

# 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)