



Moment Two: Families of Faith

Wednesday: Intergenerational Education

Keywords:

FAMILY
FAITH
CELEBRATIONS
CUSTOMS
TRADITION
SACRAMENT
INITIATION
COMMITMENT

Note: Be aware that some students may have lost grandparents in recent times and use with discretion.

W

Watch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YxCR2a-sxl (1 min 20 secs)



THE GIFT WRAP AND THE JEWEL

I looked in the mirror and what did I see
But a little old lady peering back at me.
With bags and sags and wrinkles and wispy white hair
And I asked my reflection, how did you get there?

You once were straight and vigorous
And now you're stooped and weak,
When I tried so hard to keep you from becoming an antique.
My reflection's eyes twinkled as she solemnly replied ...

You're looking at the gift wrap and not the jewel inside,
A living gem, and precious: of unimagined worth,
Unique and true, the real you,
The only you on earth.

The years that spoil your gift wrap with other things more cruel
Should purify and strengthen and polish up that jewel.
So focus your attention on the inside, not the out
On being kinder, wiser, more content and more devout.

Then when your gift wrap's stripped away your jewel will be set
free,
To radiate God's glory throughout eternity!

Wanda B. Goines
wandaburchgoines.com



Wanda was ninety-two when this was recorded. She died in 2016. She had a long and fascinating life. Unusually for a woman of the time, she graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Oregon in 1943. She later studied modern dance at the University of Wisconsin. She married in 1944 and had eight children, one of whom is the well-known artist David Goines, who credits his mother with being his first art teacher. She was an accomplished professional artist herself, and her artwork and sculptures grace the neonatal intensive care unit of Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, as well as the homes of her friends, children and grandchildren.

D

Discussion

Answer the following questions in your copy. In groups, discuss your answers.

- Which lines of the poem struck you most?
- Do we live in a society that values the gift wrap or the jewel?
- Are you surprised that Wanda had a degree in architecture and was a professional artist? Do we sometimes stereotype the elderly?
- What are your thoughts on the last lines: 'Then when your gift wrap's stripped away your jewel will be set free/To radiate God's glory throughout eternity!'

R

Reflective Exercise

Amoris Laetitia (193)

The lack of historical memory is a serious shortcoming in our society. A mentality that can only say, 'Then was then, now is now', is ultimately immature. Knowing and judging past events is the only way to build a meaningful future. Memory is necessary for growth: 'Recall the former days' (Heb 10:32). Listening to the elderly tell their stories is good for children and young people; it makes them feel connected to the living history of their families, their neighbourhoods and their country. A family that fails to respect and cherish its grandparents, who are its living memory, is already in decline, whereas a family that remembers has a future. 'A society that has no room for the elderly or discards them because they create problems, has a deadly virus'; 'it is torn from its roots'.

- Do you think today's society is open to learning from the past? Or is it more focused on the present?
- Are you aware of the 'living history' of your family? Do you know where your family originally came from, for example?
- Can you give examples of how society sometimes has 'no room for the elderly or discards them'?



W **Watch:** www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqSxjmvXzzY (4 mins 35 secs)

