

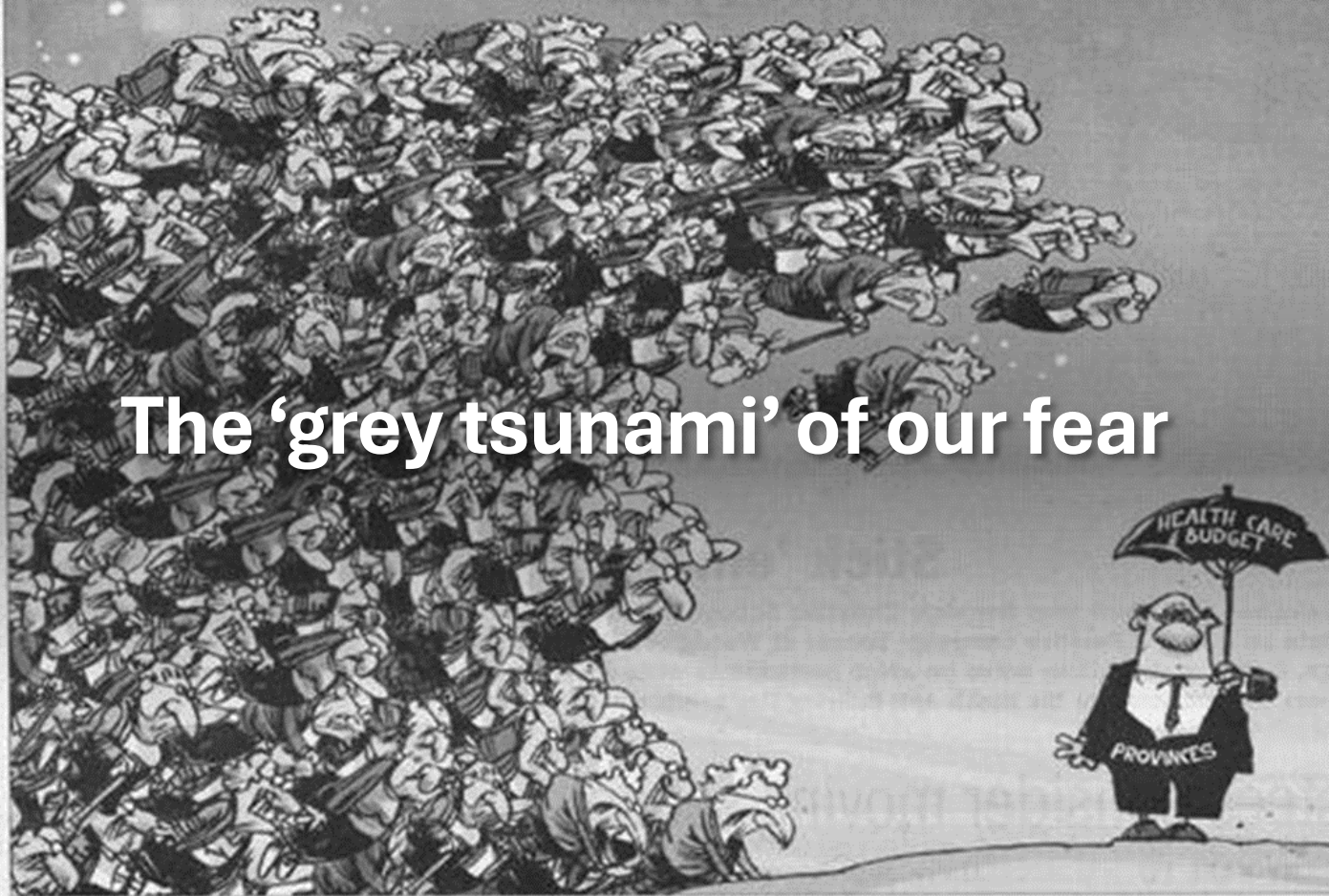
A close-up photograph of a hand holding a very old, worn book. The book's cover is dark and cracked, with the edges frayed and the binding visible. The hand is positioned on the right side of the book, with fingers gently holding it. The background is a dark, textured wooden surface. The overall mood is one of age and history.

