

The Richness of Many Years of Life

First International Conference on the Pastoral Care of the Elderly

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Peter Kevern
Professor of Values in Health and Social Care
Staffordshire University

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Summary

This document reports on the International Conference on the Pastoral Care of the Elderly, organised by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life and held at the Augustinianum in Rome, 29-31 January 2020. There was a diversity of papers addressing the Conference theme "The Richness of Many Years of Life" from 16 speakers representing 10 countries.

The content of the presentations could be grouped loosely according to four themes:

1. A critique of contemporary society and the potential of older people to address its shortcomings: older people as 'grandparenting' a neglected generation through pastoral care and evangelism
2. The pastoral needs of older people and the role of lay movements in reintegrating them into society: older people as suffering from isolation, need and meaninglessness
3. Spiritual and existential challenges of older age and the role of the Church in addressing them: the specific vocation of old age as coming to terms with loneliness, lack of purpose and finitude
4. Theological reflection on old age as a way of 'reframing' the issues: reimagining old age in the light of the teachings of the Church

Practical recommendations were provided by the Under-Secretary of the Dicastery and by the Holy Father. Both stressed the importance of the diocesan level of organisation for ministry to older people and as the site of "a journey of pastoral exploration and discernment" (Pope Francis).

If the momentum of the Conference is to be harnessed to effect real change in the status of older people in the Church and in wider society, practical measures should be taken as soon as possible to disseminate key ideas and proposals at diocesan level.

Further work in England and Wales will need to take account of the ecclesial, social, cultural and economic context, in particular in relation to present work for and with older people provided by non-diocesan structures such as religious communities, national charities and lay movements.

Overview

The conference was organised by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life at the Augustinianum in Rome.¹ It was unexpectedly well-attended, with in excess of 560 delegates from around the world. By far the largest and most visible contingent (not counting those based in Rome itself) was from Brazil: these attendees arrived wearing uniform tops and waving Brazilian flags. The other prominent group was of Italians who comprised approximately a third of the speakers. It would be fair to say that the concerns of South America and Southern Europe predominated, although there was a presence from SE Asia (e.g. Korea, Japan, Sarawak) and Africa (Angola, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe). Some large Catholic regions seemed underrepresented (I was only able to identify only one representative from the USA, and few from Northern Europe).

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) was represented by its Senior Officer for Mission and Advocacy. In addition Peter Kevern, Professor of Values in Health and Social Care, Staffordshire University, was there to contribute a paper to a 'Round Table' session on the basis of his previous work for CSAN on the *Embrace* project and his contribution to the *Care in Time* report.² Other delegates from the UK included Marriage and Family Life Coordinators from the Archdiocese of Birmingham and the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

The format was of a mixture of 30-minute papers and 'Round Table' contributions of 15-20 minutes each. Five discussion sessions of 30-60 minutes each were included in the programme, but in practice these were cancelled or severely reduced as the main sessions overran. Consequently, my analysis in the following report is heavily dependent on the content of the formal presentations, supplemented with individual conversations.

In his opening address, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, defined pastoral responsiveness to the elderly as a 'triple listening' to the signs of the times, the magisterium, and the experiences of older people and those support them. It would have been natural therefore to sort the presentations according to these three emphases, but in the event they were not reflected particularly closely in the Conference content.³ Instead, and in order to impose some sort of structure upon what follows, I will pick four central themes that appeared to

¹ Photographs from the Conference are at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/laityfamilylife/albums/>. Videos of the presentations are at <https://www.youtube.com/user/PcFamiglia/videos>

² https://www.csan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Care_in_Time_Web.pdf. See also <https://www.csan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Beautiful-to-be-Old-CSAN-edition.pdf>

³ Videos of the talks are available at <http://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/laityfamilylife/en/eventi/2020/la-ricchezza-degli-anni.html>

me to run through the conference, and discuss the contributions insofar as they address these themes:

- Critique of contemporary society and the potential of older people to address its shortcomings.
- Pastoral needs of older people and the role of lay movements in fulfilling them
- Spiritual and existential challenges of older age and the role of the Church in addressing them.
- Theological reflection on old age as a way of 'reframing' the issues



1. Critique of contemporary society and the potential of older people

As befits a Conference organised by the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, the Family emerged as a key concept for re-envisioning older age. The principle of the family as the fundamental organising principle of both Church and society is well established in Catholic Social Teaching and is specifically linked to the welfare and role of older people by the work of Pope St John Paul II.⁴ It is the presupposition of one diagnosis of the 'problem' of old age as one of managing transitions within the family. On this understanding, family stress arises if the authority is not successfully handed on from the older generation to the younger as the former relinquishes responsibility: the relationships within the family suffer and with them the wellbeing of all concerned (Bramanti). A similar, if more materialist, suggestion is made by de Rita: in Italy, wealth is concentrated in the elderly who may use it to support their children; but younger generations resent this concentration of wealth and power in the older generation.

