

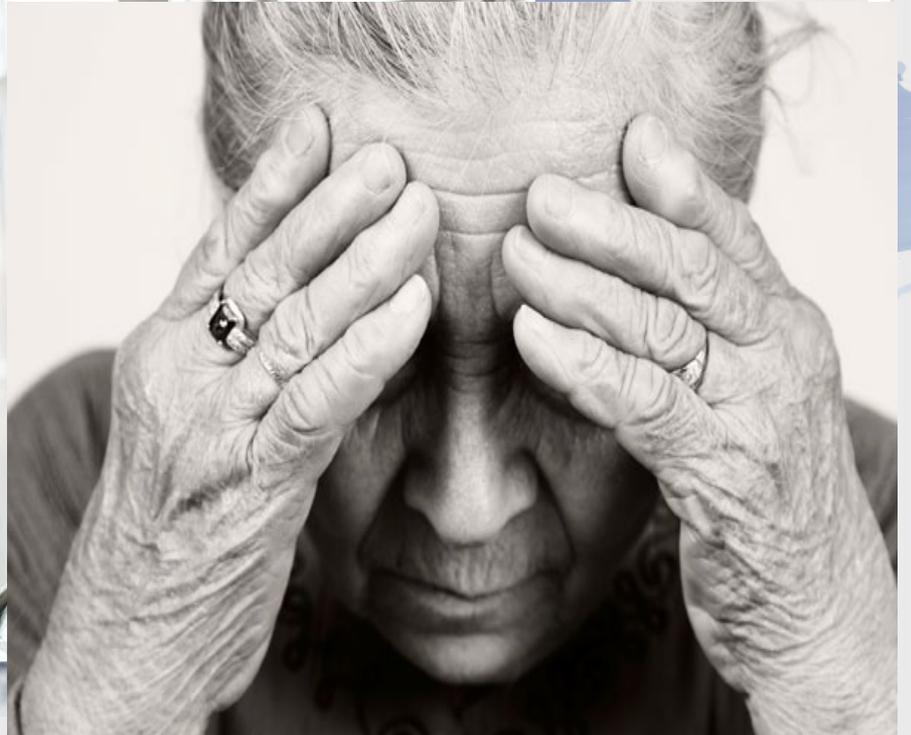
Hunger: Not just Physical

*A look into Spiritual Hunger among The
Elderly*

Presented by: The St. Louise De
Marillac Youth Conference







Did you know??

Seniors aged 65 and older are projected to be 25% of Canada's population by 2041.

However, many are overlooked, disregarded, isolated, and hungry in today's society. Not just physically hungry for food or drink, but spiritually hungry for relationships, connections, and God's presence.



Physical Hunger

To understand spiritual hunger, we must understand the definition of ***physical hunger***. As defined by a study published in The Journal of Nutrition, When you are food insecure, it means that there is “limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways,”. Essentially, it means that you aren’t receiving and/or don’t have access to the necessary foods and nutrients to help sustain your life.

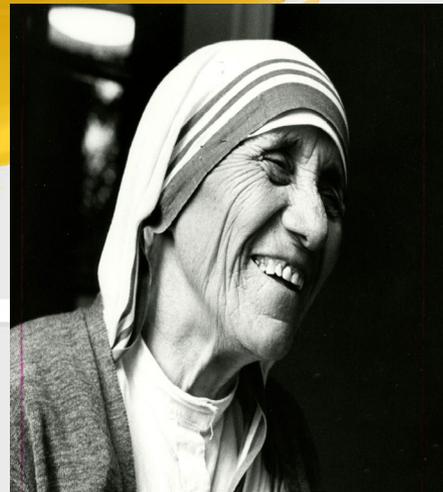
Hunger and thirst are natural expressions of the basic human desire and need for food and water. One of the clear indicators that something is wrong physically is when we lose our appetite.



“

*The Hunger for Love is much
more difficult to remove than
the hunger for bread.*

- Mother Teresa



Spiritual Hunger: What is it?

To hunger and thirst for God is at the very root of our being. It's how God made us. When there is no hunger or presence for God, it is an indicator that something is wrong spiritually. We cannot live our lives without God and His goodness. Many seniors are struggling with the effects and consequences of spiritual hunger: not feeling His presence.



