

4. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge

It is said that modern society is in an era where authority has disappeared.

Husbands' authority is disappearing at home, teachers' authority is disappearing at school, the seniors' at job places and in society, and people are not afraid of even God. The words in the Bible are ringing an alarm: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge (Proverbs 1: 7).

The True Authority is the Authority of Love

People often say young people today are ill-mannered.

A survey result recently conducted on young people shows that Korea is one of the countries which have young people who are the least respectful to their elders. Korea was once called the 'country of courteous people in the East.' But from some time ago, it became a country with no elders nor fearful people, and even the president became a subject of cartoons, comedies, and gossips. A world with no fearful person and no elders is the most fearful world of all. A world where a person is judged solely by his/her usefulness and everything is controlled only by power structure is not different from the animal world where the

stronger prey upon the weaker.

There should be elders to restore order at home, in society and in the country. However, the cause of the disorder is not just because of the young who do not respect elders.

For, the true authority is only from love, not from money, power, knowledge, or honor.

We can own and rule as much as we give. If we give the whole, then we can rule over the whole. Jesus took the mankind just like trophies by giving his life for us. Only the authority of love is the true authority.

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Test-tube Babies:

An Example of Knowledge without Fear

A sterile couple visited us and asked if they



Garden in Kkottongnae Hyundo University of Social Welfare

A class, Kkottongnae Hyundo University of Social Welfare



were allowed to try a test-tube baby since they had had pains because they did not have a child. And they also asked what the reason was if it was not allowed. They strongly argued for the test-tube baby, saying that if they have to continue living without a baby, their marriage will be in jeopardy and thereby deeply trouble their parents as well. We explained God's will sincerely to the couple who were anxious for a baby. The test-tube baby originated from wrong assumptions and technology, which were caused by improper knowledge lacking reverence for the LORD. The reasons why the treatment is unjust are:

First, a life is born by manipulation of test tools and not by the normal conjugal love of a couple.

Second, the treatment process of a test-tube baby imposes physical and psychological burdens on a mother, and if multiple pregnancy occurs, an unethical process of selective artificial abortion must follow.

Third, the treatment of a surplus of fertilized eggs is illegal and unethical. Since a fertilized egg is a perfect life, it should not be allowed to be frozen, used as a test subject, or disposed of.

The church does not allow the test-tube baby for these reasons.

The words in the Proverb of the Bible teach those who would forego the grace of God, not following the teachings of the Church: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge."

Kkottongnae Hyundo University of Social Welfare

The founder of Kkottongnae, Fr. Oh Woong-

Jin, established Kkottongnae Hyundo University of Social Welfare to cultivate specialists in social welfare with academic knowledge and love, having learned that passion alone is not enough to care for the poor through his 20 year-experience of running Kkottongnae. This university is a mini college specialized in social welfare. To cultivate a pool of well-balanced social welfare experts with theory and practice, field education is an essential and integral component in the curriculum, so students are required to take at least one practicum course and do voluntary work during the academic year. The university started with three majors consisting of Social Welfare, Social Welfare Administration, and Social Welfare Psychology in 1999. Now it has expanded to include a fourth major of Nursing, with the admissions quota set at 120 students in each academic year.

The educational philosophy is the practice of truth, justice, love, and service based on the Catholic tradition and the spirit of Kkottongnae to cultivate well-balanced social welfare experts with intelligence, sensibility, and spirituality.

The disciplinary motto of Kkottongnae Hyundo University is "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge"

We Need Elders in Our Society

If we deny our history, underestimate our seniors' work, and so make a world without elders, then homes, workplaces, societies, and countries would fall into a state of disorder. Kkottongnae takes care of those who are

deserted because they have nobody to rely on and no strength to beg for food, serving them as our elders. The secret to Kkottongnae's well-harmonized community is that we live with the least and the poorest, placing them at the center of the community, and we respect and follow the elders of church.

Our community will be strong, our home, society and country in good order, if we live our lives with our elders, respecting and consulting them.

If we follow the LORD, the greatest elder, we can have true knowledge and bear a lot of fruit with blessings.

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Knowledge.”

A class in Kkottongnae School







A complete view of Kkottongnae Hyundo University of Social Welfare

5. The Sacrament of Baptism

“It is the blessing of God just to have the strength to beg for food.”

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one God.

It is written in the Bible that “I baptize you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire (Mathew 3: 11, Mark 1: 8, Luke 3: 16).”

“Jesus went into the land of Judea; and there he stayed with his disciples, and baptized (John 3: 22).” “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (The Acts 2: 38).”

If a man, a created thing, is baptized, what will happen to him/her? The answer to the question is as follows.

Firstly, even if a man had committed any sin in the past, when he/she repents, has faith in God, and is baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, then he/she will be absolved of his/her original sin. Secondly, he/she will receive a gift of the Holy Spirit. The person who receives the Holy Spirit will be God’s child and His heir. Thirdly, he/she will receive 100 times the blessings.

Fourthly, he/she will be persecuted as Jesus, His disciples and the prophets were persecuted. Fifthly, he/she will enter the kingdom of God.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3: 5).” The Sacrament of baptism is the most glorious grace of God that makes a common man be reborn as God’s man.