In contrast, if intergenerational links can be built (Voce) and the spiritual and cultural resources of older people made available to younger generations (Awe), older people can be 'missionaries of the family', supporting younger families through difficulties and trials (Petrelli). They can be masters and teachers of *hospitality* (de Mendonca). Reflecting on some words of Pope Francis, they can draw on their ingrained memories of the faith to be a source of 'True Dreams' in contrast to the 'false dreams' of the good life offered by marketing agencies and politicians (Kevern).

The recurrent trope which summed up the role of older people was 'grandparenting', and in particular 'grandparenting' young people in the Faith (Wiley, Bodhuin). As Marie Bodhuin expressed it, grandparents' role is to evangelise grandchildren in a time when the intervening generation has abandoned faith, offering a witness to young people born of life experience. Older people need to be grandparents not just for their own grandchildren, but for all young people whose family bonds have been damaged, by exercising spiritual parenthood (de Mendonca). In this way they can transform and enrich not just their own family, but the wider society of which they are a part.

Bodhuin, Mendonca and some of those who contributed questions to the brief discussion that followed seem to be sharing a background narrative in which the pervasive secularisation of family life in the late twentieth century can be traced to a single generation of parents who, under the influence of liberalising forces in the Church, neglected to baptise their children or have them adequately catechised. It follows from this narrative that if the grandparents can draw on their own, more traditional, catechesis to 'skip a generation' and catechise their grandchildren, the decline of Catholic observance will be reversed and secularism defeated. While these

⁴ In particular, *Familiaris Consortio* (1981)

contributions point to the emergence of a rich and inspiring vision of the potential contribution of grandparents to the life and faith of younger generations, a little caution may be advisable in relation to the underlying assumptions supporting the vision.

Another concern with this narrative is that it appears to gloss over some practical tensions. Issues raised during the discussion periods and in informal conversations included whether (and if so how) a grandparent might support or guide a homosexual grandchild; how to negotiate access and influence when parents are separated or divorced; and how to teach the faith to grandchildren when their parents are hostile to religion. All these concerns indicate that the reality of grandparenting cannot simply be extrapolated from the account of the ideal Catholic family propounded in classic CST. There needs to be an intermediate, dialectical process of mapping the ideal against the social realities of family life in each context before a workable vision can emerge of what a 'grandparenting' ministry looks like.



2. Pastoral needs of older people and the role of lay movements in fulfilling them

This theme was in the main addressed through presentations by representatives from different parts of the world describing initiatives in their local church: accounts of practical action tacking between an analysis of context and a pastoral response. Thus, the PPI programme in Brazil arose from a context in which older people are almost invariably dependent on their children for support. There are many elderly housebound who are childless or have been abandoned by their children, so the programme organises volunteer visits to isolated older people across 1,700 parishes in 211 dioceses (Peruzzo). In Angola, day centres to provide food and support for older people are being set up as older people are left behind by the urbanisation process (Lucondo). Against a background of poverty, exclusion, abandonment and difficulty accessing services, a project by Caritas Chile in collaboration with Caritas Germany is training support workers to offer organic pastoral care (Nogner). In Argentina, the Episcopal Conference has launched a web-based radio channel, 'Guardians of Memory', to address the isolation of older people (Petrelli). In the USA there is a programme to 'reinvent older adulthood' as a time of active growth in faith and openness to the community, to combat a vision of individualistic and selfish old age (Cohen/Lombardi).