Jesus is

“The Bread of life”- John
6:35

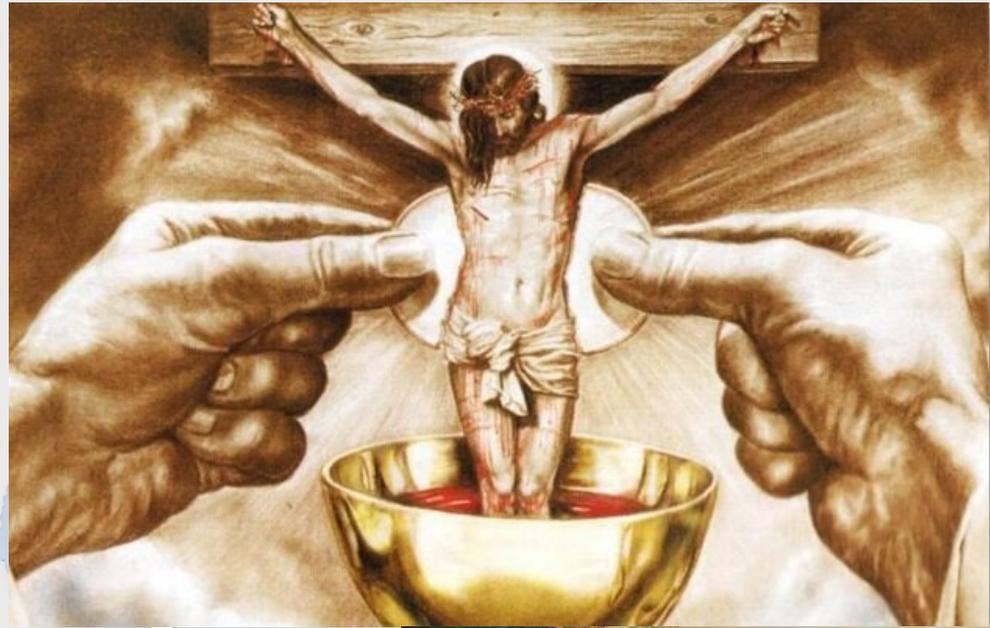
“ The Living Water” -
John 4:14

“The Light of the World”

John 8:12

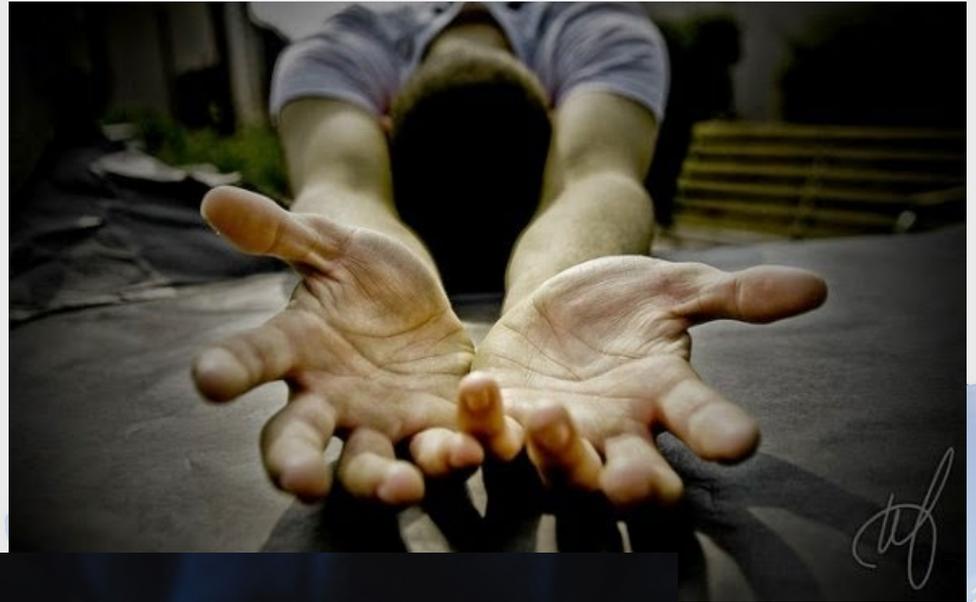
“The Breath of Life”

Job 33:4



Spiritually speaking, there is a hunger for God that is often not recognized for what it is.

