

**San Beda University
Mendiola, Manila**

Honoring the Elderly: Addressing Neglect and Ensuring Compassionate Care

**A Research submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement in the course
THED04: Social Justice**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. THED04 synthesis and its relevance to their education in San Beda

Social justice remains a critical concern in contemporary society, particularly in addressing the ethical, social, and cultural challenges faced by marginalized communities. THED04, *Social Justice*, serves as a cornerstone of San Beda University's theological and ethical education, aligning with the institution's Benedictine mission of forming individuals who are Fully Human, Wholly Christian, and Truly Filipino. This course delves into the Church's Social Teachings (CST), providing students with a framework to critically analyze and respond to societal issues through the See-Judge-Act process. By synthesizing faith and action, the curriculum encourages students to explore key themes such as stewardship, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor, fostering ethical leadership and transformative engagement.

THED04 goes beyond theoretical knowledge by emphasizing practical application. Activities such as virtual social exposures, advocacy projects, and group research presentations challenge students to address real-world issues effectively. These hands-on experiences cultivate critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and a sense of responsibility, empowering students to apply CST principles in diverse contexts. In the broader scope of San Beda University's holistic education, this course plays a vital role in nurturing leaders who embody the values of prayer and work (*ora et labora*) and advocate for social justice within their communities.

2. The social justice issue in the Philippines

The neglect and abandonment of the elderly represent a critical social justice issue in the Philippines. This concern is evident in the experiences of residents at the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home. Based on gathered interviews, elderly individuals end up in the facility due to various reasons, including abandonment by their families, referrals from friends or local government units, personal choice, or financial incapacity of their families to support them. These scenarios underscore the vulnerabilities faced by the aging population in the country and the systemic challenges in providing adequate care for them (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2020).

In the Philippines, the traditional family-centered care model for the elderly has been weakened by economic pressures, urban migration, and evolving cultural dynamics have weakened this traditional support system (Dimog et al., 2024). Many families struggle to balance financial responsibilities, leading to a growing reliance on institutional care for aging relatives. Meanwhile, government support and private initiatives remain insufficient to address the increasing needs of the elderly population

(Fajardo, 2024). The situation of elderly individuals residing in care homes should not be a common occurrence under normal circumstances. The reasons behind their placement in these facilities often stem from unjust and challenging situations, including abandonment, the inability of families to provide adequate support, or the personal choice of elders who feel they have no other option. While the care provided in these homes can be beneficial—offering guidance, monitoring, and ensuring respect and dignity for the elderly—the core issue lies in the fact that these individuals should not have to depend on institutions for care due to neglect or abandonment. Elders, who have dedicated their lives to raising families and contributing to society, deserve to be treated with compassion and provided for in their later years. This research focuses on the neglect and abandonment of the elderly, exploring its root causes, societal implications, and potential solutions through the lens of Catholic Social Teachings (CST).

II. SEE

A. WORKERS' INTERVIEWEE

1. Background of the worker



Name: Ms. Rain

Age: 29 years old

Status: Single

Name of company: Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home

Position in the company: Social Worker

Years of work: 9 months

Monthly salary: (Would prefer to remain confidential)

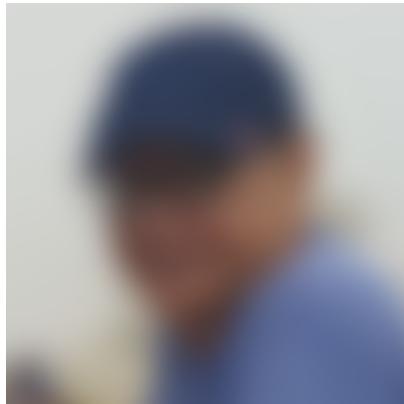
Benefits offered by the company: Sick leave, Bereavement leave (2–7 days)

Challenges in the company: Still learning due to only 9 months of experience

Needs to learn more about other tasks and responsibilities in the home

Common problems experienced in their specific occupation: Conflicts among elderly residents ("lolas") due to differences in social status, education, and life beliefs

Are they happy and content with their work? Why? Yes, the interviewee is happy and content with their work because the role of a social worker is fulfilling, especially as it allows them to care for and improve the well-being of the elderly residents, which brings personal satisfaction.