Hearing of a succession of context-specific projects is inspiring and thought-provoking, but raises the question of generalisability. Underlying all these examples is a narrative of traditional family care as breaking down under the pressures of urbanisation, of geographical mobility and industrialisation, which deserves to be the subject of more general study and reflection. In one particularly striking insight, Marco Impagliazzo linked the plight of older people rendered rootless by social changes with that of the rising number of migrants, as one of the two pre-eminent signs, or "twin pillars," of change in the 20th/21st Century;⁵ a condition that seems to be as true of wealthy older people in the USA as of the displaced rural poor in Angola. In both cases, we are confronted with a mass of people who have lost their spiritual and social place in modern society and are condemned to drift. Beyond the fulfilment of immediate physical and emotional needs, the pastoral and social impetus linking all these projects is the building of community connections to those isolated or on the periphery of society, drawing them into participatory relationships (Bodhuin). This in turn provides the context for 'an anthropology of mutual gift' (Ramonda), intergenerational and interracial solidarity and evangelism of older people.

⁵ I am indebted to Clive Chapman for spotting the significance of this image.

3. Spiritual and existential challenges of older age and the role of the Church in addressing them.

A number of speakers developed a description of many older people as being in spiritual need as a result of a combination of physical and existential challenges. Older people may be particularly subject to *Loneliness* as peers die or relatives move away; they may suffer from a *Lack of purpose* as a result of retirement or increasing frailty; and the prospect of approaching death may bring increased *Awareness of creatureliness and finitude* (de Rita). They may feel these particularly keenly if they have grown up in a secularized and dechristianized context where they lack religious resources. Those who have succumbed to 'senile materialism', clinging to material wealth, influence and youthfulness for meaning are likely to be particularly vulnerable to the existential challenges that come with advancing years (Bodhuin, Impagliazzo).

Older people should therefore be seen as *recipients of evangelization* as well as *agents of evangelization*. The Church can help to build communities and to help older people to reflect on the time and meaning of ageing. Spiritual support offered by Via Montante International, for example, includes spiritual retreats in some countries. Local churches can schedule a Mass and place of catechesis in the afternoon, as some older people don't feel able to go out at night. Teaching can include reflection on the specific vocational spirituality proper to old age, in the face of approaching mortality. Powerlessness can bring us closer to God and find sources of joy among others (Bodhuin).

Fr Alexander Awe's comprehensive and structured treatment of the spirituality of older people fleshed out some of these incipient themes. He presented old age as a time for comprehensive reappraisal leading to deep spiritual wisdom, having the potential to resource a popular (lay) spirituality. This presentation was a substantial piece of new work which will repay further examination when the text has been published.

The contribution of this strand of the conference presentations was to sketch out a more integrated understanding of the existential needs and spiritual contributions of older people than has been apparent in official catholic thinking to date. The thought of the last three Popes on this subject has stressed the power of the prayers of older people and the wisdom that may arise from a lifetime lived in the Faith, but with a few exceptions⁶ this has not been connected to the experience of old age as frailty, isolation and dependence. Taken together, the accounts of the spirituality of older people at the Conference present older people as both recipients and proclaimers of the Gospel, and so neither privilege or marginalise them in the community of the Church.

⁶ Notably Benedict XVI, Visit To The Community Of Sant'egidio's Home For The Elderly "Viva Gli Anziani" Rome Monday, 12 November 2012 http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121112_viva-anziani.html

4. Theological reflection on old age as a way of 'reframing' the issues

Three contributions explicitly addressed the challenge of reinventing old age in a theological key. Since they were different in both approach and emphasis, I will briefly summarise each in turn.

Marco Impagliazzo considered what it means for old people to "invent for [them]selves" by meditating on the experience of vulnerability. Old age is a time of weakness and an awareness of the absence of choices for the future which brings the temptation to withdraw and give up.

Against this tendency, he notes that space for spiritual life grows as other demands and capacities shrink; so old age is not to be seen only in terms of deficits. Drawing on the examples of Jesus and St Paul, he suggests that old age is marked by 'gratuitousness'. This gratuitousness manifests in prayer, as expressed in Psalm 71. Marginalisation of old age proceeds alongside the marginalisation of what is gratuitous, whereas by contrast, Christianity is the cult of the gratuitous. By grace, it is possible to transform those extra years and look to new frontiers away from self centredness and self interest into the heart of gratuitous love. The future church will need more and more older people who are converted to a new way of life along these lines.

Cardinal de Mendonca reframed the role of older people in the history of salvation by an extended meditation on the life of Abraham. He presented Abraham as shaped by his experience of ageing as starting again and learning every day to live on trust. The challenge of faith is to get past the framework of our individual existence and be open to the surprises God brings our way.

