



euthanasia

# YOUTH & AGED *for life*

**A**t the mid-point of the Jubilee of Mercy Pope Francis exhorted Catholics to establish new, permanent works of mercy as a lasting fruit of this special Year. At Jeanne Jugan Residence in Washington, D.C. an ongoing work of mercy is taking shape in the form of a newly-established intergenerational pro-life prayer group. The group was born as a collaborative effort between the Little Sisters and Janis Clarke, a consecrated virgin and singing evangelist in the archdiocese of Washington.

The group's name, "Youth & Aged for Life," was inspired by a play on words. A native of Canada, Janis was alarmed by developments leading to the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide in her homeand. Praying one day, it struck her that the word "euthanasia" and the phrase "youth and aged" sound very



similar. Rather than accept the inevitability of euthanasia, she thought, youth and older persons could come together to fight this trend, both by witnessing to the dignity of every hu-

man life from beginning to end, and by helping to build the Culture of Life through intercessory prayer.

Janis recounts how the group took shape, “While working together with one of the Little Sisters to organize the holy hour to pray for their Supreme Court case, it became clear that we share a common dream: to help the elderly discover their great dignity in Christ, their great mission for these times, and their critical role in the lives of young people who need them as much as they need the young. Not long after that, *Youth&Aged for Life* was born: a Lord of the Rings kind of fellowship to pray for families, the unborn, and the elderly.”

“Though the world seems to be spinning out of control,” she continues, “the Lord is still in charge, and there is no doubt that our elders and youth are at the heart of His Mercy Plan. No wonder the Enemy works so hard to eliminate them through euthanasia and abortion. These precious folks are some of the Church’s most untapped resources: a huge army of potential intercessors!”

The project is starting small with regular meetings at our home in Washington, in the hope of establishing a template that could be adapted to serve families, parishes, schools and homes for the elderly across North America. Each meeting includes a moment of catechesis, updates on local pro-life initiatives, singing and praying the rosary together. Each participant is encouraged to take their turn praying a Hail Mary so that each one’s voice is heard, because in the Culture of Life we believe that each person’s individual contribution is unique and necessary.

“Imagine inspiring and mobilizing elderly men and women together with youth to be the world changers they were born to be at this critical juncture in history!” Janis reflects. “With Mother Mary as our fearless leader, and the Rosary as our weapon of love, we are unstoppable in Christ!”

As she travels to parishes and schools sharing the Rosary Mission she founded, Janis looks forward to sharing this vision of *Youth&Aged for Life* with Catholics, to help them change the script in a culture constantly pushing euthanasia and abortion as the new normal. “It’s hard for young people to believe in euthanasia when some of their best friends and prayer partners are over 90,” she notes. “Regular contact with young people can inspire the elderly with greater zeal to offer prayers and sacrifices for families and for the unborn.”

Helen Alvaré, who has devoted her life’s work to the defense of life, has lent her support to *Youth&Aged for Life*: “Could there be anything more beautiful — or more representative of the thrust of the entire Christian life,” she suggests, “than this beautiful initiative which both demonstrates and prays for respect for human beings at every stage of their life?!” 🌸