

Spirituality of ageing kickstarts with Dignity of the Elderly project

SINGAPORE – Although Singapore has one of the fastest ageing populations with many services for the elderly, little is said about the spirituality of ageing.

Singapore Pastoral Institute (SPI) together with Caritas Singapore and Family Life Society will address this gap by kickstarting the Dignity of the Elderly project with workshops on aged care and spirituality by expert, Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay (photo).

Professor MacKinlay is a registered nurse, Director of the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies at St. Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra, as well as Associate Professor, School of Theology, Charles Sturt University.

She also chairs the Australian Capital Territory Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing. Her last book, *Spiritual growth and care in the fourth age of life*, won the 2006 Australasian Journal on Ageing (AJA) Book Award.

In the world today, the aged and their care present us with a challenge but the elderly also present us with many opportunities which we cannot leverage on as long as we see only disadvantages to growing old and only losses.

The external degeneration of the elderly is matched by inner spiritual depth and resilience. Furthermore, the big picture of life is easily captured by the elderly because of all their "letting go" experiences through the passage of time in relationships, and in what works



or what doesn't in life.

Letting go also means that they enjoy greater dependence on God. As they lose their privacy and depend on carers for all bodily needs, they let go of that last piece of pride, growing in humility and understanding of nature's transitory.

For those who live with their families and whose basic material needs are met, their evening years can be filled with a God-given peace and depth of prayer.

Thus the young need to value what the elderly have to offer, and allow them to contribute this wisdom to the former so that all can benefit. □

Schedules for the workshops:

Sunday February 28
THE SPIRITUALITY OF AGEING

9.00am-4.00pm: For caregivers of the elderly, and for those in pastoral ministry, especially in Small Christian Communities. At Catholic Welfare Services Auditorium (55 Waterloo St, Level 8).

Monday March 1
UNDERSTANDING THE AGEING PROCESS

10.00am-12.30pm: For those in their senior years. At Church of Christ the King.

Tuesday March 2
MEANING OF LIFE IN THE FOURTH AGE

9.00am-1.00pm: For workers in institutions such as homes for the aged, day care centres for the elderly, religious and priests. At Catholic Welfare Services Auditorium (55 Waterloo St, Level 8).

To register, contact Maria at 6488 0278 or email maria@familylife.sg □

Catholic Helplines

Canossville Children's Home : 6748 5777

Catholic Legal Aid : •Church of the Risen Christ: 6253 2166
•Church of the Holy Trinity: 6784 2332

Catholic Welfare Services: 6337 7954

Family Life Society : •Individual, Marital & Family Therapy: 6488 0278
•Counseling in parishes: 6382 0688
•Pregnancy Crisis Service: 6339 9770

Marine Parade Family Service Centre : 6445 0100 or 6446 0100

Migrants Helpline : 6280 5424 or 6283 9953

Morning Star Community Services : •Hougang Centre: 6285 1377
•Sengkang Centre: 6315 8812

Poverello Teen Centre : 6544 2603