The Holy Spirit gives us 100 times the blessings, the first of which is spiritual: Spiritual blessings are the gifts of miracle, exorcising evil spirits, healing, diverse kinds of tongues, prophecy, the interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits (1 Corinth 12). Second, the Holy Spirit gives us the human blessings: “You love one another, as I have loved you. You must love one another (John 13: 34).” Third, the Holy Spirit gives us material blessings.

The spiritual blessings are gifts given by obeying God, the human blessings are given by practicing love, and the material blessings are given by treating material objects as something for managing and not for owning.



Baptism

Three kinds of privileges are given to people who are baptized: privileges of faith, of suffering, and of glory. Therefore, the three kinds of privileges and three kinds of blessings are given to those who are baptized.

I am happy to realize how big the privilege of suffering is. I have been asking for pains and death on behalf of my neighbors with strong faith, aware of the fact that a true priest is a tool of the Holy Spirit. This has helped shape Kkottongnae to become what it is today.

Jesus suffered pains and death on behalf of me, an insignificant being, so I would like to do my part and live a life of loving my opponents to fill up the remaining sufferings of Christ, giving blessings to those who persecute me as a baptized and blessed person. This is the life of enjoying the privilege of suffering and joining the suffering of Jesus Christ.

The kingdom of salvation we will enter is heaven, soon after we receive the privilege of suffering. After our Lord's Holy Spirit gives us blessings with the privilege of faith and we practice God's love, taking part in Jesus' remaining sufferings, then we can enjoy the glorious privilege of entering the kingdom of God.

"Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3: 5)." When we are baptized, we are eating and drinking Jesus who gives Himself as food (Eucharist) to us as a guarantee of salvation by the Holy Spirit within us. Then we will never be hungry or thirsty forev-

er. Jesus Himself, who is truth and life, becomes a thing worth seeing (Cross); He also becomes a thing worth knowing (Holy Spirit) by sending us the Lord's Holy Spirit.

Those who are baptized and have faith in God are given the gifts of miracles, exorcising evil spirits, healing, diverse kinds of tongues, prophecy, the interpretation of tongues, and discerning of spirits. The sacrament of baptism is the grace of God enabling us to live with Him and making all the creatures become like their Creator.

(This article is written by the Founder of Kkottongnae, Fr. John Oh Woong-Jin)



Grandpa Choi Gui-Dong with Founder Fr. Oh Woong-Jin who are in front of the House of Love for the homeless

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5: 3)



6. True Happiness

Happiness Lies in a Life in Contentment

“Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (Matthew 5: 3)!”

All people want to live happily. However, in reality there are few who can give a confident answer when they are asked about what true love is and how they can be happy. Many people live an unhappy life despite their hard work and sweat because of the absurd situation; they want to be happy but they do not know the way to be happy. Through the experience of living with the poor as true neighbors, Kkottongnae has become aware of what true happiness is and how we might attain it. We also have taught, and helped people learn and experience what we have been aware of. Fr. Oh Woong-Jin, the founder of Kkottongnae, gives us a definition of ‘happiness’ and suggests a way how to be happy in the areas of individual happiness, family happiness, national happiness, and human happiness as follows.

Happy Individual

Happiness lies in contentment.

Contentment is a state of one’s desires being fulfilled.

A human being is born with many desires, which can be classified into three kinds. They are desires to possess, dominate, and love. Regardless of age and sex, people are born with these three kinds of desires. However, since the desires to possess and dominate are so huge that they will not be fulfilled until people own and dominate all heaven and earth. The desire to love is a desire even to suffer the agony on behalf of one’s beloved. Parents have a far stronger desire to love. When they see their children confronting death, they eagerly want their children to be alive at the risk of their death even a dozen times.

It is a reasonable and logical thought that we can give enough love when we have enough to own and dominate. That is why people have labored, sweated, fought, and died to possess and dominate from the beginning of the world. But there are few people who have satisfied their desires through these works of laboring, sweating, fighting, and dying. Someone might wonder how we can love without possessing and dominating. Unfortunately, no one wants to be possessed or dominated while they want to own and con-



From the 15th to the 19th of August, the 5th Convention of PANASCO was held in the Training Institute of Love, Kkotongnae. PANASCO is comprised of members of Vincencio from 29 countries and an International Convention is organized and held once every four years.

trol. So people who used to possess and dominate become to be possessed and controlled as they get older and sick and therefore they fall in an inevitably miserable condition in that they can not give any more favors to others.

People possess and dominate as much as they give. If they give all, they own and dominate all. The Kkottongnae family members, who once only used to ask to get owing to the deficiency of love, come to give love to each other since they have been given Christian love which is a love to risk pain or even death for the sake of a neighbor. This is how the Kkottongnae became a beautiful neighborhood where no one lives without working for others even though they are not forced to work. We become a happy person when we love by giving all the things we own until we feel shortage, because all our desires are fulfilled by doing this. Both the giver and the given become happy in contentment.

A Happy Home

We all want a sweet home.

