Jessica Kingsley, 2012).

A first-hand account of dementia by the author who was 46 when she was diagnosed made more remarkable by Christine's positivity and strength that life continues to have purpose and meaning.

Malcolm Goldsmith, *In a Strange Land... people with dementia and the local church* (4M Publications, 2004).

A mine of information and practical suggestions.

Albert Jewell (ed.), *Spirituality and Personhood in Dementia* (Jessica Kingsley, 2011)

This is the most comprehensive collection of essays with a British orientation on facing dementia within various spiritual orientations.

Dr Adrian Treloar, *Hope on a Difficult Journey* (Redemptionist Publications, 2017).

Many people with dementia carry with them a strong Christian foundation. This book provides some clues as to how those spiritual needs can and should be met.



TWO STORIES

MAVIS'S STORY

Can a loving church community be dementia UNfriendly?

“For years Mavis had enjoyed being on tea and coffee making duty after church. She used to bake delicious cakes to eat with the refreshments, so everyone was pleased when it was her turn on the rota. However, things changed: she developed dementia and no longer baked her lovely cakes. In fact most of the time she even forgot to bring milk and biscuits. The catering team had a meeting and because they cared so much for Mavis and knew it distressed her when she forgot things, they decided that it would be best if they ‘retired’ her from the duties.

They presented her with a bouquet of flowers as a thank you and explained to her that she had been doing it faithfully for so many years and now it was time to come off the rota and to be ‘waited on’. This decision was taken out of a genuine care for Mavis, the assumption being that she had done her bit; it was time now for others to serve her.

But for Mavis, it just exacerbated her feelings of no longer being useful and she became very depressed now her role was ended.”

An excerpt from Revd Gaynor Hammond’s ‘Growing Dementia-Friendly Churches’ available at £5 from www.fiep.org.uk or email faithinelderlypeople@yahoo.co.uk

What do you think the church catering team might have done to support Mavis so she could have still enjoyed serving others?



TWO STORIES

BERNADETTE'S STORY

“A lady called Bernadette*, living with dementia and who was blind, was in a care home away from her home town. I used to take her to Sunday Mass in my Parish when I could, and to start with none of us knew her. Although I knew about dementia I was still a little nervous at how she might be. An acquaintance from her home parish told me a few details about her family and job so we could talk about that.

However I learned as we went along what to do and we enjoyed each other's company. Although she had a lot of memory loss I soon learned that most times she would join in many of the Mass responses, sing some of the older hymns and mostly knew what to do at Communion. The Mass and these rituals were deeply embedded within her. The Home told me that she was sometimes agitated, but when she returned from Mass she was often more cheerful and peaceful and this effect could last for some days. The Home would tell me how she was when I went to collect her and sometimes she was still asleep or too agitated to take to Mass. I observed how much the Mass and its familiar practices grounded her and she became part of our community.

I learned that if I clasped her firmly by the hand with my forearm under hers this seemed to help guide her around the place. We sat in the same area each time so the Priest's voice was coming from the same direction. Some of the people we sat near were regulars in those seats and would greet her and learned at the Sign of Peace to reach out for her hand and say "Peace be with you", so she knew what was happening. Many of us learned that if she stood up when others were sitting or vice versa, which happened occasionally, that was OK. If it was the Sermon I would hold her hand and sit her down. Just before we stood up for Communion I said it would be time very soon to go to Communion. There was one occasion when she didn't feel able to go. Nearly every time she would put the Host in her own mouth as she had done for years. I was pleased about that because I thought for a blind person with dementia a sudden hand coming to her mouth might alarm her. We tried to go to the Deacon or Priest if we could because they knew she was blind. On several occasions she stood with the Host in her hand and I gently repeated the words "Body of Christ" and put it in her mouth. We didn't go to the Chalice.

3

GROWING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH

TWO STORIES

We have coffee after Sunday Mass and she liked coming to that. One lady realised she remembered her from years back at the Irish Centre and that she liked singing. They would usually have a chat and a singsong. I learned I could leave her briefly at a table and collect our drinks and chat to others and introduce them to Bernadette.

I learned a lot from her and the importance of the Mass for her humbled me. She was a gentle companion. Some of us learned to be more dementia friendly and dementia confident from being with her, and that we could manage a little unpredictable behaviour in Mass. Her presence enriched our own experience of going to Mass. We miss her. ”

*Name changed

HOLY COMMUNION FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

It is important that priest, deacons and Eucharistic Ministers feel comfortable when offering communion to a person living with dementia. The progress of dementia has been described as ‘a journey from the mind to the heart’ and that means that people with dementia are often more sensitive to other people’s anxiety than people who don’t have dementia. Having the proper training is important so Ministers are not anxious. Attending a Friends session and **becoming a Dementia Friend** is a good first step for all clergy and Ministers in your parish.

To those living in a world that has become confusing and strange, the repetitive nature of ritual and well known prayers gives familiarity and reliability and will act as a cue to the person’s memory – we have body memory and the sign of the cross can be a wonderful trigger.

- Use of symbols, such as a cross, a candle, can give clues and cues to what is happening.
- Use appropriate physical contact.
- Try to include a personal blessing.
- Keep as much eye contact as you can with people, even during the prayers. Praying with eyes shut can make people feel disconnected.

When offering Communion, come to the person at eye level, if that’s possible, and ask them by name if they would like to receive the Eucharist. If they say no, then offer a blessing.

A priest’s story

“When I was a hospital Chaplain, I used to take Communion to the Stroke Ward. I always asked one particular lady if she would like to receive Communion, and every week the lady always said ‘no’. Some months later, the nurses gathered the patients for Holy Communion. When I passed this lady by in the course of giving Communion, as she had again said ‘no’, she became very agitated. It was at that point it dawned on me that what she had meant was other than she actually said. I think it’s important that we don’t necessarily take the words of a person with cognitive difficulties as an expression of exactly what they mean. We need to watch people’s body language very closely. People find other ways to communicate and we have to be attentive to that, and always give a person time to respond in whatever way they can.”

Communion is a great blessing. What makes Communion the supreme gift is not the ‘understanding’ we accord it, but the fact that it is the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ. That reality is not in the slightest dependent on anyone’s understanding of so great a mystery. Ministers should not be scared to get it wrong. It is our responsibility to take care of the Eucharist but that does not mean we should not use it. The Lord will not mind if we get it wrong. It’s our intentions that count.

VISITING PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

People with dementia and their carers often receive few visitors because there is a mistaken belief that visiting is not worthwhile – and because visitors don’t know what to say or do.

Communicating with others is a basic human need and people with dementia need nourishing love and relationships and to know they are not forgotten.

Communication is

- more than words
- the smile on your face
- a friendly approach
- listening thoughtfully
- the warmth of your voice
- a gentle touch

Remember that although you and your visit may be quickly forgotten, the feelings generated will remain. People with dementia continue to respond emotionally, even when they can no longer reason.

Taken from *Visiting People with Dementia – Suggestions for Christian Visitors* from MHA (www.mha.org.uk)

“I may not always remember who you are, but I will always remember how you made me feel.”

CHRISTINE BRYDEN

Christine was diagnosed with early onset dementia at 46 in 1995, and in 2016 is still offering a unique insider’s perspective to living with dementia. www.christinebryden.com

ORGANISING A QUIET MASS – HOW DID THE PARISH OF ST JOHN MARY VIANNEY DO IT?

- The idea started with the understanding that **Mass holds a special place in the heart of most Catholics and many people living with dementia are missing this connection.** Unpredictable behaviour can result in family members feeling uncomfortable attending Sunday Mass. Others may live in a care home which makes it difficult to be supported to attend mass on a weekend.
- Supported by the parish priest, **a group of parishioners from the SVP and women's group** met to discuss the needs of those in the parish living with dementia and ways that these needs might be met.

Hillary, parishioner and a key organiser, shared with this group:

“The experience of a friend whose wife was living with Alzheimer's and who was so touched by the Parish Priest's desire to persist with his wife, that he spoke lovingly of the experience for many years after his wife died.

The Parish Priest would come to give the couple Holy Communion each week, despite Betty's refusal. One day, after many months of persistence, Betty accepted the tiniest morsel of bread. Eric knew his wife was still present and remained the person he loved despite appearing to the outside world as if she was lost. For this to be understood and accepted by others meant the world to Eric.”

- It was agreed to turn **a regular weekday Mass into a relaxed service** on the last Thursday of every month, followed by a light lunch afterwards in the church hall.
- Before the monthly Masses started, the **helpers met as a group to discuss the possible needs of those with dementia**, as well as any fears or concerns we may have.
- A committed group of **10 volunteer helpers provide a sandwich lunch** for the 20–30 older people who attend, some who are living with dementia and some who are not.
- **Different parish groups are involved** including women's groups, the SVP and mini-Vinnies (junior SVP members).
- **Local charities have been approached** and they help promote the Mass.
- **Links with a local nursing home** have helped three residents to attend with an activity worker.
- **Families are encouraged to attend** to give a true sense of community.

