

MyBible VI

Let the Word of God Keep You Alive



Author. Akinori Kamachi

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Foreword

We are truly blessed that MyBible VI has been published by the Roman Curia (Vatican) on the occasion of Pope Francis' first visit to Japan in 38 years.

The MyBible series is designed to help unbelievers and lay people learn how to put the Word of God into practice and walk more closely with it in their lives.

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done. Then it will be fulfilled.

John 15:7

With this encounter with the Word of God, MyBible (The Lord's provision on the mountain, Adonai Ereu) was born. Since the original title was MyBible, it was probably never contemplated that this MyBible VI would be born. This year marks the 15th year since the first edition was published, and it is probably because of the power of the Word and the work of the Holy Spirit that we have been able to take this step.

In the first part of MyBible VI, Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox people testify of the lives they have

walked, and even in the midst of diversity, there seems to be something to learn.

The introduction of the convent introduces the Society, which is celebrating its 800th anniversary, and provides a good opportunity to learn about how it was born, what it has done so far, and how it will continue to do so in the future.

The special program deals with death.

I am familiar with this topic because I was involved in the beatification of the 53 martyrs of the Yonezawa clan.

Fifty-three lay people gave their lives in the hope of perfect union with God. The firmness of their spirit was to resist the secular values that dominated the time and to live by the values of the Gospel, which became the foundation of the Church through their blood.

In today's society, filled with selfish individualism, we hope that through the martyrs we can find daily guidance on how God wants us to live.

May 15, 2019

Catholic Archdiocese of Tokyo

Archbishop Isao Kikuchi

First of all

This year's MyBible VI (Let the Word of God Keep You Alive) will commemorate Pope Francis' first visit to Japan in 38 years from the Roman Curia (Vatican) .

As in the previous MyBible V (Let the Word of God Keep You Alive) , the contents of this edition include testimonies from members of the interdenominational (Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox) churches, introductions to monasteries, and special programs.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Father Yoshitaka Yoshiike and Reverend Hiroshi Seo for their guidance in the production of this edition.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to those who contributed manuscripts for this publication, as well as to the members of Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church for their encouragement and cooperation.

The original text of the Bible is the Franciscan Bible Institute Translation of the Bible, and some punctuation, " ", and other punctuation marks have been corrected due to the relationship between the preceding and following sentences.

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My Father in Heaven

My father was diagnosed with terminal stomach cancer, and the doctors told him that even if he had the stomach removed, they did not know if he would make a full recovery. It was a blessing from God that he was given about one year and five months to live after having about two-thirds of his stomach removed, even though he was in the worst condition.

If my father had died suddenly or if it had been too late to treat his cancer and he had not been given one year and five months to live, his soul might not have been saved forever, and I was filled with gratitude to God.

After my father's stomach cancer surgery, when the surgeon showed me his internal organs and explained the details of the surgery, all I could do was pray. From then on, I prayed for my father desperately and began to read the Bible.

I woke up at 4:00 in the morning and prayed for my father for about 20 minutes while taking a walk in the dark in winter. I felt that God was listening to my prayer, and tears poured out unceasingly.

After the surgery, my father complained to my mother, "I didn't do anything wrong, so why did I have to go through this,," which seemed to annoy her.

What child would not be trained by his father? (Hebrews 12.7) He also prepares a way out along with trials. (1 Corinthians 10.13) This word is salvation.

I used to make my father listen to Christian tapes when I took him to the golf course. He was very interested in the tapes of the sermons, and before long, he began to learn about faith.

In the later years of his life, my father turned his mind's eye to faith, which is the most important thing for human beings, and he listened to the tapes intently, as he was a man of character who was enthusiastic about everything he did, even though he was on a sickbed from morning to night.

I, on the other hand, had some knowledge of foot rubbing before, so after my father fell ill, I began a routine of rubbing his feet and talking about my faith every day.

When I had listened to about 200 tapes, my father said to me, "In theory, I know that I am sure to join the Christian faith." When I visited a family

meeting, I happened to meet Pastor Eijiro Komatsu, and when I told him about my father I told him about my father and he told me about Jesus. My aunt in Chiba told me that her husband was going on a business trip to China for about a month, so after she came to visit my father, she stayed at his bedside all day long and talked about the Bible with him for about a month.

One day, my father said, "I want to be baptized with my mother," and then he said, "I want to be baptized with my wife because I want to be with her after I die." Then he said to the pastor, "I have done some really sinful things in my life, but it seems too good to me to be baptized and have my sins forgiven at the end of my life.

If our God is one and only, then heaven is also one and only, and I guess my father's soul must have sensed this and wanted my mother to have a ticket to heaven as well, so he said he wanted to be baptized with her.

Supported by the fervent prayers of the pastor, my father was baptized with my mother at home on Mother's Day, May 13, 1984 (Showa 59) .

My father, who was a stubborn man, had never thought about becoming a Christian, and my mother had been going to church and attending family meetings at my urging for a long time, but my grandmother, who was 96 years old and most devoted to Buddhism and her ancestors, had been observing the family religion and had refused to be baptized, but my father insisted and she became a Christian. However, my father was very forceful, and she was baptized.

My father always used to say that he wanted to give my mother some good gift. My mother tearfully told me that the best gift of all was that he led me to baptism.

The nine months after both of my parents were baptized seemed to be full of thanksgiving and prayer.