Name: (Would prefer to remain confidential)

Age: 42 years old

Status: Married

Name of company: Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home

Position in the company: Security Guard

Years of work: 2 years

Monthly salary: (Would prefer to remain confidential)

Benefits offered by the company: Sick leave, Bereavement leave (2–7 days)

Challenges in the company: Main challenge is ensuring the safety and security of the elderly residents, especially since the home is open to visitors. He also manages order during special events and handles difficult situations, such as uninvited guests or emergencies. Long shifts and emotional stress can be tough, especially when he sees the residents in need of care.

Common problems experienced in their specific occupation: He sometimes deals with uninvited guests causing trouble, emergencies like accidents or illnesses among the residents, and visitors not following rules, leading to tension.

Are they happy and content with their work? Why? Yes, he is happy in his work because he plays an important role in ensuring safety. Despite the challenges, he feels fulfilled knowing that he contributes to the well-being of the residents. The supportive management and teamwork make him feel valued, even though he's not directly involved in caregiving.



Name: Ms. Kim

Age: 31 years old

Status: In a relationship

Name of company: Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home

Position: Social Worker

Years of Work: 3 years

Monthly Salary: (Would prefer to remain confidential)

Benefits offered by the company: Sick leave, Bereavement leave (2–7 days)

Challenges in the company: Her challenges include dealing with the emotional and mental needs of the elderly residents, conducting counseling sessions, and managing a wide range of personalities. She needs to create a comfortable environment for residents to express themselves.

Common problems experienced in their specific occupation: She faces challenges like residents who are reluctant to open up emotionally and has to coordinate with their families to improve the residents' well-being.

Are they happy and content with their work? Why? She is happy with her work because she feels fulfilled by the impact she has on the residents' lives. She finds purpose in helping them with their emotional and mental needs, making a difference despite the challenges.

2. Reflection

The students reflected on interviews conducted with workers at the Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home, gaining valuable insights into the challenges caregivers face and how they find purpose in their roles. The interviews included two social workers and a security guard, each with unique responsibilities but a shared goal of improving the lives of elderly residents.

These interviews helped the students understand that caregiving goes beyond physical care—it's about making sure residents feel safe, heard, and supported. The students were reminded that fulfillment in work often comes from making a positive impact on others, no matter the role. The experience deepened their appreciation for the complexity of caregiving and the contributions of various workers in improving the lives of others.

B. INTERVIEWS ON THE ELDERLY



Name: Nanay Karina

Age: Unspecified

Status: Single; Not married

Years of stay: Almost 1 year

Story: Nanay Karina is of Chinese descent, born in the Philippines, and raised in a household that follows Buddhist traditions. She adheres to customs such as lighting incense sticks in the temple, where the meaning of the sticks' burn is interpreted from a book. Her parents hold prominent positions and expect their children to focus on supporting the family instead of working, with Nanay Karina taking on the responsibility of collecting money, as her parents don't trust others with the task. Her mother is strict, always prioritizing work. Nanay Karina has a friend named Jean, whose cousin is interested in her, but she is advised to concentrate on her studies. She believes that completing her education will open doors to job opportunities, especially with Chinese-owned companies. Nanay Karina emphasizes the importance of religion and regularly attends temple or church services, regardless of the faith, and encourages others to do the same.



Name: Nanay Felicitas

Age: 94

Status: Widow

Years of stay: 7 years

Story: Felicitas, 94 years old, got her name from her mother, Felicidad, and her name means "joyful" in Latin. She was married to a director at the Food and Nutrition Research Institute and has two children and two grandchildren, all of whom live in Canada. They brought her to Canada, where she found the place beautiful but was allergic to the cold weather, so she returned to the Philippines. Felicitas has lived with Sister since 2017, and she has come to terms with the fact that she will likely spend her final years there. She is content with her life and feels she has accomplished everything she wanted. She hopes to live to 100. Felicitas met her husband at a conference in New York, where they were workmates. After the conference, he proposed to her, and they married when they returned to the Philippines.