AN EXAMPLE OF A PARISH ACTION PLAN – BECOMING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH

_____ Parish serves the needs of the Catholic community in _____.

_____ Church is located at _____ in the town centre opposite the entrance to _____ and within walking distance of _____.

Our Parish aims to be a community of welcome, prayer, love and support for all.

Parish mission, e.g. “At the heart of everything that we do is our relationship with Jesus and our response to the Good News of the Gospel to bring Christ’s peace, healing and hope to everyone whom we meet”.

ACTION PLAN

- 1. The National Dementia Declaration lists seven outcomes that the DAA are seeking to achieve for people with dementia and their carers. How would you describe your organisation’s role in delivering better outcomes for people with dementia and their carers?**

As a Parish, we seek to be aware of the needs of those in our community who are experiencing difficulties. The care of elderly people including those with dementia, is a priority in terms of the Church’s pastoral and spiritual care and we seek to promote the inclusion of people with dementia and their carers in all aspects of parish life. We encourage attendance at Mass by those able to attend and Ministers of the Eucharist bring Holy Communion each week to those unable to attend Mass or who are now resident in Care Homes. By promoting Dementia awareness, we aim to be a community of understanding and welcome for people with dementia and their families through support to carers and good practice in ministry.

“In safeguarding and promoting life – at every stage and in any condition it is found – may we recognize the dignity and value of every human being from conception to death.”

POPE FRANCIS

2. What are the challenges to delivering these outcomes from the perspective of your organisation?

- Parish volunteers visiting those with dementia in their homes are required to go through the Diocesan Safeguarding process
- The Parish has many and varied demands on its resources and is dependent on volunteers to spread best practice across a large number of people.
- To raise awareness of dementia in our parish

ACTIONS

1. **To raise awareness of dementia in our parish.** To understand the needs of those who live with dementia, we plan to host an open Dementia Friends session in _____ led by _____, Dementia Action Alliance Co-ordinator. We will encourage those who attend to become Dementia Friends. We will take part in our Local Dementia Action Alliance and attend meetings where possible. We will promote Dementia Prayer Week in March 2016.

www.pastoralcareproject.org.uk

Status: Planning

2. **To train and support members of our Pastoral team in reaching out to those with dementia and their carers.** The Parish Pastoral team is made up of the Parish Priest, Parish Office staff, Ministers of the Eucharist, those who visit the sick at home or in hospital, those who give lifts to Mass, those who organize Services of Healing/ afternoon teas/Christmas meals for the sick, housebound and elderly, members of the Prayer Group and members of the Bereavement Support Group. We will also involve members of St Vincent de Paul in this action.

We will encourage members of the Pastoral team and members of St Vincent de Paul to become **Dementia Friends**.

Training and support are important in parish ministry to people with dementia and their carers. The Pastoral team will meet regularly for training and support, to develop awareness of the spiritual and pastoral needs of people with dementia and to plan and implement spiritual and pastoral support for them.

Status: Planning

3

GROWING A DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PARISH

3. To understand and address the needs of caregivers.

The commitments and responsibilities of families and carers of people with dementia can leave them feeling marginalized or even excluded from parish life. The emotions involved in caring can often be complex and carers need support from our Parish community.

We will signpost carers to relevant local support services. We will develop a toolkit/ information package on how to get help from local support services to ensure that carers are equipped with the knowledge to support those whom they are caring for who are living with dementia. We will ensure that all members of the Pastoral team have access to this information. We will develop awareness of the spiritual and pastoral needs of those who care for people with dementia by giving them opportunities to pray and talk about their experiences and their feelings in a safe and supportive environment. We will look into ways in which we can offer carers practical support.

Status: Planning



4 BEING MORTAL



TO DO

1. **RECOGNISE** Dying Matters Week in May and raise the topic in your parish.
2. **ORGANISE** a workshop to 'Plan Your Catholic Funeral'.
3. **CONSIDER** running other workshops exploring Catholic teaching on end of life care.

“We do not believe in the ‘after life’ but the eternal life of God’s unquenchable love. And so whether I shall live for a short time or, less likely, for long, I give thanks for this experience of the fragility of my life. I must not put off living until it is too late.”

FR TIMOTHY RADCLIFFE, O.P.

How many of us continue to feel young inside, even when our bodies are starting to wear out? This feeling may prevent us from making the plans and arrangements that will give us our best chance of having the life, care, death, funeral and remembrance that we want.

If we think about death as a journey, not just a specific moment, it might help us understand what it means to die well. But as with any journey, we have to prepare for it. We don't have to be very old or ill or morbid to start. It does not bring death any nearer but a lot of people say that thinking about what they want for themselves, and for their loved ones, can be valuable and rewarding. Our parishes have an important role in helping us 'pack for the journey'.

“We prepare for the arrival of a new baby, we plan for it, we think about what we are going to buy and what we are going to call the new baby. It is part of our daily life, our conversation. Why do we not prepare for our death in the same way?”

KATHERINE SLEEMAN

Palliative Medicine Registrar, Cicely Saunders Institute

4 BEING MORTAL

Thinking about death and dying can often make us ask deeper questions about what life is all about. The Church offers hope and comfort because it is rooted in the belief that God made us to enjoy eternal life with Him. We believe that death opens the way to new life. For us, in dying, we close our eyes for the last time here, in order to be able to really see for the first time there. We are blessed with some special prayers and sacraments that give meaning to sickness and death.

To read more about these special prayers and sacraments that give meaning to sickness and death, see pages 4/5–4/7.

WHAT YOUR PARISH CAN DO

1. Raise the topic – **recognise Dying Matters Week in your parish.** Dying Matters Week usually takes place in the second week of May (8–14 May 2017) and was set up by the National Council for Palliative Care to raise end of life issues. A wide range of leaflets, postcards, posters and DVDs are available to help people begin conversations about end of life issues at www.dyingmatters.org or by calling **Freephone 0800 021 4466**. They present useful information in a clear and easy to read manner on subjects including:

- Making plans
- Writing wills
- Bereavement
- Talking to children about death
- Avoiding misconceptions about dying

All the leaflets are freely available to download and print, and hard copies are available to order. Their website also allows you to find out what's on near you, so you can hear what other organisations, such as local Funeral Directors, are doing during Dying Matters Week.

There is a wonderful website from the Catholic Church in England and Wales called www.artofdyingwell.org which aims to help people think about dying and to learn from the experience of others. It features real stories from dying people and their families, as well as interviews with palliative care experts and is well worth visiting.

2. Ask your Parish Priest for his support to organise a workshop to '**Plan Your Catholic Funeral**'. Many older people in the parish may have younger relatives who have lost touch with the Church and its rituals and so will welcome a workshop that helps them write down their wishes.

4 BEING MORTAL

There are a number of Funeral Directors in the Diocese who specialise in Catholic funerals. They are worth approaching to see if they will be part of the workshop, to offer practical help about funeral planning. They have expert knowledge in the things to think about and what the different options are. Of course, you may prefer to approach another local Funeral Director who is known and trusted in the parish.

See pages 4/9–4/10 for the leaflet **Catholic Funerals**.

See page 4/8 for **Instructions for my Funeral Mass form**.

Planning Your Catholic Funeral could be part of a bigger event that includes **Making a Will**, or making changes to an existing will. There is a Free Will month in March and October where people over 55 can obtain free advice regarding writing or updating a will. More details are available at www.freewillsmoth.org.uk.

“Only one in three people have discussed with their partner making a will, or their wishes concerning their funeral.”

DYING MATTERS COALITION – PUBLIC OPINION ON DEATH AND DYING, APRIL 2016

3. Talk to your Parish Council about **running further workshops that explore Catholic teaching on end of life care**. It is important that a workshop is led by a person who has real understanding about the sometimes difficult decisions to be made about possible interventions and treatments towards the end of life. The workshop could include the topic of a ‘living will’, to help people think about their wishes for medical treatment and care, in case there comes a time when they are not able to say what they want.

The Catholic Church teaches that: “Though people have a duty to care for their health, they do not have a duty to prolong their life endlessly. Death after all is inevitable. So also, healthcare workers do not have a duty to keep people alive in all circumstances. As death approaches a treatment which may briefly prolong life could impose suffering such that the patient considers the treatment to be excessively burdensome.” *A Practical Guide to the Spiritual Care of the Dying Person*, published in 2010 by the Bishops’ Conference for England Wales.

