

SJAG Presents

It's Time

Social Justice in
an Ageing Society

Term 4
2016



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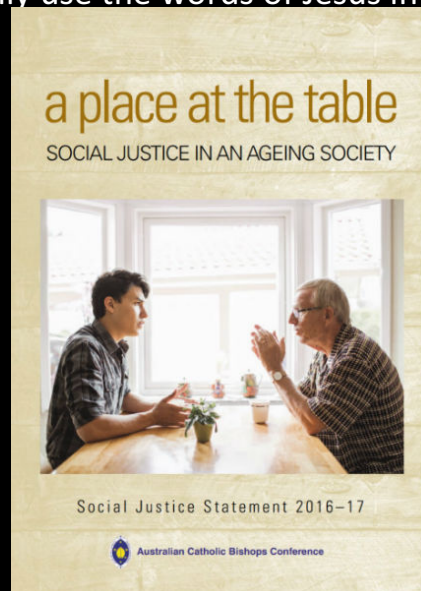
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ENJOY READING

WAZZA'S FINAL WAFFLE

This final edition for 2016 of **It's Time** focuses on our Ageing Society. The articles range from a theological reflection on the elderly within the catholic faith tradition, through to reflecting on respect towards the elderly and articles that honour the memory, wisdom, example and courage of our grandparents. This issue of **It's Time** is in fact timely for two reasons – firstly, current media reports reveal the inhumane treatment of the elderly in aged care facilities, particularly inflicted on sufferers of dementia in Australia, reveal an ugly side of institutional care in our community that lies hidden and unknown by many Australians. These current affairs programs seem to reflect a disturbing trend noted by the United Nations on World Elder Abuse Day this June, that highlighted elder abuse will increase as the global population of older people is expected to double by 2025. Moreover, we live in a society that rewards and celebrates the young and the strong and sees older people as weak and futile, often stereotyping them as dependent, slow and unproductive. The second reason for the focus of the current and final issue for 2016 of **It's Time**, is that conscious of the current media coverage, the United Nations report and reading the “signs of the times”, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) issued a statement entitled “A place at the table: Social Justice In An Ageing Society” (2016-2017). In this challenging document, Pope Francis is cited as urging us to reflect that: “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...Indeed, ‘how I would like a Church that challenges the throw-away culture by the overflowing joy of a new embrace between young and old!’. It’s time to celebrate and honour the wisdom, courage, patience and unconditional love and service of the elderly in our communities, especially our grandparents, both alive and those who have gone before. Equally important and urgent is the need for protecting those most vulnerable in our society, including the elderly. The Greatest Commandment and the Golden Rule compel Christians to work towards a loving and merciful community that is inclusive and honours the diversity of gifts of each and every member of our society. I commend this issue to you, and hope and pray we are transformed daily by the Holy Spirit to become a people who not only use the words of Jesus in our prayers, but live the words of Jesus visibly in our daily life.

Mr. Waleed Younan
Acting Director of Identity



TAKING THE SIMPLE STEP FURTHER

There's a simple reason why the elderly are elderly, they are older, wiser and more experienced than any other age bracket. Throughout our lives, we learn, grow and, change, we find new challenges and new ways to face them. However, often, the challenges we face are solved with knowledge passed down to us from those who have been where we are now. Our elders know the faults of history and are able to guide us through our own lives. Without the wisdom and knowledge of the past, history is bound to repeat itself, the mistakes of the past will become the mistakes of the future.

Every day, we pass by someone's grandparents, someone's great grandparents, sometimes, people pass by your grandparents. Respect can be shown in a variety of small ways; it wouldn't make a difference for us but it could for them. When on a train, bus or any public transport not everyone *needs* a seat but persons whom are elderly might *need* the seat. It's common courtesy and wouldn't take an inch of sweat off of you. Truth be told, the bare minimum of respect isn't always shown to those who have come before us. Simple respect should be shown to every person, the elderly deserves our respect more than anyone, they are our generations fathers and mothers. Simple 'please' and 'thank you' shows basic respect, it isn't always done but it can be if we make the effort. Shouldn't we make the effort to give back to those who have given us our lives? Remember, whenever you pass someone else's grandparent, someone else passes your grandparents. Wouldn't you want respect to be shown to them?

Take it a step further, we can all give that little bit more to the elderly. Every day, in homes, the elderly members of our society are left neglected. Left sitting in silence, forgotten about. Through Yr 11's social justice work students visit these homes, they are given a unique view into the lives of our society. The elderly are part of our society, they built what we have. The step further could be minor, offering to help your neighbour with minor chores, visiting these homes and finding your own ways to help out. Visiting elderly homes provide a new perspective on our ageing society. We need to support the elderly more than ever.