C. GENERAL OBSERVATION ON ALL THE INTERVIEWS

1. Careful examination of interviews

The Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home, exemplifies a supportive environment where both staff and residents work together to create a space of care and dignity for the elderly. The staff, including Ms. Rain, a social worker with nine months of experience, and Ms. Kim, a social worker with three years of experience, are dedicated to addressing the emotional and mental well-being of the residents despite the challenges they face in their roles. The security guard, with two years of experience, plays a crucial role in maintaining safety and organization, handling emergencies and long shifts with a sense of pride. The residents, such as Nanay Karina, who brings her cultural and religious values, and Nanay Felicitas, a 94-year-old widow who finds peace in the home, each demonstrate unique stories of adaptation. These experiences depict the staff's commitment to providing a nurturing and respectful environment where elderly individuals are treated with compassion, reinforcing the importance of care, dignity, and cultural sensitivity in elderly care facilities.

2. Similarities among each interviews

The individuals associated with *Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home* shares similarities in their commitment to their roles and the elderly residents they serve. Both Ms. Rain and Ms. Kim, as social workers, work directly with the residents, focusing on their emotional, mental, and social needs. Despite the challenges they face, such as conflicts among residents and resistance to emotional openness, they find fulfillment in their work, knowing they make a difference in the residents' lives. Similarly, the security guard, despite his long shifts and the emotional stress of dealing with emergencies and uninvited guests, feels a deep sense of purpose in ensuring the safety and well-being of the elderly. Their roles, though different, all contribute to a common goal of supporting and caring for the elderly, which brings them a sense of satisfaction and the residents like Nanay Karina and Nanay Felicitas, also share experiences of adapting to new environments, finding contentment in their lives at home, and accepting their circumstances. Whether as caregivers, protectors, or recipients of care, all individuals are united by the underlying theme of finding purpose, fulfillment, and peace in their roles within the home.

3. Realization regarding the social injustice

During our first visit there, it really made us think about whether we would want to end up in a place like that when we grow old. We also realized how lucky we are to have our parents around to

support and guide us in life. Even though our lives may not be perfect and not everything goes as planned, we are still grateful that our parents have never neglected us, unlike many of the elderly residents at the Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home. We also realized how difficult it must be to be abandoned by parents or loved ones, which made us even more thankful to God for the life we have right now, while our parents are still with us. We understand that we won't always have our loved ones with us, and especially in a place like Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly, it's heartbreaking to see that these elderly people are not with their families. We also realized that the way we care for them is like caring for our own grandmothers, and it's sad to think that some of our grandmothers have already passed away and we can no longer be with them. We are grateful that some of us still have grandmothers whom we can care for and cherish. We also realized how truly happy it is to have a grandmother to love and take care of, and we know that one day, if we find ourselves in a similar situation, we will experience the same care and love that we give to our grandmothers, just like how we take care of the elderly at the Little Sister of the Abandoned Elderly.

III. JUDGE

1. JUDGE the situation

Should this situation be happening?

The situation should be happening or not depending on the reason behind why elderly people are in there and on the circumstances of how they are treated that results them to be in the care of home for the age. It is important to know the reasons behind why they are in the home for the age to ensure that they are treated with respect, care and dignity. The matter should be addressed if these demands of elders are not fulfilled because it can be unfair and unjust. For example, during our immersion and interview on the workers in Little Sister of the abandoned elderly, we asked about the common reasons why older people are within their care and brought in the home for the age. They told us various reasons such as, the worse scenario is some of the elder people there were captured by the LGU in the streets and called them if they can accommodate; personal choice, but the reason for this is depending on the situation of their family since the worker we interviewed told us that there are cases where the family of the elder is on another country and the elders wants to stay in the Philippines more but they don't have any family anymore that why they willingly go there; Referral from their friends out of concern; Family can give financial support for them. Our analysis based on these reasons given by the workers from the Little Sister of the Abandoned elderly, is the reasons behind why they are in the care of home for the age shouldn't be happening since they deserve to give their needs and necessity despite of their old age, the same as to how they put hard work to raise their family and love ones. To make it clear, the reason why they ended up living at home for the age is the situation that shouldn't be happening but being in the care of home for the age is good for them since they'll be guided, monitored and taken care of well.