A family is usually composed of three generations of parents, husband and wife, and children. Before we get married, we live only for ourselves. Once we get married, we have to play three roles of being a child to our devoted parents, a spouse to love husband or wife, and a parent to take care of children. How can we make a happy home where we can play our roles perfectly?

Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me will live, even though

they die; and those who live and believe in me will never die (John 11: 25)." But we know that it is not easy to give filial piety to parents and love to a spouse and children in reality.

Love is naturally given to youngsters. God gave us a gift of maternal and paternal love for love toward youngsters. Parental love, spouse's love, and love toward children are all valuable. But by practicing one of these three, we can end up with practicing all kinds of love successfully: that is achieved in children-centered families but not parent-centered, or husband and wife-centered families. It is said from the biological perspective that only 30% of the genes from parents are passed to children, but 85% from grandparents is passed to grandchildren. In this aspect, it is natural that grandchildren get along well with grandparents.

By living lives devoted to their children and receiving the prosperity of descendants, the parents will get the blessings of being respected by their descendants and completing the love with their spouses. And it also brings glory to the spirits of their ancestors.

Therefore, a children-centered family is the way to practice a filial piety to parents and love for spouses. In this way we can attain three things through practicing just one thing, and make a holy family by sincerely loving each other.

Happy Nation

A nation is composed of people, territory, and sovereignty.

How can we preserve our territory in a beautiful way in order to make people healthy



The Holy Family Mass is held in Kkottongnae at 2 o' clock afternoon third Sunday every month.



in mind and body, and exert sovereign power? **There is a secret way to achieve the three of them all by doing only one thing. Will that be people, territory, or sovereignty?**

When chief executives of regional government bodies were gathering and having a seminar about 'a happy nation' and they were asked which one of these three are most important. But only few of them got the correct answer to this question.

This is what happened when Israel and Arab were fighting a 6-day-battle. When the news on this war was broadcasted to the whole world, almost all the Israeli students studying abroad packed up and returned to their home country to join the war. At the beginning of the war the Israeli Secretary of Defense asserted that they would win the war since they owned weapons kept secretly. During the air fight an Israeli fighter was hit by an enemy missile and crashed. The pilot of the flight, who survived by using a parachute, was found to be a woman who was in the eight month of her pregnancy. The 6-day-battle ended in a victory for Israel. Reporters questioned the Secretary of Defense about the secrets of the victory, and he answered, "Our secret weapon is the patriotism. The victory was won because our Israeli people exerted their sovereign power properly." On the other hand, in Korea when there was a growing sense of crisis about a possible war in the country, the airport was crowded with run-away people and all the stores were out of inventory owing to stacking up on daily necessities.

We went through slave-like lives of 36 years under the Japanese domination until we achieved liberation on the 15th of August, 1945. However, the joy of liberation did not last long. We had to suffer from the fratricidal Korean War, which occurred in 1950. Still the wounds from the war are not healed, and we still are expecting the unification of North and South.

How can we achieve unification of our country?

The only way is to exert our sovereign power properly as an owner of this country. If a person does not participate in elections, but goes about criticizing politicians, educational systems, administrative policies, and companies, he/she is not exerting his/her sovereign power properly. This is the very time to love my country and people not to slander or blame each other: I have to unify my country and people, I have to enlighten them, and I have to accept the personal responsibility for this. **We will be able to achieve unification, enlarge our territory, and make a proud and happy country for the benefit of mankind and of the whole world if we exert our sovereign power properly, which is one of the three constituents of a nation: people, territory, and sovereignty.**

Happy Mankind

For mankind to be happy, everybody should be a happy person.

There are about 6 billion people on the globe, and we can classify their lives into 3 types. The first type of person is the **egoistic type** who lies, deceives, hits, and kills others only for their own benefit by any means. The

second type is the individualistic type who does not harm others but lives only for their own benefits. The third type is the altruistic type who lives for others at the cost of his or her labor, sacrifice, and even death. The people who live egoistically are bringing the things such as wars, famines, drugs, and AIDS into this world and destroying the environment, increasing disease, and harming mankind. How can we recover the devastated globe to its original appearance God made and preserve it beautifully? How can we save mankind from growing unhappiness and live together in harmony, peace, and happiness?

It was during the war that Fr. Oh, the founder of Kkottongnae, decided to devote himself to people who have no one, or no place to depend on and even no strength to beg for food. During the tragic Korean war he saw dying refugees thrown away on the roads and happened to see a little girl giving her dying father a shrimp caught in a brook but the father giving it back to the girl. Later Fr. Oh established Kkottongnae with the dream of a youngster. Now there are about 3 hundred religious, hundreds of volunteers, and numerous visitors, such as business men, soldiers, students, public workers, and etc. who are living altruistic lives to build a nation of love and unification in Kkottongnae.

The constituents of mankind are the globe, 6 billion people, and the love of humanity. Among them, the most important constituent is the love of humanity, the practice of altruistic life. Love is what everybody can do. But it is not what anybody can do. As God loves

humans as He allows both good and bad people; rain and sunlight equally. We need people who can wrap and heal the wounds from the tragedy of fratricidal war, who can enlighten the fellowmen, who work not only for themselves but also for others alike, and who are willing to suffer and die on behalf of their neighbors. It is not until the people belonging to an altruistic type flower the love of mankind that we can become happy mankind.

