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Other News

The richness of many years of life: First International Congress on the pastoral care of the elderly

What does the Church have to say with regard to the “revolution of longevity”? On the initiative of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life, around 550 experts and pastoral workers from sixty countries on five continents will meet in Rome to reflect and find answers together.

It is the first time that the Holy See has organized an event of this kind, aimed at pastoral reflection on a theme that is destined to mark the life of society and the Church in the coming decades.

The meeting will be divided into three thematic sessions: the first will be dedicated to confronting the throwaway culture and to deepening an understanding of how, in different ways according to the socio-cultural context of origin, the Church manifests her merciful face by always remaining close to all seniors.

The second will focus on families and their responsibility towards grandparents and the elderly: families are called to recognize the gifts of life and faith transmitted by living a pastoral conversion in which gratitude is central. It is unacceptable for the Church that elderly people be deprived of a family context, and when this is the case, she is called to become a family for all those who live in solitude. The elderly need a family, and families need the elderly!

The last session will be devoted to the vocation of seniors in the Church. The increase in life expectancy and the general improvement in health have given a great many people another season of life: free from work commitments, but still in good health. How can we live these years in a Christian way? Pope Francis has said that this is a new time that we must invent in some way. There is no retirement from the Gospel!

The first international congress on the pastoral care of the elderly is intended to be just the beginning of a reflection that the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life has decided to undertake in order to respond in a practical way to the Holy Father's many requests in this regard. For the same reason, an office has been created within the Dicastery which will deal in a stable manner with the pastoral care of the elderly in communication with the Episcopal Conferences, also in the light of what will emerge from the congress “The richness of many years

of life”.
