



Summer, 2023, Volume 47 Issue 2

Senior Chatter

A publication of the Office of Aging
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston



The Spirituality of Aging: *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly* (Sunday, July 23)

What one gift or value would you like to pass on to future generations?

My personal gift is rooted in the summer vacations that I spent as a child visiting my grandparents. It included an annual downtown treat with my grandmother, daily devotional prayers we prayed together, the five or ten cent tips I would get for going to the grocery store, the open door policy to “my refrigerator is your refrigerator”, the excursion to a farm to pick apricots – a gift packaged to remind me of the unconditional love of God.

In that light, Pope Francis calls the Church on the 4th Sunday of July (the Sunday nearest the feast on July 26 of Sts. Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus) to celebrate the third annual World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly. The theme he chose for this celebration is “His mercy is from age to age” from the Gospel of Luke 1:50. Pope Francis recalls the joy that the pregnant Mary brings to the person of her cousin Elizabeth as she greets her. It entails a call to intentionally remember the elderly in our community as well as an invitation to “embrace and connect the generations”.

Engagement between the young and the old is essential for cultivating the communal tree of life. The Holy Father calls the old to help encourage the young to see the big picture of life. This vision can help the young to look beyond the fleeting present and entrapments of virtual reality to create a productive life committed to generating a just and more loving world. He challenges the elderly to move out of their dwellings on the loss of physical strength and past regrets to invest their wisdom, their experiences, their presence, and their prayers for the young.

Pope Francis invites the young to make concrete gestures as Mary did with her visit to her cousin Elizabeth to bring joy and shared hopes and dreams. The Holy Father boldly states: “May we never allow the elderly to be cast aside”. Such engagement might involve a phone call or visit to a grandparent or an elderly person in a senior living community. When my daughter was younger, we would visit a senior living community, and she would play music on her violin for them. Then we would visit with various seniors during their lunch. There was always a reciprocal sense of joy that we experienced in these encounters. These are examples of how God’s mercy concretely manifests in the world. And how these intergenerational connections can enrich the lives of young and old alike by mutual attentive listening and encouragement. I firmly believe that the felt sense of hopelessness and isolation by young and old can be replaced by a sense that someone truly cares – if only our communities intentionally reach out to each other. Then God’s mercy will be so abundant that the communal tree of life with its refreshed roots (the elderly) will produce a bounty of healthy fruit in the young.

by Mark Ciesielski | Director

SENIOR SENATES
Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
CENTRAL SENIOR SENATE-2023

President - Barbara Murray
Meeting: 1st Monday of each month
St. Dominic Auditorium - 10 a.m.
2403 Holcombe Blvd. - Houston, TX 77021

NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE-2023

President - Mary Jo Butler
Meeting: 2nd Monday of each month
St. Monica Church - 10 a.m.
8421 W. Montgomery Rd., Houston, TX. 77088

SOUTHWEST SENIOR SENATE-2023

President - John Johnson
Meeting: Quarterly meetings—10 a.m.
St. Cyril of Alexandria Church
10503 Westheimer Rd.- Houston, TX 77042

OFFICE of AGING MINISTRY STAFF



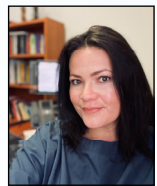
Director
Mark Ciesielski, LMSW
mciesielski@archgh.org



Associate Director
Olga Najjar, MATP
onajar@archgh.org



Associate Director
Gina Pasket
gpasket@archgh.org



Admin. Assistant
Blanca Cruz
bcruz@archgh.org

OFFICE of AGING

2403 Holcombe Boulevard
Houston, Texas 77021
Office Hours (M-F): 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 713-741-8712 - Fax: 713-741-8775

OFFICE OF AGING UPDATES

Summer Greetings, dear Seniors!

As the summer heats up, so has ministry in the Office of Aging. Since the spring, the Office hosted the following:

- an educational seminar with the Veterans Administration to address caregiving and funeral benefits.
- the Northern Senior Senate celebrated milestone anniversaries with 70 couples from their parish clubs.
- an End-of-Life planning seminar at Christ the Redeemer Parish with attendance of 33 Archdiocesan parishes.