One day, a church member told me, "Whenever you go home from a service, you should visit your father with your family, show his face, and talk to him about the Bible." I immediately did it. When the pastor's wife asked me if I prayed with my father, I said, "No, I have never prayed with my father," to which she replied, "Then by all means, pray with your father!" I felt a little awkward, but I immediately went to my father and prayed with him, and since then, my father,

mother, and I have prayed together every day. This was a joy for both of us, and I am sure it was a source of strength and encouragement for my father as well.

We went home for Christmas and my father's siblings and their families gathered there. I prayed by his bed and we all sang hymns such as "Silent Night" and "Over the Mountain Road," which brought him great joy and tears to his eyes.

On New Year's Eve, December 31, my father was hospitalized again. His pupils were still dilated and his brain waves had stopped. We called a pastor and had an emergency communion service for the last time, where we all sang "Over the Mountain Road," his only favorite song.

I prayed that God would guide all of my father's affairs as He willed and that his soul would be at peace. That night, my mother and I stayed behind to take care of my wife and I held my father's hand tightly and did not sleep a wink.

Despite the fact that my father had terminal cancer, he never once said he was in pain or suffering, and I was learning that this time would come for me as well, as I watched him go peacefully into heaven.

Ten days after the secret funeral was over. I was surprised to hear that my grandmother, now 96 years old, had told my mother that she wanted me to have a Christian funeral too.

My grandmother wondered if my father and mother had both become Christians and she seemed to be the only one going to another world, or perhaps my father had invited her from heaven.

Chairman Kengo Kawamura
National Union of Breakfast Prayer Meeting
Congregation of Fukuoka Jotobashi Church of
Christ Convention of Japan
Representative of Fukuoka Breakfast Prayer Meeting



Fukuoka Jotobashi Church of Christ Convention
of Japan

A Life Sustained by the Word of God

When I was 17 years old, He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me." (John 14.6) I was encouraged by a missionary to memorize these words. Reciting it in English took my life in a direction I had never expected.

In high school, during an oral exam for an exchange program in the U.S., when asked why I became a Christian, I answered, "Because the Bible contains the truth and I believed the words of Jesus. I answered, "Because the Bible contains the truth and I believed in the words of Jesus," and I spoke the recited phrases in English. After that, I was able to devote myself to eight years of study in the U.S. I returned home with the message of the president's address at the university's graduation ceremony that your mission from now on is to serve and serve the world engraved on my heart board.

When I started my own business at the age of 29, the following three words supported me.

- (1) Faith assures us of what we hope for and convicts us of what we cannot see. (Hebrews 11.1)
- (2) Without vision, the people will behave as they want. (Proverbs 29.18)
- (3) Write down the revelation. Write it clearly on the boards so that those who read it may easily read it. This revelation is to the appointed time, and it tells of the time of the end, and it is not false. If it is delayed, wait for it. It will come. It will not be delayed. (Habakkuk 2.2-3)

At the age of 46, he acquired a farm in Victoria in southern Australia that could produce 10,000 head of beef, and for the next 14 years, by the grace of the Lord, he exported 10,000 head of beef (Aussie beef) annually to Japanese supermarkets and co-ops. However, a prolonged drought forced the cessation of this production.

When I was 59 years old, I was praying and reading the Bible every morning with a prayer buddy at Torikai Baptist Church, my mother church in Fukuoka. I found a pamphlet by American gospel singer Benessa Mitchell on my desk, which read, "Please use me for the youth of Japan." My wife and I prayed together, then copied this pamphlet and distributed it to

churches, high schools, and universities in Fukuoka City. Supported by the prayers of church brothers and sisters and the support of young Christians, we held a gospel convention two months later, which was attended by 2,500 enthusiastic young people.

Through the Gospel Convention, I grasped the conviction and mission to share the Gospel with the youth of Japan, and was given the vision to hold this convention throughout Japan, to share the Gospel with the youth, and to make Japan a Christian nation in the 21st century.

Since 2000, my farm in Australia has been producing useful microorganisms, OZA bacteria, using fermentation technology, and introducing them to organic farms throughout Australia, which has made this busi-



Torikai Baptist Church

ness a success.

With the funds raised from this, in baseball domes and soccer stadiums in Japan, "Organize

gospel conventions, preach the gospel through gospel songs to the people, and distribute one million gospel books annually." The vision was given.

In 2006, a house of prayer was given in Itoshima City, Fukuoka Prefecture, and prayer friends from all over the world have come to Japan to pray with all their hearts for the salvation of the young people of Japan and for all the people of Japan to become a nation of God who believe in Jesus.

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11.6) , so at my ranch in Australia, I read the Bible and pray early in the morning with young people from all over the world.

In 2015, we successfully developed QOLA, an organic fermented drinking water for the 1.5 billion adult patients around the world. With this, my wife and I pray that our vision to save adult disease patients will be accomplished, and we are thankful that we are able to move forward daily with the Lord.

Korekiyo Terada

Torikai Baptist Church Congregation

Fukuoka Breakfast Prayer Meeting

God is with us

Born in Tokyo in August 1948 (Showa 23) . I was baptized at Omori Church when I was two months old. My family and relatives were all Christians. Perhaps because of this, I had no desire to seek God or deepen my faith on my own, but simply followed the teachings as I was taught, learning the essentials of the catechism (Christian teachings) , singing the chants, praying, attending Mass, receiving confession (the sacrament of forgiveness) , and everything in my life was centered around being a Christian.

I believed without knowing that I doubted the reality of God or the resurrection of Jesus. (I don't know if this can be called believing or faith.) It was during my high school and college

years that I was given a major test of faith.