“Happiness lies in contentment.”





An aerial view of the 25th anniversary of the foundation of Kkottongnae

7. Spirituality of Poverty 1

Those Who Have Nobody to Depend on and No Strength to Beg for Food: Who Are They?

‘Those Who Have Nobody to Depend on and Do Not Even Have the Strength to Beg for Food’

The reason why there are people who have no one to depend on and do not even have the strength to beg for food is because people did not offer love to those who they were supposed to love. This misfortune comes from a home. But happiness also comes from a home.

If parents risk their lives for the sake of their children since love is naturally given to youngsters, filial piety to parents, love for spouses, and love toward children spring up naturally. Then we can make a Kingdom of Christ full of God’s love in this world with happy homes. However, in this modern society there are more husband-and-wife-centered homes than children-centered homes. And in the husband-and-wife-centered homes children are often victimized and as a result, many social problems occur, such as the problems of the handicapped, the juvenile, the mentally ill, and the old. To treat their misfortune caused by a deficiency of love, it is necessary to fill the people with love which they need.

A Mother of a University Professor

It was a long time ago. A forlorn grandmoth-

er institutionalized at Kkottongnae nursing home was anxiously looking for her son crying day and night, even suffering from respiratory distress. “My son. My son. He can not come now owing to some personal problem, but he will surely come to visit me. My son. My son.” She looked so pitiful that we asked her to let us know her son’s work place or phone number for us to contact him. Then, she just closed her mouth and never said anything. Mother’s love prevented her from saying anything which might do any harm or disadvantage to her child. Later, when the grandmother fell in a serious condition, we could manage to contact her family with difficulty. After that, her son appeared in an expensive car and surprisingly he was found out to be a local university professor. Like this, **the reason of a disaster that many people are abandoned these days is not because of a deficiency of bread but because of a deficiency of love.**

A Wife Who Deserted Her Husband Who Had Become a Handicapped Person

A cripple who was begging moving on an old tire happened to meet a kind person and became to be brought into Kkottongnae. The beggar had been farming in countryside, but he



An abandoned person who suffered from psychiatric symptoms with hands and legs tied up like this is found on the street.



This abandoned person became a family member of Kkottongnae.

moved to Seoul for the education of his children and to get through a financial difficulty. He supported his wife and children doing construction work. One day, he missed his footing, fell off and got injured on his spine and became a lower-half paralytic. Since then he could not help staying home doing nothing, and soon after his wife began to abuse him. She drove her husband outside, who had served and sacrificed for his family for about 10 years, just because he could not earn money and could not play a role of husband. It was such an unbearable situation that the husband went outside to beg on a street. One day he was so hungry that he entered his house quietly like a thief and ate food in a kitchen, but got caught by his wife. He was beaten by his wife with a poker and thrown out to a street. So, he moved around cities here and there to survive with his ill body, and finally was led into Kkottongnae.

A few days after he came into Kkottongnae, he said like this: "This country is a good country. I didn't know that before, but I realized that when I was thrown out to a street. Many people gave a helping hand to the handicapped and beggars. Some people gave money or bought food, and some people took me to his/her home to wash, dress, and feed, and sometimes to give money. Then I met a good person on a street and he led me into Kkottongnae. Although my wife deserted me, other people in this society didn't turn away from me. Now that Kkttongnae accepted me, I don't have to beg for food anymore."

Are They Really Useless People?

Even at this moment many people are being

deserted. The handicapped, the mentally ill, alcoholics, the aged, and people with dementia are deserted and turned away from their beloved families and this society, so they are starving, suffering from illness, and frozen to death on streets and under bridges. Since in this society they are regarded as being of no help, useless or obstacles in their way for family happiness, they are deserted by their families.

Kkottongnae brings and accepts them warmly, provides food, shelter, and medical treatment, and even holds funeral services after their death. However, we always feel that we get more through them than what we provide them. As a phrase in the Bible, "**The thrown-away stone became a cornerstone (Psalm 18: 22),**" the reason why Kkottongnae is becoming a holy place of love to teach what true happiness is because Kkottongnae treats the poorest, the sick and the forlorn who have nobody to depend on as the core of Kkottongnae community of love.

In 1983, there was a dedication ceremony of a facility for vagabonds, where **Cardinal Kim Su-Hwan came and gave life to the event, and gave a congratulatory speech as follows:** "**What kind of meaning do those who are called beggars have? Are they really useless?** It is not too much to say that their wound is the very injury we have to carry. They are being hurt and they are suffering from all kinds of pain including hunger and poor clothes on behalf of us. The very Messiah, Jesus are those who commit all kinds of the sins which we all commit consciously or unconsciously and who are delivering today's world. When we see



Ms Park Eul Nam who lived by scavenging was guided to Kkottongnae and became a family member.



She was baptized and reborn as a Child of God.

them in this way, we can realize that they are not just objects of our impulse charity or help, but saviors who are delivering us little by little: We can still stay in the favor of God because of their existence. That is why **we cannot help thinking that we get much bigger and much more precious things from them than what we give to them.**"

Therefore, those who have nobody to depend on and no strength to beg for food are never useless people, but the most valuable people who lead us to happiness by making us love each other.