It means we are entitled to refuse ‘over zealous’ treatment that might subject us to invasive treatments that are of uncertain benefit. For more information about this very sensitive area have a look on the website from the Catholic Church in England and Wales – here is the link:

www.artofdyingwell.org/caring-for-the-dying/providing-great-care/advanced-care-planning.

4 BEING MORTAL



FURTHER READING

Special prayers and sacraments that give meaning to sickness and death, see pages 4/5–4/7.

Catholic Funerals – A Guide which you can use as a handout, see pages 4/9–4/10

Instructions for my Funeral Mass form, see page 4/8

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

***What to do when someone dies* (CTS Essentials).**

A short leaflet suggesting steps to take when someone close is dying or has recently died.

Joyce Hutchison, Joyce Rupp, *May I Walk You Home?* (Ave Maria Press, 2009).

A great resource for caregivers and loved ones assisting those on their final journey home.

Atul Gawande, *Being Mortal: Illness, medicine and what matters in the end* (Wellcome, 2015)

We have come to medicalize aging, frailty and death, treating them as if they were just one more medical problem to overcome. It is not just medicine that is needed in one's declining years, but life – a life with meaning, a life as rich and full as possible under the circumstances. *Being Mortal* is not only wise and deeply moving; it is an essential and insightful book for our times.

4 BEING MORTAL

SPECIAL PRAYERS AND SACRAMENTS THAT GIVE MEANING TO SICKNESS AND DEATH

The Latin word *sacramentum* means “a sign of the sacred.” The seven sacraments of the Catholic Church are liturgical moments that point to the presence and sacred activity of God with and among his people. They provide special occasions or opportunities for experiencing God’s loving and saving presence.

The sacraments are, therefore, both signs and instruments of God’s grace. Of the seven great communal sacraments there are three in particular that can give meaning to sickness and death.

1. Sacrament of Penance

The Sacrament of Penance (otherwise referred to as Confession or the Sacrament of Reconciliation) comprises three elements:

1. The confessing of one’s sin
2. A conversion or change of heart (originally termed a firm purpose of amendment).
3. A celebration of the newfound peace the sacrament gives.

It is a tangible sign of the healing power of God’s unconditional forgiveness at work through this Sacrament, which brings great comfort as we come to terms with our own mortality and that sense Solomon experienced when he wrote:

***“Vanity of vanities, says the Teacher, vanity of vanities!
All is vanity.”***

ECCLESIASTES 2:21-23 (NRSV)

God’s loving forgiveness for us prompts us to see how important it is for us to forgive others. Being at peace with God and our brothers and sisters is an essential element of being able to experience old age as a time of blessing and hope.

For anyone near to death, the priest can also administer what is called the Apostolic Blessing, a Blessing which gives the recipient a plenary indulgence. The priest says, “Through the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, may almighty God free you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open paradise to you and welcome you to the joy of eternal life. Amen”

4 BEING MORTAL

2. Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick (formerly known as The Last Rites or Extreme Unction) is a ritual of healing appropriate not only for physical but also for mental and spiritual sickness. It is no longer only associated with near death. It offers the power of healing to those who are worn out with age and experience it as a burden, by enabling them to discover the positive aspects of coming closer to our final meeting with the Lord himself, who loves us and is looking forward to meeting us face to face.

The priest prays over the person and anoints their forehead and the palms of their hands with holy oil. This ritual is a tangible sign of the Holy Spirit offering a special gift of healing and physical/spiritual strength.

3. The Eucharist

Holy Communion, otherwise known as 'The Bread of Life' or 'The Food of Travellers' is particularly important for those in later life who are preparing for the final journey into eternal existence with God.

Jesus first spoke about the Eucharist in the context of food, after he had fed the 5,000. He promised to give them a bread, a food, that would endure for eternal life. He likened it to the manna given to the Israelites to sustain them on the 40 year journey in the desert. It would be, he promised, his flesh, his own body. At the Last Supper, as he broke the bread and distributed it, he said **"this is my body..."**

Nutritionists who encourage us to eat healthily, point out that we become what we eat. In eating the Eucharist we become the Body of Christ.

As we prepare in later life to make our final journey, after which we will become one with God, caught up in his mysterious and eternal existence, it is surely most important that we are properly and regularly nourished on that journey with the very bread that is Christ's Body through which we become one with God. After all, it is in God we are destined to live eternally.

4. Prayers for the dying and for the dead

Even after all the sacraments have been celebrated, there are still important prayers that can be said to support those who are dying. And after death, even in their shock and grief, the family will want to pray for the person who has died and for each other. And, if possible, call the priest to pray with them at home or in hospital.

There is a most beautiful prayer the priest uses on behalf of the whole Church when someone has died.

4 BEING MORTAL

“In the name of God the Almighty Father who created you, in the name of Jesus Christ Son of the living God who suffered for you, in the name of the Holy Spirit who was poured out upon you, go forth faithful Christian. May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, with Mary the virgin Mother of God, with Joseph and all the angels and saints. My brother (sister) in faith, I entrust you to God who created you. May you return to the one who formed you from the dust of this earth. May Mary, the angels and all the saints come to meet you as you go forth from this life. May Christ who was crucified for you bring you freedom and peace. May Christ the Son of God who died for you take you into his kingdom. May Christ the Good Shepherd give you a place within his flock. May he forgive you your sins and keep you among his people. May you see your Redeemer face to face and enjoy the face of God forever. Amen.”

Some of this material is inspired by the www.artofdyingwell.org website from the Catholic Church in England and Wales which aims to help people think about dying and to learn from the experience of others.

4 BEING MORTAL

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MY FUNERAL MASS OR SERVICE

We suggest you make two copies:

1. Kept among your own papers for your own family or executor 2. For your parish priest

Name

AddressPostcode.....

The name of my parish is.....

Parish priest..... Telephone

Next of kin Telephone

Executor(s) of my Will

My last will and testament may be found

My undertakers.....

Please tick as required:

☐ I wish to be buried at OR ☐ I wish to be cremated at.....

and my ashes to be buried in the grave of..... OR in a cremation plot at.....

☐ I would like a Funeral Mass OR ☐ I would like a shorter Funeral Service with readings and prayers

☐ I would like to be brought into Church the evening before my Funeral Service

I choose the following hymns to be sung at my Funeral:

First Hymn Second Hymn

Third Hymn Fourth Hymn.....

I would like, if possible for & to read

Apart from family flowers, I should like donations to be made to the following charit(ies):

.....

Any other requirements.....

Signature..... Date.....

Witnessed by (signature) Date.....

Name (Caps) Address

When Someone Dies

Who will need to be informed as soon as possible?

- next of kin, if not present
- family doctor, if the person dies at home
- funeral director, if the family is using one (the deceased may already have made arrangements)
- priest

In addition, if you are called to someone who has died unexpectedly or in unusual circumstances, the police will need to be informed. Do not touch or move anything in the room.

What happens next? *Arranging the funeral.*

If the cause of death is clear, the doctor will issue a medical certificate and a formal notice confirming that he or she has signed the certificate. This notice gives information on how to register the death and will enable funeral arrangements to be made. If the doctor reports the death to the coroner, there may be a delay while a post mortem or inquest is carried out. The coroner's office will advise you on what arrangements may be made.

Registering the death.

The death will need to be registered within five days unless it has been reported to the coroner. Further detail concerning these procedures can be found in a booklet available from the Department of Social Security.

What are the financial implications?

If the family wishes to use a funeral director, it is quite proper to invite estimates from different firms.

There is a considerable financial difference between cremation and burial, and those choosing burial will also need to consider the upkeep of the grave.

There may be a fee for an organist or other musician.

An offering to the minister or parish is discretionary, though customary, and you may wish to check. Where the family uses a funeral director an offering may be included automatically in the account, though the family is free to make its own arrangements.

O Lord,

*support us all the day long
of this troublous life,
until shadows lengthen,
and evening comes,
and the busy world is hushed,
and the fever of life is over,
and our work is done.*

*Then, Lord, in thy mercy,
grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest,
and peace at last.
Amen.*

Cardinal Newman

This leaflet was prepared by the Liturgy Office of the Bishops' Conference. It is based on *Into Your Hands: Planning a Catholic funeral, readings and prayers* published by Dorian Books (01638 716 573).

This leaflet can be freely copied for non-commercial use. Further copies of this leaflet can be obtained from: Liturgy Offices, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PL (020 7901 4850)

CATHOLIC FUNERALS A Guide



*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.*

Christians celebrate funeral rites to offer worship and thanksgiving to God, the author of all life. We pray for the deceased, and support the bereaved.

The model for Catholic funerals is the Easter journey of Jesus Christ from death to resurrection. This is why we are encouraged to celebrate the funeral in three stages: prayer vigil, funeral liturgy, and committal.

Funeral practice varies considerably, and the Church provides several options from which we can choose freely. There is greater flexibility and involvement possible than we sometimes imagine.