One day we will be the elderly. It's not a matter of opinion or mindset but a fact. One day I, you, we will have grown old. Won't we want a culture in which the elderly are looked after? When we've grown old and live alone the least we will want is respect. If we can't give respect to our elderly why should we be respected when we are in their position?

Ultimately, it's a matter of human decency that we respect those who have come before us. They are the global communities parenting generations. Our grandparents, they're the foundations of our society. Deserving of respectful nature, they are worth our time. We give back to those who have given us our lives.

Eoin O'Sullivan
Social Justice Prefect



THE WORK OF GOD'S HAND

'Do not speak harshly to an older man, but speak to him as to a father, to younger men as brothers, to older women as mothers, to younger women as sisters—with absolute purity' – 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

On 2nd November the Catholic Church celebrated All Souls Day – a day where we commemorate all the faithful departed. It is a time of solemn prayer and remembrance of those that have gone before us into the light of faith. It also provides the opportunity to reflect upon those individuals that have provided us with experience, hope and wisdom in our lives. As Pope John Paul II stated in his 1999 Letter to the Ageing, *"wisdom is becoming to the elderly"*. Inspired by a conviction towards the contribution that the elderly can give to the life of society, the Catholic Church calls for their dignity and fundamental rights to be respected.

In today's society, there is a common perception of old age as a period of decline – a stage of stagnation and ineptness that permeates as time progresses. However, the elderly provides us with a considerable amount of knowledge, wisdom and insight that only comes from a lifetime of experience. In Job 12:12, it states *"wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in length of days"*. This highlights that throughout our Catholic tradition, there is a common emphasis on the importance of the elderly as a source of information, but also a realisation of the world around us.

When trying to understand the Christian response to the elderly, I think of the Gospel of 'The Widow's Offering' provides us with an insight:

"He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury" – Mark 12:41-43.

Just how Jesus did not disregard the works of the widow, Christian adherents should not overlook what the elderly do to promote true worship. We have reason to commend elders for their share in the ministry, for their participation in meetings, for their positive influence in the congregation, and for their endurance. A sincere word of encouragement can help the elderly find meaning in their sacred service and show that their contribution to the world and society is appreciated.

From a faith perspective, the elderly plays a crucial role as catechists – teachers of the principles of Christian faith. Throughout the history of the Church, it has been the role and duty of senior adherents to bequeath traditions and understanding of faith. They provide their own discernment of the world around them, and aid in the applicability of beliefs towards it. Just as devoted parents nurture their children through infancy, childhood and later life, the elderly nurtures society through their continual commitment to service to others.

Mitchell Devine
Spirituality/Faith Formation Prefect



WISDOM COMES WITH AGE

“Listen to your elder’s advice, not because they are always right, but because they have more experiences with being wrong.”

In today’s fast paced and ever changing society, it is often quite easy to become consumed in ourselves and the never ending tasks that are at hand. However, as we travel through our day to day busy lives, a large proportion of the community that are often forgotten about, sit back and observe the changes that are occurring in front of them, with a cup of Earl Grey in one hand, and a crossword in the other. They are, of course, the elderly.

The elderly people in our community are most often the wisest. Many individuals do not realise the tremendous knowledge and wisdom that resides within the older members of society, until they have the chance to sit down and have a conversation with one another. We, as members of the younger generation, may have to teach them how to use a computer, or enlighten them with an explanation on the functions of a smartphone, but the greatest lessons of all, are those in which the elderly can teach us.

Wisdom comes with age; as the more life experiences you have, the more you know about love, hate, compassion, acceptance, ethics, hope and the list goes on. Thus we can learn more from the elderly, than we can ever teach them. Their knowledge of history supersedes that of a text book and is second to none, as they lived through experiences such as WWII and the repercussions that it brought along. Their ideals of love and its dominance over hate is something that society as whole, can learn from, because they know the dangers of resentment and non-acceptance. As the abovementioned quote denotes, the advice given by the elderly should be taken with honour and great consideration; not because they are always right, but because their life experiences have shown them what is wrong.