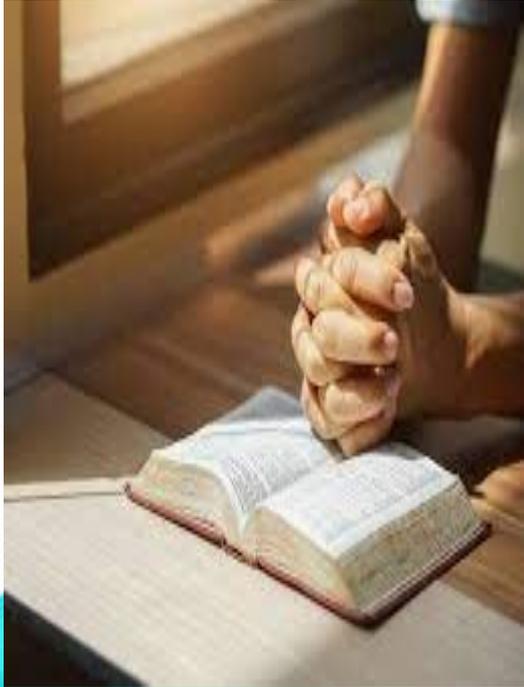
It may be an empty feeling, a sense of longing, even loneliness when surrounded by people.



“

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

- **Genesis 1 :26**



Prompt:

Do you have a hunger for God?

Do your family members?

Friends?

Members of your parish
community?

According to Stats Canada,
Older Canadians are considerably more likely than
their younger counterparts to attend religious
services on a regular basis.

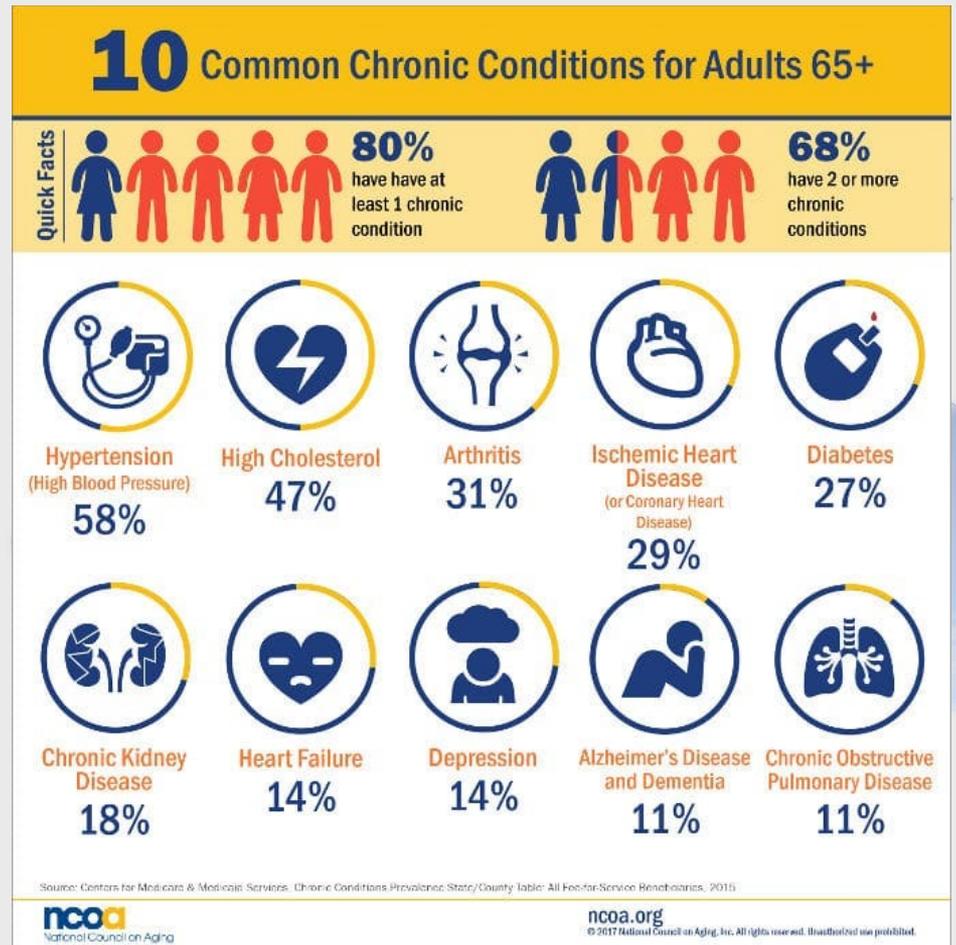




Other issues
contributing to
Spiritual Hunger
in the Elderly...

