Newsletter – September 2026

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"Caring for My Parents: Discovering Christ in the Reality of Dementia"

Seeing

My parents are ageing and becoming more dependent on me. Ageing and vulnerability are not a loss of human dignity. Every person remains made in God's image. I must treat my parents with dignity, even when caregiving is difficult.

Dementia changes the way my parent communicates and behaves. Jesus identifies Himself with the vulnerable: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these… you did for me." (Mt 25:40). I need to see Christ in my parents, rather than seeing only the illness.

There are moments of frustration, repetition, resistance, or anger. Jesus is patient and compassionate. I also recognise my own limitations and need for grace. I need to respond more patiently, to pause before reacting, to ask forgiveness when I fail.

I sometimes feel tired, trapped, guilty or resentful. These feelings do not make me a bad Christian or child. Jesus Himself experienced exhaustion and asked His disciples to watch with Him. I need to accept my limitations and seek help rather than trying to carry everything alone.

I may wonder whether my caregiving is making any difference. Christian love is not measured only by visible results. Love can be expressed through small, hidden acts. Value simple acts—feeding, accompanying, listening, bringing comfort—as acts of love.

I have less freedom and time for myself. Christ calls us to love through self-giving, but not through destroying ourselves. I need to establish healthy boundaries and share responsibilities with family, friends, or caregivers.

Sometimes I feel that the person I knew is disappearing. Dementia may change memory and personality, but it does not erase the person's dignity or God's love for them. I need to continue to relate to the person who is still there, rather than only mourning who they used to be.

I do not know what the future will bring. Christian faith invites trust even when we cannot control the outcome. I need to entrust my parents and myself to God, one day at a time.

The JUDGE is the heart of the reflection.

"Where was God in this experience, and what is He showing me about love?"

1. What does this experience reveal about the dignity of the elderly?

2. Where have I encountered Christ in my parents?

3. What has this experience revealed about myself—my patience, fears, selfishness, love, and limitations?

4. What is Jesus inviting me to learn about love that is not dependent on being recognised or appreciated?

A particularly powerful Gospel passage would be John 13:1–15, Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Caregiving can be understood as a very ordinary form of washing another person's feet: feeding, cleaning, accompanying, repeating the same answer, bringing them to appointments, or simply sitting beside them.

ACT — make it concrete.

Some examples of actions which we can make:

I will spend 15 minutes each day simply being present with my parent, without trying to "fix" anything.

When dementia-related behaviour frustrates me, I will pause and pray: "Jesus, help me see You in my parent."

I will ask for help instead of assuming I must do everything myself.

I will make one concrete effort to preserve my parent's dignity and independence.

I will also do one thing each week to care for my own physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing.

A powerful way to conclude is to move from: "I am caring for my parent." To "Christ is teaching me how to love through caring for my parent."

And finally in summary:

SEE: I see my parent becoming increasingly vulnerable.

JUDGE: Through the eyes of Christ, I see not merely dementia, but a beloved person whose dignity remains.

ACT: I choose to love—not perfectly, but faithfully—one small act at a time.

Kenneth Soh 9 Sept 2026