Cardinal Kim Soo-Hwan attended the opening ceremony of the completion of the House of Love which was the first-built facility in Kkottongnae.





A person with problem of alcohol abuse was found severely burnt and as an emergency was taken to Kkottongnae by some of the brothers.



For a long time, this man had been hospitalized at the hospital in Kkottongnae for burns and frostbite.

8. Spirituality of Poverty 2

“Whenever You Did It for the Least Important, You Did It for Me”

“I was hungry and you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink; I was a stranger and you received me in your homes, naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you took care of me, in prison and you visited me.’ The righteous will then answer him, ‘When, Lord, did we ever see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? When did we ever see you a stranger and welcome you in our homes, or naked and clothe you? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?’ The King will reply, ‘I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least important of these followers of mine, you did it for me (Matthew 25: 35-40)!’ ”

Grandfather Bae Dong-Soon (Peter)

Grandfather Bae Dong-Soon (Peter) lives in the House of Love at Kkottongnae. He experienced a poor and difficult childhood because he was disabled with cerebral palsy. For various reasons he left home and lived as a beggar until he came into Kkottongnae.

While his family members could not carry out the responsibilities of taking care of the sick little boy when he was young, Peter later helped his family when they were suffering from financial difficulty with the money he

had collected as a beggar. However, he never bore any resentment toward the world, nor hated his family, despite not getting any education, or money or health. Rather, he was so religious that he never stopped praying. And there was never a day when he missed a mass when he was living in a boiler room of Myeongdong Catholic Cathedral where he had lived for 28 years. Finally he had to leave the place at Myeongdong Cathedral when it was being renovated for the Pope’s visit and after that he came to Kkottongnae and so far he has lived here for 20 years.

Grandfather Peter gets up at 3 am every morning to pray the divine office and join in the Daily Mass no matter how sick he is or how many difficulties he has. Visitors often come to see old grandfather Peter to ask for religious advice or for his prayers. Whenever they do this he always prays for them with all his heart and God answers his prayers. Grandfather Peter, who lives no less a spiritual life than the religious, **often likens Kkottongnae to ‘a big treasure box of heaven’ and the forsaken to ‘a lump of gold.’** He says that only those who are open-eyed with love can immediately recognize these treasures (Please refer to Kkottongnae Bulletin No.8).



Cardinal Kim Soo-Hwan and Granpa Bae Dong-Soon, Peter

The VIP of Kkottongnae

In the worldly life, the rich are often treated well while the poor are despised.

There is an old tale that somebody treated a traveler in shabby clothes with heartwarming hospitality, and later he was found to be a noble person and he brought a great luck to the person who provided him hospitality. Worldly people often look away from or give unkind treatment to the least, unhelpful, or those people that are useless to them. For people become blind because of the greed of possessing and ruling, they cannot see the pain of their neighbors in need. They are not aware that the people in poor and shabby clothes are the real people of value who are being served by the angels of God. If in their lives they could have been aware that those who were forsaken and not having any place to go were the noble, and if they could have realized that God lived in them and what they had done to them was what they had done to God, then surely they should have scrambled to take care of the poor wholeheartedly.

It is those sick and forsaken brothers and sisters who have not been recognized properly and who were looked away from are the most precious VIPs at Kkottongnae.

The Poor Beggar Who Was Saved from Under the Cheongju Bridge

One day Kkottongnae got a report that a patient was dying under a bridge near Cheongju.

The Kkottongnae paramedics who traveled by ambulance found a beggar, who had suffered a second-degree burn on his leg but by not having received proper treatment, was

dying under the bridge. The beggar was an alcoholic. He had got his severe burn when, being drunk, he spilt boiling water while he was warming food. However, since he had not been brought to a hospital he had only bound his burnt leg with a dirty cloth. By now he was dying, suffering both from pain and high fever.

We had to go through a hard time bringing him into the hospital and treating him. His whole body was in a bad condition having ascites owing to liver cirrhosis as a result of his alcoholism. We did our best to treat him using high-cost medicine, such as Albumin. Far from expressing thanks for his treatment, the patient was difficult and gave hard time to the nurses and voluntary helpers by frequently complaining and using rough words. He sometimes turned over a food tray or called a helper all sorts of names and shook his fist when the helper removed his urine from the urinal drain.

Having passed the major crisis, the patient had been sent to and treated at a big hospital where he made a full recovery. One day when he was living at a nursing home after he was discharged from the hospital, he visited the nurse station of Kkottongnae Hospital and danced a spirited dance singing "Thank you so much for bringing my life back."

My Favor will Shine on You like the Morning Sun

People often lament their difficult and dark lives of living a miserable life and they sigh over the dark world. They live a life of resenting the world instead of reflecting on their own attitudes and conduct. God has presented



Kkottongnae families and sisters at the Ingok Jae hospital in Kkottongnae.

us a guide to the right direction toward achieving a happy life in a world of darkness where people are wandering around and losing their way, where we can be a bright light for ourselves and neighbors:

“The kind of fasting I want is this: Remove the chains of oppression and the yoke of injustice, and let the oppressed go free. Share your food with the hungry and open your homes to the homeless poor. Give clothes to those who have nothing to wear, and do not refuse to help your own relatives. Then my favor will shine on you like the morning sun (Isaiah 58: 6-8).”