Prayer Vigil

This is the principal rite celebrated between death and the funeral itself. It is the first stage of the farewell journey; its mood is one of quiet support which helps to prepare the bereaved for the final leave-taking.

The Vigil or wake may be held in the home of the deceased, the funeral home, or in another suitable place, for instance a hospital chapel. It may also be celebrated in church. The body of the deceased may be present, but this is not necessary. The form of the service is a simple Liturgy of the Word of God or Evening Prayer.

Funeral Liturgy

This is the main celebration of the Christian community for the deceased person. It is usually celebrated in the parish church where the local community gathers for the Sunday Eucharist. Sometimes people may celebrate the Funeral Liturgy in a crematorium or cemetery chapel. Two forms are possible: a funeral Mass, (also called the Requiem Mass) or a funeral liturgy outside Mass.

The Church encourages a Mass since the eucharist remembers and celebrates Christ's own death and resurrection. However, while the eucharist is our central liturgy, it is not always the best option for every funeral. To celebrate a funeral without Mass is a truly valid form of Catholic worship.

Committal

The rite of committal usually follows on immediately from the funeral liturgy. This final act of leaving-taking is celebrated at the graveside or at the crematorium. When a body is cremated the funeral liturgy is concluded with the interring of ashes sometime afterwards.

While we are encouraged to celebrate a funeral over these three stages, for a variety of good reasons this model is not always possible or appropriate to the circumstances. Many combinations of funeral rites are possible. The funeral may even comprise a single act of worship either in the cemetery chapel or crematorium.

Lord, in our grief we turn to you.

*Are you not the God of love
always ready to hear our cries?*

*Listen to our prayers for your servant N.
whom you have called out of this world:
lead him/her to your Kingdom of light
and peace*

*and count him/her among the saints
in glory.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

Some Questions

What choices can I make?

More than you think. Not only can you choose hymns but also scripture readings and prayers.

How do I plan a funeral?

Planning Guides are available which contain the choice of readings and prayers. *Into Your Hands*, prepared for the Bishops' Conference, also contains helpful advice on the form of the funeral service.

Who can help me plan a funeral?

The priest, deacon, or other members of the parish community will be happy to help.

Can I have a poem or favourite song?

There are opportunities for personal choices in each of the three stages of the funeral. Secular poems and songs often fit best in the prayer vigil, but there is also an opportunity for 'Words in Remembrance' towards the end of the funeral liturgy. Care should be taken that the words of any material is in keeping with our Christian faith.

Can a stillborn baby have a funeral?

Yes, the Church provides a special service within its collection of liturgies *Order of Christian Funerals*. It can also be adapted for parents who have suffered a miscarriage.

What about cremation?

Catholics in this country can be cremated. The Church encourages the bereaved to bury the ashes in a final resting place.

*I am the resurrection and the life,
says the Lord,
whoever believes in me will never die.*

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BEREAVEMENT & LOSS



5

BEREAVEMENT & LOSS



TO DO

1. **HOLD** a Memorial Service each year recognising especially the First Anniversary.
2. **CREATE** social opportunities for people to gather for sharing and mutual support.
3. **DISCUSS** starting a Bereavement Support Group with your parish priest.

*“Blessed are those who mourn;
they shall be comforted.”*

MATTHEW 5:4

Most adults, especially older people, have or will experience the death of someone close to them. Grief is a reaction to that loss.

Grief can also be felt about the ‘other little deaths of life’. Older people can experience loss in many ways:

- in retiring from a job – we may lose some of our purpose in life and the status and routine of doing a paid job of work
- we may have a life changing illness, such as a diagnosis of dementia in ourselves or a family member
- we may experience a loss of independence and less mobility
- in moving house we may lose our sense of independence and being able to make our own decisions.

Care Home residents face this loss of independence. Residents have often entered a care home because of the loss of their health or mobility, or the loss of their carer. They have certainly had to face the loss of their home. Page 5/10, has some thoughts on including Care Homes in parish life.

There are also losses we may be facing at any age: a breakdown of a relationship, divorce, illness, unemployment, a loss of trust in someone we know.

According to research into our response to bereavement (Listening 2004, Marriage and Family Life), as a Church we are very good at responding in a crisis, but what do we offer the bereaved once the initial shock has passed?

WHAT YOUR PARISH CAN DO

1. Hold a Memorial Service every year recognising especially the First Anniversary. This may include personal invitations to all those who have lost someone in the past year, prayers and lighting a candle for everyone who has died in the previous year.

2. Develop your own parish Bereavement Leaflet. Including some information about the grief process is useful for bereaved people, as are details of any parish support such as Friendship Groups. Putting together **Help Sheets**, with telephone helplines, information services and organisations available in and outside the parish, is also helpful. The Helpful Contacts section on pages 8/1-8/6 has a list of useful organisations, some of which have free resources available.

All parishioners can help by not ‘avoiding’ the bereaved. We may not know what to say, but by acknowledging the person we show we care.

To understand more about our personal responses to grief, see page 5/4.

3. Create social opportunities for people to gather for sharing and mutual support, both in the church and in the home. Friendship Groups, with talks and outings, have helped many bereaved people. Group leaders and group members in the parish could be approached to think about how they might get alongside people dealing with loss.

Some parishes have set up groups to befriend bereaved people. They offer a listening ear and accompany people to Mass if they wish, as many bereaved people find walking into church alone difficult. A monthly Drop In for coffee in the Hall might be an idea for some parishes.

4. Discuss starting a Bereavement Support Group with your parish priest. Sometimes known as ‘Bethany Groups’, recalling the visit of Jesus to Mary and Martha on the death of their brother Lazarus, all Bereavement Support groups offer a listening ear to those who have been bereaved. Listening is not the same as counselling and these groups are not counselling groups. A Bereavement Support Group can only operate with the full support, cooperation and encouragement of the priest. Here’s how a parish in the RC Archdiocese of Southwark promote their **Consolation Group**:

When we experience a loss, especially when it is of someone we love, we may find it difficult to cope. Our parish Consolation Group offers you friendship and support to those who have lost family or friends. We also offer a safe, confidential space to talk about your loss. It may be some years after bereavement before you feel the need to share the experience. Do not let this prevent you from joining us. You will receive a warm welcome. Please join us in the Sanctuary of the Upper Room in the Parish Centre. We meet on a Thursday (4.30–5.30pm).
www.stjosephsbromley.org/support

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BEREAVEMENT & LOSS

Such a group might be for a wider area, such as a deanery. Sometimes, bereaved people do not feel comfortable in sharing with those who are close to them.

To read more about how to set up a Bereavement Support group in your parish, and hear from a parish in our own Diocese who has done this, see pages 5/7–5/8.

- 5. In some Dioceses lay people can assist parish priests in an official role in the funeral liturgy.** This has been in response to some priests being overstretched in dealing with the bereaved.

To read more about how Liverpool Archdiocese and a parish in Cork have developed Funeral Teams, see page 5/9.



FURTHER READING

The Ministry of Consolation (an Archdiocese of Liverpool leaflet), see pages 5/5–5/6

Personal responses to grief, see page 5/4

How to set up a Bereavement Support Group, see pages 5/7–5/8

Developing a Funeral Team, see page 5/9

Including Care Homes in parish life, see page 5/10



Growing Old
Grace-fully

Supporting later life
friendly parishes

WELCOMING OLDER PEOPLE
Ideas for and from parishes

PERSONAL RESPONSES TO GRIEF

Grief may be expressed in different ways including sadness, shock, anger, guilt and relief. Some responses like shock and sadness may be evident immediately. Other reactions like guilt and anger may take longer to appear or are not so evident, as people might feel troubled and even ashamed by them. All these responses to grief are natural, but how we handle them is important. Some may withdraw from parish life. Religious faith may become stronger, or feel threatened. (Usually if this extra loss is acknowledged, understood and supported by others, it will dissipate.) Sometimes guilt, which many feel but may find difficult to talk about, may not be fuelled by reality. Part of grieving is going over past events and behaviour, and some believe they should have been able to predict the future and have superhuman amounts of patience and energy, and acted differently. Anger, a natural response, can be difficult to feel or watch, but if it is acknowledged usually it works itself through. Sometimes people feel anger is 'wrong', but if we recognise it as being a natural emotion, we realise it is how we deal with it that matters: keeping a diary, speaking about feelings, physical exercise or punching a pillow does not harm others and may help.

SOME WAYS OF COPING WITH GRIEF

Some people talk about going through stages of grief like shock, pining, despair (disorganisation), reorganisation and acceptance (Murray Parkes, *Bereavement: Studies of Grief in Adult Life*, I.U.P 1972). This may be helpful as long as we realise these feelings are not compulsory at any one time and not always expressed in any particular order.