My interest in the social sciences, such as evolution,



St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Kojimachi

molecular biology, and other life sciences taught in high school, and my questioning of the capitalist system in the wake of the Vietnam War, strengthened my interest in the social sciences, love of people, human rights, human dignity, and support for the weak and small, even without faith (at least in my mind at the time) in Catholicism, I came to believe that by studying science more deeply, I could grow as a person and gain strength.

There was UYOKYOKUSETSU 紆余曲折, however, after graduate school, I became a university student, and as I came into contact with students and teachers studying and researching education for children (and persons) with disabilities, I realized that we, including myself, live by the logic of selection and competition, and that we cannot escape the values that make us fit the image of human beings that this society demands. In an egoistic manner, I have been accumulating achievements in the name of academics, science, and thesis. In that one respect alone, I followed the path of many other teachers who were dedicated to protecting themselves from being vilified.

In the midst of this distorted world, my second son suffered from mental illness from truancy in high

school, and shortly after, my mother, who had supported my life as a college student, fell ill and moved in with us, along with my father. In the midst of all this, I developed depression myself due to the friction between my children, my parents, and my work relationships.

When my mother's dementia progressed and she lost consciousness and became critically ill, I naturally prayed to God for help (It's God's help in a time of need.) . This was a natural human act for me, culturally, habitually, and emotionally.

Even though I had tried so hard to theoretically deny the existence of God and had chosen to live in a worldly way, I knelt before God and asked for salvation, without any shame or guilt.

I was opportunistic and shameless. As for my own depression, now, looking back on those days with a clear consciousness, I think there was a latent desire to escape from the university and my inner distorted authoritative world by entering the world of illness (avoidance and disease gain) .

Now that I am healed, I finally realized that I had been following the words of the Bible, even though I

could not understand what people were saying, could not speak satisfactorily, and could not write or read well. This was the driving force behind my "miraculous" recovery from the electroshock therapy at the university hospital that made my symptoms worse and left me bed-ridden and crippled.

After that, I gradually resumed my work and began to go to church, and when the words of Jesus were renewed through the mouth of the priest, they simply washed my heart with tears.

From now on, I hope to take up my own cross of my own volition and walk the path of rebirth as a person who can bear the crosses of those who suffer with Jesus, even if only a little.

Kikuko Hayasaka

Congregation of St. Ignatius Catholic Church,

Kojimachi

Representative of Hayasaka Stuttering Specialist

Training Association

Part-time lecturer, Tokyo Metropolitan Medical

School, etc.

The words of the Bible have the power to save souls

On a cold rainy December afternoon, I picked up the phone to call Ms. A, who had received a Gideon Bible 20 years ago in Shinjuku. He had not read the Bible for the time being, but the words of the Bible filled the void in his heart after he had lovingly nursed his seriously ill mother to the best of his ability. He called us and said, "I would love to visit a Christian church, please recommend somewhere suitable."



Christian Holy Co-operative, Narashino
Church

I felt my heart pounding, but Jesus showed me that this way of replying was very important, and I immediately prayed to Him for guidance. When I asked where he lived, he told me

The words of the Bible have the power to save souls 25
that he lived in Itabashi Ward. What a guidance from the Lord! I had just been given the opportunity to visit a church in Itabashi Ward and get to know the pastors in the area.

Mr. A's phone call gave us a strong assurance that the Lord had given us the meeting in His plan. I told her that Pastor T is a wonderful pastor and that Mr. O, a doctor and a faithful Gideon member who kindly helps pastors and missionaries when they are sick or in trouble. As soon as I hung up the phone, I informed Pastor T that someone named Mr. A might be visiting the church.

Mr. A visited H church. He was very pleased with the warm fellowship with Pastor T and the congregation and the Bible message. Before Easter, I wrote to Mr. A, asking him to accept Jesus as his Savior. She told me that she was going to be baptized on the day of Pentecost, and I praised the Lord's name from the bottom of my heart. I thanked Pastor T for his kindness, and with his permission, I visited H church on the day of Pentecost to attend the service.

On this day, at the Pentecostal service at Church H, I had three joyful experiences.

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First, I was able to witness for the first time the baptism of a person who received salvation because of the Gideon Bible.

Second, "In case you haven't noticed, this H church is a great church, and Dr. T is a great pastor. Mr. O, a member of the congregation, is a wonderful person. Please believe in Jesus as your Savior and be baptized like me," said Mr. A in his confession of faith. It was the first time for me to hear such a confession.

Third, Ms. A stood next to Pastor T as he dismissed the congregation at the exit after the service, handing out handwritten "thank you" bags of sweets to each person and bowing her head as she said, "Thank you for being present at my baptismal ceremony.

My heart was filled with emotion. I remembered the joy of the Kingdom in the Bible by meeting the One who has such a deep taste and delight in His salvation. To Him be all glory and I praise His name with all my heart.

Isaiah 55:11 promises that the words of the Bible have the power to do God's will. Therefore, in order to share the gospel, we, the members of Gideons, give

The words of the Bible have the power to save souls 27
the Bible, the Word of God. Sometimes the Bible is read immediately, and sometimes, like Mr. A, it is read many years later. However, we have the peace of knowing that through the Bible, we will encounter Jesus Christ, and we have the hope that the "time" for salvation will come, and we can entrust all the results to the Lord.

This service of sharing the gospel through the presentation and equipping of the Bible can be difficult and troublesome. Therefore, we cannot do it without receiving patience, humility, and courage from God, rather than relying on human strength. It is a service that God allows us to do when we pour our eyes on the precious blood of the cross and the risen Lord, seek His will, are pushed by His love, and try to obey His will.

