

God is love. (1 John, 4: 16)

11. Make Something Non-Existent Exist, and Grow Something Existent Bigger

The Importance of Spirituality

A professor and 10 students from Social Welfare Department at Kansas University in the U.S.A. visited Kkottongnae on May 31, 2005. We asked Professor Kanda who accompanied the students what reasons led him to visit Kkottongnae. He replied that his group was making a special study, "Of how spirituality can influence processes of social welfare and so we have come to visit Kkottongnae to experience spirituality and social welfare in action on the spot. We have found that Kkottongnae's work for the poor and abandoned is permeated with a unique Kkottongnae spirituality and we are deeply impressed by what we have seen here."

The social welfare students who accompanied Professor Kanda said, "We can see, feel, and experience something here which we have not seen or experienced anywhere else. We are deeply impressed. And we can feel how valuable the spirituality is." Talking with the students, Father Oh Woong-jin summarized spirituality as, "Anything in the world has some dysfunction. Even the pinnacle of academic or technological achievement, which is recognised as the best of its type with the award of a Nobel Prize, has some dysfunction. However,

spirituality has no such dysfunction but is always adequate to its purpose. Love is the same." Giving Father Oh a translated copy of a book he had written about social welfare, Professor Kanda emphasized the importance of spirituality. He said, "It is a big fallacy when the liberal arts and technology condemn religion and consider religion an obstacle to the development of science and learning. Rather, it is both the starting point and finishing line of everything contributing to harmony and is a valuable force motivating and helping develop science."

What do we have to do to reveal the invisible spirituality to the real world?

Make Something Non-Existent Exist

The cause of my existence is due to the love of God for humans. The invisible Spiritual Being created the world and made human beings of spirit and body visible following his own image with His love.

Kkottongnae was born out of love as well.

The 30 years history of Kkottongnae that started with only 1,300 Won of pocket money is the history of God's love toward the poor at

every step through the life of the founder, Father Oh Woong-Jin.

Reflecting on the course that Kkottongnae has followed with the concept of creating something out of nothing, we can see that we have established comprehensive social welfare facilities to treat those abandoned and poor, built the Training Institute of Love to teach love in the hope that there will be no more abandoned people, and finally to create a social welfare university to educate the religious and voluntary workers to be professionals of love with both academic knowledge as well as passion. Kkottongnae has taught people about true happiness in the Love Training Center, and started the Love Research Center on August 15, 2004, which has already got into its stride in teaching and helping people learn and experience God's love. We are preparing a spiritual center for this work as well. It is possible to make something new exist where love dwells, but on the contrary even the things that exist will disappear where love is absent.

Make Things Existent Grow Bigger Not Smaller

There is a cage for monkeys that was donated by patrons that stands in front of the nursing home at Kkottongnae.

A monkey is known to breed a baby once in three to four years, while the monkeys at Kkottongnae breed more than one baby every year, the number of which reached the point of selling out to others. Not only the monkeys but also the goats, deer, cattle and dogs are all growing and breeding very well at Kkottongnae. Though domestic animals are given as an example here, Kkottongnae is pro-

ductive today just like the life style of Father Oh Woong-Jin who has lived throughout his life 'making something non-existent exist and things that exist not to decrease.'

The founders of worldly enterprises often devote and sacrifice their whole lives to making and growing a company. However, the next generation following the founders often make the company be smaller or even disappear by failing to keep and develop it. Where does this difference come from? Even if the founder is neither a professional in business management nor a genius, there is no one who can come close to his/her love for his or her own company. This is because at all times and in all places, the founder is sacrificing himself/herself in only thinking about the development of the company.

Devoting the Whole Life Only to Kkottongnae

Father Oh Woong-Jin wishes that a day was 100 hours long. He lives only thinking about Kkottongnae 24 hours a day even at his meal times, on the road, and in the bathroom.

Whenever Father Oh is asked "What are you thinking now?" he always answers that he is thinking about Kkottongnae-related things. He has actually been living such a life. He has a wish that he could work for Kkottongnae even in his dreams when sleeping and after his death as well. He made a will as follows:

"I would donate my eyes and body for Kkottongnae family after my death. Use my body freely, but bury my heart which loved Kkottongnae next to other Kkottongnae family side by side. My tomb should not be bigger or

12. You Have to Keep Carrying out Whatever You Are Called to Do

These days there are many people who tend to suddenly stop doing important things which they have been doing or involved in. They may give many excuses for this, but it is mainly from a lack of patience and self-sacrifice as well as a lack of love arising from such selfishness. As a result, families become broken and companies and societies stop developing when faced with unstable situations.