It is perhaps more useful to realise that some of us grieve in a way that could be described like the swinging of a pendulum or that is oscillating. Some of us more naturally 'feel' the emotions of grief mentioned: i.e. we have a 'loss orientation'. Others more naturally have a 'restoration orientation': trying to manage everyday events and life changes whilst recognising what has happened, and realising that some denial and distraction (in moderation) is natural (Stroebe, Hansson, Stroebe and Schut, *Handbook of Bereavement Research: Consequences, Coping and Care*, American Psychological Association, 2001). Some people believe they have to grieve all the time, but, concentrating on family responsibilities, work, driving a car or crossing a road are necessary too. The importance about this model or way of coping with grief is that we begin to oscillate between the two areas of loss and managing, frequently. Sometimes this happens several times a day. Different family members may be oscillating at different times, which can make communication and understanding with each other difficult. However eventually we learn that we can do both: grieve and manage, and so learn to live with what has happened. This model takes into account individual, gender and cultural differences. No model solves grief but for some, knowing that what they experience is felt by others too, may be helpful. Models of grief are perhaps not useful at the time of the death, but some months later may be helpful for reflection, but not for everyone.

*Grieving is as natural as
crying when you are hurt,
sleeping when you are tired,
eating when you are hungry,
or sneezing when your nose itches.
It's nature's way of healing
a broken heart.*

Doug Manning, Don't Take My Grief Away



*Lord, may we always be present
to those who suffer bereavement
and help us to be
attentive to their needs.*

Useful Resources

Liverpool Bereavement Service

1st Floor
Granite Buildings
6 Stanley Street
Liverpool
L1 6AF

Tel: 0151 236 3932

Email: enquiries@liverpoolbereavement.co.uk

Alder Centre

For those affected by the death of a child.

Child Death Helpline: 0800 282 986
Local: 0151 252 5391 (Daytime)

Grief Net

An internet community of persons
dealing with grief, death and major loss.

www.griefnet.org

Sands

For those who experience still birth.

Tel: 020 7436 5881

Email: helpline@uk.sands.org

The Ministry of Consolation



*The responsibility for the ministry of
consolation rests with the believing
community... each Christian shares in
this ministry according to the various
gifts and offices in the Church.*

Order of Christian Funerals n.9



Archdiocese of Liverpool

What can we do to support those who are living with a bereavement?

...as a parishioner

- Befriend a bereaved person.
- Offer a listening ear.
- Don't cross the road to avoid a bereaved person.
- Talk about the deceased person.
- Say 'I'm really sorry about the death of.....'.
- Offer help with practical tasks like shopping, cooking, transport, child care.
- Go to funerals.
- Sing, play or read at funerals if you can.
- Pray for the deceased and the bereaved.
- Invite a bereaved person to go with you to parish events or other activities.
- Keep in contact by occasional phone calls.
- Join or start a bereavement support team.

...as a parish community

- Gather a bereavement support team.
- Include people with different gifts and skills:
 - Visiting.
 - Listening and keeping confidences.
 - Preparing and taking part in liturgies.
 - Ensuring good communication between all those involved: family, priest, undertaker, other team members.
- Maintaining a book of remembrance.
- Recording, remembering and marking anniversaries.

Find creative ways of including the bereaved in prayers and services.

Provide opportunities for bereaved people to meet each other and members of the team:

- Coffee mornings.
- Drop-in sessions.
- Regular groups.

...as a pastoral area

- Provide initial training and continuing support for parish bereavement teams:
 - Listening skills courses.
 - Days of Reflection and Prayer.
 - Training on supporting difficult bereavements such as suicide or the death of a child or young person.
- Arrange regular celebrations and gatherings for bereaved families.
- Encourage parishes to share good practice and good experiences.

*If we didn't love
and care so much
we wouldn't hurt so much
when a special person dies.
Grief is the price we pay
for loving.*



HOW TO SET UP A BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Taken from Diocese of Portsmouth – Bereavement and Loss Support Group: Handbook 2011 available at: www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/docs/marriage/Bereavement-Loss-Group-Handbook.pdf

It is vital that the group works closely with the priest from the outset to determine its role and ways of operating. The group, or representatives of the group, should meet regularly with the priest to consider how they are exercising this ministry, suggestions for further action etc.

Such a group might be for a wider area, such as a deanery. Sometimes, bereaved people do not feel comfortable in sharing with those who are close to them.

1. Meet with the parish priest and ask for his support.
 2. Draw up a volunteer role description including details of what is involved, desirable skills / gifts and possible time commitment. There may be a variety of roles with the group. Some people may be more gifted in direct contact with people who are bereaved, others may be in administrative roles.
- *Creating a Safe Environment. Any individuals doing this work must have gone through the diocesan safeguarding checks as they may be seeing people on their own and grief may make the bereaved person vulnerable. For all guidance and forms in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults please see www.csas.uk.net/resource-area. Your Local Authority will also be able to offer guidance and resources in relation to safeguarding.*
3. Ask your priest to suggest people who might be invited to participate in this ministry.
 4. Invite these individuals personally to a meeting to explore the work of the Group in more detail. It is important to emphasise that everyone in the Group needs to respect that much of the work will be confidential.
 5. Give people time to think about whether they want to be involved.
 6. Plan for everyone involved to have the right kind of initial training, as well as ongoing training.

Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved people in England and they run regional training courses for volunteers. They have regional branches all over the country which can be found on their website www.cruse.org.uk and a list of local branches in Yorkshire can be found on page 8/4 of this Guide.

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BEREAVEMENT & LOSS

7. As a Group, and with your priest, develop procedures for the work in your parish. This includes the process about how a bereavement is shared with and between the priest, the parish office and the Bereavement Support Group coordinator; how members of the Group might support the bereaved between the death and the funeral; and what support is offered after the funeral.
8. The recommendation is that the Group meets monthly to pray for the bereaved and the work of the Group, support one another, share what went well and raise any concerns.
9. Members should prepare and distribute/display publicity which explains the work of the Group.

A parishioner's story



“ Last year it was agreed with our parish priest to hold a memorial Mass for those who had died during the previous 12 months and to send an invitation to bereaved families to attend the Mass.

The response was so good, more than 50 people attended the service, that the idea developed to invite the families to a monthly lunch and self-support group. On some occasions we have been privileged to have the presence of a qualified bereavement counsellor and spiritual director.

These monthly meetings have continued, and have even attracted people from another town who had heard about the meetings and needed a safe place to talk about their loss.

There is no doubt that having an opportunity to express feelings of grief and loss in a safe space in the company of others, over a shared lunch, is enormously beneficial. This is an important lay ministry to those who are bereaved or have suffered loss in other equally wounding ways.

The SVP do very important work with vulnerable people within parishes. This work can be enhanced by the parish providing a meeting place for those who are dealing with grief and loneliness in the aftermath of loss. This ministry provides an opportunity to help with the healing process by being with others who have similar experiences, who are also seeking answers and are at varying stages of recovery.

The group is open to anyone who would like to come. We meet on the last Friday of every month in St. Walburga's Parish room, Shipley, from 11.30–13.30. **”**

DEVELOPING A FUNERAL TEAM

The Church has a vital role at the end of life. Parishioners can help a parish priest in an official role in the funeral liturgy, following a special training.

Liverpool Archdiocese launched this project 6 years ago and has now a network of 100 funeral team members who accompany their parish priest in the funeral liturgies.

The following is taken from Fr Bernard Cotter's article in The Tablet, May 2011, about his own parish in Cork:

- It was presented as a continuation of the 'ministry of consolation' we are all called to.
- The course in formation was provided centrally by the diocese, with a commissioning service in the parish.
- The parishioners were selected by the parish priest and all who agreed to take part had:
 - Experienced the loss of someone close to them
 - Sympathy for the grieving and had an appreciation of the importance of confidentiality
 - The ability to work with others as part of a team

In the Liverpool Archdiocese, all members of the parish funeral teams must also belong to an existing parish Bereavement Group, with all members given bereavement training.

The process in the Liverpool Archdiocese is:

- After a death occurs, a funeral director finalises funeral arrangements with the parish secretary, who then contacts two members of the funeral team.
- The funeral team members then make contact with the bereaved relatives and arrange a time to meet and plan. Team members travel two by two, in line with the Scriptures.
- Funeral team members bring a funeral book to the meeting, with all the suitable readings, sample intercessions, explanation of the symbols used and suggestions for how family members might be involved.
- Before leaving, team members leave contact numbers, in case other questions arise and further help is needed.