Is this situation right or wrong?

The care and attention provided for them defines the situation whether it is right or wrong. The situation is in line with righteousness and moral standards if elders are given the care they need, treated with compassion, and permitted to live with dignity. Despite this, the situation will be wrong if they are treated incorrectly, since there is negligence, loneliness, abandonment, lack of emotional, physical, and spiritual support from their family.

Their situation of elders being in the care of home for the age is right since helpers will provide care, compassion, respect, and will also guide them. Recognizing the elderly as significant members of society given their old age, providing for their needs and upholding the worth, value, and dignity of

every individual, especially for elders who are in need of care. On the other hand, the situation is wrong since the family of every elder cannot give support, aid and care for them anymore. Neglect, mistreatment, or disregard their physical state, spiritual and emotional necessities. It is unfair to treat the elderly as a burden or to abandon their contribution to society, especially to their respective family, which dehumanizes them.

Is there anything that we can do to change the situation?

If the family can't really provide financial support, at least encourage them to regularly visit them and be involved in the lives of their elders living at the home for the aged. Provide and support homes for aged the necessities that each elders' needs for daily living, donations, volunteer, and advocacy for a better care standard for elders to still experience good life despite their situation. Encourage intergenerational solidarity and increase knowledge of the rights of the elderly. Develop holistic care initiatives that consider a persons' physical, mental and spiritual priority for elders.

2. Lessons or values from the Scripture that helps us interpret this experience

Exodus 20:12 – “Honor your father and your mother; so that you may live long in the land the lord your God is giving you” This passage emphasizes how important it is to respect and honor parents and all seniors in general. It emphasizes a moral need to guarantee that elders who live in home for the aged facilities get considerate and dignified treatment.

Psalm 71:9 – “Do not cast away when I am old; do not forsake me when my strength is gone” This sincere request captures the fragility of elders and the amount of need for and companionship. It makes us realize how important it is to provide respect, love, and assistance when they are in the stage of needing support.

Proverbs 23: 22 – “Listen to your father; who gave your life, and do not desire your mother when she is old” This verse highlights the value of the life of our parents and the respect and care that we need to pay back the same as they did for us when we're still young, especially when they reach old age. It has a direct impact on how society views elderly or senior citizens in the home for the aged.

3. Key principles from Catholic Social Teaching that applies to this situation

1. Solidarity

Elders feel abandoned and isolated because of the negligence and abandonment of the elderly by society and the loss of connections between generations. This weakens the elderly's sense of connection and separates them from society.

Interdependence and reciprocal care amongst all societal members are essential components of solidarity. In an ideal scenario, the elderly would feel more appreciated, cherished, connected and loved into the society since the gap between generations won't matter if they develop meaningful relationships with their families and communities that will result in the reduction of elderly living at home for the aged.

2. Human Dignity

Elderly residents in home for the aged may experience negligence, loneliness, and lack of emotional support, resulting in diminishing their innate human dignity. When they feel that they are a liability rather than accepted citizens of society. That's why some of them personally chose to go for home for the aged because they felt this to their families, and it made their significance and contributions to be ignored

Every individual should be treated with respect and care since they were made in God's image, according to human dignity principle. In an ideal situation, a family should provide full attention, support and uphold the human dignity of their elders in the family since they need physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

3. Preferential option for the Poor and Vulnerable

Those elderly people who are in a family that can't provide financial support anymore for their life may be neglected or given inadequate care. This societal structure that does not put importance and prioritize their well-being increases their vulnerability and that leads them to be in bad situations such as, get lost in the streets, choosing to voluntarily go to home for the aged etc.