D **Discussion**

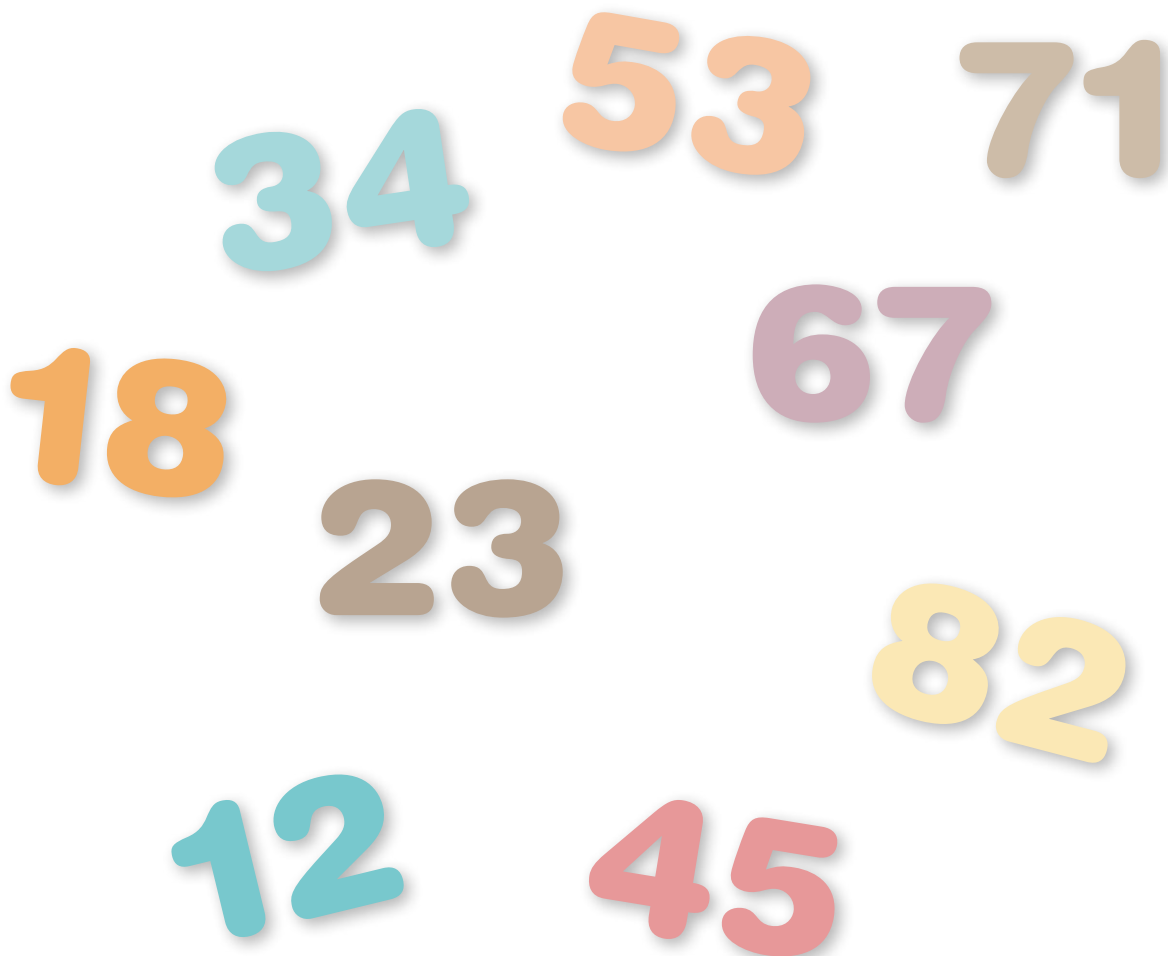
- What is your favourite part of the exchange in the video?
- Summarise the advice given by the young boy and by the older man.
- What do you think are the best aspects of being young or being old are?

R **Reflective Exercise**

Write a letter from your older self to your younger self, giving advice on how to live life today.

A **Activity**

At what age do you think you will be old? Calculate how many years until then. Check with a neighbour and see what his/her definition of old is. Find out the youngest and oldest ages defined by fellow class members as 'old', and calculate the difference between them.



**R**

Reflective Exercise

Amoris Laetitia (191)

'Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent' (Ps 71:9). This is the plea of the elderly, who fear being forgotten and rejected. Just as God asks us to be his means of hearing the cry of the poor, so too he wants us to hear the cry of the elderly.

- How could you be mindful of this plea of the elderly in practical ways in your own life?

E

Extension Exercise

In 1976, a military dictatorship took power in Argentina, which soon became brutal and repressive. Thousands of people were kidnapped, tortured, and murdered. It is estimated that some thirty thousand people were taken away and never seen again, mostly young people aged eighteen to thirty-five. Argentina lived in fear during this period of state brutality now known as the 'Dirty War'. Many years later, it emerged that aside from torture and illegal detention, many of these innocent people had been drugged and pushed out of planes over the La Plata river and the Atlantic. Small children and babies were taken from their young parents and given for adoption without permission, usually to people associated with the repressive regime, but sometimes to couples who had no idea the babies had been stolen from people who were subsequently murdered. In some cases, when women were pregnant when arrested, they were kept alive until delivery and then murdered. This regime endured until 1983. During that time, a group of mothers whose sons and daughters were among the 'disappeared', as they became known, began protesting in the Plaza de Mayo, a central square in Buenos Aires. Later, a group of women who suspected that their grandchildren had also been stolen, set up a separate group called the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo. They were mocked by the regime as crazy, deluded women, but they persevered in the face of threats. An estimated five hundred children were taken away, and through campaigns, marches, advertising and detective work, over a hundred have been restored to their families. Disgracefully, some priests and nuns were involved in covering up the illegal adoptions. In 2016, at the request of Pope Francis, who is from Argentina, the Argentinian Church opened all its archives from that time in order to provide assistance to those who are still seeking relatives who were among the disappeared.

W

Watch: www.youtube.com/watch?v=_YO4u8ARy9M (8 mins 22 secs);
www.youtube.com/watch?v=arBC3T6DsZM (1 min 25 secs)





D

Discussion

- What struck you most about the first video?
- Why did these grandmothers struggle for decades to find grandchildren that in most cases they had never met?
- In 2002, the home of Estela de Carlotta, one of the founding members of the Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo, was riddled with bullets by unknown gunmen. Peacefully fighting a brutal regime and being attacked by gunmen – this is not generally our picture of grandmothers! Think again about ways in which older people can be an inspiration. For example, has any older person in your life been an inspiration in relation to faith, or service of others?

A

Activity

Research a well-known older person from history or today (e.g. Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa) and make a presentation to the class on why that person is inspiring.