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BEREAVEMENT & LOSS

Fr Cotter says *“Initially, many parishioners feared a massive intrusion on their grief, but in fact, when team members simply made themselves available, with no pressure, the bereaved mostly welcomed the resources the parish put at their disposal through the team.”*

A representative from Liverpool Archdiocese commented *“In six years, we have not had one complaint.”*

INCLUDING CARE HOMES IN PARISH LIFE

Care homes are an integral part of the local community. Residents in care homes may have come from outside the area and are probably not in a position themselves to request visits from the priest or the parish. That is why it is so important that there are people or groups in the parish that go out of their way to visit all the local care homes.

Here are some suggestions of how to establish and nurture relationships between the residents, their families, the staff and the carers of local care homes.

1. Talk to your SVP group and your parish priest to see what plans are in place to be in regular contact with all the local care homes.
2. If you want to make a list of all the care homes in your parish, then the website www.carehome.co.uk has details of all the local homes.
3. Care home staff could be provided with clear, up-to-date information about how to contact the parish, and what support is available for residents.
4. A laminated information sheet, updated and re-distributed regularly, can be sent by post or, even better, delivered in person to the care home.
5. Your priest could also provide Catholic residents with an instruction sheet for inclusion in their Care Plan. This instruction sheet will help their carers know that ministry of the Church is important for them and they want regular Communion and a priest to come to them at a time of critical illness or approaching death.
6. Some residents may be near, but no longer within, their old parish. Consider what ways there are to help residents keep in contact with the people and the news from their old parish. This might be through your SVP group to help ensure friends are not lost, or it might be simply making sure residents are sent the weekly bulletin.

9 TACKLING LONELINESS



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TACKLING LONELINESS



TO DO

1. **THINK** how people can be encouraged to get involved in parish life.
2. **ENCOURAGE** involvement in parish groups that are already there.
3. **ASK** people how the parish could be better at being a ‘little place of belonging’ using the *Your Opinion Matters* survey on page 1/5.

Is loneliness the biggest challenge Britain has? A survey showed that loneliness and social isolation are the most common concerns amongst church leaders and 64% of these leaders thought loneliness is a major problem (CofE and Church Urban Fund, 2014).

Loneliness: the causes are not just physical isolation and lack of companionship, but also sometimes the lack of a useful role in society. It may be influenced by cultural and psychological factors.

Social Isolation: refers to separation from social or familial contact, community involvement, or access to services.

WHAT IS LONELINESS?

Loneliness is not the same thing as being alone or living alone. Many of us can, and do, spend time alone and live happily on our own. We all feel lonely at times – it’s part of being human. But that feeling shouldn’t last.

“Loneliness is an internal trigger telling us to seek company, as thirst tells us to drink and hunger tells us to eat.”

JOSEPH ROWNTREE FOUNDATION
Let’s Talk About Loneliness

What is growing is the kind of loneliness that isn’t chosen and doesn’t pass quickly away. This is ‘chronic loneliness’ and it goes on and on. It wears us down. This is the loneliness that “kills people and kills communities” (Joseph Rowntree Foundation).

Did you know...

- That loneliness is as bad for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day and increases the chances of developing dementia by 64 per cent (Campaign to End Loneliness).
- Nearly half of older people say that television or pets are their main form of company and as many as 13% of people aged over 75 said they were always or often lonely (Age UK, 2015).

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TACKLING LONELINESS

LONELINESS IN OLDER PEOPLE

Older people are more at risk of becoming chronically lonely because of the kind of life changes we can't avoid as we age. Bereavement, retirement and ill health can put us at risk, as well as the changes in family life – we are less likely to live near our sons and daughters. A new organisation called Ageing Without Children www.awoc.org recognises that not all of us have children, or have them near us, and aims to help people live a later life free of the fear of ageing alone and being without support. Cuts in social services are also putting people at risk of being lonely.

WHAT CAN YOUR PARISH DO?

Tackling loneliness is about building community right where we are – in our parishes. It means thinking near and thinking small, to create “little places of belonging” (House of Bishops, 2015).

1. Think how people can be encouraged to get involved in parish life.

- Do you have welcomers on the door at Sunday mass?
- How do people who are frail and sick get to mass?
- Are all those confined to their homes visited and brought the Eucharist?
- Where are the various projects and gatherings which extend the important sense of community which going to mass creates?

2. Encourage involvement in parish groups that are already there. This can mean going along with someone to an event, or offering a lift. This is really helpful for people who have not lived in the parish, the neighbourhood (or even this country) for very long.

You could also develop a simple *What's On Guide*, as well as a parish newsletter which could be produced twice a year, or every 3 months.

Talk to members of the Justice and Peace group, St Vincent de Paul, Cafod or the Legion of Mary to see if they would consider encouraging new members to join. This can help to ensure that even frail older people continue to have a sense of meaning in their lives, whether it be through praying for others, or by providing practical action such as helping children learn to read.

It is really important to remember that many people find it difficult to talk about feeling lonely – it can fill us with deep shame. That's why Age UK recommends that groups talk about the activity, the fun, the purpose and never advertise membership as something for lonely people.

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TACKLING LONELINESS

Sister Monica's story



“When I came to live in Yorkshire it took me quite a while to adjust. I was 82 years old and had never stayed for long in the North of England. The two other sisters in the house were more active and were out much of the time. Because of my arthritis I was unable to join them, although it was good that we had meals together and our times of prayer.

However, I settled much better once I had joined the Amnesty Group and started writing letters to people in prison for human rights activities all over the world, and to government ministers. I had always enjoyed writing (I used to teach English) and it was a particular joy when I received replies to my letters. It gave me a sense of purpose.”

3. Ask people how the parish could be better at being a “little place of belonging” using the *Your Opinion Matters* survey on pages 1/5.

There may be older people of various ethnic backgrounds in your parish who have grown older in the UK and whose culture, language and expectations may be very different. It is important to make sure representatives from different ethnic groups are also asked how the parish could be better at being “a little place of belonging” too.

The results will help your parish give older people what they want, rather than what we think they ought to want. You could also trial new things such as a ‘pop-up’ café, a Big Lunch or a Film Club.

Catholic Care, a charity working on behalf of the Diocese of Leeds to provide a range of care and support services, has been supporting older people through friendship groups in the community since 1994. They are developing older people's groups throughout the Diocese. For more information about their community groups for older people please call 0113 388 5400 or email info@catholic-care.org.uk. The current groups (April 2017) are listed on page 8/1 or visit their website www.catholic-care.org.uk.

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TACKLING LONELINESS



FURTHER READING

More facts about loneliness, see below

**Mother of Unfailing Help's Parish
Community Liturgy**, page 6/5

RECOMMENDED REPORTS

Loneliness: Accident or Injustice?

Report by Jo Ind

www.oxford.Anglican.org

Let's Talk About Loneliness

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

www.jrf.org.uk/loneliness

MORE FACTS ABOUT LONELINESS

A recent study for Leeds Older People's Forum (2014) found that the most lonely and isolated people are those who:

- Are restricted to their home environment (including care homes) through ill-health, disability and/or dementia
- Are carers
- Live alone, coping with personal circumstances which reduce their social networks and confidence (e.g. bereavement, retirement, poverty)
- Whose social/cultural needs are not fully met, for example: men, people with learning disabilities, elders from ethnic minority groups, LGBT seniors

In Japan, the country where people live longest, much is attributed to *Ikigai*, a concept which implies that everyone needs to have a purpose in life, regardless of age.

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TACKLING LONELINESS

MOTHER OF UNFAILING HELP'S PARISH COMMUNITY LITURGY

For over five years, older people have been organising a monthly mid-week community liturgy and lunch in the parish hall. This is regularly attended by 15–25 people.

Volunteers take it in turn to prepare and lead a short service of prayers and readings; others prepare a simple lunch of soup, bread, cake, fruit and tea; those with cars bring friends who need help to get there.

Cath, a volunteer, says:



“It does need someone to organise a rota of people willing to prepare a short service – and to encourage people who haven’t done it before to have a go. And of course, we rely on soup makers, someone to buy the bread, cake etc. and to lay the tables – and we find that people are very generous with their time and skills.

The theme of the prayer service is left in the hands of the person leading it. Often the theme follows the liturgical season or the special monthly devotion.

There is an opening prayer gathering people together, followed by one or two readings – from Scripture or a poem. Sometimes people want to share their thoughts on the readings. There is always a time for everyone to make their own prayers of the faithful, bringing to the community concerns for those they love, for themselves and for the wider world. There is generally a short prayer to close, sometimes the Lord’s prayer, a blessing or grace and a sign of peace, and then move to eat. We find that about half an hour is long enough for the service, with an hour or so for eating, chatting and clearing up.”

Useful resources for prayer services:

- Readings and prayers from the Missal for feasts around the time of the service.
- Favourite hymns can be used as readings (or sung if people wish).
- Psalms.
- There are lots of lovely blessings and graces that can be used or adapted.
- Everyone has their favourite prayers and prayer books. Among those we have found useful are: Edwina Gately, Psalms of a Laywoman (Sheed and Ward), Denis McBride CSsR, Praying the Rosary (Redemptorist Publications).



