

# **Fraternite Notre Dame's Input related to the development of a possible international standard on the protection of the rights of older people**

## **Open-ended Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons**

On the occasion of Working Group for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of elderly persons, Fraternite Notre Dame, founded by His Excellency, Bishop Jean Marie, would like to share certain points of view, dear to its Founder, and in particular when it comes to the status of elderly persons in need of long term or palliative care.

Now, first of all, allow us to start with a very simple question, which could be asked to anyone: "Is there still, in our society and in our hearts, some room left for the elderly who need palliative care for a variable period of time?" Our duty is to grant the elderly, those who have lived their lives before us, the medical care and the affection that they need, above all things. The society in which we live, must stop considering them as a useless burden, something cumbersome of which we must get rid sooner or later, under the pretext that they are no longer useful in anything.

In no case should euthanasia become a solution, for life is precious, this is a Sacred Gift from God; the right to life is consecrated by international charts, it is imprescriptible, and no one has a right to dispose of the life of his or her neighbor.

Unfortunately, it is common to assess that certain palliative care services supposed to provide a decent level of comfort to the elderly who have reached the final years of their lives, have become places where old people are just left to die, and especially when they come from less-favored sections of society, they die from starvation, thirst, a lack of hygiene, in want of respect and affection, and left alone in their own state of despair.

The experience of the Religious Nuns, Friars and Priests of Fraternite Notre Dame has often proven that when properly surrounded, an elderly person in need of medical care in the long term, can see his or her life prolonged by a few months or even years, thanks to the love, affection and care that he or she receives. In no instance should the evolution of society allow for going against the multi-century old, moral and social value precepts.

From the beginning of time, the elderly have, through their experience, wisdom and knowledge, played an important role, handing down to younger generations their life legacy, and they would be respected for all what they stood for. Are we going, while we owe them so much and even all that we are, to deny them the respect and affection that they need so much?

The same thing applies to the rights of Senior citizens; many of them were denied certain jobs, or they are retired when they reach a certain age, without taking into consideration their life experience which is often irreplaceable, and could be useful in their particular field.

Without denying the right and access to jobs to younger generations, we cannot reject a person on the sole pretext of his or her age. The know-how and life experience of the elderly contribute an undeniable advantage in every field of society, and the transmission of such know-how to the young people can only strengthen the ties that already exist between the different generations, to shape a society in which each person really has his or her place.

*[End of Fraternite Notre Dame's Input - October 25, 2019]*

**Fraternite Notre Dame - 502 N Central Ave Chicago, IL 60644 - USA  
Fraternite Notre Dame - 2290 1st Avenue New York, NY 10035 - USA  
Raphael10@aol.com - www.FraterniteNotreDame.org**