The moral responsibility to give priority to the elderly and other vulnerable people's needs is what this principle emphasizes. In an ideal scenario, institutions and society would actively support home for the aged, which guarantees elderly residents, regardless of their financial circumstances, should receive fair and compassionate care.

IV. ACT

1. Sector of the society that should act on this social issue

The responsibility for addressing the negligence and abandonment of elderly people does not fall on a single sector but should be shared among multiple stakeholders. Government institutions, particularly those focusing on social welfare and public health, should take the lead in formulating policies and programs to protect the elderly. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based groups must also play crucial roles in advocacy and outreach. Additionally, religious institutions can offer spiritual and emotional support, while private corporations may contribute through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives aimed at funding elderly care programs. Finally, families, as the most immediate social unit, bear the primary moral obligation to ensure that their elderly members are cared for and valued.

2. Action to alleviate the suffering and injustice done to the people involved

To alleviate the suffering of elderly individuals, it is essential to establish comprehensive support systems. The government should provide accessible healthcare services, including routine medical checkups and mental health support tailored to the elderly's needs. Building and maintaining state-funded nursing homes or elderly care centers can offer a safe and supportive environment for those abandoned. Additionally, financial assistance or pensions should be expanded to ensure the elderly can meet their basic needs without relying entirely on others. On a societal level, awareness campaigns must be launched to combat ageism and promote respect and empathy toward older people. These efforts should also include the training of caregivers to provide proper care and dignity for the elderly.

3. Actions for victims to stop the injustice

Elderly individuals must be empowered to take proactive measures in defending their rights. They should be encouraged to join senior citizens' associations or support groups where they can share experiences and advocate for their collective welfare. Being part of these groups can also give them access to legal resources, should they need to take action against neglect or abuse. Furthermore, older individuals should be educated about their rights and the available social programs they can access for assistance. Reporting instances of neglect or abuse to local authorities, social workers, or trusted community leaders is another vital step toward ensuring their safety and well-being.

4. Simple, specific and doable ways young Bedan students can help address this problem

Young Bedan students have the potential to make a significant impact by engaging in practical and meaningful actions. They can start by organizing volunteer activities in local elderly care centers, offering their time for companionship, storytelling, or recreational activities that help combat the loneliness many elderly face. Bedan students can also initiate donation drives to collect essentials such as food, clothing, and medical supplies for elderly individuals in need. Raising awareness is another critical area—through social media campaigns, school projects, or community seminars, young Bedan students can educate their peers and local communities about the importance of caring for the elderly. Lastly, fostering intergenerational relationships by spending quality time with their own elderly family members sets a powerful example of respect and love for others to follow. By combining efforts across society and empowering young people, the issue of elderly neglect and abandonment can be significantly mitigated, fostering a culture that values and uplifts the older generation.

V. REFLECTION PAPERS

Aningalam, Jul-Andrei T.

"The worst thing about being abandoned is not just the loneliness, but the feeling of being forgotten."

I learned that you must be thankful always for the things the you're taking as a negative things in life, always find the good side in all the bad things that happenings in our life, and whenever you're alone always think what's good for yourself and always do things that can fulfill you to be a better person everyday.

I learn to be more faithful and as a muslim i also learned about the catholic religion like their beliefs, who they're praised, and who Jesus is and how they are going through life as a catholic peoples.

"The worst thing about being abandoned is not just the loneliness, but the feeling of being forgotten." this quotes really hits me because it is sad to be forgotten by our loved ones, and it's a big impact to our life to accept being abandoned or neglected, by being abandoned feels like no one loves you like how you love them, and being abandoned makes us feel that we are alone in our battles, problems, challenges that we are facing in life, and it makes me feel unimportant in life.