Over the last couple weeks, I have been lucky enough to have had one on one conversations with both of my grandfathers. Through this, I feel as if I have gained so much more respect for my grandparents, as I never really appreciated the sacrifices they made, and the struggles they faced as migrants, until I heard their spiels. Prior to this, I never knew that they had experienced racism throughout their initial years in Australia; I never knew that my grandfather would often work two jobs for a total of 15 hours a day; or that my other grandfather would rarely see my grandmother due to the fact that as he arrived from work, she would leave to her job, just so they could provide for their families. By hearing this, they have taught me that with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible.

So I urge everyone to make the time, to visit the local retirement village or surprise your grandparents with a visit, as a simple conversation, can go a long way.

Anthony Bejjani
College Vice-Captain

THE ELDERLY AND RESPECT

Everyone has heard someone say in their time *"Respect your elders"* but it isn't often that you hear someone actually explain why. A lot of people just say it's because they are older and they deserve it, which is true, however in my experience the older generations have actually earned my respect and admiration. To live for 7 or more decades is an amazing thing - it's crazy considering the life expectancy of people some 150 years ago. But in this day and age, generations seem to blend. People that have seen so much in the world change in their lifetime - from cars just starting to become a common thing on the roads, to cameras transforming from using film to digital cameras, and then these cameras going into mobile technology, which can also call, text, access the internet, count your steps, track what you eat, find your place on the globe with GPS, email and so much more. To see all these changes and embrace it is an awesome thing. One person that I have seen embrace all of this change is my 80 year old Zio (Uncle) Giocondo. He has recently added me on Facebook, regularly calls his nieces and nephews in Italy on Skype to stay in touch, has a mobile phone and still drives his car around the streets of the Inner-West.

I have truly been blessed to grow up with some amazing people who are my role models in life. These people constantly inspire me in every aspect of my life, whether it be interactions with my family and friends, my relationship with God or the way I approach my job. But the people that have inspired me the most have been my grandparents. Growing up I was fortunate enough that my parents chose to buy a house around the corner from my Nonno and Nonna. This meant that almost every day my brother and I would go over and spend time with them. Nonno would always be in the veggie patch in the backyard telling us stories while Nonna was cooking one of her delicious meals. At the dinner table the epics of Nonno's life would continue and little did I know at the time that I would still hold the messages close to me at all times: love your family and always be willing to help each other, even at the worst times.

After Nonno passed away I became much closer to my Nonna. I would spend a lot of my holidays there when we would go to bingo and the shops together. That is the time that I started to realise just how strong she was. Her entire outlook on life, spanning over a long 93 years, was formed from varied experiences across many spaces and countries and was shared with me. She also taught me some life lessons which I will never forget: always look for the positives in everything; know God is always with you; thank everyone for every moment you share with them; and sometimes things happen in life that are out of your control, but just let them happen. This is why I respected her so much. She always knew the right thing to say and when to say it. She is the strongest person I know to date, and went through so much in life but still managed to smile everyday and be thankful for the blessings. She taught me so much - and I thank her every day for doing so.

Respect is important because it shows how much you value another person. It is true when people say *"you don't know what you have until it's gone,"* but memories live on and are eternal. If someone has impacted on your life, or is a role model that you look up to, thank them for simply being them. In my life it was my grandparents who inspired me to be a better man. As I get older (and hopefully wiser!) I hope I can be like them, then I think I'll be okay. In your life these people may be different or you may thank them for various things, but the important thing is that you maintain good relationships with those who are older than you. They may take a little while longer to get used to new phones, apps and trends, but ensure you give them time to be with you and learn from you, because you, no doubt, will learn from them.

Mr. Gregory Sciortino
Geography Teacher



ARRUNGA NURSING HOME – A PLACE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

Many stereotypes and common beliefs about the Elderly of our society are that they are “grumpy” or “out-dated”. It is these stereotypes that are strictly torn apart at the Arrunga Nursing Home, Silverwater. In this Nursing home lives many Elderly people who sometimes portray these stereotypes but it is a training station to people whom are equipped to care for their every need. The home is a haven for the Elderly as the staff, nurses and doctors treat them with the upmost respect and care.

Everyone resident has experienced joy and happiness, living in a community where they can live out their lives in peace and happiness. Rarely is there a resident who “hates” or “condemns” the practices as they have all enjoyed each others company, including the staff. Although some are of great illness and therefore have been admitted there, the community that has been built, makes the nursing home more “home” to them. The nurses cater to all their desires about their rooms as well as what needs to be done and when.