The only way for us to be happy is by practicing love in serving the least important people. Whether these people are sick parents, physically or mentally disabled children,

insane people or even wandering spouses who have suffered financial failure, we should not look down on them or forsake them. Taking care of ‘strangers, the sick, and prisoners’ with all our heart is the way for all of us to achieve happiness following the will of God.

“Whenever you did it for the least important, you did it for me.”

Kkottongnae families, brothers and sisters at the House of Salvation (Sanatorium for the elderly) in Kkottongnae





The sisters of the Congregation of Kkottongnae Sisters of Jesus on their way to search for those who might be hungry, homeless and dying on street.



Praying for a dying patient

The Spirituality of Poverty 3

You Have to Live a Poorer Life Than the Poor if You Want to Take Care of Them

“Take nothing with you for the trip: no walking stick, no beggar’s bag, no food, no money, not even an extra shirt (Luke 9: 3).” Why did Jesus ask his twelve disciples not to carry anything but their body when he dispatched them into the world? It is to emphasize the faith in God that they have to keep absolutely depending on God’s favor. Moreover, He wanted to present that only poor people can truly deliver the good news. The disciples, who lived a truly poor life, proclaimed good news and healed patients traveling around many villages.

Poor People Can Love Neighbors as Well

It seems that the rich would help the poor more, but there are more cases of where the poor help the poor.

We cannot forget the people who led a young prostitute dying of uterine cancer to Kkottongnae long time ago. They were those who were running a bar hiring barmaids but who were being scorned by people. They took care of a barmaid paying a lot of medical expenses by themselves after it was found that one of their barmaids had got cancer. As the cancer spread through the whole body of the woman they ran out of money, and so they

came to Kkottongnae with her and in tears they made a plea to us to help the poor prostitute.

We were deeply stirred by seeing their love. In this world where even a professor forsakes his sick old mother and put her into Kkottongnae, the humble barkeepers were helping a whore with no relation by emptying their purse. Not just those who are rich, who are educated, or who have power and fame practice love. We realized that it is rather difficult for the rich to practice true love, while the poor strive to share the pain of their neighbors and help them more.

A Person Who Won’t Buy Even a Cigarette for Himself

Father Oh Woong-Jin, the founder of Kkottongnae, **emphasizes the spirituality of poverty saying that it is inappropriate for those who are serving for the poor to smoke. We can serve truly when we are ready to use the money that we have saved without spending on cigarettes for the poor.** The common people might question if we have to go that far. However, a thoroughly miserly person to him/herself by not even buying a drink, can save money for helping poor neighbors; can



Fr. Oh Woong-Jin with Kkottongnae family member

deliver true love to the people in difficulty.

Kkottongnae spirituality, which emphasizes thorough poverty, does not allow any dowry from a new religious entering the convent. In case a religious leaves the convent, the person goes back out without anything in the same way as he/she entered.

St. Louis

St. Louis, one of the famous Catholic saints, was a good and wise king. He owned power and wealth, but he used them not for himself but for his people. Especially he truly loved poor people.

Everyday he brought three poor and sick people to his home and shared food with them. It was said that the king served food for those humble people by himself. He even happily ate or drank the leftovers, which the sick people had left. The saint owned the most power and wealth, but he lived a poorer life than the poor by serving them by himself.

On the other hand, grandfather Choi Gui-Dong who was the very originator of Kkottongnae was a sick person with high blood pressure, frostbite, and poor mental health.

He was only a beggar with mere power of begging. The life of grandfather Gui-Dong who took care of dying beggars for 40 years with mere power of begging is a living testimony that shows that not being wealthy and healthy is not a hindrance for loving the poor. Grandfather Gui-Dong is the person who revealed through his own life that poor people could better help the poor.

The Poor Life of the Founder, Father Oh Woong-Jin

Father Oh Woong-Jin who founded Kkottongnae was born at a poor farm house, went through poor life from his childhood, studied at a theological school and became a Catholic priest. About 30 years ago when Father Oh started Kkottongnae, he was a poor priest at a country church. He brought beggars and the seriously ill into the parsonage, let them sleep in his bed, gave them a bath by himself, treated their wounds from bedsores himself, and ate with them at a same table.

One day a parish priest visited Father Oh and they happened to eat lunch together. Then, a patient with a deformed figure in rags came in to sit at the dining table and fed himself dribbling. Looking at the person, the guest priest could hardly have lunch, but Father Oh savored the food the beggar patient was eating without any hesitation. The guest priest finished lunch and confidently realized that Father Oh truly loves the poor and he would always be dependable when working for the forsaken and sick.

Since then whenever others have worried about or said things against Kkottongnae, the priest has been an advocate and supporter of Father Oh Woong-Jin, by recollecting what Father Oh had done to a patient at a dining table.