Chronic Health Issues and falls

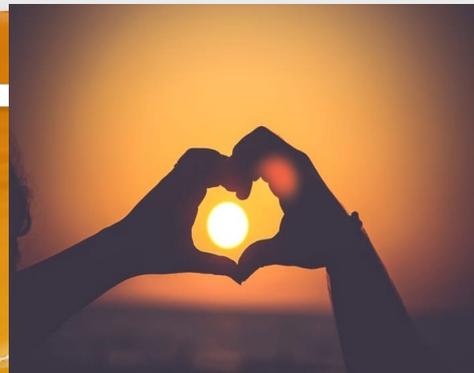
- Falls are a major cause of injury, disability, hospitalization and premature mortality.
- Over one-third of seniors have two or more chronic diseases.
- Having compromised health status or multiple chronic health problems are factors that may place seniors at risk of social isolation and loneliness.

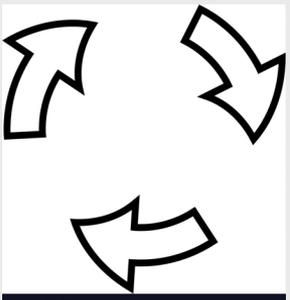


“

*So we do not lose heart.
Though outwardly we are
wasting away, yet inwardly
we are being renewed day by
day.*