In contrast there should always be people who keep their positions and carry out their duties whether they are sick or not, they have pain or not, or even when they are in a situation where their life is at stake.

To help make the world more beautiful and happy Kkottongnae would like to deliver a spiritual word to those who get tired in their body and mind, about the importance of keeping their positions. ∞You have to keep carrying out whatever you are called to do."

A Painful Memory of a Boy

A father facing his impending death called his little son who was about to leave home for school three times to stay with him, telling "Please stay with me since I have such a terrible stomachache." Every time he was called, the boy returned and caressed his sick father's

belly but he left home soon after so that he would not be absent from school. He left his sick father behind at home for school, saying, "Father, you have always told me not to stop doing whatever things I am doing in order to be a great man, so I have to go to school." However, later that day during the class he got the news of his father's death.

This is the real story of Father Oh Woong-Jin, a founder of Kkottongnae, who always keeps this painful childhood story in his mind.

However, what he did was true to the manner that he had been taught at home. His parents used to tell him: "Since you were born with a good conception dream you will one day have an influential power over people. You always have to keep going to the end of whatever important thing you are doing."

A boy, Oh Woong-Jin, liked hunting when he was young, and one day he caught a wildcat in a trap. He witnessed the wildcat keeping a stick in its mouth even until after it had died. The image of this incident left a strong impression on him and he has always led a life of never stopping whatever he began to do.

Being Sick and Working Are Two Different Things

After soldiers from an airborne troop did voluntary work at Kkottongnae, they made a joke that contains a certain truth when they said that working at Kkottongnae is more difficult than the training involved in parachuting from high-altitude. So, as even the brave soldiers say in telling such a story, sometimes the religious also get hurt in their mind and body from taking care of the Kkottongnae family. Whenever the religious feel weak and wish to stop working, Father Oh does not console the weary religious, but instead he has encouraged us spiritually, by saying, *“Being sick and working are two different things. You have to work even when you are sick. If you cannot stand up, then work sitting down. If you cannot sit down, then work lying down. If you cannot lie down, just work opening your eyes. If you cannot open your eyes, then work closing your eyes. If you cannot close your eyes, then keep doing Kkottongnae work even unto death.”*

Even though there have been a lot of difficulties in Kkottongnae since its beginning, and it is to be expected that there will be more agony and pain in the future, the spiritual words of the founding father to the religious is always with us, *“Keep carrying out whatever you are called to do.”* The Kkottongnae religious should keep working and going on our way even when we are sick and even when there is no help or encouragement from others.

There Is No Vacation at Kkottongnae.

Many people have tried to make their weekends meaningful since the new five-day work system per week launched, but it is a meaningless system to the religious and voluntary workers at Kkottongnae. Rather, the religious have to work even more to make up for the absence of the staff

and voluntary workers on holidays or consecutive weekends.

The religious at Kkottongnae do not have a vacation. The Kkottongnae community has ‘a family concept’ so we call the patients here ‘family members’ not inmates. Since the religious are not salaried workers, they do not have office hours and annual vacations that are allowed to most of the regular workers.

It is just the same with the parents who have sick children at home. They do not leave or do not take vacations. The religious are supposed to be ready to devote themselves to Kkottongnae at any time or in any situation. *They should be rangers who are checking Kkottongnae day and night and taking care of any in need.*

They have to be alert and work for 24 hours. In the Bible, when the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he had done the healing on a Sabbath, Jesus said, *“My Father is always working, and I too must work”* (John 5: 17) and kept working. Father Oh Woong-Jin has been awakening and encouraging the religious to live a love life without stopping, saying, *“Let’s take an eternal rest after we die.”*

There Are People Who Are Doing Their Duties

These days the number of families who end their married life and get divorced when they are experiencing misfortune is increasing greatly.

So they give up their duty as parents and spouses. Some students leave their school with the excuse of not liking studying or having different aptitude. Some workers resign their job with the excuse of discord with a boss. Soldiers escape from the camp because they cannot manage the hardship. Even the religious leave the convent when

13. Help Others Just Like You Help for Yourself

Kkottongnae will be celebrating its 30th anniversary on the 8th of September, 2006.

Over the last 30 years, the community has been providing warm care and love to more than 13,000 people who have been abandoned by their families. This care has been accompanied by realization that the cause of the many being abandoned is a deficiency of love. In order to fill up this deficiency in love, Kkottongne, with the spirit of helping others just like you were doing it for yourself, has totally devoted everything to the abandoned, unconditionally providing the needs of shelter, food, medical and funeral services. Through the lives of many dedicated brothers, sisters and volunteers in the community who have lived their lives for the abandoned, with the spirit of helping others just like helping for themselves, Kkottongnae has been able to grow and expand into what it is today.