Father Oh has lived a thorough poor life himself, never buying a cigarette or a drink for himself, and even a pair of socks and underwear. Yet, he has practiced true love for the poor who do not have anybody or any place to depend on and do not even have power to beg.

That is how he can confidently preach spiritual sayings from his experience.

“You have to live a poorer life than the poor if you want to take care of them.”

Sisters cultivating the soil share jokes in joy.



10. The Spirituality of Poverty 4

Spiritual Poverty

“Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (Matthew 5: 3).”

People want happiness, but few know what true happiness is.

There are those who live an unhappy life though they have all kinds of wealth; while there are those who are happy though they have nothing.

There are the blessed rich who have piled up wealth properly and given favors to their neighbors; while there are the unhappy poor who have lived only for themselves and squandered their fortune.

The way to reach true happiness is to gain entry into the Kingdom of heaven by loving our neighbors until we enjoy the spiritual poverty.

Confessions of a Successful

Businesswoman: “I am Unhappy.”

One day a decent middle-aged woman came to Kkottongnae to donate a big sum of money. She behaved very humbly and said she would be grateful if we accepted the money. We asked how it was that she could be so humble while donating such a large amount of

money. She then answered that she thought she would become happier in this way and implored us again to accept it.

The middle-aged woman was a successful businesswoman, working as the president of a medium-sized company. She said she had made a lot of money in an enviable position but she had never been happy. She felt that she was living in a way that was not pleasant for her and kept asking herself why she was so unhappy. After trying to figure out the reason, she finally realized why.

She was thrust into the business world without any experience, forced to take over responsibility for the family after her husband lost his job and became incompetent, shortly after their marriage. She found, after years of all kinds of hardships, that she could be successful in growing the business by competing against other businessmen. However, this selfish life of working only for herself and her family left her with a feeling of unhappiness and a sense of emptiness and loss when she had reached her middle age.

She realized that she had felt happiness only once during her marriage life, which was at the beginning when she was very poor. At the time, she lived in a run-down rented



The statue of Sacred Heart of Jesus that stands at the foot of Mt. Sosokri.

house, but could feel happy with just a ray of warm sunshine on her forehead and back, taking care of her three-year-old daughter, doing laundry, and waving good-bye to her husband going to work. Those were the days when she lived a happy but poor life owning nothing, while now she lives an unhappy rich life despite owning everything.

The Definition of Poverty

When we talk about poverty, we talk about both material and spiritual poverty. Spiritual poverty refers to having an attitude of not having attachment to material goods by standing aloof from them.

In the Old Testament era, poverty was understood as a deficit and was treated as an unhappy state which should not exist in the human world. However, in the New Testament era, Jesus came to this world and proclaimed 'happy poverty': "Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them." Happy poverty, which is also called a spiritual poverty, is the poverty of people who are bound to only God and who give everything to their neighbors, not just being aloof from wealth.

Even in the history of the church, there have been numerous saints and religious orders who have lived poor lives

The Poverty of St. Francis

St. Francis was one who best kept a spiritually poor life, and he liked the Old Testament expression the 'Poor people of Yahweh' and enjoyed praying as one of them. 'Poor people' are those whose only hope is God and those who cannot live without God. So they put all

their hope and faith in the Messiah, waiting for Him through all kinds of hardships and suffering.

A disciple asked his teacher, Francis: "What is poverty?" He answered: "The poverty of our Jesus Christ is poverty." The poverty of Jesus Christ is summed up as Jesus of Bethlehem, Jesus of Golgotha, and Jesus in the Eucharist.

Since He loved men so much, Jesus of Bethlehem came to this world leaving behind the prestige as the owner of this world, to be born as the poorest and weakest baby in a humble stable. Jesus of Golgotha is the Jesus of sacrifice, giving his life on the cross as the lowliest and most miserable being in appearance in order to forgive and atone for our sins. Jesus in the Eucharist alludes to the impoverished appearance of Jesus who willingly changed Himself into a piece of bread and became food for humankind, locked in a shrine because of His love for men.

In this way, Jesus, who lacks nothing, became the poorest because of his love for us.

Our Ancestors Who Lived Poor

A learned man in our past history lived poorly enjoying honest poverty, and valued filial piety toward parents. The teaching on filial piety clearly states about the duty of children when parents are sick as follows: 'When a parent is sick and cannot eat, the children should skip a meal together with the parent. Do your best to cure your parent's illness by seeking every best-known medicine and doctor. Do not show a look of happiness even if you have some good news, and fulfill all of your filial duties by even selling everything you have. Once you have done everything you could do

during his/her life, mourn as you beat your chest and ground, confessing that you were a sinner who had not done all the duties due a parent after he/she died.'

Our ancestors who reproached themselves as sinners even after doing their best for their parents are those who practiced filial duties with true spiritual poverty.

The Spirituality of Poverty of Kkottongnae

Fr. Oh, who founded Kkottongnae, has been carrying out spiritual poverty as a father to the poor for the last 30 years with all his life. He encourages the religious and volunteer workers to live a poor life and teaches as follows:

“Spiritual poverty is the state where we feel deficiency because there’s nothing more to give out, no matter how much we would like to. Jesus achieved spiritual poverty first since He gave His life for men and wanted to give more to His people, observing His own word, ‘There is no greater love than taking one’s own life for a friend.’ Like this, we can live in blissful poverty when we are finally satisfied by fulfilling our needs for love, once we have loved our neighbors until we feel spiritually poor.”