Through this service, the joy of experiencing the presence of the Lord, this joy is what makes it holy. The fullness of being able to obey the Word of Jesus is a priceless joy that wells up from our gratitude to the Lord.

It is truly awe-inspiring to know that the Lord is using this ministry of Bible presentation to advance His work and build His Kingdom.

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I pray that we will continue to walk the Lord's path with Him, be sustained by the love of Christ, and be used as servants of the Lord until the end of our lives.

General Director Norihiro Hirai

The International Gideons Association of Japan, Inc.

Christian Holy Co-operative, Narashino Church

Congregation

Triumph of Victory

The war ended when I was in the first grade of elementary school. My next door neighbor and my sickly brother across the street were killed in an air raid. 3 years later, the Great Fukui Earthquake hit and I was trapped under my house, but survived. Seven of my classmates were killed in the earthquake, and several others died of illness. This experience made me wonder where those children had gone and where they were now. Where are they now? Where did they come from and where are they going? I asked my parents and teachers several times for answers to these questions, but received no clear answers.

In the spring of my twentieth year, a friend handed me an invitation to a special Christian evangelistic lecture. In retrospect, this was a turning point in my life. I attended the event at my friend's half-assed invitation. I was bewildered by the new space I was entering for the first time, but it was also a moment when I felt a light in my empty life that seemed to hit the sky, and I vividly recall feeling something sacred.

I still vividly recall how the lecturer said, "Truth is something that used to be, but is not anymore. It is not something that is accepted here but not on the other side of the world, but something that transcends time and place and is universal. It is the love of God at the cross." I understood only the words of the message, "God loves you," and I started attending church after that. The pastor of this church was Pastor Yukifumi Imamura, who later became my life-long husband.

Pastor Imamura graduated from the theology department of the university and was assigned to Fukui Mission Station in April as the pastor of the pioneer mission



Japan Baptist Convention Sawara
Christ Church

station, and I was led to this meeting where he gave a "special evangelism lecture" at the beginning of May.

The worship service was held at a rented school for Western-style dressmaking, and the Lord blessed the small flock, laying the foun-

dation of the Fukui Mission Station with the baptism of more than a dozen people that year. Three years later, I married Pastor Imamura and we had four daughters. All of my daughters were baptized and now my grandchildren are walking the Christian path.

My husband has been an active pastor for 59 years of his life. While there are exemplary servants of the Lord in every church, there have also been difficult people in my long pastoral life who, no matter how much I loved them, could not get this through. Many times I was led to pray for this person, thinking that the Lord loved him. My husband lived humbly in the Lord's way for 59 years without a single word of complaint or grumbling, always mild and sincere in the Lord's love.

In all these things we have glorious victory through Him who loved us. (Romans 8.37)

On December 5, 2018, due to an acute myocardial infarction, my husband passed away at the age of 82. Our eldest daughter's family happened to be returning home on that day, and we are convinced that the Lord has taken care of her.

Our eldest daughter is married to John, an American missionary, living in Oregon, and for John, who is

evangelizing foreign students, it was a great joy to talk with my husband, who has devoted his life to evangelism, and their banter was endless. On Wednesday morning, after a week of joyful fellowship with our eldest daughter's family, my husband passed away.

After getting ready, my husband got into the driver's seat of the car to attend the prayer meeting. As I was waiting outside the car for the engine to start, I felt a strange atmosphere when I heard no sound of the engine and looked at the driver's seat to see my husband's face pale. In the tension of waiting for the ambulance, John prayed to God while holding my husband. The doctor's diagnosis was that he had breathed his last in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. I can only imagine how happy my husband must have been to be supported by the intercessory prayers of his son, a fellow worker who loved the Lord, at the time of his death. I can only praise the Lord for guiding him in all things in His hands.

Cooperating Pastor Masae Imamura
Japan Baptist Convention Sawara Christ Church
Fukuoka Breakfast Prayer Meeting

There is Hope for Your Future

Life is full of worries, and sometimes we worry about our old age. When Abraham was 51 years old and was told to leave his familiar land and relatives and go to a land the Lord would show him, he left without knowing where he was going. Going out without knowing where you are going is life, and it is also the place where the glory of God is manifested.

There is hope for your future. (Jeremiah 31.17) Because you have hope, you will rest in peace, protected and at ease. (Job 11.18)

There is hope for your future. This is the Word of the Lord, the Gospel itself. The Word of the Lord will be accomplished, and your life has been and will be protected by God.

I was born with a weak



Minor cathedral

body and was told that I would not live for 20 years, but through this Word, I was made alive anew, and despite my infirmity, I am very grateful to be able to celebrate my 89th birthday this year while being allowed to do pioneering evangelism.

Hope is the driving force that creates a sense of security, and without hope there can be no security, and this hope is the reason that "if there is iniquity in your hand, turn it away, and let not evil dwell in your tent, you will surely lift up your face without shame, and stand firm and not be afraid. Then you will forget your troubles and think of them as water that has flowed away. And your life will be brighter than the noonday, and the darkness will be like the morning."

(Job 11.14-17) , and this is how my hope has been built.

- (1) Hope will not fail us. (Romans 5.5)
- (2) We are afflicted on all sides, but we do not come to a standstill. We are at a loss, but we do not lose hope. (2 Corinthians 4.8) Therefore I will not be discouraged. (2 Corinthians 4.16)
- (3) Faith assures what is hoped for and convicts what is not seen. (Hebrews 11.1) God assures you and me of our future.