Everyday, a hoary-headed old man picks up cigarette butts in a university campus. One day there was a big ceremony held in the campus. Many students attending the ceremony were shocked to see the old man sitting in a chair of the chancellor of the university. Feeling ashamed of the fact that many of them threw

away a lot of cigarette butts around the campus, they began to admire their chancellor of the university from that moment. On being asked why he does not assign the job of picking up cigarette butts to cleaners instead of doing it himself, the chancellor's answer was just simple and straightforward. He said, "Picking up cigarette butts as the chancellor gives me a sense of happiness and joy. First, this is because I am grateful to the fact that the chancellor has enough time to spare for picking up cigarette butts, for the university is in a state of stability. Second, it is a dutiful and an act of atonement for a chancellor to do since the chancellor has failed to properly influence the moral consciousness of the students."

There are many types of people living in this world. For instance, the type of person, who throw away cigarette butts..., and the kind of person who picks up them without any strings attached.... Fr. Oh Woong Jin, the founder of Kkottongnae, asserts that all the people can be categorized into three different types: selfish, individualistic and altruistic types of people.

Selfish people are those who are willing to use foul means to meet their needs and accord-

ingly live only for themselves. Since they do not even help themselves, they live their lives in the vain of pursuing pleasure, money and prestige and, as a result, always become a heavy burden for other people. This kind of person abandons even their own parents without any hesitations when they become too old and sick to be taken care of.

An old lady abandoned from her family living in our community cried out for her son everyday in the midst of a severe asthma attack. She would not open her mouth whenever we asked her anything about her son such as his occupation, address or contact number. But she never hesitated to open her mouth to tell us that her own son could not come to see her right now because he might have his urgent agenda, as we insinuated that people do not come to see their parents living in the community are really bad. Seeing this old lady, who tries to stand up for her own son who abandoned his mother with intrinsically deep sense of maternal love, was very pathetic and touching indeed. As her illness got aggravated, her own son finally turned up to see his dying mother. To our surprise, her son was an incumbent professor at a university.

The sad and deplorable fact that many people are abandoned is caused definitely not by a deficiency of either bread or knowledge but by a lack of love that is needed for the abandoned.

Second is **the individualistic person who is the one who thinks 'it is not my business to help others or ask others for helps' and is only interested in their own concerns.**

So they have absolutely no interest of their neighbors in pain and the world in which they

live, but regard a happy life of their own as the best value that they want to grasp in their lives. Only by pursuing the extreme freedom of pleasure as the best thing to achieve but disregarding a true value of sacrifice and devotion for the neighbors, they are inevitably under the illusion that they have automatically gained all the knowledge, richness and health from their own efforts. This kind of people will be very unfortunate when they lose what they think they have.

On the contrast, **altruistic types of people are those who are always concerned with not only themselves but also many other people around them.** They are the people who are willing to please the neighbors in need and to help others just like helping for themselves. It is because of invaluable contributions made by this kind of many people that there is still a hope lingering on in this world, which seems to be almost perished soon.

Sadly, a lot of people are being abandoned even at this very moment. Kkottongne has been putting the one of catchphrases of our community; "Help others just like you help for yourself" which is inspired by our founder of the community into practice over the last 30 years. We did not sit and wait for the abandoned but did actively search for the people who desperately needed help, by driving an ambulance purchased by a donation from cleaners' savings to every corner of the country. A few days ago, we actually brought a sick person who had lain nearby the train station of Youngdengpo and it turned out by using a CT scan that he was suffering from a cerebral hemorrhage. Although many people who

14. Leave the Thing that Is Right as It Is, But Make the Thing that Is Upside-Down Upright: Make a Real Problem Come into Focus

serious cases back to Kkottongnae Hospital. Accidentally, they happened to find a man lying with his face down on the stairs.

Father Oh, having a lot of experience in taking care of such cases, had a feeling that the man was not alive and when he had examined the man carefully he confirmed that he was already dead.

People had just passed by this poor dying neighbor inadvertently without noticing his death, assuming that here was a drunken man lying on his face.

Even the homeless people who were drinking near this dead man did not notice his death. Even when a number of people were making a big fuss around the dead man, they kept on drinking and reveling, and remained unconcerned in spite of the racket being made from the noise of an ambulance and people.

