

# SEPTEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



## **FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE**

is a small voluntary organisation which aims to enhance the quality of life and well-being of older people by working with those providing practical, pastoral or spiritual care

## **FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE**

### **THINKING ABOUT PREFIXES**

For some obscure reason known only in the deepest recesses of my mind I have been thinking about words with prefixes. Words like distribute, arrange, invent, create, align, possess, upholster, fuel, are all enriched and enhanced by the prefix, 're.' Of course, not all words that start with, 're' gain from its inclusion, words like result or remain permanently contain their meaning. Having this BLOG to complete then sent me on a search to discover if resilience is a word that has 're' as a prefix. To my surprise I found the noun 'silience' explained on Google as follows: *'The kind of unnoticed excellence that carries on around you every day, unremarkably – the hidden talents of friends and co-workers, the fleeting solos of subway buskers, the slapdash eloquence of anonymous users, the unseen portfolios of aspiring artists – which would be renowned as masterpieces if only.....'*

Now, if I am completely honest, I am gobsmacked that there is an explanation for such a word as 'silience'. It was totally unexpected because I had always understood resilience as a standalone word with the 're' permanently embedded. Yet, when I look at the interpretation above it makes real sense in that it allows 'resilience' to have an enriched meaning, the one drawing on the other: 'the

capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, toughness.'

Over the years I am sure most of us have heard folk talk about their ongoing recovery from illness or bereavement by reference to hitherto hidden resources within or outside themselves that they have drawn on in the recovery process. This may have been referred to more directly by phrases such as 'I couldn't have coped if I hadn't had a faith.'

During these last few months, and I am sure, in the days that lie ahead, people will be called to find the deepest of inner and external resources to draw upon as we enter the 'new normal' more fully. I don't suppose that it will matter whether we all have silience or resilience but importantly we will probably revisit many moments of life experience that helped to create the persons that we are, moments of victory in difficulty, moments when we learned to deal with difficult personalities, faced pressure, stress or complete breakdown but survived because some kindly soul pointed us to the therapeutic benefits of gardening, fishing, art or exercise. Yet I believe that these means of wellbeing are only part of the process, albeit an important part. We are not simply physical or intellectual beings, we are also spiritual beings. Those who recognise and nourish the spiritual aspect of their beings will gain an additional means to

personal resilience. I believe that this is what was happening at the beginning of the pandemic when it was widely noted that up to 25% of the UK population engaged with spiritual matters whether through online services or studies.

All of us, especially in times of trouble, need to find our route to resilience, for myself it is the rich and diverse route of faith, past experiences, exercise (including that garden) and some of the lovely choral music that I have always loved listening to. Let me share with you some words that help me to find that resilience from within and outwith myself.

*'The well is deep, and I require a draught of the Water of Life  
And none can quench my soul's desire for a draught of the Water of Life.  
Til one draws near who the cry will hear, Helper of man in their time of need  
And I believing, find indeed that Christ is the Water of Life.'* (The Salvation Army Song Book)

As we take stock of our means to resilience in life during these difficult times, let us remember that we are whole people with body, mind and spirit and that each aspect of the whole person must be used as a means to resilience.

**Bob Rendall, Chairman FiOP**

## **A New way of Living**

### **Introduction**

My husband had a stroke seven years ago which destroyed speech, all of the use of his right hand, and some of the power of his right leg. Fortunately, his cognitive ability was unimpaired. We were forced together to find ways in which we could understand each other, and new ways in which to express our love.

As we had prayed together every 47 years of our married life, I looked first at prayer to see whether it could provide a link, a new way of communication for us.

I used 'Celebrating Common Prayer' published by the Society of St Francis, which followed the Churches year, and had different services each day for morning and evening prayer. I sat beside John so that he could see the

text as I read the prayers. I knew he could still read from his attention to the many cards which we had received from friends.

