

withU: Seeking the Center of Our Faith in the Film The Odyssey

Ken Doo
September 16, 2026



Christopher Nolan's film *The Odyssey* has recently surpassed ten million admissions in Korea, resonating deeply with audiences. Based on the ancient epic of Homer, the film portrays the twenty years of suffering that Odysseus endured on his way home to Ithaca - the story hidden behind the grand campaign that brought victory in the Trojan War.

Odysseus's journey home was anything but smooth. He lost companions in the cave of the one-eyed giant Polyphemus, and he suffered the tragedy of watching his crew transformed into swine by the sorcery of the enchantress Circe. Before the sweet, soul-stirring song of the Sirens, he had to bind himself tightly to the mast with rope in order to barely preserve his reason. Amid the fierce storms raised by Poseidon, god of the sea, he tasted the despair of seeing his ship shattered to pieces. Even so, the place toward which he kept rowing was Ithaca, the home where his beloved family and peace awaited him.



The reality that our Unification community faces today likewise resembles the vast seas that Odysseus crossed. As we press through rough waves toward our destination on this journey of faith, we now find ourselves facing another great question.

Since its founding in 1954, our community has walked its own distinct path under the teachings of True Parents, establishing families of true love and advancing a peace movement that transcends national borders and races. Behind that path lies the pure devotion of countless members who have offered their sweat and tears over many long years to establish the Will of Heaven.

Yet our members are now passing through a time of hardship more difficult than any before. Before trials as fierce as crashing waves, the wounds and confusion our members feel in their hearts must run very deep. This is a solemn time that calls us to reflect once again, and deeply, upon the path of faith we have walked and the direction toward which we are moving.

When Odysseus at last reached his homeland of Ithaca, he was met by the 108 suitors who had occupied his palace, courted his wife, and squandered his wealth. Like the 108 defilements that unsettle the human soul in Buddhist teaching, they were the embodiment of every worldly greed and temptation that shakes the order of our true homeland. Just as Odysseus steadied the center of his heart, drew his bowstring, and restored order to his palace, our journey of faith also requires the reflection and resolve that quietly still the clamor of a restless mind.

The trials we now face call each of us to look back and ask where we have placed the center of our faith, rather than allowing our hearts to be captivated by immediate worldly circumstances or outward conditions. Beyond the phenomena and the environment that appear on the surface, this is a moment that calls for the wisdom to return to the value of true love we set out to embody and to the pure, original heart we once held toward Heavenly Parent. Like Odysseus, who held fast to the mast and drew his bow amid the temptation of the Sirens and the violence of the 108 suitors, we too must now center ourselves upon the truth.

Odysseus was able to overcome every obstacle and finally reach his homeland of Ithaca because, in the midst of every trial, he never lost sight of the destination toward which he was heading.

What our members need now is not hasty despair, nor to be tossed about by the waves before our eyes, but a mature posture that looks squarely at reality. Through the night of trial, the devotion and the purity of true love that each member has built up will never lose their light.

When we look to the truth itself rather than to human beings or worldly power, we will be able to pass through the rough waves and move forward at last to the true homeland of the soul, our real Ithaca.