

FROM THE DESK OF FR. DAVID

What the Bible says about
GROWING OLD

by Ronald D. Witherup, SS

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This is part one of a two part article.

Like so many other baby boomers, I have had to deal with aging parents in the last few years. After the death of my father at the venerable age of 92, my siblings and I decided that my mother, who had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, would need to move to an assisted-care facility.

Recently, that facility sponsored a special presentation on Alzheimer's. My mother dutifully attended and came back with a few interesting materials which she proceeded to describe to me. She pointed out that she was not sure if she was in the early stage, the middle stage or the end stage of the disease. Then, with a twinkle in her eye, she said, "It probably doesn't matter. Even if I did know, I wouldn't remember it anyway!" At least she has not lost her sense of humor.

We are privileged to live in a time when people are living longer and, generally, healthier lives. Reaching 100 is no longer a rare and special feat. The verifiably oldest living human on the planet at the time, a Frenchwoman, died in 2006 at 116 years of age!

Seniors have become a special segment in our society. Business, politicians and advertisers court seniors because this demographic group constitutes a powerful segment in society. The AARP has practically transformed representation of seniors' interests into an art form.

Yet, in a society that also tout youth, vitality and sensuality – and uses these in all kinds of seductive advertising – one cannot help but wonder whether we really appreciate growing old the way we should. The Bible, I think, offers a useful perspective.

Praise in the Old Testament

In biblical times, the average life span was quite short. Infant mortality was high. If people survived childhood, most could expect to live only perhaps into their 40s, 50s or 60s.

Even the psalmist has to admit that the expectations were, by our standards, not very remarkable: "*Seventy is the sum of our years, or eighty, if we are strong; Most of them are sorrow and toil; they pass quickly, we are all but gone.*" (Psalm 90:10).

Yet living a long life was a cherished goal. To live a long life meant that a person had received God's blessing. The Book

of Genesis, in particular, makes this point in almost comic fashion.

The fifth chapter contains a long list of human ancestors, stretching from Adam to Noah. Note the remarkable ages attributed to them: Adam died at age 930; Seth at 912; Enosh at 905; Kenan at 910; Mahalalel at 895; and the famous Methusaleh at 969! Not only that, but they are said to have been fertile and fathered children at venerable ages as well. After his 500th birthday, Noah was said to have fathered Shem, Ham and Japheth (Genesis 5:32). What kind of vitamins did they use? These stories, of course, are not meant to be taken literally. The Old Testament attributes long life to its heroes. The longer someone lived, the more heroic, important and honored the individual was considered. Living a long life also enabled people to fulfill their obligations to God honorably.

The cry of the psalmist is instructive: "*Now that I am old and gray, do not forsake me, God,/That I may proclaim your might to all generations yet to come.*" (Psalm 71:18).

The Old Testament also associates long life (and gray hair) with wisdom. It is not the longevity itself that mattered as much as the experience that came from it. The Book of Wisdom says, "*For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years. Rather, understanding is the hoary (gray) crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age*" Wisdom 4:8-9).

Ben Sirach, another wise biblical figure, advise, "*My son, from your youth embrace discipline; thus will you find wisdom with graying hair*" (Sirach 6:18). When Job's young friend, Elihu, offers his own interpretation of Job's calamities, he defers to the elders before speaking, out of respect (Job 32:4).

Remarkable Deeds

If living a long life was an ideal, the Old Testament was not naïve about what often accompanied such length of days. The Bible's quintessential skeptic, Qoheleth (called *Ecclesiastes* in Greek), was particularly blunt about growing old: "*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come/ And the years approach of which you will say, I have no pleasure in them*" (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

The authors of the Old Testament knew well that old age often brought with it many physical ailment and vulnerability. One group is consistently singled out for special protection because they are so vulnerable: widows. Thus, in biblical times, it's little wonder that widows (along with orphans and strangers) became a focal point for Jewish acts of charity. As part of the reform God demands of Jerusalem, the Prophet Isaiah cries out: "*Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphan's plea, defend the widow*" (Isaiah 1:17). The Book of Exodus says, "*You shall not wrong any widow or orphan. If ever you wrong them and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry*" (Exodus 22:21-22)

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

The Old Testament also explains that old age can hold some real surprises. Through God's grace, some characters miraculously bear children in old age, such as Abraham and Sarah, who are promised they will bear a son Isaac (Genesis 18:12-14). Indeed this incredible life-giving act becomes symbolic of God's ability to achieve remarkable deeds beyond normal human expectations. Even in old age, someone can become a special servant of God.