The authorities who came were absorbed in dealing with this matter just in a businesslike way. Nobody mourned for the dead man or seemed either sad or solemn in the face of the poor man's death. No citizens were responsible for the death of that homeless person. However, we Kkottongnae religious prayed wholeheartedly beside the body lying on the cold floor of the underground passage: "Lord,

forgive the sins of this brother and forgive the sins of us and the whole world that made him die like this, and allow him to enter heaven." After we finished the baptism procedure and prayer, we found another homeless brother at the same place. He was wandering around, suffering from tuberculosis and alcoholism. We brought him into our car and returned to Kkottongnae.

Seeing the unconscionable world... absurd world... where people are just working at their own things, even being indifferent to a person who is dying next to them, leads us to pray and think.

How can we make what is upside-down be upright?

To make an alcoholic be upright, we need a lot of devotion and sacrifice.

A man named Insik Chung was living in Kkottongnae for over 10 years. His story is an agonizing one of repeatedly coming in and out of Kkottongnae for more than 100 times. He ended his life by dying from a traffic accident on a street. Even though Fr. Oh Woong-Jin opened a nursing home for alcoholics like him in 1989, he kept leaving the nursing home and

coming back as an invalid soaked in drink. During his stay at the nursing home he was treated well and recovered his health, but soon after he left each time his body and mind became completely broken. This was repeated countless times and finally he left us forever. When we once asked him how long we had to have such patience for his behavior, he answered humorously like this: "How is it said in the bible? Isn't it written there to forgive him seventy times seven?" As he wished, we always welcomed and treated him with warm heart every time he returned to Kkottongnae, and we held a courteous funeral for him after he died.

Some people might say about this man that he failed because he couldn't stop drinking. However, we can't change anybody by judging him; or keep on giving him a scolding to stop his drinking and calling the family to account. Rather, the time, which he had when he was being accepted, endured and being loved without any condition up to the last moment, was the most valuable healing time for him. It was the opportunity for a person abandoned even by his family to be treated as a person with dignity and who, for a time at least could stand upright.

A man who became freed from alcoholism through Kkottongnae once confessed like this: "I was in a condition where I had even given up on myself, being abandoned even by a psychiatrist; my whole being was trapped within myself by my alcoholism, paranoia, and depression. But my wife, despite getting hurt by me everyday, didn't give me up and she kept our home going with tears and sacrifice.

She prayed with her whole heart for about 6 years including visiting Kkottongnae twice a month in this desperate situation. One day when my wife was praying staying up all night at Kkottongnae, I heard a voice: 'If you drink even a drop, you won't get peace of your mind.' Since then I have completely stopped drinking and smoking. This happened because my wife's prayer penetrated heaven." After that time the family could stand upright. The reason why this family could stand upright was not because of the people who had scolded him over his drinking, threatened him to get divorced, or called the people who had provided the abnormal environment to account, but it was because of the wife's prayer. It was because of a wife who had accepted her husband's wrongs without any condition, and who had lived a life of love with sacrifice and tears.

The founder of Kkottongnae, Fr. Oh Woong-Jin, preaches to us that we need a spiritual practice that will keep the right thing as it is but make the upside-down thing be upright:

"It is all right if you make a real problem come into focus as a question, but if you make something which is of no matter come into question, then it does become a problem."

The reason why there are so many problems in this world is because we didn't make the real problems come into question. Mother Teresa once pointed that **'abortion is the biggest weapon which destructs humans.'** Today only few people make the abortion problem, which is actually the biggest problem come into question. Most people make the claim that the economy is the first issue, but the important reality is where



15. You Have to Be a Person Who Wakes Yourself up

We are entering upon the New Year of 2005. On each New Year's Day, we look back on the last year and we think about our new plans for the year ahead. Early in the morning of the New Year's Day, we should hear the ringing sound:

"You have to be a person who wakes yourself up!" We all live with problems and troubles within ourselves, homes, job places, societies, and this world, which are not easy for us to solve. Yet we can make this world a brighter and happier place by having an active attitude of solving all the problems by ourselves. The productive life is achieved by accepting our own responsibility on any problem rather than attributing those problems or pains to others and expecting others to solve them. God gives us a word through Fr. Oh Woong-Jin, the founder of Kkottongnae:

"You have to be a person who wakes yourself up!"

