

Pastoral Ministry Support

13th September 2017

Hello,
I hope this correspondence finds you well.
On a regular basis I will be sending you pastoral support information that may be beneficial to you or for your parish pastoral involvement.

September is Dementia Awareness Month; here is some information on DEMENTIA. I scanned through many help sheets from "Alzheimer's Australia" and have attached a few for you. Don't forget to spend some time reading! 😊

Dementia and grief can go hand in hand especially when support, information or care is limited. The person with dementia and their loved ones will experience the many changes and challenges of everyday life, and eventually the loss of self and time. With help and support the process may be a more gentler and even an enriching experience. May joy and hope be part of the journey, and may our faith continue to nourish us each step of the way.

For further information, prayers, visitation support, please don't hesitate to contact me via email or phone.

Stay tuned for the next instalment....

Wishing you God's continuous blessings.

Much love,

Paulineke

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Today's tips, reminders, support & information:

September - Dementia Awareness Month "You are not alone"

The purpose of Dementia Awareness Month is to encourage Australians to become dementia-aware, have a better understanding of what it is like for a person to live with dementia, and ultimately be encouraged to create communities where people with dementia are supported to live a high quality of life with meaning, purpose and value.

To find out what is happening during September and also information on Dementia and Alzheimer's please visit:

Alzheimer's Australia

<https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/> OR Call 1800 100 500

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is the umbrella term for a number of neurological conditions, of which the major symptom includes a global decline in brain function. **It is a condition that has been noted in people for hundreds of years.** Dementia was a relatively rare occurrence before the 20th century as fewer people lived to old age in pre-industrial society. It was not until the mid-1970s that dementia begun to be described as we know it today. We now know dementia is a disease symptom, and not a normal part of ageing. There are over 100 diseases that may cause dementia. The most common causes of dementia include Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and dementia with Lewy bodies.

The information in this section defines dementia, describes the symptoms and causes of dementia and explains the difference between normal memory problems and dementia.

The information below comes from: <https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia/what-is-dementia>

What is dementia?

Dementia describes a collection of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. It is not one specific disease. Dementia affects thinking, behaviour and the ability to perform everyday tasks. Brain function is affected enough to interfere with the person's normal social or working life.

Who gets dementia?

Most people with dementia are older, but it is important to remember that not all older people get dementia. It is not a normal part of ageing. Dementia can happen to anybody, but it is more common after the age of 65 years. People in their 40s and 50s can also have dementia.

What causes dementia?

There are many different forms of dementia and each has its own causes. The most common types of dementia are Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia, Parkinson's disease, Dementia with Lewy bodies, Fronto Temporal Lobar

Degeneration (FTLD), Huntington's disease, Alcohol related dementia (Korsakoff's syndrome) and Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease.

Is it dementia?

There are a number of conditions that produce symptoms similar to dementia. These include some vitamin and hormone deficiencies, depression, medication clashes or overmedication, infections and brain tumours. It is essential that a medical diagnosis is obtained at an early stage when symptoms first appear, to ensure that a person who has a treatable condition is diagnosed and treated correctly. If the symptoms are caused by dementia, an early diagnosis will mean early access to support, information, and medication should it be available.

Can dementia be inherited?

This will depend on the cause of the dementia, so it is important to have a firm medical diagnosis. If you are concerned about the risk of inheriting dementia, consult your doctor or contact Alzheimer's Australia to speak to a counsellor. Most cases of dementia are not inherited.

What are the early signs of dementia?

The early signs of dementia are very subtle and vague and may not be immediately obvious. Some common symptoms may include:

- Progressive and frequent memory loss
- Confusion
- Personality change
- Apathy and withdrawal
- Loss of ability to perform everyday tasks.

What can be done to help?

At present there is no prevention or cure for most forms of dementia. However, some medications have been found to reduce some symptoms. Support is vital for people with dementia. The help of families, friends and carers can make a positive difference to managing the condition.

Information and fact sheets

For information and fact sheets about dementia go to:

<https://nsw.fightdementia.org.au/about-dementia/resources/help-sheets#About-dementia> and click on: [Download all Help Sheets which are available in English](#). Fact sheets are available in other languages.

ALSO GO TO:

Dementia Australia

<http://www.dementia-australia.org/> OR Call 1800 180 023

For detailed information on Dementia please visit the website.

Downloadable fact sheets: <http://www.dementia-australia.org/page/dementia-facts/> OR Call 1800 180 023

CARER SUPPORT

Support for when you need it most..

Caring is a role which involves a great range of emotions, from joy and privilege to fear and frustration. Carers find themselves in situations they find confronting, frightening, challenging and saddening. There are organisations that work alongside Carers, sharing their experiences and helping them to meet the challenges that come with caring.

3Bridges Community – Carer Support Services

<https://3bridges.org.au/what-we-do/carers-support-service/>

Penshurst Community Centre: 23 St Georges Road, Penshurst NSW 2222; admin.penshurst@3bridges.org.au

3Bridges Carers Support Service is dedicated to strengthening, empowering and supporting Carers. These Carers are family members and friends of people who experience disability, frailty, dementia, chronic illness or mental health issues.

We provide the following:

- Carer Counselling and emotional support
- Grief and Loss Counselling
- Monthly Support Groups for Carers
- Carer Courses and information sessions
- Advocacy
- Carer Retreats and Weekends Away

Carer Gateway

Carer Gateway provides information specific for carers and has a service finder and guided search to assist carers with information on carer support organisations.

ALSO GO TO:

Carers Australia

For carer supports and services visit: <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/> OR Call 1800 242 636