

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.