God includes older people in the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian Exile. The Prophet Zechariah specifically promises: "Thus says the LORD of hosts: Old men and old women, each with staff in hand because of old age, shall again sit in the streets of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 8:4).

Concluded next week.



And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith." The Lord replied, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." - Lk 17:5-6

LIFELINE SCREENING RADIOLOGY

will be at St. Stanislaus Church on Wednesday, October 10, 2007 from 9:00am – 4:00pm.

Screenings are fast, painless and offered at low cost. Using ultrasound technology scans will be performed for blocked arteries, which can lead to a stroke, aortic aneurysms, which can lead to a rupture and plaque buildup in the arteries in the legs, which is a strong predictor of heart disease. Also offered for men and women is a bone density screening to assess risk of osteoporosis. Each screening takes about 10 minutes or less to complete. Our vascular screening package is \$119.00 and the complete wellness package, which includes the osteoporosis screening) is \$129.00. Please call 1-800-407-4557 as soon as possible as space is limited and pre-registration is required. Further Information on each test is available in each church.

YOU CAN AVOID A STROKE! Register now!

HOSPITAL IN NEED OF EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS: If you are a commissioned Eucharistic Minister and wish to volunteer your time and minister to the sick, please call David Pilliod at Saint Mary's Hospital; 842.1900, Pastoral Care Office.

GOOD SHEPHERD CHURCH, 27 Teller St., Amsterdam, will be hosting a Polish Platter Dinner in their church hall next Sat., Oct 13 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Tickets can be purchased after the 9:00 a.m. Sunday Mass at the Good Shepherd Church. For information and tickets call 842-3241. (Please see the flyer on the bulletin boards.)

22ND ANNUAL POLISH HARVEST FESTIVAL *The Church of St. Adalbert,* Schenectady, NY will hold their annual DOZYNKI on Sunday, October 14 from 10 am to 8 pm at the Parish Center located on Crane St. Hill, 550 Lansing St. The festival will begin with a Harvest Mass at 10 am. Booths will be open from 11 am to 5 pm. Dancing will be from 4 to 8 pm. For more information, call Bob Chelkowski at 355-2226.

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER: Autumn is a time for colored leaves, crisp mornings, picking pumpkins and for putting the fire back into your relationship on a Marriage Encounter Weekend. For more information on the November 16-18 weekend, please call Ed & Rhonda Staats at 279-3243.

On the Flip Side

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Please take a moment to check out all of our new advertisers on the back of our bulletin. Please be sure to patronize these businesses to thank them for their new and continued support of our bulletin. Through their generosity, this publication is provided at no cost to us or the parishes.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST NEWS

Weekly Parish Stewardship Report

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:
\$216,390.00

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$4,161.35** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses.

Collection: Sept 29: \$1,724.00

Breakdown

Weekly:	\$1,376.00	Monthly:	\$195.00
Miscellaneous:	\$45.00	Diocesan:	\$386.00
Candles:	\$30.00		

THERE WILL BE NO RELIGION CLASSES this week due to the Columbus Day holiday. Classes resume next Sunday, Oct. 14 at 9:15 am.



ST. JOHN'S ANNUAL HARVEST CHICKEN DINNER is scheduled for Saturday, October 27th at 5:30 pm. Tickets are available before & after the 4:30 pm Mass. **NO tickets will be sold at the door.** You may call 842-5712 to reserve tickets.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: Volunteers are needed for a collection ministry. *We are looking for 18 people, male or female, students and/or adults* to assist with the weekly collection. Please contact Butch Zierak or Larry Steiger, or you may call the rectory at 842-6851 and leave your name & phone number.