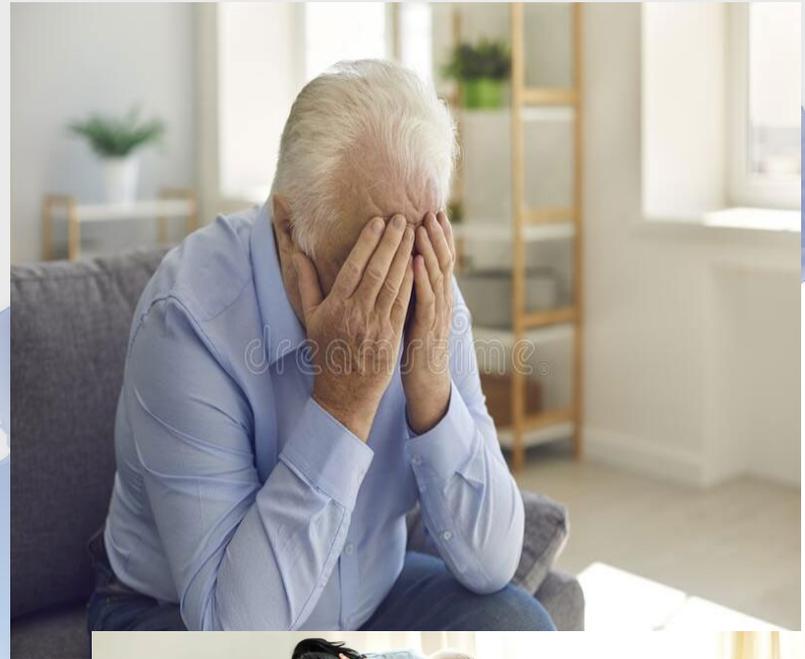
- 2 Corinthians 4:16





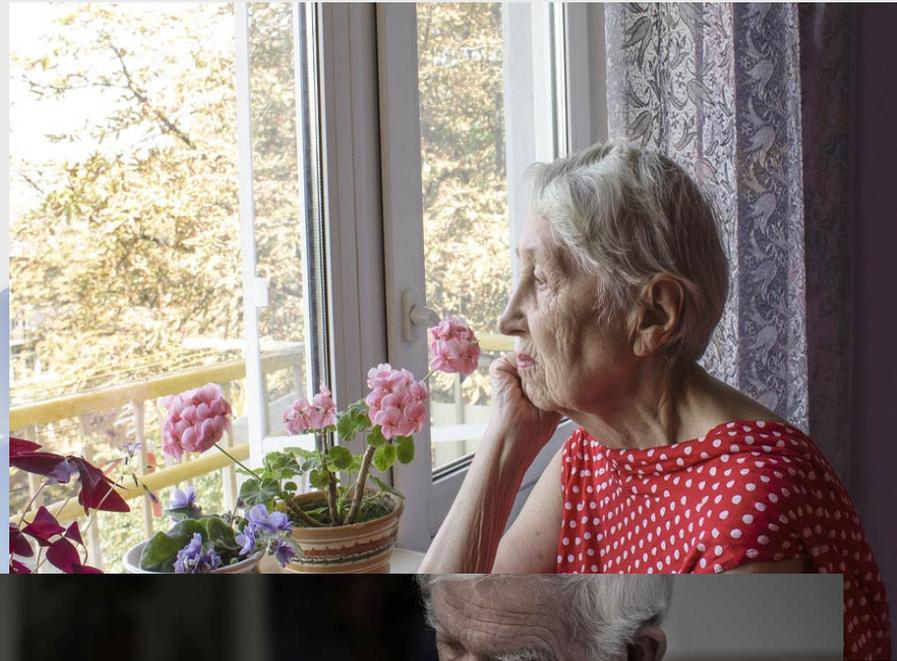
Losses

- Loss of loved ones (family & friends)
- The inability to visit loved ones (COVID)
- Loss of mobility
- Loss of vision or hearing
- Loss of trust or faith in God
- *Depression in elderly people is often unrecognised; it is often caused by loss and causes further losses*



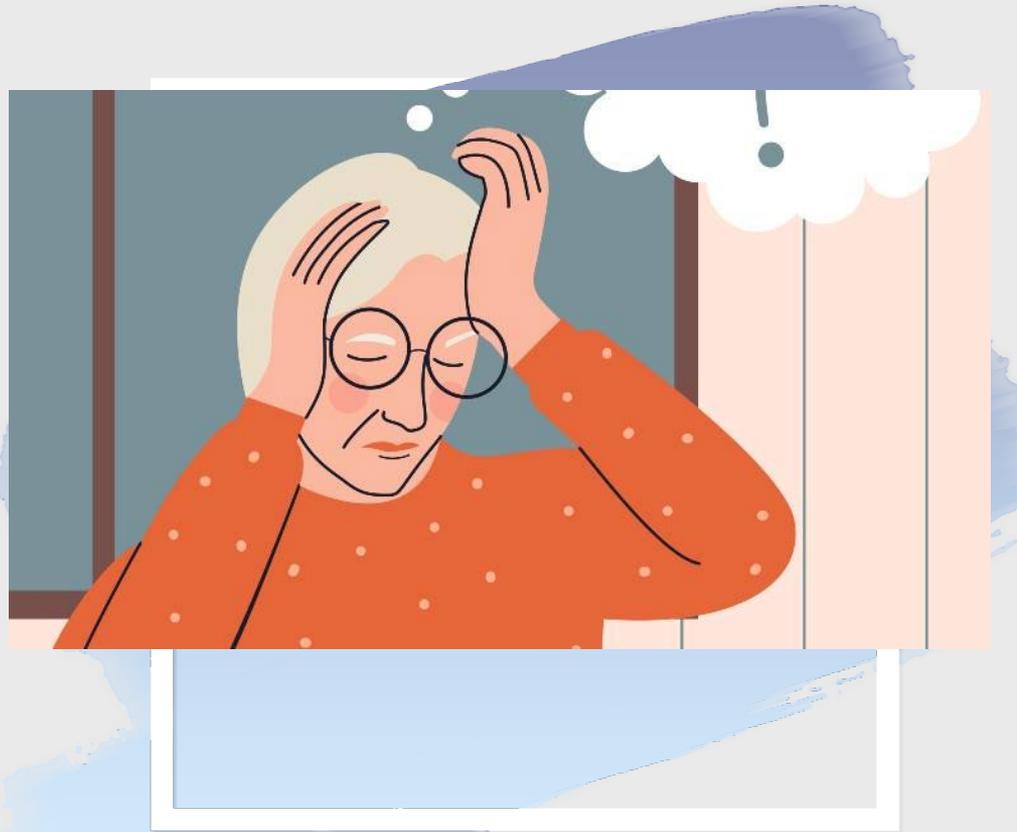
Social Isolation

- With the increased losses faced by many elders, social isolation is extremely common.
- Up to 16% of Canadian seniors experience social isolation, and about 30% are at risk of becoming socially isolated.
- Aging Christians often have trouble staying connected with spiritual support systems, making it hard for them to get the fellowship they need.