Spiritual Cure of Grandfather Who Was Suffering from a Fever of Unknown Origin

There was an old patient with a high temperature of 40 degrees Celsius.

A volunteer worker took care of him, treating him with antibiotics and ringer’s solution to reduce his fever, but the high fever lasted over one month despite all efforts of the worker. One day the grandfather, who was dying with fever, told the volunteer worker like this:

“Brother, it seems as though my illness is all gone when you come to my side.” He held his hand and did not let it go. The volunteer worker was embarrassed and felt sorry, reproaching himself for helplessly watching the old man die, unable to help him recover. He felt a big burden rather than pleasure when he heard the words of thanks from him because he thought he could have done better with the huge responsibility of nursing the old man, even though he actually did his best in his own way. At the time, it was uncertain whether he read the worker’s thoughts or not. However, the grandfather repeated the same words every-day, and mysteriously his fever would go down, the breathing difficulty was alleviated, and the pain in his heart disappeared whenever he was holding the volunteer worker’s hand. The grandfather, who said exactly the same words of thanks even on the day of his death, seemed unaware of anything suffering from high fever but he knew everything. He realized that he would die soon, and he knew that the volunteer worker felt guilty about the bad result, feeling sorry for not curing his illness and not taking care of him better. The grandfather, who realized that the volunteer worker took care of him without rest in the true spirit of poverty, came to reconcile with the world and forgive his family, overcoming the wound from being forsaken, and even promised to donate his eyes before his death.

Just as this shows us, when a person gives one’s all doing her/his best until she/he reaches deficiency, she/he can achieve spiritual poverty: the person receiving the love will become a happy person living with forgive-

ness, reconciliation, and love through the spiritual healing.

“Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor; the kingdom of heaven belongs to them (Matthew 5: 3).”

This article is a summary from a homily of Fr. Oh Woong-Jin saying Mass on September 24, 1990

Spiritual Poverty

Poverty is poverty. But we have to figure out how the poverty occurred. The true poverty of God is the poverty which Jesus Christ showed us through his words, power, life, pains, and death. However, worldly poverty is the state of being deprived of everything due to pains, mistakes and sins.

True poverty is the spiritual poverty that we can attain when we give out everything from our body and mind, to even our life. It is the state of mind where nothing ? not shape or life ? but spiritual poverty is left after giving out body and blood as our bread and wine. This is the definition of true poverty.

Jesus Christ is the poorest person. There is nothing left but an expression of spiritual poverty after giving out everything to us in Him: Jesus Christ lives within us without any shape since He gave out everything. If He had not given everything, Jesus Christ could not have been living within us.

A person who lives for oneself cannot take part in the poverty of Christ. Such a person cannot live in the Kingdom of God. However, a person who does not live for oneself but gives his/her life to God's words, can be a spiritually poor person like Jesus Christ. Such a person will be reborn as an eternal being above time and space like Jesus Christ. Therefore, such a person already has a place in the Kingdom of God.

However, poverty exists in this world. Worldly poverty is a state where people who like to be engaged in owning and ruling are ruled and owned instead, so it is a

state where people cannot offer anything. Worldly poverty is a miserable state, also called absolute poverty as it is developed from greed, sin and death. Therefore, worldly poverty comes from the end of disaster, while the poverty in the Gospels is the state of poverty where nothing but spiritual poverty leaves like the decisive result of Jesus Christ's mercy, who sacrificed everything—body, mind, and life—until He died on the cross. This is true poverty.

True poverty is in the place where people offer their life and their life is taken for God's words. Those who offer their life for God's words are spiritually poor people. So, the poverty in the Gospels is the true spiritual poverty which is in those who offer their life for God's words.

To deliver this world from evil, everybody should become spiritually poor. If we are not spiritually poor, we cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Therefore, we ourselves should become spiritually poor to serve as a model to teach people in the world to be spiritually poor: When we become spiritually poor, people in the world would become spiritually poor as well through us.

We never live by bread alone, but by God's words. God's words are love, and the love is the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ. If we do not eat and drink the holy body and blood, we cannot become spiritually poor.

Jesus Christ said, 'Nobody can come to me if they do not eat my body and drink my blood.' People who eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ will be spiritually poor. Jesus Christ stayed a spiritually poor person by giving us everything including even His

flesh and blood, and came to sit on the right side of God through the spiritual poverty. Likewise, we also have to give our body and blood to the worldly poor people who have nobody to depend on and no strength to beg for food. In turn, they will also live a life of giving body and blood to their neighbors like Jesus Christ and will be truly poor and finally enter the Kingdom of God.

Accordingly, when worldly poverty disappears and the world is full of the perfect spiritually poor, the Kingdom of God will be realized with the spiritual poverty of the Gospels in this world.



From 10 o' clock in the morning
to 4 o' clock in the afternoon,
a lucid halo of the Sun was
shining upon the site of the new
house for the homeless where
people were celebrating the
completion of the house on
September 8, 1983.