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# The 23rd JELCW • Newsletter

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Overlying Theme: "Trust in the Lord next to Us" --- Faith, Hope and Love

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## *Scriptural Theme:*

*There are three things that remain --- faith, hope, and love --- and the greatest of these is love. I  
Corinthians 13:13*

## "If I don't get involved"



Rev. Yoshihiko Ito  
Matsuyama Church, Hiroshima

Have you heard of **Tō Kazuko**? She was a leprosy patient and poet, who was separated from her family at age 13 and spent the rest of her life in a sanatorium on a remote island. She found Christ while in the sanatorium and was baptized at age 35. Every one of the 1000 poems she created are sincere quests for the meaning of life and our very existence. One of her most famous poems is titled, "In the Spring of My Heart," which reads as follows:

If I didn't get involved,  
I would have never known this love, never  
felt this closeness  
[...]  
One learns various feelings from getting  
involved  
[...]  
It begins with getting involved;  
grows with much happiness and  
unhappiness,  
piled up as layers as they are caused by  
getting involved;  
becomes polished as they repeat;  
and then one's feeling is chipped away and

blown up among others;  
and the life is spelled out.  
Oh, no matter how many thousands may be  
there,  
if I don't get involved, they are just someone  
by the roadside.  
They will not even drop one dead leaf  
in the spring of my heart.

The poignant phrase "if I don't get involved, they are just someone by the roadside" resonates with us deeply. Our Lord Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan to a Lawyer who asked "who is my neighbor?" The priest and Levite who saw the hurt man but walked passed by were surely "someone by the roadside."

On the other hand, the Samaritan felt the voiceless cry of the man who could not even call for help but only moan in pain. This compassion is the source of love and courage that helps us step forward to get involved. Being involved, I believe, is the beginning of the Gospel of the Lord because Jesus himself became our Good Samaritan and helped us, hurt and down on the ground. As the Lord took in our sorrow and pain as his own and carried all the burden with us, each of us is called to use our talents boldly in our own places when we meet and get involved with others.