

**But Ruth said,
“Do not press me to go
back and abandon you!
Wherever you go
I will go,
wherever you lodge
I will lodge.
Your people shall
be my people
and your God,
my God.”**

Ruth 1:16



World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

This 4th World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly highlights Psalm 71 as its theme, “Do not cast me off in my old age.” In his papal address, Pope Francis invites us to engage in reflection with the story of Ruth. She remains with her elderly mother-in-law, Naomi, in spite of Naomi’s insistence that Ruth move on to other places. As an ancestor of Jesus, Immanuel, “God with us,” Ruth lives out her vocation to accompaniment. She stays with Naomi: “Wherever you go, I will go.”

Deepen your reflection on Ruth’s story with Pope Francis’s offering. Then, consider how you are being called to more closely accompany the elderly in your own life. What mutual gifts might you discover together?

Ruth’s freedom and courage invite us to take a new path. Let us follow in her footsteps. Let us set out with this young foreign woman and the elderly Naomi, and not be afraid to change our habits and imagine a different kind of future for our elderly. May we express our gratitude to all those people who, often at great sacrifice, follow in practice the example of Ruth, as they care for an older person or simply demonstrate daily closeness to relatives or acquaintances who no longer have anyone else. Ruth, who chose to remain close to Naomi, was then blessed with a happy marriage, a family, a new home. This is always the case: by remaining close to the elderly and acknowledging their unique role in the family, in society and in the Church, we will ourselves receive many gifts, many graces, many blessings!