- (4) He who believes will not be put to shame. (Romans 9.33)
- (5) When you have no hope, have hope and believe.
(Romans 4.18)
- (6) Put on the armor of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation. (1 Thessalonians 5.8)
- (7) Suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance produces virtue refined by trials, and that virtue produces hope. (Romans 5.3-4)

Everything he did went well because the Lord was with Joseph as the Word by which I could always receive strength and have hope. (Genesis 39.2)

The Lord was with him, and whatever he did, the Lord made it succeed. (Genesis 39.23)

When I was in my 30s and doing pioneer evangelism, I was diagnosed with tuberculosis in both husband and wife. My wife was hospitalized in a tuberculosis sanatorium, where a Bible study group was held. A young man who attended this group joined the church, was committed, and became a pastor of a church in California, USA.

After being given a vision of overseas missions, I happened to meet this pastor in the U.S. and preached

at a church in Philadelphia to which he had referred me. At this time, an elderly Japanese couple told me, "I have been attending church for 30 years, but today's sermon made me decide to be baptized," and after consulting with the pastor of the church, I baptized them that day. The same thing happened during the evangelism in Brazil.

When I was planning to enter Costa Rica, I was troubled that the entry required the name of the hotel where I was staying, the address and name of someone I knew. The person sitting next to me on the plane seemed to be Japanese, so I asked him a few questions and was able to enter the country without incident. The same thing happened when I went to Indonesia.

During the overseas mission, I experienced many times that the Lord really worked things out through prayer when one difficult question after another poured down on me. As a result, I came to have confidence in the Lord.

Pastor Hiroshi Seo

House of Prayer

Ichikawa Breakfast Prayer Meeting

The Origin of Christianity

On September 6, 1972, I was born in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima Prefecture. I have parents and two older sisters, and our family is a Christian home, so I went to church from an early age and was baptized in the Christmas service of my second year of junior high school.

Although I became a Christian, I did not understand salvation or sin very well, and at that time I felt inferior. My father told me, "I failed to educate you. I spoiled you too much."

Every time I heard these words, I began to think that I was a bad person. And I thought, "I can't stay the way I am, weak as I am, I want to be strong." When I entered high school, I joined the Kyudo club. I thought, "This is it," and I thought, "If I do this, I can become strong." I thought, "This is it. I did improve, but I gradually began to look down on people, and people began to call me arrogant, and those around me began to avoid me. It became a vicious cycle, and I began to think, "They think I'm stupid, I'm not like them. I'm

not like you. Watch me now." I became more and more absorbed in Kyudo and became arrogant.

I practiced on Sundays, which kept me away from church, and in my senior year of high school, I fell into a slump, and no matter how much I practiced, I could not improve. When I stood on the playing field at my last retirement game, I felt a strong sense of loneliness that I had never experienced before. When I retired, I had to study for exams, which was very difficult because I had hardly ever studied before.

I had been able to mask my weakness through club activities, and now that this was gone, attending high school became very painful. Around that time, I began to like rainy days. Because I was able to hide my face with



The Church of Christ in Japan, Osaka Nishinoda Church

an umbrella when I did not feel confident.

I managed to enroll in a night college and joined the Kyudo club again, but

eventually I left the club because I could not keep up with it, so I no longer had anything to cover myself with.

It was during this time that a friend invited me to a praise meeting. It was an interdenominational meeting held at a large tennis court, bright and full of fun. I thought to myself, "This is not the place for me." The brighter the surroundings, the more my misery was highlighted. I wanted to go home, but I decided not to, in front of my friends. Around evening, I was led to prayer by the moderator. I don't remember how he prayed, but I only remember that he asked me to "look up." At that time, I felt that God loves even such a miserable person.

I remembered a story I heard sometime in church school. When I remembered that Jesus loved us enough to go to the cross for our sins, I just burst into tears and repented. This was the starting point of my Christian life. After that, I was led to Akabane Church and began my walk of faith, and I can only thank the Lord for that.

Senior Pastor Jun Takahashi

The Church of Christ in Japan, Osaka Nishinoda

Church

Repentance twice

My mother church is the Tsuchiura Church of the Brothers of Christ in Tsuchiura City, Ibaraki Prefecture. This church was pastored by my paternal grandfather, Pastor Toki Motokawa, and his wife's grandmother when I was a child. I thought I understood God, sin, and salvation through the cross, as I had been prayed for and followed the church life since I was in my mother's womb.

I would attend the denomination's summer bible camps and repent of my sins and begin my life of faith with a renewed spirit, but after two or three days, I was back to my usual, cold life of faith.

In the summer of my first year of junior high school, my parents suggested that I be baptized. The reason was that I wanted to be baptized while my grandfather was still alive, but I was against it. I was against it because I would continue to sin and I wanted to feel free.

However, I decided to be baptized along with my two older sisters. A simple pool was set up in the

church yard, and when I was grabbed in the arms of the 82-year-old pastor and submerged in the water, I felt an indescribable sense of comfort, and after the baptism I could not stop the tears from welling up. This was not because of joy, but rather because I felt that I, full of sin, had defiled something sacred by being baptized.

Before my baptism, I made a confession of repentance in front of my pastor, but there were sins that I just could not express. I could not confess because I was in front of my relatives, my grandfather, rather than in front of the pastor whom God had set up. Even after my baptism, my lax life of faith did not change.

My relationship with God began when I found a job. When I started working as a teacher at a Christian kindergarten in April, my mother said to me, "You can't protect children's lives with the kind of faith you have now." This one word pierced my heart, and I was in awe that life belongs to the Lord.