The Church needs older people to be 'truly persuaded' of the faith as masters and teachers, when they become key agents for transmission of the faith. The central message is that we are not our own origin, but are what we receive from others: conversion integrates the individual into a story in which they are a co-protagonist. So young should seek out old people, and vice versa.

My (Peter Kevern) contribution was to bring the understanding of old age emerging from the teachings of the last three popes into critical conversation with some of our cultural assumptions about old age. The prevailing view of old age is as a time of decline and loss to which the logical conclusion is 'assisted dying': assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia. The Catholic understanding of old age stands as a challenge to this view, which is why pastoral care has the potential to transform a whole culture as well as the individuals involved. It needs to be informed by a vision of old age as

“beautiful” (Benedict XVI),⁷ as a time of challenge, growth and ‘true dreams’ (Francis)⁸ for the good of the whole society.

The three contributions summarised briefly here share a similar structure inasmuch as they start with the experience of old age, working out through reflection on key themes of the Faith to arrive at prescriptions for Church and a critique of Society. The diversity of approach underscores on the one hand the richness of older people’s experience as a resource for critical theology, and on the other how much needs to be done to contextualise and apply Catholic Social Teaching to questions of ageing over the life-course. It is striking how little Catholic theology of ageing exists, particularly considering its clear links to individual and social experience in an ageing global society.



⁷ Benedict XVI, Visit To The Community Of Sant’egidio’s Home For The Elderly “Viva Gli Anziani” Rome Monday, 12 November 2012 http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2012/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20121112_viva-anziani.html

⁸ [Address](#) of His Holiness Pope Francis to the members of the Italian National Association of Senior Workers, Clementine Hall Monday, 16 December 2019

Summarizing events

Taking into account the fact that this Conference was convened around a very loose brief (“The meeting will focus on how to deal with the culture of discarding the elderly, their role in the family and their particular vocation in the Church”) it is noteworthy how much convergence was apparent in the diverse presentations. There was clear agreement around the importance of a ministry of ‘grandparenting’, both within the natural family and to younger generations in general, as a means of expressing care but also of vertical transmission of Catholic Faith and Practice. In the inspiring stories of pastoral ministry from around the world, there was a wealth of examples of how the virtues of compassion and solidarity issue in lifechanging action for the most isolated and vulnerable. There was a recognition of the status of older people both as hearers and evangelists of the Gospel; and of the potential for a distinctive spirituality growing out of memory, weakness and dependence. Finally, there was work to root our understanding of the elderly in the heart of the Church’s teaching.

That said, the convergent priorities emerging from the Conference needed knitting together into a coherent body of work, and integrating into the developing thinking and activity of the Church. This process demands attention, because the previous attempt to precipitate action by regional churches in response to the needs and gifts of older people appears to have been largely ignored throughout the Church.⁹ It is reassuring therefore, that specific attention was given to the question of what needs to be done.

⁹ This was the document produced by the Dicastery’s predecessor, the Pontifical Council for the Laity (1998) *The Dignity of Older People and their Mission in the Church and in the World*, accessible at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_pc_laity_doc_05021999_older-people_en.html . It is noteworthy that the document was not referred to once during the Conference; and English-speaking participants at least seemed completely ignorant of it when asked.

Two events deserve a separate treatment, as both in different ways sought to distil the key themes and messages of the Conference and mould them into a course of practical action. The first, and most detailed, is provided by the concluding remarks of Gabriella Gambino as Under-Secretary to the Dicastery, who stressed the need now for application: for the dioceses to “get on with it”.¹⁰ In practice, she said, this required:

1. each diocese and bishops’ conference to create a dedicated office
2. the Church leadership to promote a ‘correct vision of God’ in prayer, relevant action, and evangelisation processes.
3. existing church departments to develop intergenerational work.
4. ministries to empower the service and contributions of older people
5. promotion in both civil and ecclesial contexts of:
 - a. measures against all kinds of elder abuse.
 - b. processes to enable older people’s participation.
 - c. Measures to protect older people’s rights.
6. A clear stance against euthanasia in policy and practice where we see people in voids, looking to escape life.
7. Spiritual care and development, including in the contextual explanation of sacraments (e.g. sacrament of the sick)

She proposes that these responses can and should appropriately be developed at the level of the diocese, since on the one hand, “We don’t need big plans, just human relationships with sound networks”; and on the other, “We don’t need more fragmented, small initiatives, but strong networks”. The point is, presumably, to identify the locus of activity as the local or regional Church, rather than to marginalise work at either extreme. However, in a context such as the UK where so much of the provision for and thinking about elderly care has traditionally been provided by extra-diocesan organisations (notably communities of Religious and lay organisations such as SVP), and where these rather than diocesan structures have provided the nucleus for ‘strong networks’ of human relationships, the Church’s work with older people does not sit neatly between these two extremes.