He joined in with his speech, which I believed was composed accurately in his head, but which came out garbled, but with the correct rhythm. Sometimes the 'correct' words like 'God' or 'Father' would chime in. These times were very important in many ways. They were a great strength to me, that we could share the agonies of this time with our Father. I think they were equally important to John, as he would point at the Prayer Book when he wanted its prayers in the evening. Also, I began to realise that prayer was the bridge between John and myself. Without the possibility of the daily conversations which we used to have with each other when he was well, I could have

felt very shut out of his present life. Instead through prayer I felt that he and I were still close to each other, although I was not able to care for him under the same roof. The use of symbols was another way in which we could still relate to each other. In the early weeks after the onset of his stroke, he was at a very low level of consciousness. I let him finger my wedding and engagement rings and I talked about how we had chosen my engagement ring in London, and how much I had cherished it.

Next, I took into the hospital for him a handholding cross, which had been carved in Palestine. I had given it to him about a year before and it usually lay on his study desk. He clasped it in his good hand, and I knew he recognised it. As his level of consciousness grew, he made it clear that he would like me to take it away.

Music became a very important vehicle of affection between us. His musical taste had changed. He used to enjoy the symphonies of Shostakovich, but now he found them too loud and shrank from them. Instead, he often selected from early church music CDs which I brought in. We both sighed with pleasure as we listened to the Allegri 'Miserere' John was still able to sing, even though he couldn't speak. When singing he usually used the correct words. So, we sang hymns together as I pushed him in a wheelchair around the lovely grounds of the rehabilitation centre. I remember singing 'Praise to the Holiest in the Height' under a cherry tree as it was the period of the sanctification of the author Cardinal Newman! This singing was good for John's vocal cords, but it was also a form of conversation between us and God. John moved after about 10 months in rehabilitation to a nursing home. At times, my energy flagged, and I did not know how to keep our hope alive. I asked a friend who had cared for her husband for 22 years how she had done it. She replied, 'We still have our moments of grace Jean. Even though now Francis (her husband) is in vascular dementia sometimes in the evening when I read him a prayer by Jim Cotter from his 'Prayers for the Night' Frances will show clearly that he has heard the prayer.

This phrase 'moments of grace' helped me considerably. Although sometimes I felt overcome by the demands of a situation, if I stopped to look for these moments of grace, I realised we still had dozens of them. We still kissed and hugged, we still laughed together and with friends, we still listened to music together, we went for outings and we still prayed together.

### **A Time to Say Goodbye**

Many friends have told me that they wished they had told their partners that they loved them before they died and that they had had the opportunity to say goodbye to them.

My husband John lived for nearly three years after his first stroke. I did not know then how much time we would still have together, but as the months moved on, I began to draw together the memories of our life together, and to say 'goodbye' and 'thank you' to him.

I used photographs of favourite holidays and a diary that he had kept of all our visits to Canada. I used favourite music and I talked to him about many things.

I reminded him of the phases of his ministry, of his beloved parishes, of his work as Chaplain to local government, and finally his work as Adviser in Ministry to the Bishop of Lichfield concerned with its in-service training for both laity and clergy in the diocese.

I thanked him for all he had given to me; so much encouragement and love and nurturing. I thanked him for the many travels we undertook together. I recalled the satisfaction and joy we both shared as we jointly ran courses for all the clergy in the Lichfield diocese in understanding the Myers – Briggs Theories of Personality. This was in the last years before retirement from Lichfield.

I thanked him for our children and through them for our beloved grandchildren. I thanked him for the lovely homes we helped to make together, and for the hospitality we shared there. I thanked him for our sharing in membership of the Iona Community, which brought so much richness to our whole family as we shared in pilgrimage together. There was so much to thank him, and God, for in our life together.

### **Living under Grace**

At first when John was ill, I felt that he was the sufferer for whom I must intercede, and that I was the one who was well. However, as the months grew into years, I felt a profound change. I realised that we were both suffering in different ways, and that I needed to ask for God's help and healing for us both. It seemed to me that we were two people living under grace through a very difficult time. At one stage, the situation was so painful that all I could pray

was 'Lord have mercy on us.' Over and over again, I prayed this, not because I believed that God had brought affliction on us, but because I believed strongly. He could bear our sorrows, and would never desert us. I do not think in my personal intercessions that I have prayed like this before.