Many functions are held there to celebrate their lives as well as make their experiences enjoyable and memorable. Not only that but the students from the school on the opposite end of the road, do constant work and charity to make their lives happier. These involve music programs, social functions such as bingo and dress-up, food catering and donations towards the improvement of the home. I truly find this to be an inspiring and uplifting community of which shows the upmost respect and care for the Elderly regardless of their conditions. The home’s beliefs and traditions are centred on care and diversity of every variety of people regardless of religion, culture, race and etc. In addition the families and friends of every resident also help to make the home a more enjoyable place for them. The feeling of togetherness and community and love, is what makes the Home a shining example of one of the many places where people show the Elderly the respect they deserve.



Lachlan Coorey
Year 9

PAST AND FUTURE WORKING TOGETHER

It is uncommon in today's society that we see respect and a sense of decorum towards people, especially towards the elderly. I worry to think about our generation and how we will be treated when we soon reach our time of being elderly. When I was a child I was brought up to respect the elderly and to help them when they are in need. It was a very important in our household to respect the eldest. But in today's community it is very infrequent that these actions and these dreams are being realized which is a big concern!

To treat the elderly with respect is more of a privilege rather than a chore, but in today's culture we live in a world now that is evolving and changing rapidly and sometimes we forget to make time for our grandparents and elderly. It is disappointing to see what our respect for the elderly has come to and it is important that we change our assumptions about the elderly. We have to give thanks for all that they have achieved and done for us.

I believe it is important that we give back to the elderly community as they have done so much for us, now it's their time to enjoy the fruits of their hard labours and our time to support and be there for them especially in times of need.

Joshua Veidreyaki

Year 9



RESPECTING THE ELDERS

My grandparents are the most wonderful, caring and generous people I know. I am lucky enough to have all of my grandparents from both my mother and fathers' side. They are an inspiring pair of role models representing senior citizenship that I aspire to. I see them still caring for my parents and helping them look after my brother and me and all their other grandchildren. They are very giving with their time, love and food. I respect my grandparents by greeting them with a kiss or a handshake when I visit on weekends; I listen to them and spend time with them before I play with my cousins. I love listening to the stories of their childhood, which is so different to my own. I respect them by having good manners and appreciating them for all their contribution to their families and community.

It's pretty hard to think of my grandparents as young kids - being naughty for their parents, going to school, or fighting with their brothers and sisters. The simple act of listening to them and paying attention makes me remember that they have lived through a life that has changed incredibly in the last 80 years. By taking the time to learn their history, my heritage, I have gained beautiful memories.

Respect is a part of love and human dignity. Pope Francis has said, "The human person is always precious, even if marked by age and sickness". He says we have a duty to honour the elderly. Many years from now we too will be old. If we don't learn to respect the elderly for their wisdom, then perhaps we too won't be treated well when we're old and fragile. I want to live in a society where we show gratitude, mercy and affection to our elderly because their contributions have made our lives better today. So next Sunday, go visit Nonna, Stara Mama or your Granddad, and give them a hug! They'll love you that much more!

Darcy Patterson
Year 7

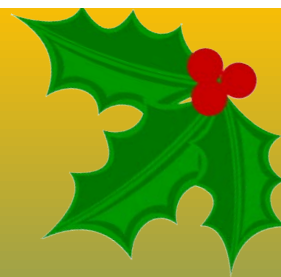


THE LOVE OF GRANDPARENTS

I have known my grandparents on my mother's side my whole life and I have never met my father's parents (Marjorie and Jamil Jabour) as they died before I was born. I have many fond memories of my mother's parents (Dorothy and Cecil Lindley) including our time together down the South Coast at Kiama where they have a holiday house and at their house. Most holidays my sisters and I go down to Kiama either by train or car. Whenever at Kiama my sisters and I would go down to Kiama Surf Beach with Nanna and also to the Lolly Shop if we were good. With my Poppy I would work in the back garden with him daily and help pick tomatoes, cucumbers, peaches, beans and snow peas. I remember I used to wash the snow peas and eat them right after we picked them. After I got picked up from school sometimes we went over to their house for afternoon tea where my Nanna would make pikelets and sausage rolls for my sisters and I. No other sausage rolls can compare to my Nanna's. I used to eat all of them and not leave any for anyone else.

James Jabour
Year 8





THANK YOU FOR READING THE FINAL EDITION
OF SJAG'S IT'S TIME MAGAZINE

WE HAVE HAD A GREAT YEAR OF FIGHTING
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE YEAR TO
COME

HAVE A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE BREAK

BE SURE NOT TO FORGET ABOUT THE LESS
FORUNATE DURING THE HOLDIAY SEASON

THE SJAG TEAM WISHES OUR READERS A
HAPPY AND HOLY CHRISTMAS AND A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