CARING FOR CARERS

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CARING FOR CARERS



TO DO

1. **INCLUDE** all those who care for people in the prayers of the parish.
2. **ENCOURAGE** carers to talk and pray about their experiences by offering opportunities for a drink and chat.
3. **CONSIDER** the ways your parish can help carers take a break, such as offering a sitting service.

“O my Lord, inflame my heart with love for You, that my spirit may not grow weary amidst the storms, the sufferings and the trials. You see how weak I am. Love can do all.”

SAINT FAUSTINA

Today, in Britain, one in every 10 people is a carer. And that number just keeps on growing, according to Carers UK (Policy Briefing October 2015). In particular, the number of carers over the age of 65 is growing more rapidly – a 35% rise in the last 15 years. All these figures show that caring will touch the lives of most of us and **3 in 5 people will be carers at some point in their lives**. It may be only for a short time when someone close to us comes out of hospital and needs help as they recover, or it may be for the rest of our lives.

WHO IS A CARER?

A carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without their help due to illness, disability, mental health issues or a substance misuse problem.

WHY CARERS NEED SUPPORT

There is no job description but we are likely to find that caring is physically and emotionally demanding. Caring for someone can be really hard work. It can also be satisfying as well, as it unearths qualities that we never knew we had and helps us develop new skills. Many people do not think of themselves as carers; they simply see themselves looking after the person they love – their daughter, their mum, their husband or wife or their grandparent, for example.

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CARING FOR CARERS

But poor health, poverty and social isolation are also more likely to be part of the experience of being a long-term carer. All the duties and responsibilities can badly affect people's financial situation, their physical and mental health, their work and their personal relationships.

HOW YOUR PARISH CAN HELP

1. **Carers need masses of stamina, humour and patience so they need our prayers.** Praying for those who care for people could be delivered alongside the prayers for the sick as part of the prayers of the faithful every Sunday. Also, any parish Prayer Groups could be asked to remember all the carers in their prayers.

“61% of carers said they were worried about the impact of caring on their relationships with family and friends.”

CARERS UK, STATE OF CARING 2015

2. **Carers can become isolated.** They need people with whom they can cry or shout at, or just collapse with. The opportunity for a drink and chat can be very important and that's why **it's worthwhile to encourage carers to talk and pray about their experiences.** This can be done in lots of different ways:
 - By inviting anyone you know who is currently caring for someone to parish social occasions. This might be just asking them to come with you to a drop-in event after Sunday mass.
 - Offer a lift on a Sunday or other times of the week. Members of the SVP, for example, can relieve carers through offering transport.
 - Call in and have a cup of tea and a chat with anyone you know who is caring for someone. This can make a huge difference to help people cope with caring and alleviate any loneliness that may be experienced.
 - Talk to Growing Old Grace-fully about organising a “Quiet Time for Carers” event. These half-day sessions provide space for prayer, sharing, reflection and refreshments. People have told us that they appreciate the opportunity for putting their caring role in a spiritual context. For more information or a chat, call Rachel on **07702 255142** or email **growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk**.
3. **Carers need a break and time away** but sometimes that can be difficult. Carers can become trapped if the person needing care will not accept a sitter they don't know and that's why people from the parish can make a real difference. **Consider the ways your parish can help carers take a break.** Parish groups, such as the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), may be willing to, or already offer, a sitting service to

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CARING FOR CARERS

help carers have a break. There may be other groups, such as the Legion of Mary or the Union of Catholic Mothers, who might be able to help too. Carers need someone they can trust, who is willing and comfortable enough to come into their home and step into their shoes to give them a break from the day to day stresses of caring. A regular break can take the pressure off, help the carer plan and go out to a regular activity, just to have time to themselves or re-connect with family or friends with the peace of mind that your loved one is being cared for. Anyone visiting formally on behalf of the parish or parish organisations must have gone through safeguarding checks*.

Anne's story

“When I was caring for my father, who had dementia, I found my parish's Legion of Mary group a pillar of support for us both. They met weekly, which allowed me to ask the group, at relatively short notice, if there was anyone who could come and sit with my father if I wanted or needed to go somewhere in the afternoon. Members would come and sit with my father and say the Rosary with him, which he really appreciated. Because I asked via the group, through an intermediary, I felt that people who came really wanted to be with him. I think every parish should have a 'Community Care' group which could offer a 'sitting service'. Maybe the SVP already do this in some parishes.”

***Creating a Safe Environment.** Anyone in contact with children or vulnerable adults on behalf of the parish or parish organisations must have gone through the diocesan safeguarding checks. For all guidance and forms in relation to children, young people and vulnerable adults please see www.csas.uk.net/resource-area. Your Local Authority will also be able to offer guidance and resources in relation to safeguarding.

- 4. Help people find their local Carers' Support Group.** A support group provides an opportunity for carers to share their feelings, problems, ideas and information with other carers. The group is there to help people think about their own needs and to take care of themselves, so they can keep caring. It also provides the satisfaction which comes from sharing with and helping others. Your local Carers' Project will be able to help in finding details of local Carers' Support Groups which you could make available at the back of church. You can find more information at www.carersuk.org.

Contact details for the Carers' Projects in the Leeds Diocese are on page 8/6.

7 CARING FOR CARERS

If there are no suitable groups in your area, then you could consider setting up a Carers' Group in your deanery. There are a lot of elements that need to be in place, but again your local Carers' Project (detailed above) will be able to offer advice and direction if this is something your parish want to explore.



FURTHER READING

A Carers' Group hosted by Churches Together, see page 7/5.

Welcome Me As I Am, www.welcomemeasiam.org.uk A website offering resources and reflections, including a Caring for Carers workshop outline, to help parishes "to be communities of understanding and welcome".

Contact Ben Bano on 07887 651 117.



A CARERS' GROUP HOSTED BY CHURCHES TOGETHER

Churches Together in Hampshire set up Ringwood Carers' Group ten years ago. Carers (with or without their 'cared-for') can drop in for a chat and helpful information from professionals every month.

The Carers' Group meets monthly at a local Church centre, and offers an opportunity for carers to share their experiences, discover they are not alone and to gain valuable information as to what help is available. The group is now supported by The Princess Royal Trust for Carers and one of their outreach support staff is usually able to come to meetings. Sometimes, too, there are outings, and occasionally speakers – either on “useful” subjects like Powers of Attorney or on “fun” subjects.

Its aims are to offer support, information and relaxation to those who care for relatives, friends or neighbours (in a voluntary capacity, rather than paid care workers). Often “caring” is just drifted into – a husband or wife begins to have problems and needs more looking after, so “the other half” takes the strain (and strain is what it can soon become). Sometimes the need for caring happens suddenly and shockingly, perhaps through an accident or illness like a stroke. But also, parents have to care for children with problems, or children for parents and so on. The strain is just as great.

When our caring love wears thin,
when our nerves are stretched and taut
and the strain of our concern
fills our every waking thought –
God of understanding heart,
give us strength to play our part.

When we watch in helpless love
when all hope of health is past
and distress cries out in pain
that this suffering will not last –
God of healing, hold us near;
bring your calm and drive out fear.

When our tears speak out of love,
when by smiles we mask our grief,
in those dark and lonely hours
when the silence mocks belief –
God of comfort, to our night
bring the dawning of your light.

*Marjorie Dobson © 2004,
Stainer & Bell Ltd.*

Catholic Care have been supporting people in later life for over 25 years.



Our community groups provide an opportunity for people to come together and meet in a friendly space, enjoy refreshments and have fun, with time to chat and make new friends.

Our outreach service provides care and support in a person's own home, helping them to live independently for longer.

To find out more about our services please call 0113 388 5400, or email info@catholic-care.org.uk



RC ORGANISATIONS IN THE LEEDS DIOCESE

Catholic Care

www.catholic-care.org.uk

A charity working on behalf of the Diocese of Leeds to provide a range of care and support services to vulnerable people across the community, regardless of faith.

Catholic Care has been supporting older people through friendship groups in the community since 1994, helping to tackle loneliness and isolation.

• COMMUNITY GROUPS

Harrogate

The Deanery Lunch Club on the first Friday of the month from 12.30–2pm at St Robert's Club, Robert Street, Harrogate HG1 1HP.

Friendship Group, Tuesdays from 1.45–3pm at St Joseph's Parish Hall, 281 Skipton Road, Harrogate HG1 3HD.

Knit and Natter on the third Friday of the month from 10.30–11.30am in the Ripon Room at St Robert's Centre, Robert Street, Harrogate HG1 1HP.

Huddersfield Deanery Project for Older People (HDP) at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish rooms, Sheepridge, HD2 1HF

Bingo Club on Mondays at Alundale Road 2–3pm.