### **Learning to relate to the Communion of Saints**

After John's death I asked a few wise friends how I could continue to have some kind of relationship with John. One of his ex-curates told me that in the Eucharist you are as close as you can be to Christ, so it is in the Eucharist that you are also close to the Communion of Saints.

I found the Eucharist in the early stages of John's illness to be the time when I felt most tearful and most conscious that I was partaking when he was no longer either presiding or kneeling beside me.

As he improved and I was able to take him back to church, I

no longer found the Eucharist as an occasion for tears, but rather a very intimate, sharing and comforting time.

Now he is dead I do not weep at the Eucharist. I try to imagine what the banquet in heaven is like for the saints. I pray for John although he no longer needs my prayers, and I also add other special petitions.

I think that tears in my situation in a time of loss were often a form of conversation. I couldn't talk about loss, but I could cry. These tears were in a way the opening up of my heart to God to ask for his consoling.

### **The use of Ritual**

I find it helps me in my grieving to have some rituals connected with our marriage and life together.

When I visit his grave on anniversaries, I take a specially selected stone from Iona which I tuck under the tombstone, as a sign that I have visited.

I light candles in places like Durham Cathedral where he was ordained, and I note his daughters and the grandchildren are also lighting candles in his memory.

My birthday I try to celebrate with a friend as I cannot any longer celebrate it with John. On the day which would have been our Golden Wedding, he had died three years before we reached it, I went to Edinburgh Botanical Gardens to walk with a friend, to admire the flowers, to talk a little about our husbands, she was a fellow widow, and to lunch.

I find it helps me to think that I am still part of one family, one member of which is in heaven, while my daughters and I, my sons in law and our beloved grandchildren are here on earth.

I am comforted by a strong belief that in some way my spirit may meet John's in the kingdom of heaven.

**Jean Williams**

## **FAITH IN OLDER PEOPLE PROJECTS**

### **ONE STEP AT A TIME**

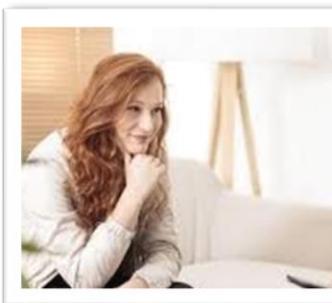
FiOP developed this free learning resource to assist faith communities to build a more supportive environment for people with dementia and their families.

Our handy quiz on "*How Dementia Friendly is your Faith Community*", is available on our website along with the resource. FiOP was delighted that Dementia Advocacy Canada has adapted this resource to the Canadian context as a joint approach. **Download the resource from:**

**<https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/project/one-step-at-a-time/>**



Faith in Older People has set up **'LISTENING AND CARING IN CONFIDENCE'** – a free on-line service for care home staff and care at home providers.



The wellbeing of staff in our care homes and care at home must be a priority; their health and resilience are essential in supporting those vulnerable older people who are dependent on their care. We believe that it is **'Okay not to be Okay'** and the opportunity to talk can help to prevent anxiety. This free service is independent and there is no monitoring or reporting except for the numbers of people who use the service. The aim is to provide an oasis of time for staff to simply off-load.

Our **'Listeners'** are all experienced and qualified and are giving their time on a voluntary basis. Self-compassion and kindness are important to enable you to care for others and **'Listening and Caring in Confidence'** is a way to help all staff continue to do this.

We would encourage our readers to help by sharing information about this important new service so that our vital carers can be supported and encouraged through this excellent new venture.

**To access the service please use the following link:**

<http://faithinolderpeople.org.uk/listening-service>

## **SPIRITUAL CARE MATTERS**



People who will be interested in the course include care assistants, health care staff, home care visitors, activity coordinators, catering staff, administrative staff, carers and anyone with a role in supporting older people. It provides an opportunity to consider your own spiritual needs as well as helping you to enable the spiritual needs of others to be met.

FiOP developed this free eLearning resource for all staff and volunteers working in care homes, health and other care settings.