**OCTOBER 7TH
RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY**
October is Respect Life Month!

It is a time for us to strengthen our commitment to the gospel of life. "The value of human life does not depend on exercising one's intellect; it comes from God's fatherly love for each human, created in his image. His love is present long before our brain waves can be measured at six weeks gestation and long after our brains no longer function so well. His love is present long before our heart begins to beat at 22 days after conception, and long after our heart begins to fail. His love is present at every step and misstep of our lives." Flyer, *Respect Life Program* (2007)

SAINT CASIMIR NEWS

Weekly Parish Stewardship Report

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:

\$188,494.02

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$3,624.89** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses.

9/23/07 Collection: \$1,186.00

Breakdown

Weekly: \$1008.00 Monthly: \$23.00
Insurance & Fuel-\$45.00 Catholic University: \$110.00
Next Sunday is our monthly collection. Please be generous.

FAITH FORMATION: No Sessions today. Sessions will resume next Sunday at 9:30 am. in the Social Center.

TODAY'S HAPPENINGS

Today is the Feast of the Holy Rosary. - The Living Rosary Society will attend Mass followed by their Annual Dinner at CP's Restaurant in Hagaman.

Ladies Auxiliary sponsored food pantry collection for Catholic Charities. Monetary donations and nonperishable food items are collected on an ongoing basis.

Our **"After Mass Coffee Hour"** resumes today with Aldona Abeling, Regina Kot, and Gerry Drenzek hosting. Please plan to attend and join in our community fellowship.

500 Club Winner - September 26, 2007 Sam Farhart #810

St Casimir's 500 Club memberships are available. The cost is \$5.00 a month--\$60.00 for the year. You will receive 2 numbers and the award is based on the weekly Wednesday Evening, NYS Pick Three drawing. We are also in need of promoters. This is the major fundraiser for our parish. Please consider joining and asking your family, friends and neighbors to participate. Please call Aldona Abeling at 842-3391 for more information.

Baseball Pool - Week 26-No winner- We will have a random drawing for the last prize.

Football Pool - Winner Week 4- Alfred Rogers

FALL FOOTBALL POOL: PAYMENT IS NOW DUE!!



Please remember in your prayers the late Charles Sharmose. May he rest in peace.

St. Casimir's Parish Community offers our condolences to Deacon and Mrs. Michael Ryba, and the entire family of the late Gabriel Vertucci.

We "Thank" Aldona Baltch-Gravrogkas MD. and George Gravrogkas for their generous donation for the beautification of the grounds surrounding the Veteran's Memorial at St. Casimir's Cemetery.

Excavating and paving of the roads in the cemetery will be taking place shortly. We "Thank" Mr. David DelGrosso for his generous donation of \$25,000.00. We will also be using monies from the Memorial Fund and the Foundation to complete the entire area.

The 13th Annual Rosary Rally will be held at St. Casimir's Parish on Sunday, October 21st at 2:00 pm. All are invited to attend to implore Mary's intercession for peace in the world, in our families and in our own daily lives. St. Casimir's Living Rosary will host the Rally. A reception will follow in the Rev. Robert Baltch Social Center. St. Casimir's Rosarians are requesting donations of home baked cookies and other dessert items for this county-wide event. All donations can be dropped off at the Social Center prior to the event.

SAINT STANISLAUS NEWS

WEEKLY PARISH STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Budgeted Expenses for the Fiscal Year 2007-2008:

\$400,627.04

The weekly collection needed to meet our expenses: **\$7,704.37** prior to fundraising efforts. This amount is the compilation of all collections including weekly, monthly, flowers, insurance, liability etc. All these monies are deposited in our Operating Acct and used for our parish expenses

9/16/07 Collection: \$5,346.00

Breakdown

Weekly: \$3,880.00 Monthly: \$241.00
Candles: \$110.00 Liability Insurance: \$95.00
Capital Improvement: \$1,020.00

Empties for Cash: \$5.00 (many of the cartridges received were damaged, had print heads missing or were the wrong type – if you need clarification, please call the rectory.) Thank you for your support of this project!

USHERS NEEDED: We are looking to create 3 groups of 4 ushers each; we need at least v6 more people, women and youth included! If you are interested, please call the office at 842-2771.