Happy Wednesday's 'aerobics for mature movers' runs 10–11am weekly.

Thursday Friends runs 11am–1.30pm weekly.

Friday Friends runs 11am–1.30pm weekly.

Wakefield

Monday Friends, 10am–12 noon at The Canon O'Grady Hall, Normanton WF6 2JF.

Wednesday Friends, 2–4pm at St Austin's Parish Rooms, Wentworth Terrace, Wakefield WF1 3QN.

Wetherby

Exercise for mature movers, Thursday 2–3.30pm (not on 3rd Thursday of the month) at St Joseph's Parish Hall, 20 Westgate, Wetherby LS22 6LL.

Catholic Care (Diocese of Leeds), 11 North Grange Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 2BR.

Tel: 0113 388 5400

Email: info@catholic-care.org.uk

Legion of Mary

An apostolic organisation of lay people whose purpose is to give glory to God through the intercession of Our Lady through prayers and actions.

Des Tinline, 31 Rossett Beck, Harrogate HG2 9NY.

Tel: 01423 789363

Dennis Lackey, 8 Ladywood Mead, Roundhay Leeds LS8 2LZ.

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HELPFUL CONTACTS

St Vincent De Paul Society (SVP)

An organisation of lay people seeking to follow in Christ's footsteps by working in a spirit of justice and charity with people in need. The 550 SVP members, in more than 55 parish-based groups through the Leeds Diocese, meet weekly or fortnightly to pray together and to visit families and individuals in their own homes, in hospitals and in care homes. Membership of local SVP groups is open to all who wish to share in their work.

Leeds Diocese Council Contacts:

Airedale & Skipton 01274 569729

Bradford 01274 613619

Halifax 01422 259143

Harrogate 01423 865033

Huddersfield & Dewsbury 07724 035497

Leeds South East 0113 295 6307

Leeds North West 0113 293 3713

Wakefield & Pontefract 01924 380192

President: Marie Atherton
01484 541990

GENERAL AGEING ISSUES

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk

The country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. They provide services and information and advice through a network of 170 local Age UKs.

Age UK Advice Helpline: **0800 678 1174**
(calls are free from a landline but not from a mobile).

Ageing Without Children

www.awoc.org

Ageing without Children aims to help people ageing without children live a later life free of the fear of ageing alone and being without support. AWOC is developing local groups where people ageing without children can meet together and there is a group in Leeds, contact awoc.leeds@gmail.com

Centre for Ageing Better

www.ageing-better.org.uk

This is one of several organisations funded by The Big Lottery to tackle issues around ageing including loneliness and social isolation. Their Report on Later Life in 2015 is particularly valuable and is available to download free online.

Centre for Ageing Better, Level 3,
Angel Building, 407 St John Street,
London EC1V 4AD.

Tel: 020 3829 0113

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HELPFUL CONTACTS

CCOA – Christian Council on Ageing

www.christiansonageing.org.uk

Christian voice and action on issues that matter to older people in church and society.

Contact: Secretary, CCOA, 'Stoneway', Hornby Road, Appleton Wiske, Northallerton DL6 2AF.

Faith in Elderly People (FIEP)

www.fiep.org.uk

An ecumenical group based in Leeds concerned with the needs, including the spiritual needs, of older people, and especially those living with dementia and their carers. They produce a variety of practical leaflets and books available on their website.

MHA (Methodist Homes)

www.mha.org.uk

A charity and housing association providing a range of care services for older people of all faiths and none around the UK.

Epworth House, Stuart Street, Derby DE1 2EQ.

Tel: 01332 296200

PSS – Person Shaped Support

www.psspeople.com

Plugging the gaps and providing 'on the ground' support for a wide array of people.

Tel: Head Office 0151 702 5555

Email: info@pss.org.uk

DEMENTIA

Alzheimers' Society

www.alzheimers.org.uk

The UK's leading dementia support and research charity for anyone affected by any form of dementia. They have a network of local branches.

Helpline: 0300 222 1122

Email: enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

Contented Dementia Trust

www.contenteddementiustrust.org

An independent charity with an innovative approach to the care of people with dementia, aiming to ensure that the person with dementia, and their carer, can lead as close an approximation to the life they would have wished to live without dementia.

Contented Dementia Trust, The Old Hospital, Sheep Street, Burford, Oxon OX18 4LS.

Email: info@contenteddementiustrust.org

Welcome me as I am

www.welcomemeasiam.org.uk

A Roman Catholic perspective on promoting awareness of mental health and dementia in faith communities and the wider community.

Tel: 07887 651117 (Ben Bano)

Email: telostraining@aol.com

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HELPFUL CONTACTS

BEING MORTAL

The Art of Dying Well

www.artofdyingwell.org

Website from the Catholic Church in England and Wales aimed at helping people think about death and dying. It features real stories from dying people and their families, as well as interviews with palliative care experts.

Dying Matters

www.dyingmatters.org

A coalition of 32,000 members across England and Wales which aims to help people talk more openly about dying, death and bereavement, and to make plans for the end of life.

Freephone: 0800 021 4466

BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.cruse.org.uk

The leading national charity for bereaved people offering support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support and local branches.

Cruse Bereavement Care, PO Box 800,
Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RG.

Central office tel: 020 8939 9530

Email: info@cruse.org.uk

Bereavement Support Helpline:
0808 808 1677

- **LOCAL CRUSE BRANCHES IN LEEDS RC DIOCESE**

Craven and Bradford District,

1D Royal Oak Yard, Raikes Road, Skipton
BD23 1NP.

Referrals Tel: 01756 797799 (Telephone line staffed: Mon & Thurs 2–4pm, Tues & Fri 10am–12pm, Wed 5–7pm – Answerphone at other times).

Email: craven@cruse.org.uk
(admin only)

Kirklees Area, Brian Jackson House,
New North Parade, Huddersfield
HD1 5JP.

Tel: 0844 800 3309.

Email: kirklees@cruse.org.uk

Leeds Area, Room 27, 3rd Floor,
York Place Buildings, 6–8 York Place,
Leeds LS1 2DR.

Tel: 0113 234 4150.

Email: leeds@cruse.org.uk

Pontefract and Wakefield Area,

Tel: 01977 708 335

Email: pontefract@cruse.org.uk

LONELINESS**Campaign To End Loneliness****www.campaigntoendloneliness.org**

Established by a group of organisations and has produced a number of helpful resources of which one of the latest is *Hidden Citizens: how can we identify the most lonely older adults?* (2015), as well as *Promising Approaches to Reducing Loneliness and Isolation in Later Life*. Both these are available to download free online. Membership would be valuable for parishes.

Campaign to End Loneliness, 3 Rufus Street, London N1 6PE.

Tel: 020 7012 1409

Joseph Rowntree Foundation**www.jrf.org.uk/loneliness**

A charity working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice. They have a lot of research and ideas for how to reduce loneliness in our communities, looking at the effect of community initiatives, and the link between dementia and loneliness.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation,
The Homestead, 40 Water End,
York YO30 6WP.

Tel: 01904 629 241

Email: info@jrf.org.uk

Leeds Irish Health & Homes

A charity offering a variety of services and support, not only to members of the Irish community, but also to the wider community. They run a specific Irish Community Support Service.

Leeds Irish Health & Homes, Unit 5,
Gemini Park, Sheepscar Way,
Leeds LS7 3JB.

Tel: 0113 262 5614

Leeds Time to Shine**www.timetoshineleeds.org**

Out of the Shadows: Time to Shine is managed by Leeds Older People's Forum (LOPF) and funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Fulfilling Lives: Ageing Better programme to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst people over 50.

Leeds Older People's Forum,
Joseph's Well, Suite C24, Leeds LS3 1AB.

Tel: 0113 244 1697

Email: timetoshine@opforum.org.uk

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HELPFUL CONTACTS

CARING FOR CARERS

CARERS' PROJECTS IN LEEDS DIOCESE:

Bradford

Carers Connection 01274 323323

Carers Resource 01274 449660

Halifax

Calderdale Carers Project 01422 369101

Craven & Airedale

Carers Resource, Skipton 01756 700888

Harrogate

Carers Resource 01423 500555

Leeds

Carers Leeds 0113 380 4300

Selby

Carers Centre 01757 292532

Wakefield & District

Carers Wakefield 01924 305544



Growing Old Grace-fully is a small charity working across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Leeds focused on supporting **Later Life Friendly Parishes**. 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

This pack can be freely copied for non-commercial use but please acknowledge the source. Each section is also available for download at:

www.growingoldgracefully.org.uk

Diocese of Leeds

11 North Grange Road

Leeds LS6 2BR

Tel: 07702 255142

Email growing.old.gracefully@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Registered charity no. 1161765



Suggested donation £5