I reflected on my past and once again repented of my sins in front of the pastor whom God had set up. Then I was filled with peace and joy and could not

help but remember the intercession of my family and church members who continued to pray behind me. Above all, I prayed a prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord Jesus, who has waited for me with patience and compassion.

I may not be faithful, but Christ is always faithful. For Christ cannot deny Himself. (2 Timothy 2.13)

Pastor Yoko Takahashi
Osaka Nishinoda Church of Christ Convention of
Japan



Osaka Nishinoda Church of Christ Convention
of Japan (Chapel)

Lazarus Triumphant in Heaven

My brother Toru, who is seven years older than me, developed schizophrenia when he was in middle and high school, and has been hospitalized in a Tokyo mental hospital for almost 50 years since then. For many years, my father visited Toru about once every two weeks to change his clothes, but three years ago, he fell down the stairs on the second floor of our house and hit his back so hard that he could not walk, so I decided to go and change his clothes instead.

When I visited Toru, I talked about heaven as much as possible. I told him, "You have suffered a lot on earth, but if you believe in Jesus and go to heaven, you will be at peace in God's bosom." Then Toru said, "I will go to heaven, I believe."

Last April, a turning point came. Toru contracted aspiration pneumonia and was transferred to a different hospital for treatment. The doctor told me that Toru's physical condition was about 85 years old." Doctor told me that after living in a mental hospital for so many years, he would age 20 years earlier than normal people.

I thought this was my last chance to lead Toru to salvation, so I visited Toru's hospital bed with Pastor Atsushi Saito of Fukasawa Church of the Japan Christian Association and asked Mr. Saito to lead Toru to confession of faith and baptism. He said, "You were given good things while you were alive, but Lazarus was given bad things. But now he is comforted here..." (Luke 16.25) . We sincerely hope that this word will be fulfilled.

"Do you want to go to heaven?" "Yes!"

"Do you believe in Jesus?" "Yes!"

"Do you want to be baptized?" "Yes!"

Toru's answers to Saito Sensei's questions were all "Yes!". Toru was like a baby. Two days later, Toru's hospital bed baptism took place. When I saw the scene, I was stunned and amazed rather than "Yay!" I was more stunned and amazed."

"My family will never believe in God..." I thought that for a long time. When I shared the gospel with my father, he would bounce back, "What good does it do to have faith? You haven't changed at all." Eventually, I stopped talking about the gospel with my family. But then salvation came to my family. I was really sur-

prised. I was so amazed. "I gave up, but God didn't...". Those words passed through my mind.

Toru was called to death at 9:57 pm on February 21, 2019. Pastor Saito rushed to the hospital at midnight and prayed at Toru's bedside. He told us that his father had been crying ever since Toru passed away. He said, "Toru was a pity child," "Poor Toru," "I am so sorry for what I did to him..." When he saw my father crying like that, he felt the need to tell us that Toru had been baptized, and that is when the thought came to him from heaven. So I gathered up my courage and said, "Toru believed in Jesus, got baptized, and became a resident of heaven. So it's all right!"

Hearing these words, my father suddenly stopped crying and said with a surprised look on his face, "Is that so? Toru was baptized by the pastor, wasn't he?" Then, my father said something surprising. He said, "If Toru has done so much for me, I should ask the pastor who baptized him to come to the funeral..."

Originally, the funeral was a Buddhist family service, but Pastor Saito's encouragement was added to the program, and in addition, the cremation service was to be celebrated at the crematorium. Pastor Saito

said, "No one is without suffering. God is the one who turns suffering into hope. Toru-san may have had many hard and painful days here on earth, but let us remember that he is now at peace with Jesus in heaven," he said in a message filled with comfort.

Thank you so much to the humorous Toru-san, who loved Coke, ramen noodles, and the Bee Gees, for showing us a wonderful miracle at the end of his life. Rest in the bosom of Jesus!

Akira Nakata

Urawa Evangelical Free Church Congregation
Reporter, Inochi no Kotoba Christian Newspaper



Urawa Evangelical Free Church

I am strong when I am weak

Looking back since 2005, when MyBible was first published, almost 15 years have passed.

The author, Mr. Kamachi, was always praying in the front row of the cathedral, dignified and unchanged, and his father was once next to him. I can't tell you how many times I was made to straighten up my residence by the sight of his back...

I am sure that Mr. Kamachi's unwavering trust in God is the reason behind the publication of MyBible over such a long period of time.

With the support of many words, we welcomed the Lord's resurrection with joy and peace again this year.

During Lent (the 40 days before Easter) , I was invited to the grace of Bishop Yoshinao Otsuka of the



Inside the cathedral, Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church

Diocese of Kyoto to participate in a silent meditation on the theme of "Humility Following Takayama Ukon".

Takayama Ukon lived a life of deep faith as a Christian feudal lord during the Warring States period and was therefore forced to live a life filled with hardship. Despite repeated trials, Ukon gave up his position and honor, but still testified of his faith and became a small man before God.

He ended his life in Manila without choosing a place of rest due to Hideyoshi Toyotomi's decree to expel Jesuit missionaries. It makes us wonder what kind of faith enabled Ukon, who was also a capable military commander, to follow the path he believed in even while giving up everything he had.

I cannot compare Ukon with my own life of peace and tranquility, but he is a source of pride and a powerful guide to me, a Japanese who has passed through time and lives in the present.

I think we can all agree that Ukon's trust in God is unquestionable. Four hundred long years later, in 2016, he was finally recognized as a "blessed person".

This meditation, however, focused on the struggle

against the sin of arrogance. It was limited to knowledge, judgment, decision, and confidence within one's own power, and it shared with Peter, who betrayed Jesus three times, that he was limited in his faith.

