

« Haraminè » : this is the name of our new house in Gwangju where four disabled adult men, aged 20 to 31, live in residence with the community, in a section of the house adapted to their needs. The name of the house means: "those sent by God". These four young men have varying degrees of disability and personal autonomy. The eldest, Chong Shil Park, works in a refrigerator assembly shop, is in good physical shape, but has cognitive disabilities. The second, UttUm Kim, has Down Syndrome (he is one in the photo below giving the archbishop a bouquet); he works in a 'closed shop' run by the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres.



The third, Ho Chol Chong, with cognitive and physical disabilities, and the fourth, Song Un Youn, with speech disabilities, both attend a special school. Residing with them there is a live-in counselor to oversee their activities. The origin of this arrangement dates back to our arrival in Gwangju and our close relationship with the Sisters of Saint Paul de Chartres. Fr. Leo Brassard, one of the founders of the Korea mission, regularly went to this community, and the disabled children they serve, for Mass and Confession. New government regulations called for an end of placing such individuals in large residences and rather placing them in group homes. As a result the sisters asked us to take a small group under our wings, because, although there are many opportunities for younger individuals, there are few for older ones, those over 18. They would have had to leave the sisters' care, but where would they go? The work on the house ended in May but we could not organize the official opening until the former archbishop of Gwangju, Most Rev. Andrew CHOI, was free in November.