Download the courses from:

<https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/project/spiritual-care-matters/>

## **SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT**

### **Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Bill**

On 13 August 2020, the Scottish Government introduced the Redress for Survivors (Historical Child Abuse in Care) (Scotland) Bill to the Scottish Parliament. It has been published this morning here: <https://beta.parliament.scot/bills/redress-for-survivors-historical-child-abuse-in-care-scotland-bill>

The Bill aims to establish a financial redress scheme for survivors of historical child abuse in relevant care settings in Scotland, and, in some circumstances, where the survivor has died, their next of kin. The purpose of the redress scheme is to acknowledge and provide tangible

recognition of the harm suffered as a result of that abuse. The redress scheme will also offer survivors access to some non-financial elements of redress such as acknowledgement, apology and therapeutic support.

The Bill builds on previous work with survivors of historical child abuse in care and follows the pre-legislative consultation launched last year. The Bill is the draft legislation and it will now be discussed and examined by members of the Scottish Parliament.

You can contact us by email at [redress@gov.scot](mailto:redress@gov.scot)

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### **Funding to help the voluntary sector thrive post-coronavirus has been announced as part of the Programme for Government**

[http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/25m-sector-recovery-fund-announced?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Weekly%20Third%20Force%20News%20-%20social-justice-and-poverty&utm\\_content=Weekly%20Third%20Force%20News%20-%20social-justice-and-poverty+CID\\_8f8eeb6438044c80cccee8c7d18e8b6c&utm\\_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm\\_term=25m%20sector%20recovery%20fund%20announced](http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/tfn-news/25m-sector-recovery-fund-announced?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%20Third%20Force%20News%20-%20social-justice-and-poverty&utm_content=Weekly%20Third%20Force%20News%20-%20social-justice-and-poverty+CID_8f8eeb6438044c80cccee8c7d18e8b6c&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=25m%20sector%20recovery%20fund%20announced)  
<https://bit.ly/34SkZOd>

A multi-million pound fund to help the voluntary sector thrive post-coronavirus has been announced.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon announced the Programme for Government this afternoon as the Scottish Government aims to help the country recover socially and economically from Covid-19. And the plans for 2020/21 include a £25 million Community and Third Sector Recovery Programme which aims to ensure organisations can support the recovery.

### **Coronavirus (COVID-19): Guidance on adult social care building-based day services**

Please see the link below

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-adult-social-care-building-based-day-services/>

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

### **OUT OF THE BOX - Care Homes**

Please see the link below regarding support to care homes which has been much appreciated

Here is a blog from Outside the Box which might give some useful

background: <http://ruralwisdom.org/2020/07/30/care-homes-and-communities-our-recent-experience-and-what-has-helped/>



**Glasgow Disability Alliance**  
Confident Connected Contributing



**COVID pandemic has supercharged inequalities: GDA's disabled-people led response has prevented thousands from falling through gaps.** Read our **report** and recommendations from our 5000+ members' experiences throughout the pandemic.

Last Friday saw the launch of our pandemic report **'Supercharged: a Human Catastrophe'**, at GDA's biggest online event yet. 171 disabled people joined the discussions - many for their first ever zoom call, after hours of coaching support from GDA Connects.

Participants shared their experiences, questions and concerns with Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People, Shirley-Anne Somerville, and Glasgow's Convenor for Equalities and Human Rights, Cllr Jen Layden, who both agreed vital lessons must be learned by involving disabled people in recovery planning, going forwards.

GDA members asked: 'Social Care was already cut to the bone: when the pandemic hit there was no margin of error and people were left with no support. What will be done to build a better, more accountable Social Care

system?' Ms Somerville and Cllr Layden agreed disabled people's lived experience will be crucial to improving Social Care, with Ms Somerville highlighting the need for a serious review of Adult Social care, after 'appalling' experiences shared by many disabled people: left throughout lockdown without vital support to eat, wash or take medications – with many still waiting to hear when or if their support will be reinstated.

GDA's report calls for actions drawn from in-depth engagement with 5000+ disabled people - through 8500 phone calls, 20,000 accessible mailouts, and 218 online discussions since March.

Members spoke out about falling through gaps in emergency food provision, having crucial healthcare cancelled, mental health supports withdrawn and social care cut indefinitely, at a time when they needed it most.