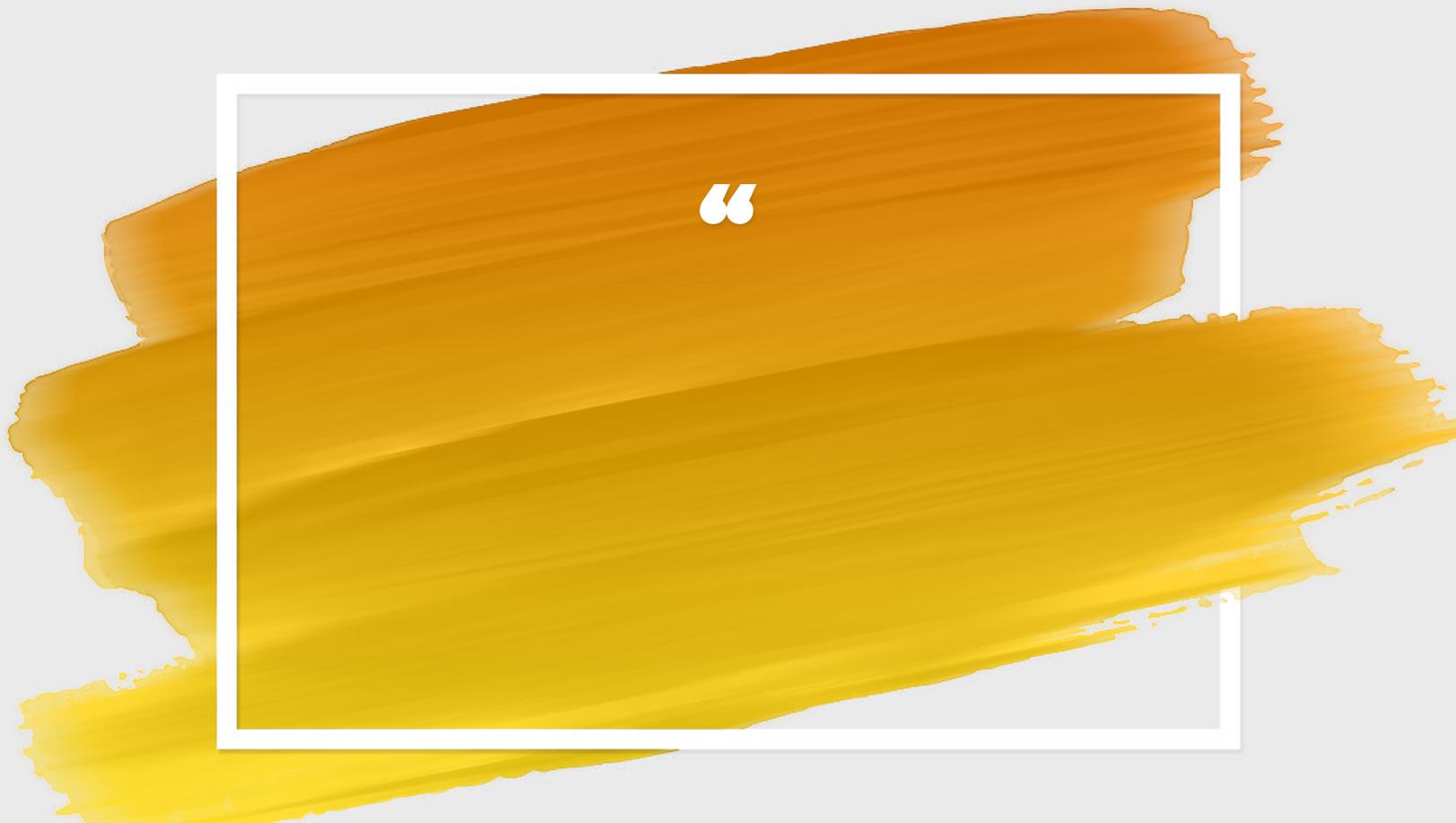
Mental Health Concerns and Cognitive Conditions

- 10-15% of the Elderly in Canada have depression
- *The most common causes for depression in the elderly are the loss of loved ones*
- More than 402,000 seniors living in Canada have dementia.





