

26. The Way to Get the Blessings of God 2

Human Blessings

Fenceless Kkottongnae

The reason why Kkottongnae families, who used to habitually roam around, would not leave Kkottonae is because there is an invisible love fence around Kkottongnae. Just as bees or butterflies gather around flowers for the honey, people also rally to the place where love dwells. Sometimes family members leave Kkottongnae to go back to society after recovering their health. But in more cases, they leave Kkottongnae owing to temptations such as alcohol, or they leave here impulsively missing the family that had forsaken them. Those who leave Kkottongnae for their hometown unannounced usually return to Kkottongnae in dejection, not welcomed by their family or friends.

Once there was a paralytic who left Kkottongnae without notice and seemingly for the vagabond.

We, the religious, searched for him until late at night because he was hemiplegic and had a speech disorder. Although he had sometimes shown signs that he missed home, we worried a lot because he was not in a condition to go to his hometown with difficulty in walking and speaking. Early next morning the patient's

family had brought him back to Kkottongnae. As they did not want to spend a single night with him, they had driven all night to bring him back. The next day, when he was asked if he wanted to go back to his family in his hometown, he shook his head firmly, conveying that he would never want to go again.

From the Cradle to the Grave

Real welfare takes responsibility of people 'from the cradle to the grave.'

Our love for the Kkottongnae families extends to their after-death, taking care to ensure their proper burial. Many people wonder why we do not cremate them, but this does not take into account the forsaken Kkottongnae families' feelings. When they are asked if they want a burial or cremation after death, they answer with a long face, "We do not deserve to want anymore. Either way is all right for us. Deal with it as you think fit." We know, however, that they are probably thinking, "Forlorn people like us should naturally be cremated to be disposed of easily." The founder, Fr. Oh Woong-Jin, who is very well aware of this, goes through all the steps a traditional funeral entails: preparing the body for burial, proceeding the rite of placing a body in



The tombs (referred to as “Paradise”) for the people of Kkottongnae in Kkottongnae

its coffin, performing funeral service and mass, and entombing the coffin at the Kkottongnae cemetery.

Fr. Oh is embellishing the cemetery as a beautiful paradise and developing it into the most valuable place to honor the miserably forlorn people's last moment. We are trying to make the Kkottongnae cemetery, where the forgotten are laid, a sacred place with a lot of prayer and sacrifice with other patrons for the people to recollect and visit. This endeavor comes from the true love for the poor, so the Kkottongnae family who know the love cannot leave here even though there is no fence.

Love Training Center

Every year around 200,000 of students, businessmen, public officers, the religious, etc. in groups get training at Kkottongnae Love Training Center. There is one reason why so many people visit Kkottongnae: There is love here. The following passage was written by a student who finished a training of 3 days and 2 nights at Kkottongnae.

Finally I visited Kkottongnae. I learned, felt, and thought a lot there. When a religious asked a patient with severe cerebral phalsy about the meaning of happiness, he answered, "Happiness is in our mind. I have a severe disability, so I hardly committed a sin. I am happy because I can pray for others and help them."

It was a very common saying, but as I heard it, I don't know why my eyes shed tears... When I heard that Kkottongnae patients write a will which promises the donation of their internal organs before death, I thought I was

the very unhappy person, who had sought for happiness with eyes only. I only washed dishes and cooked at the kitchen because I didn't have courage to meet the patients, for which I felt regretful when I returned to the lodging. While Kkottongnae was founded by a Catholic foundation, it is a really beautiful place regardless of religion. I reflected on my conduct a lot looking at them helping each other with heavy disability. I made up my mind to live doing good deeds with a lot of voluntary work. I would like to visit Kkottongnae again to serve the family there.

I Love You

The greeting of Kkottongnae is 'I love you.' We put our both hands over the head making a big heart shape and greet. The greeting which we have taught at Kkottongnae Love Training Center since 10 years ago is now spread all over the country and used by students, mass medias, various publications, and even commercials or posters. Last time when President Noh Moo-Hyun visited Iraq, a soldier was seen to say "I love you" to the President with a heart-shape hand motion on TV.

People rally into the place where love dwells. Even the restaurants which are run with love and hospitality are crowded with people. A household having a lot of continuous visitors becomes an honorable and prospective one. It is because there should be love. It is not easy to find love in a family where visitors are rare.

There is only one reason why there are so many people at Kkottongnae: Love dwells here.

Love comes from 'those who have no place to depend on and no strength even to beg food' and the volunteers and the religious who gathered to help them relying on each other. The young people gather from all over into Kkottongnae to serve devoting themselves without any condition because they have love of God toward the poorest.

Human blessings are gained by loving.

Many students who came to Kkottongnae to learn the love of neighbors are happy to learn the way of greeting of Kkottongnae.







A feature of the gathering for the supporting members of Kkottongnae in a stadium of Jamsil, Seoul