

1. HISTORY

Kkottongnae, or “Flower Village” in English, is a community of love and salvation in South Korea. It warmly welcomes and feeds those people who have been abandoned by their families and by society and who are silently wasting away on the streets and under the bridges because of lack of love. These people usually have no one to depend on nor even the strength to beg for food. Kkottongnae provides them with food, shelter, and clothing and give them medical treatments. Kkottongnae also introduces them to God’s love and even provides funerals for them when they pass away.

Kkottongnae was founded by Fr. John Oh Woong-Jin, who has been devoting his entire life to the poor. Fr. Oh was born on March 22, 1944 to a family of farmers in Chungbuk Province in South Korea.

DREAM OF CHILD

As a boy, Fr. Oh experienced the Korean War during his early years in elementary school. One day, while on the way home from school, he stopped to drink water at a nearby stream. At the stream, he saw a refugee and his daughter arguing over a shrimp. Taking a closer look, he realized that their argument was over who should eat the shrimp. The little daughter had caught the shrimp in the stream and she wanted her father to have it. But the father was trying to give it to his daughter. The father had only one leg, as he had lost one of his limbs from a bomb blast. Upon witnessing this event, Oh Woong-jin, who was himself a very hungry boy, began to dream of becoming a person who would devote his life for those who were dying from hunger. To make the dream come true, he became a Catholic priest in 1976 and began his assignment at Geumwang Church.

AN ENCOUNTER



On September 12, 1976 he had a providential encounter with an old man called Choi Gwi-dong (means precious son) that would change his life forever. That day, Fr. Oh saw a beggar passing by his church. Out of curiosity, Fr. Oh decided to follow him. What Fr. Oh saw shocked and startled him. Living in a dugout at the foot of Yongdam mountain, eighteen beggars were huddled together with no one to help them and without the strength to even

beg for food. The group consisted of tuberculosis patients, the mentally ill, alcoholics, the blind, and a few cripples. Fr. Oh witnessed grandpa Choi Gwi-dong distributing the food that he had collected from his begging to the group. When he had finished feeding the eighteen, he ate what little there was remaining.

Returning to the rectory, Fr. Oh could not sleep. He tossed and turned all night thinking about the grandfather. He thought to himself, “I became a priest to make my dream to live for the poor come true, but grandpa Choi Gwi-dong is already living a life of practicing love, even though he barely has

the strength to beg, not to mention that he is in worse physical condition and less educated than I am.” After thinking over and over about what he had seen, at around dawn the next morning, he had a sudden flash of insight. He thought, “Even if you have only the strength to beg for food, it is the blessing of the Lord.” Later that morning, using all the money that he had in his possession-- 1,300Won(1USD), Fr. Oh bought some cement and began to make bricks to build his house of love for the beggars.

On October 15, 1976 he started construction of a house with 5 rooms at the foot of Yongdam mountain. The house was completed a month later on November 15 and housed the 18 beggars grandpa Choi Gwi-dong took care of. The people in the neighborhood called it “The House of Love.” This is the origin of Kkottongnae.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN AND THE NEW COVENANT

On August 16, 1978, Fr. Oh found a dying old man who had fallen into a coma on the Bantan Bridge (also called the “Jordan Bridge”) of Cheongpyeong. Although many cars and people passed him by, nobody tried to help him just as in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-35). Since his childhood, Father Oh had always tried to help beggars or sick people on the street, so he stopped his car to take a look at the man. As he was taking the old man to the hospital, he heard these words from Heaven, “Could another day be more joyful and delightful than today? With great joy indeed, I thank you for saving the life of my beloved son. I will make a new covenant with you: “I will take care of everything else if you receive the least of my brothers in my name.” At that very moment, he experienced deeply that his action had truly pleased God. Since then, whenever Father Oh took the sick or homeless into his care, everything that was needed for their care began to appear; food, clothing, volunteers, money, and other necessities. Father Oh would often speak about his new covenant with the congregation. During a sermon on August 19, 1991, he stated, “If I had found and brought someone dying from the streets after breakfast even when we were out of food for lunch, someone would always come and bring lunch for us before lunch time.”

THE APPROVAL OF THE DIOCESE

Divine love has been revealed by the Holy Spirit to the surrounding people and many sick and homeless people have begun to gather at our community. So far, Kkottongnae has taken care of about 13,000 sick and abandoned people: 4,000 have passed away, 5,000 have returned to society and 4,000 patients are currently living in the community. God has prepared the young workers who will devote their entire lives to helping the sick and the homeless. In 1979, a young man came to devote his life to Kkottongnae and its mission. In 1981, two girls also came and began their lives of devotion to the cause. Thus, the foundation of our community has been laid down by these devotees. Currently, there are over 100 brothers and 230 sisters who have dedicated their lives to Kkottongnae and its mission.

On December 27th, 1986, at the feast of St. John, the Most Rev. Nicholas Cheong, the Bishop of Cheongju (the present Cardinal of Korea) visited Kkottongnae and announced his approval of the establishment of the Congregation of Kkottongnae Brothers and Sisters of Jesus.

2. LOGO Symbol with explanation



3. CHARISM



The founding charism of Kkotongnae is taking sufferings and death on behalf of helpless neighbors who do not even have the strength to beg by following the words of Jesus Christ: “The greatest love you can have for your friends is to give your life for them (John 15:13).”

Embracing this spirit is to live the life of ceaseless love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who even sacrificed his last drop of blood for us.

4. VISION

*Whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.
(Mt.25:40)*



5. MISSION

A world Kkottongnae is dreaming of is

A world where no one is forsaken,

A world where everyone is respected just as God is,

A world where everyone loves his neighbor as he loves himself.



6. FORMATION



Aspirancy

It is time for affiliates to learn the congregational traditions and a liturgical life under the guidance of the director of affiliates.

Postulancy

During this time, postulants grow in responsibility for community life. It is time to learn the Catholic doctrine of consecrated life and theologies and to prepare for participation in ministry.

Novitiate

The novitiate is a critical time for novices to recognize the calling of God. It is time to put effort into studies for a religious life and understand the charism of our congregation. Novices participate in life of the community and develop their spirituality by following the founder's teachings.

Temporary profession

In this period, brothers are encouraged in spiritual growth and participate in the ministry. It is time to understand what they learned in the novitiate more deeply under the guidance of the director.

Perpetual profession (Ongoing formation)

At the end of the formation procedure, brothers take vows of chastity, poverty and obedience for life and dedicate themselves to God perpetually.

7. ONLINE ADDRESS

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