Upcoming:

- See the Calendar of Senior Senate events for 2023
- The first Archdiocesan Conference on Aging: "Nurturing the Roots of Our Communal Tree" will be held on Friday, January, 26, 2024 (parish leaders) and on Saturday, January 27 (seniors & family members) at Prince of Peace Parish.

New Office of Aging Staff:

- Please welcome a second associate director, Gina Pasket. Gina will be responsible for oversight of the senior senates. Her autobiography is listed in this newsletter.
- Blanca Cruz joins us as an administrative assistant.
- The two associate directors will return to in-person visits to your senior clubs.
- The final note is that on June 30 after 7 years in the office, I will be retiring. It has been a pleasure knowing and serving you. I thank you for sharing yourselves, your wisdom, and life experiences with me and the office. Always remember that you are a gift and blessing to the Church! I leave you with competent, compassionate staff in Olga Najjar, Gina, and Blanca. Sr. Maureen O'Connell, our secretariat director, is also available as needed. All of you will remain in my prayers and heart as I treasure you and our time together!

Blessings,
Mark T. Ciesielski | Director

NEXT CHATTER DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

Send Chatter articles to: Chatter @archgh.org

Please limit articles to 125-150 words.
All submissions are subject to editing based on space available.
Be sure to visit the Office of Aging on the web at:

www.archgh.org/aging

ST. HELEN, PEARLAND - Super Seniors

The Super Seniors went on the Sam Houston Boat Tour out of Port of Houston in April. That was wonderful; the day was beautiful, and the tour was not disappointing. Everyone absolutely did enjoy the Boat Tour. We also had time to visit Villa de Matel. And, of course, that is always a beautiful place to visit. In May, Fr. Luis blessed our newly installed Officers. Our trip to The Painted Churches in Schulenburg was in June. We had a beautiful day for that trip, no rain. Hopefully, all are staying well and happy.

-Ginger Shea

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR - Mavericks

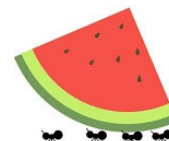
The Mavericks took a bus trip to Giddings to visit the Serbin Community in April. We had a tour of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and the Texas Wendish Heritage Museum. Very interesting. We celebrated our club's 27th anniversary with a Texas BBQ meal and musical entertainment by Rodney Rasberry.

Our May bus trip took us to Lake Jackson to tour the Texas Sea Center. It contains an aquarium with exhibits of Texas marine life, the world's largest redfish hatchery, a wetland exhibit and more. Lunch was enjoyed at the Lake Jackson Seafood Restaurant.

The Mavericks Kitchen Band sang at June's First Friday Mass, minus our noisy instruments! Our monthly bus trip was to Beaumont to tour St. Anthony's Cathedral Basilica. We also visited the Texas Energy Museum and the Art Museum of Southeast Texas. Lunch was at Luby's, everyone's favorite!

Have a safe summer and keep cool.

- Marilyn Tovsen

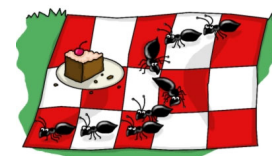


ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA - SAVVY SENIORS

Happy Summer to all. We enjoyed a nice spring in the Savvy Seniors with a pot luck for St Patrick's Day. In April we had Bob Mitchell, a Korean War Veteran, talk to us about his experience in the war. It was very informative. In May we had a representative from BBB talk to us about scams targeting our elders. It seems like there are new scams every day.

Hope you have an enjoyable and safe summer.

- Gayle Naar



ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE - Kolbe Seniors

In March 7 we attended the Senior Senate Day of Prayer at Prince of Peace and also enjoyed musical entertainment at our March 17 meeting. Our bus trip for March was shopping and wandering around in Old Town Spring.

April we had another bus trip: we were off to see our favorite ASTROS. A new game was introduced at our April meeting. It is called Left, Right and Center. Great fun.

On May 10th we traveled to Saint Mary's Catholic Church and Saint Stanislaus Church in Plantersville for tours and then to Martha's Bloomers for Lunch. May 8 was the Northern Senior Senate Anniversary dinner where we had five couples recognized. Our May 19 meeting had a presentation from Brad Janicek with St Dominic's Village followed by a good Bingo session.