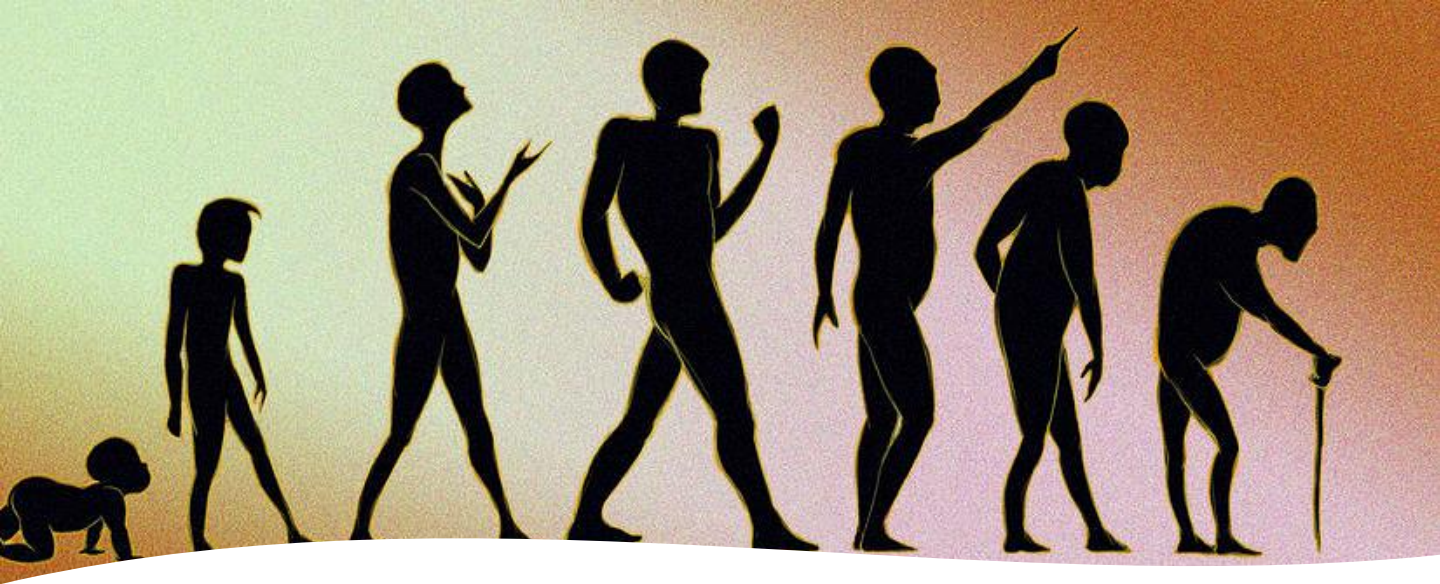
“It is beautiful to be old”
A Catholic perspective
on ageing and the Church

Dr Peter Kevern
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THE GREY TSUNAMI

The 'grey tsunami' of our fear





... And the imagery of Old Age



“It is beautiful to be old”.

*The quality of a society, I'd
say of a civilization, is
judged by how well it treats
its elderly.”*

Benedict XVI 2012

*The elder is not an alien.
We are that elder: in the
near or far future, but
inevitably, even if we don't
think it.*

Francis 2015



So what is
'beautiful' here,
and what is the
challenge to us?

Three key themes



a) What are we elders called to be?

Passengers or pilgrims?

*Photography© Jan Servin/Servin
Design.*



Rise! Look! Hope!

What new horizons,
new insights open up
to Spiritual Pioneers
as we journey into
old age?



b) What is our contribution as elders for the Church?

- ‘Second Childhood’ or ‘a Treasure of the Church’?
- ‘Old dreamers’ or ‘True dreamers’?
Joel 2.28





Role models

- Pope Francis' 15 Catecheses on old age
- Mostly studies of biblical elders and their contribution
- Also stresses the relationship with the young



c) The social critique – what do we have to say to our society?

- JP II: The “Culture of death” vs the restoration of the family
- Francis and the ‘throwaway culture’
- Ageing and the ‘denial of death’



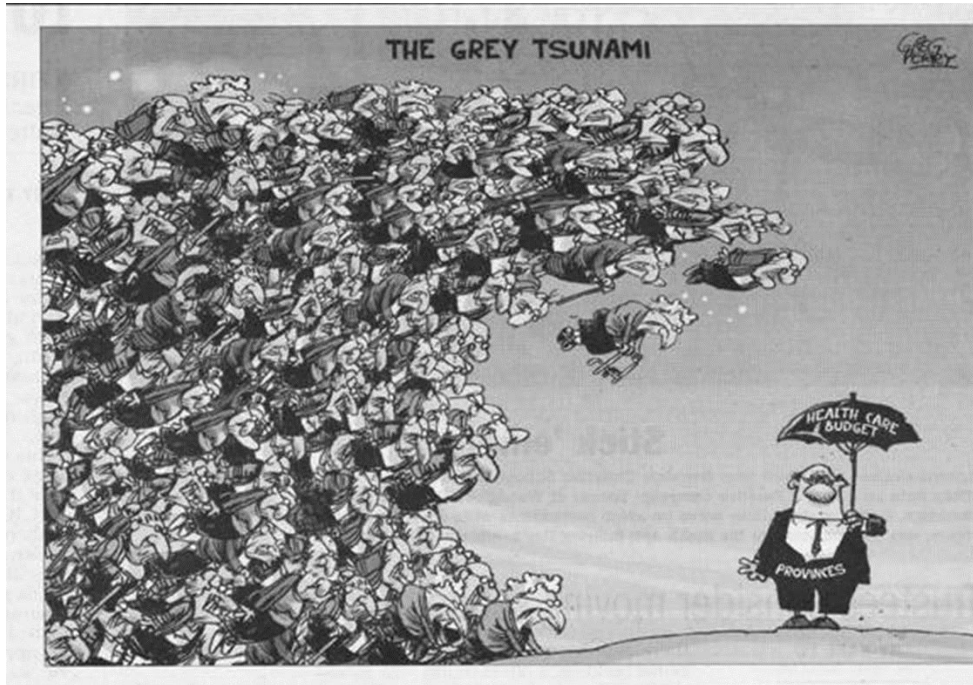
The “Denial of Death” and “Expanding into Life”

Is frailty God’s
gift to us all?



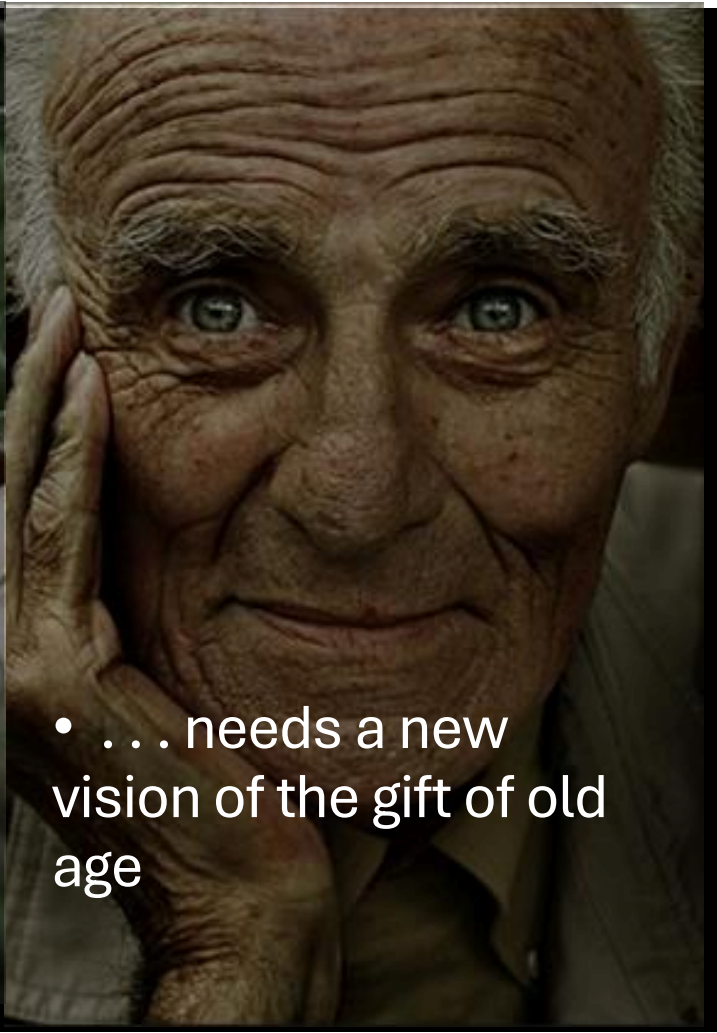
Mr. Fish /
Truthdig

3. Good News - revisiting the grey tsunami



A close-up photograph of a white, possibly plastic or ceramic, mask lying on its side in a field of tall, green grass. The mask is heavily damaged, with a large, jagged hole on the right side of its face. It is stained with brown and red marks, suggesting blood or dirt. The lighting is natural, and the background is slightly blurred.

A blind, brutal
'throwaway society' . . .

- 
- A close-up portrait of an elderly man with a deeply wrinkled face. He has light-colored eyes and is looking directly at the camera. His right hand is resting against his cheek and chin, with his fingers slightly curled. He is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.
- . . . needs a new
vision of the gift of old
age

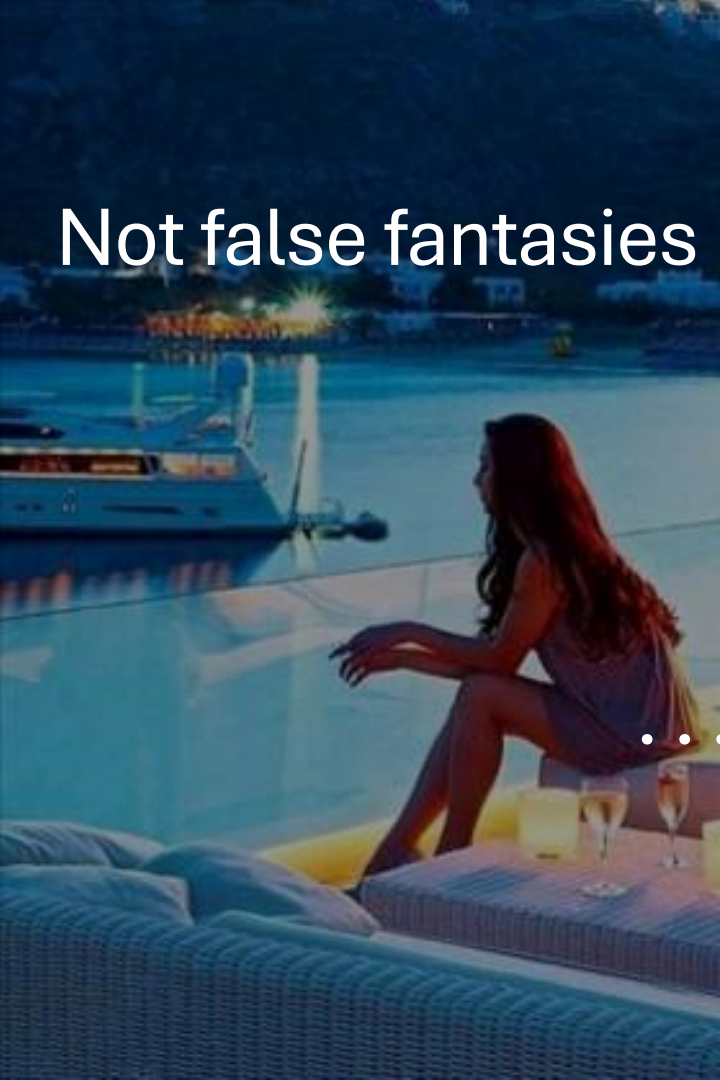


Not a “disease to keep
away from . . .”



. . . but an icon of our
shared frailty

Not false fantasies . . .



. . . but true dreams





Reflection: inventing it for ourselves



Imagine a world where . . .

Imagine a society in which the old are spiritual pioneers and 'value' includes 'frailty'

- How would we care for our older people?
- What would we expect or hope for from our older people?
- What changes or challenges would need to happen in society?
- What would we need to learn or repent of?