

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER



EDWIN SULEWSKI
FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Why don't we forget funerals and get on with living?

When presidents and national heroes die the nation has elaborate ceremonies to mark their deaths. We mourn heroes because their lives mean something to us, they are important to the morale and life of our nation. When someone we love dies we mourn also. They are important to us and we need to mark their passing with appropriate ceremonies. The ceremonies we have for the deceased help us express our feelings about the person's life and our feelings of loss. Through ceremony we express tribute and say goodbye to those who have been close to us. If we did not take the time to express our feelings at a formal ceremony we would find it more difficult to let go of the past and get on with living.

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Pope: Seniors can contribute to church

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The world's growing number of older people need affection, care and a chance to contribute to society and the church, Pope John Paul II said.

At the same time, the elderly should not seek refuge in the past and reject all change, the pope said at a general audience Sept. 7.

He said the church has always taught

respect for the elderly and seen them as a source of experience, wisdom and advice for younger generations. The church has also said that parents must be helped materially by their children — and this is especially true in modern society, he said.

Today's increased longevity means more older people are feeling the effects of solitude and a marginal existence, he said.

"In a society like ours, which has the cult of productivity, older people risk

being considered useless and even judged to be a burden on others," the pope said.

He said church institutions remain committed to offering care for the elderly, but said a lack of personnel and funds makes this task more difficult than in the past. The church provides help to the aged mainly through religious orders, lay associations and parish centers for the elderly.

But older people also want to contribute, and the church must involve them in all its activities — such as liturgy, visiting the sick and serving the needy, he said.

The pope encouraged the elderly to try to stay involved in life around them.

"Even when it is difficult for older people to keep pace with the many changes taking place in society, they ought not to give in to the temptation to seek refuge in the past," he said.

The pope said everyone should remember that as people age, their health difficulties and decline in physical strength are linked through faith to Christ's suffering.

Centenarian starts day with walk, Mass

By Patrick Joyce
Catholic News Service

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Eddie Treadway fishes a worn walking stick out of the shrubs in front of St. Rose Church in Sacramento, smiles and cocks his ear. He's in a hurry to get home, but he can spare a few minutes to talk about his first 100 years.

Treadway celebrated his 100th birthday in May by doing what he does every day: he walked to 8 a.m. Mass at St. Rose.

He's a little hard of hearing but otherwise vigorous and, most of all, happy. He spent the first half of his life in Louisiana working on shrimp boats, then moved to Sacramento and St. Rose Parish in 1945.

He worked as a carpenter in Sacramento before retiring and lives with his wife, Augusta, in a house they bought in 1947. His wife is "90, 92, 93, 94," he says with a smile and a wave of his hand. He has four children and too many

grandchildren and great-grandchildren to remember the number.

"I thank the Lord I've had a good life," he says. "I come to Mass every day, leave home at 7:30, a half-hour walk. Sometimes a fellow comes with me. He didn't make it today. That happens sometimes," he says and shrugs his shoulders. Treadway doesn't need a walking companion.

Why does he go to Mass every day? "To please God," he says firmly. "We owe it to God." He pauses, then says, once more, "To please God."

With that, Eddie Treadway says goodbye and strides down the walkway to the traffic light in front of the church. He punches the "walk" button and waits.

As the "walk" light flashes on, he lifts up his walking stick and moves briskly across the street. He makes it easily before the light changes, then turns north on the sidewalk, moving quickly, heading home once more.

Agency seeks volunteers

ROCHESTER — Volunteers are being sought by Respite Cares!, an agency which provides relief to caregivers of the developmentally disabled, brain injured or people with Alzheimer's disease.

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