



# OUR SOCIAL MISSION

BY CARITAS SINGAPORE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

## Ageing with dignity and grace



By 2030, one in five people in Singapore will be over 65 years old. We need to act now to find ways to help older people stay active and well, and receive the help they need.

*The Singapore Pastoral Institute and Family Life Society, together with Caritas Singapore, are launching the Dignity of the Elderly project. This kicks off with a series of workshops and seminars on the spirituality of ageing which will focus on the pastoral care of the elderly.*

**S**ingapore has one of the fastest ageing populations in the world. In 1970, 3.4 per cent of the resident population was aged 65 years and above. In 2007, it was 8.5 per cent and in 2030, it is likely to reach 20 per cent.

Many elderly, especially the very old, encounter significant healthcare challenges. A large proportion of the elderly will require substantial ongoing caregiving support. In addition, with the average Singaporean experiencing about eight years of ill health,

it is likely that many elderly will face financial difficulties, especially if they lack family support and have significant health problems.

Older people who are well also need to be supported with services, facilities and infrastructure to allow them to live active, independent lives. Unfortunately, many elderly face social exclusion, emotional and physical abuse and neglect. An increasing number of elderly live alone or with just their spouse. Suicides among the elderly are

on the rise.

The Community Strategy Committee of Caritas Singapore did a review of the gaps in services for the elderly and found that while many services address the physical well-being of the person, what is lacking is attention to the social, emotional and spiritual well-being of the elderly as well as those who live with and care for them.

The Dignity of the Elderly project aims to address the issues of active ageing, the value of older persons and the transmission of values, as well as caregiving, euthanasia and end-of-life issues.

Ms Wendy Louis, chairperson of the Dignity of the Elderly project, said: "I believe strongly that the Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in our parishes and parish ministry groups can provide a network of pastoral and spiritual care which is a profound need of both the elderly and their caregivers."

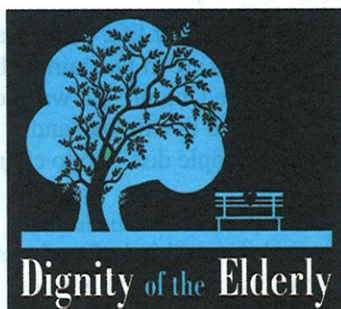
"The Church can model a way of caring for the elderly that avoids institutionalising all aspects of their care. 'Love your neighbour' takes on concrete forms in the outreach of SCC members to the elderly house-bound and their caregivers."

The Dignity of the Elderly project seeks to make more Catholics aware of the issues, the needs of the main community groups and what we can do to promote the dignity of the human person.

The six-month programme will begin with three workshops by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay, an expert in the area of aged care and spirituality.

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 is also Chair of the ACT 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.



### Dignity of the Elderly Project

A series of workshops and seminars jointly organised by the Singapore Pastoral Institute, Family Life Society and Caritas Singapore will kick-start the project.

- **The Spirituality of Ageing Workshop** by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay  
Feb 28, Sunday, 9.00am - 4.00pm  
Venue: CWS Auditorium, 55 Waterloo Street 8th floor.  
For caregivers of the elderly and for those in pastoral ministries, especially Small Christian Communities.
- **Understanding the Ageing Process** by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay  
Mar 1, Monday, 10.00am - 12.30pm.

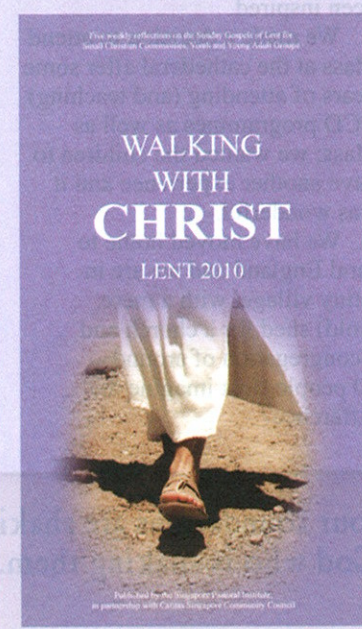
- Venue: Church of Christ the King, Ang Mo Kio Ave 8.  
For those in their senior years.
- **Meaning of Life in the Fourth Age** by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay  
Mar 2, Tuesday, 9.00am - 1.00pm.  
Venue: CWS Auditorium, 55 Waterloo Street 8th floor.  
For workers in institutions such as homes for the aged, day care centres for elderly, religious and priests.
- **Caregiver Workshop 1**  
Mar 20, Saturday, 2.00pm - 6.00pm.  
Venue: CAEC, 2 Highland Road.  
Focus: A vision for pastoral ministry and care of the elderly; physical aspects of ageing, and the spirituality of caregiving.  
For caregivers and SCC pastoral care ministers.
- **Caregiver Workshop 2**  
Apr 24, Saturday, 9.00am - 1.00pm  
Venue: Hall A, Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, 24 Highland Road.  
Focus: The psychological and mental aspects of ageing, and Christian perspectives on suffering and pain.  
For caregivers and SCC pastoral care ministers.

- **Caregiver Workshop 3**  
May 29, Saturday, 2.00pm - 6.00pm.  
Venue: CAEC, 2 Highland Road.  
Focus: The chronically and terminally ill. Understanding loss and bereavement, and end-of-life issues.  
For caregivers and SCC pastoral care ministers.
- **Seminar 1 for the Elderly**  
Jul 2, Friday, 9.30am - 12.30pm.  
@ the Church of Christ the King.  
Focus: Successful ageing, grandparenting skills, advance care planning.  
For those in their senior years.
- **Seminar 2 for the Elderly**  
Aug 13, Friday, 9.30am - 12.30pm.  
@ the Church of Christ the King.  
Focus: Prayer, spiritual reminiscence, assessing mental changes and medical conditions.  
For those in their senior years.

Registrations for any of the workshops and seminars can be made at:

Family Life Society  
Contact : Maria Plengsangtip  
Telephone : 6488 0278  
Email : maria@familylife.sg

### Walking with Christ Disciples on the Journey Lenten Reflections 2010



We modern city-dwellers are accustomed to travel. Our daily life is filled with movement from here to there: in our own cars, on bicycles, in buses, taxis, trains, ships, planes, and even on our own two feet!

This year's Lenten Reflections explore what it means to travel as a believer in Jesus: being a Christian pilgrim. Let us use the season to discover the way we conduct our pilgrimage in this journey of life. What kind of traveller am I? What occupies my attention most while I am on my way? Does the path I am taking feel like it is leading me towards or away from the heart of God? Am I weary of walking alone?

Gather your Small Christian Communities, ministry groups, family and friends for prayer and let the Lenten Reflections be the map that helps you negotiate the journey with your fellow pilgrims. May you come to appreciate that we are all disciples on the journey walking with Christ and arrive at a deeper discovery of yourself and your community in the greater plan of God.

"Walking with Christ" is published by the Singapore Pastoral Institute in partnership with Caritas Singapore Community Council. Copies will be available in your parish from Feb 7. Remember to pick up your copy.