

3. Teach, and Help Them Learn and Experience the Love of God

January 8, 1990

From Kkottongnae family

At midnight on August 15, 2004, one hundred members of the Kkottongnae Order (friars, nuns, and the secular) held a mass to celebrate the foundation of the Love Research Institute at the auditorium of Kkottongnae Love Training Center. The Love Research Institute is not a real place per se, but is in essence, a practical spiritual institute placed in the minds of the religious; the goal of which is to practice the Lord's calling that commissions us to, "Teach, and help them learn and experience the love of God." The religious in attendance walked barefoot around the Love Training Center, praying the rosary while holding a burning candle in one hand and a cross in the other, in order to live in the spirit of poverty and sacrifice for the establishment of the Love Research Institute. After the symbolic walk, Rev. Oh Woong-Jin, founder of the Kkottongnae Order, resumed the mass and officially proclaimed that the religious in attendance carry the Love Research Institute in his or her mind from this moment on and are commissioned to, "Teach, and help them learn and experience the love of God," to those who have never realized, felt, or received God's love. They would in

essence be commissioned to lead and assist these people to a life of happiness.

I took care of an AIDS patient who was in the terminal stage of the disease with sympathy and heart. The poor patient was waiting for death, alone, in a retired hospital room. I was informed that he contracted the disease in a foreign country and exhausted all of his resources for the treatment of the disease. Eventually he was discarded by his mistress and banished from his country, and even his own immediate family and relatives turned their faces away from him. I brought him to this hospital, cleansed the bloody pus on his decaying flesh due to bedsores, applied disinfectant, administered an enema for him with my finger whenever he suffered from constipation, and bathed his body covered with blood and sweat. When I once fed him with some warm rice after changing his clothes and making his bed, I happened to make eye contact with him and found tears welling up in his eyes. We lived together like this for about forty days.

On a silent night when almost everyone was asleep, the patient told us his last words: "I am happy—I can now forgive everybody, my mistress, my family—I repent my past and



Brothers and Sisters of the community in prayer on the day when the special Mass for the establishment of the Theological Research Institute of Love was celebrated.

will pray for everybody though I am dying now. I am truly happy because I was able to receive real love for the first time in my life.”

About a week later, he passed away, *singing the happy song as a man who had indeed received true love for the first time in his life.*

There was also once a middle-aged woman who visited the Kkottongnae Sanitarium. What was unusual about this woman was that she had decided to commit suicide. The woman had been running a small business by herself but had endured many financial difficulties resulting from both bad luck and the International Monetary Fund financial crisis. Unable to deal with her problems, she decided to visit Kkottongnae before carrying out her decision to commit suicide. At the sanitarium, she happened to enter a room where Ms. In-Ja Kim (Cecilia) was staying. Ms. Kim was born with a serious case of cerebral palsy that had left her unable to use her paralyzed arms and to live her life of sixty years using only her legs. And in spite of the many years of medical treatment, she continues to suffer from severe chronic pain in the right shoulder of her paralyzed arm. Nevertheless, Ms. Kim’s life has been an example of a life filled with a heart of gold. Ms. Kim continues to assist in the feeding of people who are members of the Kkottongnae family, in particular, Ms. Young-Hee Bae. Ms. Kim also makes fine work of folding paper by making paper cranes with her toes. When the visitor entered her room, Ms. Kim welcomed her with her usual warm heart and gave the guest some paper cranes that she had made. Ms. Kim also blessed her for her happy life without knowing that the

visitor was a person who had earlier decided to take her life.

When she returned home later that day to take her life, a paper crane fell out of her purse when she was reaching for the lethal pills. The paper crane immediately reminded her of what Ms. Kim had told her earlier, that, *“Patience is not to endure what we can endure, but to endure what we cannot endure.”* At that moment, she came to her senses and decided not to kill herself. She made a firm commitment to herself to live, saying, “How can I even consider killing myself, when I am so much more blessed than a woman with cerebral palsy who lives wearing a happy smile and folding paper cranes for her neighbors for such a long time in great pain. How can I possibly think about killing myself.” The businesswoman eventually sent a thank-you letter to Ms. Kim, calling Ms. Kim a life savior. Though there was nothing special about a paper crane, it became a symbol that could rescue a person from committing suicide. This great crane saved a life because it was folded with true love, sacrifice, and prayers by someone who overcame a life filled with tears, pain, and suffering.

“To teach others, and let them learn and experience the love of God,” one must carry a cross of great pain and sacrifice like Ms. Kim, who, like a candle, provides light at it’s own expense.

People who serve at Kkottongnae proclaim in one resounding voice, *“I receive much more from the poor than I give them*— No, actually, It seems that I have only received and not have given anything—” This may at first appear to



Kim In Ja Cecilia who cannot use both her hands due to cerebral palsy is embroidering the holy face of Jesus with her toes.

The holy face of Jesus, the work of Kim In Ja Cecilia, is being presented as a special gift to the first lady Son Myeong Soon on the celebration of completing the sanatoria for psychiatric patients and the elderly.



be an exaggerated confession of humility. However, as time goes by after people begin to serve and volunteer here, it becomes clearly evident to them that the favors that they provide for the poor return as favors given to them. How is it possible for people to understand this mystery?

A few days ago, Mr. Baek Jong-Ryol (Paul) passed away. Even though he was suffering from pain and emesis, he did not pass away without expressing his gratitude and appreciation for our small gesture of love and assistance. The sincere gratitude expressed by those we help in dire situations where all hope of life is lost, makes us realize the love of God living in us. In these instances, the weakest among us were the ones who, “taught us, and helped us learn and experience the love of God.” In this manner, we learn what love is by loving, just as people learn about marriage through married life as well as parents learn about parenting by raising children.

“Love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love (1 John 4: 7-8).”

The Kkottongnae Love Research Institute was established in the souls of people by having Jesus Christ as the director. Every member of Kkottongnae carries his or her own cross and lives a practical life dedicated to learning about true love through the Holy Spirit and sacrificing their lives for the love of their neighbors, and to finally, teach what they learn and to let them experience what they teach.

Kkottongnae Spirituality of Love Retreat Center