What comes to mind for me is the sin of "arrogance," which is visible and hidden many times if we allow ourselves to be a bit careless. It is like a shadow that always clings to us in our daily lives. How often we criticize others, hurt others, and judge others just because we think we are right!

Even after we have performed "Sacrament of Forgiveness" (Confession) and renewed our minds, the thoughts of arrogance that spring up like a fountain soon afterward are a test that we will have to face as long as we live.

However, through this meditation meeting, I realized that I am poor and powerless before God, and I am convinced that I can follow the way of life of Blessed Takayama Ukon, stumbling again and again but stopping, and then reforming myself. I was convinced that I could follow the life of Blessed Takayama Ukon, who stumbled many times, but stopped and was convinced that I could be converted. The Lord re-

plied, "My grace is sufficient for you. In weakness is the fullness of power." Therefore, I will rather rejoice greatly and boast in my weakness so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Corinthians 12.9) For as these words indicate, "I am strong when I am weak."

Takako Sakano

Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church Congregation

Obedience of Faith

Yashi was born on January 3, 1911 (Meiji 44), the eldest daughter of Naonosuke Kikuchi and Taki. Her father, a drapery merchant, stopped this and became a pastor evangelizing Jesus Christ. Yashi was prepared to face the harsh economic environment of a pioneering evangelistic family, and she lived the rest of her life as a true devotee.

When Yash was in school for girls, he said, "If a grain of wheat does not fall to the ground and die, it remains a grain. But if it dies, it bears abundant fruit." (John 12.24) These words were engraved on Yashi's heart. While helping out at home and taking care of her younger brother and sister, Yashi attended a girls' school. After graduating from the girls' school, Yashi dreamed of becoming a doctor, and when she told her father about her dream, he advised her, "It is not possible in my house, you should work and make your brother or sister a doctor." Since her father's brother was also a doctor, Yashi wanted to borrowed money from her uncle's house and said she wanted to enter

medical school. However, her father said, "Do not depend on God and do not depend on others. When you depend on others, you will not be able to return glory to God later on." Yashi graduated from the University of Tokyo with a degree in nursing and chose to work as a midwife. Yashi was blessed for following the Word and becoming a grain of wheat.

The Lord said, "Trust in the Lord your God. Then you will be protected. Believe in the prophets of the Lord. Do this, and you will succeed." (Chronicles 20.20)

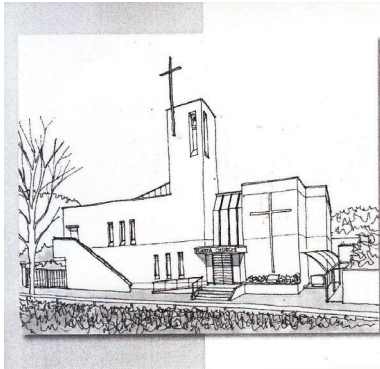
Yashi was later assigned as head midwife at Peking University Hospital. She worked for her younger brother and sister, and when she returned to Japan, she helped her sister "Ruiko" become a doctor. At Fukaya Church at that time, they prayed for 40 years, the same number of years it took the Israelites to enter the land of Canaan after their journey to Exodus, in order to have even one doctor who believed in God's healing. In the 1960s, one doctor was given to Ruiko.

God blessed Yashi greatly, and Yashi's work at Fukaya Church was remarkable. After the hospital was established as Kikuchi Hospital, the Lord blessed both Yashi and Ruiko, and the hospital grew with yearly additions and renovations.

Yashi did not have a room of his own, but slept at night among the patients and became a person trusted by them, but he was too busy.

Yashi was also a dedicated man. When Pastor Yoshiyasu Kobayashi told him to dedicate the land he had purchased for the construction of the hospital to the church because it was a prime piece of land, he immediately and simply said "Yes".

God sometimes speaks through men, and Yash grasped this firmly. And Mary answered, "I am the Lord's Handmaid. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1.38) , Yashi Together, Yashi and Ruiko offered scholarships to those who would become devotees and medical professionals for the next 100 years. As a result, Fukaya Church received an astounding blessing from the Lord with more than 7 midwives and nurses, 4 pas-



Fukaya Church of Christ Convention of Japan

tors, and 11 doctors. In response to my prayer to give one or more doctors who believe in God's healing, God gave Fukaya Church, founded in 1916, more than 11 doctors. One of them is me.

Listen to me, you who have been carried by me since you were in your mother's womb, you who have been carried by me since you were in your belly. I am he until you are old. I will carry you until you are gray. I make, I bear, I carry. I will carry, and I will save. (Isaiah 46.3-4)

When Yash became old, he had no inconvenience, and his caregivers read the Bible to him daily, giving him a taste of heaven on earth.

As Yashi's legacy, he had no material inheritance, but as a legacy of faith, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matthew 6.33) . This is a testimony that God lives in us, as it is the way of life in which we live with God as the first, and that "the measuring rope has fallen into a good place for my sake. Truly, the transfers I have received are wonderful" (Psalm 16.6) , Yashi became the one to confess that he had inherited the best inheritance in the world from God.

The death of Yash, who had been faithful to the Lord, became "something to be regretted in the day of

the Lord" (Psalm 116.15) . Please, O Lord, let Yash be as you promised in your word: "To those who love the Lord and keep his commands, he will keep his covenant and be gracious to them, and he will be gracious to them to a thousand generations." (Deuteronomy 7.9) .