June found our group at the Buffalo Soldiers Museum and then on to Saint Arnold's brewery for a tour and a great lunch on the open air patio. Our leader Becky Keels does an amazing job making our senior's group interesting and active.

-Mary Ann Harvery

PRINCE OF PEACE - Keenagers

We are Dark in June, July, August 10, except for this CiCi Pizza Lunch 22513 Tomball Pkwy. Might be followed by Bingo at Fr. Ryan Center (That's up to a new President to be appointed soon).

Regards,

- Joe Cochrone



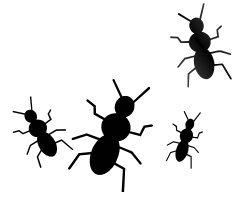
Assumption —Harvest Years

With the exception of the June 11 luncheon/meeting at Luby's and the NSS Game Day at St. Maximilian Catholic Church on Monday, August 14, the Harvest Years will be on official hiatus until the 3rd Sunday on September 16, 2023. Catherine Suarez is working hard to get a bus to transport all to the Game Day. Members will still be expected to participate in the Weekly Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Prayers on Thursdays.

Please pray for those who are ill and dying.

Please have a great Summer. Be Safe!

- Catherine Suarez



St. Anne de Beaupre—Kings and Queens

April 12th we're happy to have had Mark Ciesielski, Director of the Office of Aging and Olga Najjar, Associate Director. Each one gave a speech.

We also celebrated the 26th Anniversary of our club and also the oldest member (Anna Marie Jenkins. The members having a April birthday Rose Bossard and Shirley Jones were also celebrated. We had sandwiches from Jason's Deli for lunch and cake and ice cream for dessert.

May 10th we co-hosted a Senior Resource and Appreciation Day which was hosted by Metoyer Roundtable Consultants. It was held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Break and lunch were provided by the host. There were many vendors who handed out information, gifts and door prizes.

It was a great success even though it rained in the morning.

We will not have meetings June, July, and August. See you all in September.

- Pat Jewell

CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD, SPRING—55 Plus

April was a very busy time for us. We went on two journeys - one through the movie, "The Journey", with Andrea Bocelli ; the other, experiencing the Sacred Heart Co-Cathedral. The first took us on horseback through the countryside of Italy, stopping periodically for music depicting the area. The theme of the movie was for us to explore the moments that define us, the songs that inspire us and the relationships that connect us to what matters.

The second was a journey of faith. The beauty on the outside of the Cathedral was only the beginning. It was/is the beauty on the inside that was/is all inspiring. Seeing so many traditional symbols so beautifully displayed gives us pause for this faith journey.

We couldn't let Cinco De Mayo pass without a social event! The quiz questions were challenging and the fajitas - the perfect finish!

A new adventure awaited us at George Ranch - our trip for May. We toured two houses and watched the steers jump into a trough for disinfecting. That was exciting! Even got to see an alligator .. Our next trip coming up is to the Print Museum.

We are very fortunate to have such an active community. Our usual activities are ongoing and soon we will be redoing the dine-out groups. Thank you to the board for all you do!

May we continue on this faith filled journey together.

- Helen Moorman

HOLY FAMILY, MISSOURI CITY --Golden Friendship Group

We continue to enjoy bingo, raffles, and door prizes at each meeting. Our lunches for the last 3 meetings had entrees of tamales, sandwiches and frito pie. Members brought side dishes and desserts. We meet monthly at different restaurants for food and fellowship. We have had monthly luncheons at Super 6 Chinese buffet, Salt Grass Steak House, and Olive Garden. At these luncheons, we continue to have a drawing for one lucky person to have their lunch free! At our June meeting, we voted to donate funds for 2 youths to attend the July Archdiocesan Youth Conference and also funds for our parish's "Burn the Mortgage" campaign. We are looking forward to attending the SW Senior Senate's Game Day in July.

- Gwen Reinke



SOUTHWEST SENIOR SENATE

We enjoyed a presentation in April by Bob Mitchell on his military experiences in the Korean War and its history. He is working hard on writing a book about his experiences to pass on to his grandchildren. All members have been asked to consider what special skills, hobbies, or memories do they have to bequeath to their loved ones. We have been making plans for our Game/Bingo Day on July 26. We hope many will attend for a day of education, food, fellowship, and fun. The day includes a speaker on the importance of hydration, a turkey dinner, bingo, the 50/50 game, and door prizes. The deadline for registration is July 12. We have begun plans for our recognition dinner in November.

- John Johnson & Gwen Reinke

WELCOME—GINA PASKET | ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

My name is Gina Pasket. Jesus is the center of my life. I have been married for almost 39 years and have two children and four grandchildren.

I have a master's degree in "Theology and Pastoral Studies" from St. Thomas University at St. Mary's Seminary and have served the Catholic church in ministry for 35+ years.

I love baking, cooking, decorating, working events and serving others. I love the truth and wisdom of God's word, and hope that my stories and faithful service will stir your hearts to a deeper relationship with our Lord, to help you strengthen your Catholic faith, and encourage you on your journey.

God has giving me many gifts and talents. I love sharing these gifts and knowledge with others, especially to help them grow in their faith and to serve others. I am looking forward to meeting and getting to know you.

- **Gina Pasket** | Associate Director | Office of Aging

YOUTH SUPPORT FOR CAMP KAPPE

▪ Looking for ways to support the youth of the Archdiocese?

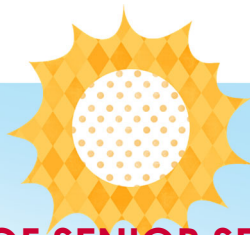
Camp Kappe, the Archdiocesan facility for youth retreats and school for environmental education is in need of 2 things:

1. Volunteers to help youth with skills in gardening and care of animals (chickens, pigs to goats)
2. Financial support to help care for the garden and animal supplies

▪ Here is their Amazon wish list:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/MBW7AHT9RBZL?ref=wl_share

▪ To make a contribution or to learn more about Camp Kappe, contact Randy Adams, director at radams@archgh.org or call (713) 741-8771 or (936) 894-2141



CALENDAR OF SENIOR SENATE EVENTS

NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE (Membership meetings are held on the second Monday from 10-am – Noon of the month at St. Monica's Parish). Parishes take turns to provide a light lunch,

- Monday, July 10 – Educational Presenter on Fall Prevention (Cheryl McClure from You're First Caregivers)
- Monday, August 14 – Game Day at St. Maximilian Parish from 10 AM – 2 PM. Registration deadline is August 1 (\$20/person covers meal and game expenses)
- Monday, September 11 – Home Modifications & Mobility Support
- Monday, October 9 – (Rosary); Hospice, Palliative Care, and Bereavement Support
- Monday, November 13 – (Mass for deceased members); Caregiver Support
- Tuesday, December 5 – Recognition Day/Christmas at Shirley Acres

CENTRAL SENIOR SENATE (Membership meetings are held on the first Monday of the month from 10 AM – Noon at St. Dominic's Center auditorium, 2403 Holcombe Blvd., Houston, Texas, 77035) No meetings in July or August. Meeting dates on holidays are moved to the Thursday of that week.

- Thursday, September 7 – Dementia, Memory Care & Caregiver Support
- Monday, October 2 – (Rosary): How to stay safe and prepare your home for colder weather
- Monday, November 6 – Medicare updates
- Wednesday, December 6 – Recognition Day/Christmas at the Doubletree Hobby Hotel

SOUTHWEST SENIOR SENATE (Membership meetings are held quarterly on the fourth Wednesday of the month at St. Cyril of Alexandria Parish).

- Wednesday, July 26 – Game Day at St. Cyril's. Registration deadline is July 12 (\$12 registration covers lunch); Lunch presentation by Danna Barnes on "The Mystery of Hydration"
- Wednesday, October 25 – Members share a talent or legacy personal item.
- Saturday, November 4 – Recognition Day at St. Cyril's



The First Archdiocesan Conference on Aging:

"Nurturing the Roots of Our Communal Tree"

- Friday, January, 26, 2024 (parish leaders)
- Saturday, January 27 (seniors & family members)
- Location: Prince of Peace Parish, 19222 Tomball Parkway, Houston, TX 77070





**CENTRAL SENIOR SENATE MEMBERS
ENJOYING A GAME DAY BINGO**



St. EDITH STEIN SENIORS' JUNE LUNCHEON LUAU



**REV. LEON STRIEDER (PRESIDER) & DEACON DENNY HAYES
AT THE
NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE ANNIVERSARY MASS
ST. MONICA'S PARISH**



**NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE
WEDDING ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION**



NORTHERN SENIOR SENATE WEDDING ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON

The Spirituality of Older Adults

Nicodemus said to him: How can an old man be reborn? Who will return to his mother's womb to be born a second time? Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, whoever is not reborn of water and the Spirit cannot enter the Kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit." John 3:4.

These words of Jesus to Nicodemus help to focus the true sense of what it means to be in relationship with God. It is where the person finds one's mission to evangelize and serve through a rebirth in the Spirit. In the first part of life, youthfulness is often consumed by the busyness of life – cultivating a professional career, forming a family, and chasing material success. This can distract from nurturing the spiritual life and the encounter with God through the Holy Spirit.

As people age, that hunger for the eternal resurfaces as the hustle and bustle of youth have faded and the opportunity and time to cultivate the encounter with God becomes ever present. There is more time for prayer when the older adult can practice simple dialogue with God – conversations or even wordless encounters with God. By deepening one's experience of the mercy and patience of God, the older adult's desire grows to share God's compassion with his family and those in need of God's mercy.

It is essential that this growth in the Spirit be grounded in a sense of belonging to a group to counter the effects of isolation and loneliness. It is in the context of their faith community, accompanied by fellow disciples, that they can accept the crosses of the loss of their personal physical and mental strengths, the losses of their loved ones, and to find renewed meaning in daily life through prayer and service to others. It also provides the same companionship that Jesus asked of his friends – to pray with Him in his final hours through illness and death. In this way, the older adult knows that the Holy Spirit has finished his work to meet Christ.

by Olga Nájar



La Espiritualidad de los Adultos Mayores

Nicodemo le dijo: «¿Cómo renacerá el hombre ya viejo? ¿Quién volverá al seno de su madre para nacer una segunda vez?» Jesús le contestó: «En verdad te digo: El que no renace del agua y del Espíritu no puede entrar en el Reino de Dios. Lo que nace de la carne es carne, y lo que nace del Espíritu es espíritu. Juan 3:4.

Estas palabras de Jesús a Nicodemo ayudan a enfocarnos en el verdadero sentido de lo que significa estar en relación con Dios. Es donde la persona encuentra su misión de evangelizar y servir a través de un renacimiento en el Espíritu. En la primera etapa de la vida; la juventud a menudo se ve consumida por el ajetreo: cultivando una carrera profesional, formando una familia o persiguiendo éxitos materiales. Todo esto puede distraernos de nutrir la vida espiritual y del encuentro con Dios a través del Espíritu Santo.

A medida que las personas envejecen, el hambre por lo eterno resurge cuando el ajetreo y el bullicio de la juventud se van desvaneciendo, la oportunidad y el tiempo para cultivar el encuentro con Dios se hacen más presentes y necesarios. Hay más tiempo para la oración, cuando el adulto mayor puede practicar un diálogo simple con Dios: a través de conversaciones o incluso sin palabras en el diálogo con Dios. Al tener una experiencia más profunda de la misericordia y paciencia de Dios, crece el deseo del adulto mayor de compartir la compasión de Dios con su familia y todo aquel que la necesite.

Es fundamental que este crecimiento en el Espíritu se base en el sentido de pertenencia a un grupo para contrarrestar los efectos del aislamiento y la soledad. Es en el contexto de su comunidad de fe, acompañados de sus condiscípulos, que pueden aceptar las cruces de la pérdida de sus propias fuerzas físicas y mentales, las pérdidas de sus seres queridos, y encontrar un significado renovado en la vida diaria a través de la oración y el servicio a los necesitados. Esta también brinda el mismo acompañamiento que Jesús pidió a sus amigos: orar con Él en sus últimas horas a través de la enfermedad y la muerte. El adulto mayor sabe que el Espíritu Santo ha terminado su obra para encontrarse con Cristo.

by Olga Nájar