



For young parents, caring for their babies, helping them in their absolute dependence to survive, learning to walk, and relying increasingly on their own, is lived as a magical path, expected and very satisfying, of which the reward is seeing the child grow and become a little person. Caring for them when they are sick is a concern that can lead to an extreme, so that their needs be well catered for, medicated and following the doctor's instructions. No one questions this responsibility and satisfaction.

It is very easy to give love and cuddle a baby or a lovely little girl, or hug a child. Parental satisfaction is readily available and takes to pride in being the protector and caretaker of the children growing up. These satisfactions become pride that can even reach arrogance, and the conceit of a fulfilled duty.

But there is the other end of life, the decline over the years, which makes vigorous middle aged people in elderly individuals, increasingly in need of help of all kinds: material, physical and psychological—not to say spiritual. Those who did not die on the way of life, turn old, with a growing dependence on younger people that, in every human culture, is seen as a fundamental responsibility of their children, and secondly other relatives such as younger siblings.

Responsibility for the old-aged individuals is as important as with infants; the latter grow and former decreases; children become less dependent and the old are increasingly so; children gain strength, the old loose it. Here the problems begin for those who, as adults in the spring of life, face the needs of their aging parents: what a nuisance!

As the historical memory of the nations make them forget and repeat past mistakes of action and omission, people tend to forget what they received from their parents: from the care and feeding of the newborns to even personal sacrifices of time and money for their education. And it is no lack of familiar historical memory it is a selfish to forget the paternal and maternal dedication received.

Very easily young and middle-aged parents can selfishly disregard increasingly

that which they received from their parents, considering it as an obligation to fulfill without much merit; but at the same time, they overestimate their own actions towards their children. Selfishness and excessive self-esteem take place, rejecting their parents.

Care for aging parents or already elderly is seen by selfish adults as a very uncomfortable burden, demanding something they want to have for their exclusive benefit: time. Once an adult begins to feel the need to spend time as a parent, the alternative is this: if I leave my things aside for my parents, it is a pain, and if I do not give them time, I have a bad conscience. The easiest solution: ignore consciousness.

Human aging is synonymous, unfortunately, of the loss of faculties, and at the same time it can bring obstinacy, stupidity, bad temper and stubbornness to ideas and customs that through his/her life the elderly came to regard as their own: I am right and new generations are wrong. Older people start doddering, their movements hinder, and they lose recent memory, and become ill more easily and more continually. What a nuisance are the elderly!

Yes, aging parents or already elderly are a burden, but is the life process of all living things. This burden is, for a correct conscience free of selfishness, an inescapable responsibility to comply with, with the same love with which the children are attended to prepare them for life. But the difficulty of caring for the old is more rewarding than caring for children, and the divine reward enormous.

We cannot be deaf nor blind to the demand for care of elderly parents, whose main condition is solitude. In all human cultures and all religions, this responsibility is very serious; it is, first, to correspond to the care and love received while growing up, with all the faults and errors that it could have had. Except for very special cases of parental irresponsibility, the balance of love and care we receive, is very favorable to our parents. To forget it is so, so comfortable... that thinking about it confounds the use of my time: to sacrifice my nice leisure time to spend time with our elderly ...

The Bible is very clear about the responsibility for elderly parents, with all its weaknesses, shortcomings and requirements. The word of God is more demanding than any human word about the duty to parents. God continues to threaten those who do not comply and offer rewards to those who give love to their parents. (See Ecclesiasticus, Cap. III, Vers. 1-18).

In conclusion: we must give our aging parents what they need from us. In material things—the most comfortable—, but essentially in time, time full of human warmth, affection and great understanding of their weaknesses of their old age and their loneliness. Incidentally, do not forget that if we do not die in the prime of life, we also, as elderly people, will require time of our own children, who naturally repeat what they saw us do or did not see.

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