Labrador, Sean Andrei Jeremy

"When one is abandoned, one is left alone. This can happen through physical absence as well as physical presence. In fact to be abandoned by someone who is physically present is much more crazymaking." - John Bradshaw

The quote above made me remember our immersion days that we've spent at The Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, and this quotation emphasizes the sad reality of the abandonment and negligence the elders experience from being emotionally disconnected from their family they used to live and someone who is physically present. This social issue made the problem of emotional negligence a common overlooked and often given importance knowing that this is an extremely harmful kind of abandonment especially for elders who are more in need of physical, emotional and spiritual support from their family; and that made us conclude that they really in need for these factors since we got the chance to talked spend a little with them and they really can't stop talking and telling stories about their past lives and I'm sure that they are longing to tell those with their respective families. And this experience gave me a personal learnings too, knowing that our parents

is getting old and made me realize now as a student who's slowly experiencing the true challenges of life, that I really need to work hard for my parents and spend time building good relationships with them so that when the time they are in the age the same as the elders at The Abandoned Sisters, I can give their necessities, attention, and the support they need so that they won't feel they are neglected, abandoned and burden since this was some of the experiences of the elders their which is saddened and heartbreaking to see and hear. And this also I want and applies for myself when I reach the same age they were now.

I've learned from our research and observations that emotional negligence is an emerging and unnoticed societal issue. Emotional absence can be overlooked for years, leading people to doubt their relationships, real life, and value. In contrast, physical absence is simpler to detect. According to studies, social pressures, unresolved trauma, or a lack of emotional literacy are frequently the causes of emotional neglect. I discovered that the long-term implications of this neglect might include anxiety, despair, and complications in establishing wholesome connections.

This course taught me that a genuine approach to theology and justice requires addressing social and emotional problems in addition to theological ones. Communities must give priority to those who feel abandoned or disadvantaged, according to the concept of a "preferential option for the poor" found in Jesus Christ's teachings. Based on Bradshaw's quote, demonstrates a failure to uphold justice, love, and faith in relationships, that will result in abandonment is particularly damaging when it takes place in the midst of what is seen to be intimacy. And I learned that faith is more than belief; it is a commitment to act justly, love deeply, and live in trust. This aligns with Bradshaw's emphasis on the importance of emotional presence. Faith, as described in the module, integrates the mind (what can I know?), the will (what should I do?), and the heart (what can I hope for?). Abandonment occurs when one or more of these factors is neglected, both in personal relationships and in societal structures.

As we ended and conclude this subject and reminisce the days we spent on our immersion, we learned and deeply these factors that led for negligence and abandonment; the scriptures and Christian Social Teachings tells us that given by this situations, as a citizens of God's creation we must act and help one another to resolve this emerging social issue and reminded us that we all have the capacity whether big or small we can lend a hand and be an example for those who are in need especially the elders.

Mapula, Paul Joshua G.

I've been reflecting on our immersion and research at The Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, Sta. Teresa Jornet Home. One quote that has stuck with me is by Andy Rooney: "*The best classroom in the world is at the feet of an elderly person.*" It perfectly captures what I've learned throughout this experience. Listening to the elderly residents reminded me so much of my lola, especially in her last two years. I could almost hear her voice in the way some of the lolas spoke—talking endlessly, often repeating themselves. It brought back memories of how my lolo and lola were always there to take care of us when my parents weren't around. My lolo was a deeply religious man who would share stories about the church, lead family prayer meetings, and even memorized the entire Bible. His wisdom and faith left a lasting impact on me. This experience also made me think about my lola's later years. Even though she faced challenges within our family, I'm grateful for all the time we spent together. Unlike the elderly in the home, she was surrounded by her family until the end, and I now realize how fortunate we were to have that time with her. Seeing the residents without their families was heartbreaking. While they have each other, nothing can replace the presence of family during their final years.