In Kkotdongnae, there Is Nobody Who Lives an Idle Life Although No One Pushes Others to Work

There is a man named uncle Peter Samyong (Mr. Han Baik-Nyon) who is always crouching at the entrance of the Kkotdongnae office. Even though he is a spastic and epileptic and over 60 years of age, he is always doing his duty of

arranging shoes and bringing out slippers for guests. Nobody in Kkotdongnae forced or asked him to do so, but he does this work on his own initiative and enjoys it. Uncle Samyong really loves this job of arranging shoes even though if people think it is an insignificant and fiddly kind work. There are many times when we can see him waiting for expected guests at the entrance even if it means missing his routine meal time. It is of no use whatsoever of us pushing him to go to eat. He has a firm will of his own to complete his responsibility in any situation.

He prays from deep within his soul before the statue of Mary exactly after each meal everyday, with the same sincerity as he does his duty. He concentrates so hard when he prays with his eyes closed that he can not recognize anybody passing by. He was praying so hard like this at one time that he could get a miraculous cure for his crooked legs and having his fingers straightened.

There are family members with many kinds of handicaps living together in Kkotdongnae nursing home for the mentally and physically challenged. They show us in various ways lives of beautiful love by making up for each other's deficiencies. They are the true examples of the people awakening themselves.

Where Your Love Dwells

by Bae Young-Hee

There is a place where many people
are gathered together with love
to make one whole body.

Like small and big
pieces of cloth of various colors
are gathered together
made into patchwork blanket
by the sewer's deft touch and fingers,
many small and different bodies
are gathered together into a whole body.

An eye and a mouth together form one whole
A hand and a foot together form one whole

Bodies which were lonely
uncomfortable because they were alone
Two or three of them now can gather
with joy to create a whole body

With expressions of eyes and gestures
With a lovely look
This is where they can understand
and live together

This is the place
which is made up with your love
This is where your love dwells.

Ms Bae Young-Hee, a poet well-known for her poem, 'I am happy,' could live her life singing happiness without any difficulty such as a normal person would experience, even though she was a serious case of losing her sight and suffering quadriplegia from tuberculosis of the spine since the age of 19. It became possible owing to her friends' help in the nursing home: Aunt Seongsuni, who was a dwarf with hemiplegia, became Ms. Bae's eyes; Aunt Inja, whose both hands were paralyzed and who only could move and use her feet, fed her at every meal time, and sister Rabbit, who could not walk but only hop in a sitting posture because of her cerebral palsy, cleansed her back whenever she relieved herself. Sunghee, a sworn sister of Ms. Bae in the nursing home, also was handicapped and confined to a wheelchair without free control of her hands, but

she still typed the poems which Younghee dictated and so has kept the beautiful poems alive until now. The above written, 'Where Your Love Dwells' is one of those poems.

With our prevailing values, the Kkottongnae family, might be considered by some people, as some of the unhappiest of people. However, when visitors see their happy lives in helping each other in Kkotdongnae, they look back on their own lives and get comfort and strength from being with these beautiful people even if they have lost the will to live or are frustrated with their life. Fr. Oh Woong-Jin often emphasizes the message, "You have to be a person who wakes yourself up," as a necessary spirituality for any religious who wants to be a servant for the poor. The following is the full text of the sermon he preached about this message.

You Have To Be a Person Who Wakes Yourself up

You have to be a person who awakens yourself. In this encouraging message we can see that a person who seeks love whenever and wherever she/hs is can as a result awaken himself/herself.

There is a mentality with which we cannot help cleaning something messy when we see it. It comes from the discernment with which we can distinguish what we should do from what we should not do. It is through having such a mind, which makes us have such a mentality and discernment that allows us to do the work without hesitation, and change things for the better with pride.

A mother having a child staying home, who works on a farm, returns home at the right time to breast feed the child.

Whenever you eat, walk, or sleep, you have to be a person who awakens yourself. Such a person is the light of the world. Such a person is the salt of the world who prevents the world from being rotten.

You always have to be a person who awakens yourself no matter whether anyone sees you or not. How happy you are if you do something on your own whenever or wherever you are.

A person who awakens himself/herself is a person with rich blessings, like when someone digs groundwater within a rock-wall and huge amount of water overflows from it.

Why don't you have the insight into the phrase, 'I love you,' which can make you not a slave but a friend?

You have to be a person who awakens yourself in proclaiming love for those who do not have a shelter to live and even some energy to beg for food. You always have to live with this phrase engraved within yourself: 'You have to live a life of awakening yourself.'

He is a person who tries to be frugal towards himself, but who is eager to be generous towards his neighbors with all his effort. You should be such a blessed person. A blessed person!

You should be a person who works voluntarily! You should be a person who does things on your own without waiting for God to lead you, and a person who strives to make a word a reality.

(From a sermon of Fr. Oh Woong-Jin in masses of June 12 and 21, 1991)