

Grandparents and their role of passing on the faith



"God has a large population of grandparents throughout the world... They are the indispensable link in educating children and young people in the faith." Pope Francis -- who, at age 84, is old enough to be a great-grandfather -- made that observation last year during an international conference at the Vatican on the pastoral care of the elderly. The pope

has spoken often about the role his own grandmother Rosa played in his life of faith and has urged grandchildren and grandparents to strengthen their own relationship." I feel that this is what the Lord wants me to say: that there is an alliance between the young and the old," he wrote a 2018 book called *Sharing the Wisdom of Time*. His main point was that "we need the elderly to be dreamers" so they can "inspire" youngsters to have hope for the future. That's a message that resonates with Florence Bosviel, a French journalist and author who has written about this very topic.

How can grandparents pass on the faith? Faith is not passed on as a skill. Rather, it is done as a way of being, and it goes far beyond that. Faith gives meaning to our life: it is a path that connects with the path of our existence. God acts in us. We must dare to bear witness to what faith transforms in us, even if there are periods of doubt or moments of bewilderment. So that the word of the Gospel may begin to speak to the young person to whom we are speaking, whatever his age, grandparents can play the role of intermediaries. But the relationship with God is direct. Everyone can dialogue with God and hear themselves say, "It is good that you exist and I love you".

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