From the subject THED04, I learned how social justice ties into caring for the elderly. It taught me about Catholic Social Teachings and the importance of upholding dignity, solidarity, and care for the vulnerable. I also gained a deeper understanding of how societal issues, like the neglect of the elderly, need action and compassion. I now see how important it is to translate faith into action to support those who feel forgotten.

Looking back, this experience reinforced how much we can learn from the elderly. My lolo and lola taught me the value of love, family, and faith. I'm reminded to cherish our elderly and ensure they feel valued, loved, and respected for the incredible lives they've lived. If I ever find myself in their shoes one day, I hope to receive the same care and love that I've seen others give to them.

Marquez, John Ariel A.

"Neglect is not only the absence of care, but the absence of love and respect for the human dignity of others."

For me I realize that neglect is not just about the lack of physical care, being neglect to your own family and not treated with dignity especially to the elders inside of The Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly. I realize that neglect is not just about not providing for someone's basic needs, it's about ignoring their emotional, social, and psychological well-being. When elders are placed in

care homes, especially those like Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly, it is not only the physical care that they need, but also the love, attention, and respect they deserve as human beings. Many elderly residents in care homes have been separated from their families, and some may feel abandoned or forgotten. When society or family members forget to check on them, listen to them, or show them love, it can make them feel as if they no longer matter. The absence of these small gestures of kindness and respect can be a form of neglect that takes a toll on their dignity and sense of self-worth. I believe that we should not let this happen to any of our elders. The elderly have lived through so much and deserve to be treated with care, empathy, and respect. They should not feel neglected or forgotten, but rather valued and honored. It's essential that we, as a society, recognize that true care involves not just providing for someone's physical needs but also acknowledging their humanity, making them feel seen, heard, and loved.

For me as Catholics, we are called to live out Christ's teachings through acts of service, such as visiting and caring for the elderly, embodying the corporal works of mercy. This reminds us to honor the dignity of others by showing love and respect, ensuring that no one feels forgotten or devalued. It's a challenge to integrate our faith into action, reflecting Christ's love in our daily lives.

"Neglect is not only the absence of care, but the absence of love and respect for the human dignity of others." This quotation captures the heart of what I learned from our research and visit to the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly. Neglect is not just failing to meet someone's physical needs but also failing to acknowledge their worth as individuals. The elderly in care homes often feel abandoned and forgotten, which can deeply affect their emotional and mental well-being. Our experience reminded us how important it is to treat our grandparents or parents during this time, spending the great moments with them and love and respect them, just as we would want to be treated when we grow old. Caring for them is not just about duty it is about showing compassion and honoring their dignity as children of God. I realize this calls us to take action, both as students and as Catholics, to ensure that no one is left feeling unloved or unvalued, especially our families and close to our hearts.

Villa, Kyle Rafael

"Every act of abandonment is a story untold, a life interrupted, and a future uncertain."

From our research, I gained a deeper understanding of the systemic neglect of elderly individuals in the Philippines. It became clear that abandonment often stems from financial constraints, migration, or societal shifts. This issue highlights the gaps in societal structures meant to support vulnerable populations. Our immersion at the Little Sisters of the Abandoned Elderly revealed the emotional

and psychological toll on both residents and caregivers, emphasizing that care transcends physical needs—it involves restoring dignity and providing companionship.

From the subject THED04 has provided invaluable insights into the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, such as the importance of human dignity, solidarity, and the preferential option for the poor. These teachings frame social justice not just as charity but as an active responsibility to uplift marginalized communities. The course has inspired me to view social justice as a practice rooted in faith and action, compelling me to contribute meaningfully to the well-being of others.

Abandonment isn't just a physical separation but an erasure of one's narrative and future. Elderly individuals in care homes often carry untold stories of resilience and sacrifice, yet they face uncertainty in their living years. This realization calls for collective action, families, communities, and institutions must work together to ensure that no life story ends in loneliness. THED04 and our immersion have taught me that true social justice involves listening, acting, and advocating for those whose voices have been silenced, ensuring every individual is seen, heard, and valued.

VI. REFERENCES

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VII. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Immersion snippets