*"Four days before lockdown, our care was cut completely with 3 hours- notice. No has checked on us since then to see how we are managing."*

*"I feel completely let down by the society that was supposed*

*to care for me."*

*"There's been nothing extra put in place for those with mental illness in fact our services have been removed. I've never felt so worthless and unvalued."*

GDA quickly mobilised to provide Lifeline deliveries to 1,251 individuals; Health and Wellbeing supports to 357; and digital equipment, coaching and online learning to 593 disabled people (March-July) – thanks to funding from Scottish Government, National Lottery Community Fund and Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership, via Impact Funding. This funding enabled GDA to help prevent thousands of disabled people from falling through gaps: as 80% of disabled people we spoke to were not aware of any support they could access in their local area.

One member explained: *"Disabled people are being excluded so much in our communities. Nothing is accessible to me, except GDA!"* - underlining the vital role played by disabled people-led organisations in bridging these gaps.

Members also highlighted a rise in harassment and hate

crime in public spaces, and say fundamental rights to life were threatened by rationing of COVID-treatment and inappropriate Do Not Resuscitate notices.

GDA is calling for an Inquiry into the unequal impact of the pandemic and responses on disabled people's human rights; for a National Social Care agency to be established,

on a par with our NHS, co-designed with disabled people, founded on dignity, respect and Human Rights; and for disabled people's meaningful involvement in recovery and renewal planning, with inclusive communication and capacity building led by our own organisations.

**Read the full report and recommendations:**

[Supercharged, a Human Catastrophe](#) or our [summary](#).

**Our mailing address is:**

Suite 301, The White Studios  
Templeton Business Centre  
Templeton Court  
Glasgow G40 1DA

### **FREE ACTIVITY BOOK for Older People and their Carers –**

Would you help us get these free activity books to the older people who might benefit from them most please? If you would - thank you.

**We'll get a sample to you and make plans from there. Read on as I explain...**

Lockdown easing means many of us are getting out and about more than goodness! At Home Instead we're enjoying being able to help more of our clients to do this again, with sensible precautions of course. But this isn't the

#### **The book contains...**

A general knowledge quiz  
Sudoku  
Geography quiz  
Wordsearches  
Spot the difference  
Riddles to solve  
Plus, all the answers!

If this hits the mark as well as we hope it will, we're planning to produce a book every few months. **Thanks for your help!**

case for all older people. With many of their usual clubs, centres and activities still preparing to start up again, there's a big hole left in many of their days.

We have been trialling an activity book for older people to do themselves, with family or their caregivers. It's been so well received we're now planning to make it more widely available, for free. To residents and owners in independent living facilities, family carers, members of day centres and lunch clubs, anyone who would benefit from it really.



*Now more than ever  
a little bit of kindness  
is going to go  
a long way*



**Generations  
Working  
Together**

**Directory of intergenerational ideas and resources Second edition:  
Keeping generations connected, with  
new activity ideas and mental health  
support**

With thanks to Alison Clyde, GWT, for bringing this to my attention – please see the attached document.

This is GWT second edition of their *Directory of Intergenerational Ideas and Resources*. This

edition focusses on keeping generations connected with new activity ideas and mental health support.

<https://generationsworkingtogether.org/resources/directory-of-intergenerational-ideas-and-resources-for-use-during-covid-19-crisis>

It's a wonderful resource and I would encourage you all to read through this and I'd be grateful if you could share this with your members and networks.

**A new SAMH research project on mental health designed to assess the impact of the pandemic**

The coronavirus pandemic has dramatically affected the way we have all lived our lives, including how mental health services are being delivered. These vital services were stretched even before the pandemic, with waiting times targets for both adults and young people regularly being missed. SAMH believes there is an opportunity to rebuild mental health services to meet increased need. Please go to the link to see the full article and particularly the Survey which we hope people will complete.

Faith in Older People, together with VHS and Health in Mind are exploring the issues affecting older people and mental so the more information and evidence that can be collected will be beneficial.

<https://www.alliance-scotland.org.uk/blog/opinion/covid-19-how-is-mental-health-care-and-treatment-being-affected/>



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