Benefit Spaghetti Dinner

Special thanks to the staff at Amsterdam Municipal Golf Course and all who attended our Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser. It was a HUGE success raising a profit of \$1,598.00 toward our debt!! A very special thank you to the committee; to those who gave up their evening to serve and to those who baked the wonderful sweet treats for dessert! Congratulations to all of the raffle winners which are too numerous to list by name.
You know who you are!!

LADIES' ROSARY SOCIETY ANNUAL MASS - Sunday, October 14 at 8:30 a.m. A buffet breakfast will be served in the church hall immediately following Mass. Cost is \$5.00. Reservations must be made in advance by calling 842-6272 (Connie) or 842-3475 (Regina) by October 8. Following breakfast the Society's business meeting will be held at which annual dues will be collected.

THE AMERICAN POLONAISE SOCIETY will meet in the church hall on Monday, October 8th at 6:30pm.



In the month of October, our diocese celebrates a marriage jubilee in Albany with a celebration for those who have reached certain "milestones."

On Sunday, October 28, during the 8:30 Mass at St. Stanislaus,

we will be celebrating all the milestones of years which those in our parish who are married have reached (whether it's two months, two years, or beyond). As part of our celebration, you are invited to bring a wedding picture (even if it's your parents or grandparents). There will be a table to display them during the Mass. If you have any questions, please call MaryAnn (843-5637).

ST. STAN'S PROJECT PIEROGI SUPPLIES/DONATIONS NEEDED

We are in need of donations of Gold Medal flour (5 lb. bags), large eggs, (in total 77- 5 lbs. bags of flour and 21 dozen large eggs) and margarine; to be left in the church hall. Monetary donations for supplies may be placed in an envelope marked "St. Stanislaus Project Pierogi" and dropped in the collection basket. Make checks payable to St. Stanislaus Church. Any questions contact Sue 829-7191 or Helen 842-4747.

OCTOBER SCHEDULE FOR CABBAGE PIEROGI

Crew #1- 10/8 & 10/9 at 9 a.m.; 10/11 at 6 p.m. (bagging);
Crew #1- 10/15 & 10/16 at 9 a.m.; 10/18 at 6 p.m. (bagging);
Crew #2- 10/19 & 10/20 at 9 a.m.; 10/22 at 6 p.m. (bagging);
Crew #2- 10/26 & 10/27 at 9 a.m.; 10/29 at 6 p.m. (bagging)
We are counting on your presence if you volunteered; if you didn't sign up stop in and join in the fun!!



MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Weekday masses are celebrated at St. Stanislaus at 8:00am

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7

Catherine, Jerome & Lucy Pabis, req. Family

MONDAY, OCTOBER 8

Pietro "Peter" Russo, req. Frances Dylong
Return to Health – Yolanda Jaracz, req. St. Stanislaus Cenacle Group

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9

Theresa Ostrowski, req. Husband Stanley & Family
Eugene Swiderski, req. Marcia Kochis & Family

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10

Wiktoria & William Lesiakowski, req. Josephine

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11

Barbara Reidy, req. Lynette & Natalie Russo

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

Gabriel Vertucci, req. Linda, David & Ashley

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13– 4:30 @ St. John's

Living and Deceased Members of the St. John's Ladies Rosary Society

Health & Blessings Received During 30 Years of Marriage – Eloy & Krystyna Emeterio, req. Mary Staniul

Martin & Hedwig Walag and Deceased Members of the Family, req. Elizabeth

Charles Lis, req. Gen & Lee Polinski

Dorothy Bednarczyk (Ann.), req. Jeanette & Butch

Mary Szumski (Ann.), req. Grandchildren

Joseph & Viola Delongchamp and Anthony Lasky, req. Kathy & family

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14–8:30 @ St. Stan's/10:30 @ St. Casimir

8:30am ***Living Members of the St. Stanislaus Ladies Rosary Society***

Health & Blessings Received During 57 Years of Marriage – Helene & Walter Amberger

Rev. John Wojtyna, req. Family

Barbara Reidy, req. Helena Feret & Family

Elizabeth & Joseph Grajewski (Ann.), req. Gayle

10:30am ***FOR PARISHIONERS***

SANCTUARY LAMP –October 7 – 20, 2007:

In memory of:

Ben Kroup from Sophie Olbie

John & Sophie Posluszny from Ron & Sophie