Senior Pastor Teruhiko Hobo
Fukaya Church of Christ Convention of Japan
Doctor of Kikuchi Hospital, Shinyukai Medical
Corporation
References Fukaya Church 100th Anniversary
Magazine

The Word and the voice of God given at that time

As we began the process of selecting the next Japanese delegate to the International Navigator, and we all began praying about who we wanted to represent us, someone said to me, "Many people think you are the next representative, you know." I was shocked because I had been thinking of someone else who was more suitable. I wondered what would happen to the students in Sendai if I was really chosen as the representative, would I have to move to Tokyo, and before that, would someone like me be able to do such an important work?" At the same time, I was grateful for the many people who were thinking and praying for me.

Three months before the general meeting to elect representatives, a survey was made to those involved and several of the responses mentioned my name. When I saw this, I wondered what God thought, although I could know some of people's opinions, so I read the Bible seeking His will, and the Lord spoke and showed me the words of Isaiah 41:9-10.

I brought you out from the ends of the earth, and called you out from the corners of the earth, saying.

You are my servant.

I have chosen you and have not turned you away.

Do not be afraid. I am with you.

Do not be afraid. I am your God.

I will give you strength and be your help,

I will be your support with my righteous right hand.

From this word, I wanted to believe that the Lord would choose me, be with me, strengthen me, help me, and sustain me, but after prayer and discussion with my wife, we decided to write other people's names.

At the general meeting, when the ballots were handed out to elect representatives, I was about to write the name of the person my wife and I had discussed, when the Lord said, "Write your own name." And the words of Isaiah came to me, and without thinking, I wrote my own name and voted.

The result was that the majority of the votes were for me. This method of selection does not end once, but continues until everyone agrees on one name. Af-

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ter the first vote, I was asked to speak and I told them that I had voted by writing my name and the words of Isaiah that were given to me. Another vote was taken and I was elected as a representative.

Thus, through the Lord's mysterious guidance, I was given the role of a representative of the International Navigators, and I began my work as a representative two years ago.

Most of my work during these two years was work that I had never done before, and I made many mistakes, but I experienced the prayers and help of many people, and above all, God strengthened and

helped me as He promised in Isaiah.

In fact, my wife and I were the two navigators' representatives, and we were told that "if two of you unite your hearts in one desire on earth, our Father who is in heaven will fulfill it" (Matthew 18.19) , we have experienced praying



International Navigator U.S.
International Headquarters

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together as a couple and discussing and helping each
other to seek the Lord's will more than ever before.

I hope that we can continue to seek the Lord's will
even more and work to bring the "Gospel of Jesus"
and the "Kingdom of God" to Japan, and to train the
next generation of workers.

International Navigator was started by an Ameri-
can, Dawson Trotman, to do the work of making dis-
ciples of Christ. At one time it was responsible for the
ministry of following up on saved people at evangelis-
tic meetings organized by Rev. Billy Graham, and its
materials are still used today. With the philosophy of
"Know Christ, make Him known, help others grow,
and those who have been helped, help others in the
same way," Navigator continues to train workers to be
disciples of Christ throughout the world.

Representative Director Tooru Ogawa
International Navigator
Japan Association of Evangelical Christian Churches,
Izumi Christ Church Congregation

A Life Dedicated to the Lord

When he was in the third grade of elementary school, Pastor Hiroshi Seo led him to church school at a public bathhouse. When I went to church, I felt God's holiness, warmth, and brightness, and I attended church every week.

I was very fond of science, and during my adolescence I felt conflicted with my faith. That was because I could not believe in the miracles of the Bible.

During my sophomore year of college, I reached a dead end in my faith and decided to stop going to church that summer. During summer vacation, I was on a boat returning to my hometown and read the words of Ephesians 2.8-9 in a booklet. "It is not by your own strength, but it is a gift from God. It is not based on anything you do. This is so that no one may boast in himself."

When I read these words, a strange thing happened. It was as if a curtain was opened and morning light shone through. You cannot know God by your own understanding or effort, and you cannot believe in God. I was made to realize that faith in God is something that God blesses us with. In the middle of the

night, I went up on the deck of an empty ship and prayed. The sea and sky were black and the wind was blowing. I prayed. "Lord God, are you there? Are You there?" Then I heard a voice say, "Yes." I cowered in fear and felt something hot inside me.

After that, I began to testify and evangelize as if I was a changed person. I formed a Bible study group in the university and evangelized to the students. My message was very simple: "God exists." Students came, believed, and some became pastors. That experience has led me to where I am today.

People gathered in marriage and home worship services, which eventually grew into a church. I was involved in product and technology development of electronic devices at the company and earned a PhD in engineering in the field of electronic physics. I served in top management of the intellectual property department via the head of the research institute. While working for the company, I also taught electronic device theory and analysis at the university level.

Alongside, I was evangelizing and pastoring. For many years, I had a desire to be involved in the Lord's

work full time; in 2015, at the age of 60, I resigned his corporate contract and his contract as a university lecturer to prepare for full-time worker ministry. That year, T&M (Discipleship Training & Church Multiplication, church multiplication through discipleship training) program of One Mission Society (OMS, a missionary organization headquartered in the U.S.) was introduced to me by Steve Duhrkoop. The content overlapped with mission, vision, strategy, and management as concepts I was engaged in business. I believe that my encounter with T&M and the missionary organization OMS was God's leading.

For three years, 2016-2018, I received annual T&M Launch, Develop and Coaching training in Greenwood, Indiana, where OMS headquarters is located. Since 2017, with Bob & Suzanne Warren of OMS have been conducting T&M seminars in Shikoku, