

RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY

John Paul Speaks

*Notable quotations from Pope John Paul II and
official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church*

RESPECT OR CONTEMPT?

We see that among some peoples old age is esteemed and valued, while among others this is much less the case, due to a mentality which gives priority to immediate human usefulness and productivity. Such an attitude frequently leads to contempt for the later years of life, while older people themselves are led to wonder whether their lives are still worthwhile. (9)

EUTHANASIA IS EVIL

It has come to the point where euthanasia is increasingly put forward as a solution for difficult situations... Regardless of intentions and circumstances, euthanasia is always an intrinsically evil act, a violation of God's law and an offense against the dignity of the human person. (9)

“A CORRECT PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE”

There is an urgent need to recover a correct perspective on life as a whole. The correct perspective is that of eternity, for which life at every phase is a meaningful preparation. (10)

“GREATER WISDOM”

Elderly people help us to see human affairs with greater wisdom, because life's vicissitudes have brought them knowledge and maturity. They are the guardians of our collective memory, and thus the privileged interpreters of that body of ideals and common values which support and guide life in society. (10)

“A MODERNITY WITHOUT MEMORY”

To exclude the elderly is in a sense to deny the past, in which the present is firmly rooted, in the name of a modernity without memory. (10)

“EVERY PERSON NEEDS OTHERS”

The signs of human frailty which are clearly connected with advanced age become a summons to the mutual dependence and indispensable solidarity which link the different generations, inasmuch as every person needs others and draws enrichment from the gifts and charisms of all. (10)

“HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER”

“Honor your father and mother” ...Where this commandment is accepted and faithfully observed, there is little danger that older people will be regarded as a useless and troublesome burden. (11)

“A WORD TO THE YOUNG”

While speaking of older people, I would also say a word to the young, to invite them to remain close to the elderly... I urge you to do this with great love and generosity. Older people can give you much more than you can imagine. (12)

FIRST OF ALL, EVANGELIZATION

The Christian community can receive much from the serene presence of older people. I think first of all in terms of evangelization. (13)

“ACCEPTANCE AND APPRECIATION”

As the number of older people increases, ... it will become more and more important to promote a widespread attitude of acceptance and appreciation of the elderly, and not relegate them to the fringes. (13)

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