The second key summarizing event was the papal audience following the formal business of the Conference. This picked up on some key themes that had been explored in the conference and ended with an exhortation for action which was, once more, directed at action at the level of the diocese:

. . . I welcomed with interest the initiative of this conference, which focused attention on pastoral care for the elderly and initiated a reflection on the

¹⁰ I am indebted to Clive Chapman for his notes of this address and his reflections upon it, which constitute the majority of the material presented here.

implications of a substantial presence of grandparents in our parishes and societies. I ask that this does not remain an isolated initiative, but that it instead mark the beginning of a journey of pastoral exploration and discernment.

. . . Do not be afraid, take initiatives, help your bishops and your dioceses to promote pastoral service to and with older people. Do not be discouraged, keep going!¹¹

Pope Francis's concern for older people is well documented, and there was nothing particularly new in his address. It was of importance less for its content than its character as event: it amounted to a papal endorsement of the significance and urgency of the topic under discussion.



¹¹ Pope Francis, Audience 31.1.20

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/01/31/dicast.html>

Conclusions

The primary significance of the Conference lay in its potential as a means to reinvigorate thinking around inclusion of and work with older people in the Church. The fact that it was held at all, and with the explicit endorsement of the Pope, may be the most important factor in situating the needs and gifts of older people in the centre of the Church's pastoral and social thinking in the coming decade.



Some structural and organizational issues shaped the proceedings in unintended ways. Since formal presentations overran their scheduled times, the planned discussion sessions had to be abandoned or curtailed: since these were the only opportunities for contributions 'from the floor' to be translated for all participants, the effect was to limit the potential to exchange perspectives from around the world. In addition, since there was no guidance given before the Conference regarding the content of each presentation, some ideas and themes were elaborated upon repeatedly, whereas others (with hindsight) seem to have been overlooked entirely. Consequently it has been necessary to impose a structure upon this account in order to elicit some recurrent themes.

Nevertheless, it was by the end of the Conference possible to discern a good deal of convergence among the presenters around some key ideas: the vocation of 'grandparenting', both within and beyond the family; the growing and vital spirituality of some older people, along with a concern for their spiritual needs; the potential of grassroots lay pastoral care to both support older people and draw them into an active ministry; and the need for theological 'reframing' to enable the restoration of dignity and meaning to old age.

From the point of view of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) itself, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and the focus of *Care in Time*, there were a number of unaddressed issues and gaps in the account of the role and care of older people in the Catholic Church that would repay further consideration:

1. The concept of 'grandparenting' as a vocation is clearly at the centre of much of the thought represented at the Conference, and grows neatly out of the mainstream of Catholic Social Teaching on the centrality of family structures to the wellbeing of individuals, Church and Society. For this reason, it needs developing more fully as part of the Church's response to the shortage of adult social care in England and Wales. However, a few questions raised during the Conference were indicative of the tensions inherent in the notion of grandparents as guardians of the faith. These practical issues will all require further reflection if the insights of the Conference are to be put into practice.
2. Reference was made to how the status of older people varied between urban and rural settlements in several countries (notably Angola and Chile); a similar analysis of the differences in the experience of older people between Eastbourne and London, or Dudley and Birmingham, might shed useful light on the heterogeneity of contexts within England and Wales. Behind all these variations, there is a need for reflection on the substantial body of work that exists examining the relationship between changes in care for older people and wider social changes, which could provide a grounding in theory for the diverse pastoral response presented at the Conference. Similarly, in the UK context the Catholic contribution to public policy on social care provision will need to be informed by an analysis of the changing requirements for and expectations of its ministry of pastoral care for the elderly.
3. The point of departure in *Care in Time* was residential care, but this was hardly mentioned at the conference. In global terms, mobilizing the laity-in-community (such as in Brazil) has abundant potential for addressing the needs of isolated older people without recourse to residential care, but the Embrace project suggests that such mobilisation will occur slowly, if at all, in England and Wales (this is probably the case across Northern Europe). There's the potential for a more nuanced social analysis of the drivers and barriers to lay mobilization in our context,¹² but it might also be important to look at how the lessons of the Conference could be applied to the situation we currently find ourselves in – for example, by promoting occasions for cross-generational encounter in care homes, and starting a conversation on the spirituality of older people with Chaplains and residential care providers.