The spiritual domain is one area that still provides room for growth during the senior years. The body may break down, but the spirit is still capable of expansion, renewal, or rebirth in old age. In spite of changes, losses, or chronic health conditions, the elderly can still cultivate their relationship with God, with the right resources.

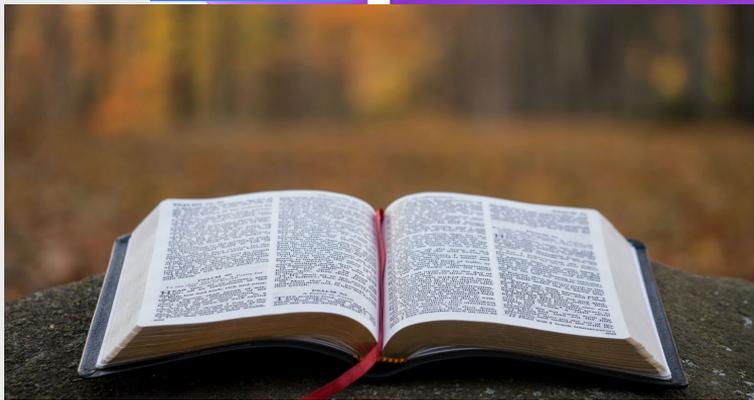


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Weekly Masses

Scripture



Prayer

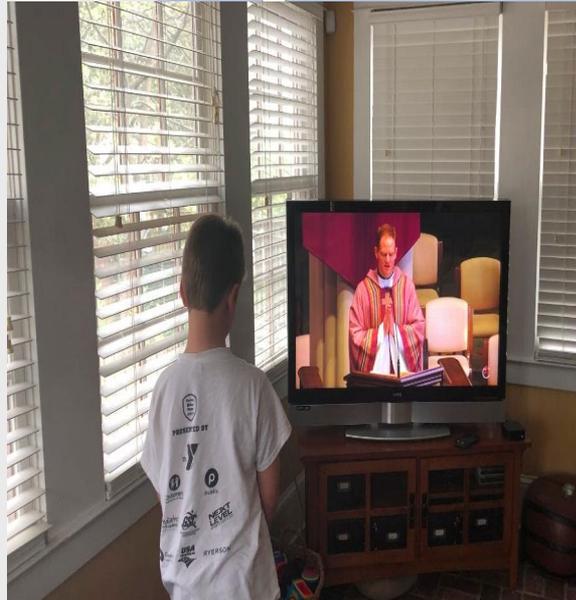
How to cultivate relationships with God?

Social Relationships



Changes in Catholic Mass:

- Traditional worship styles
- Traditions or Doctrinal Stances
- Watching mass online



A decorative background consisting of several overlapping, horizontal brushstrokes in various shades of green, ranging from light to dark, creating a textured, painterly effect.

Pope
Francis
(Church
Must
Recognize
the Gifts of
Older
Catholics,
2020):

“The Catholic Church at every level, must respond to the longer life expectancies and changing demographics evident around the world.”

“Spare no effort in proclaiming the Gospel to grandparents and the elderly. Go out to meet them with a smile on your face and the Gospel in your hands. Leave your parishes and go seek out the elderly who live alone.”

“

While aging is not a disease, Solitude can be an illness. But with charity, closeness and spiritual comfort, we can cure it.

- Pope Francis





What Can We Do?

Be a Listening Friend

Encourage the elderly to re-live past moments and talk about their losses.



Offer Hope and Encouragement

A loving hug and tender words can go a long way toward bringing healing to a grieving heart.



Get Practical

If they can't make it to church, find ways to bring the church to them:

- *Sing*
- *Pray*
- *Read devotional books*
- *Play sermon tapes*
- *Ask a priest to visit them*



Remember...

- Special dates
- Things that matter and are important to them

This makes all the difference!



Important
Date!



Encourage...

- Them to cultivate new friendships
- Them to get involved in spiritual activities



Prayer!

Pray for them!

- Many seniors, including those unable to attend church services, find Intercessory prayer a significant part of their spiritual life.





Bette's Story

Helping give us perspective



Questions??

Resources

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