¹² Backstrom and Davie's project on Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe may provide a starting point for this. See Bäckström, A., Davie, G., Edgardh, N. and Pettersson, P., 2010. Welfare and Religion in 21st Century Europe, 2 vols. *Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate*.

4. A distinctive Catholic contribution to national policy on elderly social care needs to be grounded in a theological anthropology that questions the prevailing functionalist understandings of the life and destiny of human beings. This can provide a different account of the needs and capacities of older people that challenges the 'culture of death' and restores meaning to notions of frail old age. Two key insights from the Conference that may drive this challenge to the prevailing culture are the connection between the rejection of old age and euthanasia (Kevern, Gambino); and the recognition that the rising number of older people is, with the rise in migrants, one of the two pre-eminent signs, or twin pillars, of change in the 20th/21st Century (Impagliazzo).¹³

There remain grounds to fear that, despite the impetus given by the Pope's involvement and the energetic work of the Dicastery itself, the care and contribution of older people will remain a peripheral issue for many dioceses. The fact that some parts of the world with large and active Catholic populations (such as the USA) were underrepresented and the relative failure of *The Dignity of Older People* to precipitate change both give cause for concern.

As regards England and Wales, it is important that Caritas Social Action Network and the Bishops' Conference move promptly to build on the work of this Conference before the momentum is lost. Practical short-term responses might include:

- to encourage the Bishops in each diocese to draft a pastoral letter drawing the attention of parishes to some of the key themes of the Conference
- a collaboration with Diocesan Marriage and Family Life Coordinators and organisations such as the Catholic Grandparents' Association to discuss opportunities for disseminating some of the key messages to parishes
- a consultation to explore some of the theological and practical issues related to the care and ministry of older people
- the establishment of a network of Catholic residential and daycare providers to share experience, best practice, stories and insights relating the findings of the Conference to the delivery of care.

¹³ In relation to this observation, Clive Chapman comments, "In the context of Pope Francis's vision of a Church of the poor, I think it has added significance in that in Europe and the West we have focused on education but systematically bought into a) a model of retiring the alleged extra wisdom of the elderly, and b) education of the presumed ignorant poor rather than being educated by the poor and frail (I realise I'm not comparing exact like with like here around outcomes).

Contributors

Fr Alexander Awe, I. Sch Secretary of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life. *The spirituality of the elderly and the roots of the holy faithful of God*

Monique Bodhuin, President of Via Montante International *The elderly: a generation to accompany spiritually*

Donatella Bramanti, Catholic University of Milan sociologist. *Family and the elderly*

Mary Cohen, Senior Ministry, Archdiocese of Atlanta, USA Round Table, 'We must invent old age' (paper delivered by Dominic Lombardi in her absence)

Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect for the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life *The Church and the Elderly*

Dr Gabriella Gambino, Under-Secretary for Family and Life. *Conclusions – Towards a Pastoral Care of the Elderly*

Marco Impagliazzo, President of Community of Santa'Egidio *The elderly, richness for the Church*

Peter Kevern, Staffordshire University, UK. Round Table, 'We must invent old age'

Dominic Lombardi, Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Round Table, 'We must invent old age' (delivered Mary Cohen's paper in her absence)

Fr Moses Lucondo OFM Cap, Senior Centre Martyrs of Love, Huambo, Angola. Round Table, 'The Church with and for the Elderly'

Mario Nogner, Social Worker Caritas Chile. Round Table, 'We must invent old age'

Bp Antonio Peruzzo, Brazil. Round Table, 'The Church with and for the elderly'

Maria Elisa Petrelli, Ministry for the Elderly, Episcopal Conference, Argentina. *The pastoral care of the elderly in ordinary pastoral care*

Giovanni Paolo Ramonda, President of Pope John Paul XXIII Community Association, Italy. Round Table, 'The elderly: a challenge and an opportunity for the family'

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonca, Archivist and librarian of the Holy Roman Church. *The Vocation of the Elderly within the Church*

Maria Voce, President of Focolare Movement. *The dialogue between generations*

Catherine Wiley, President and Founder of the Catholic Grandparents Association. Round Table, 'The elderly: a challenge and an opportunity for the family'

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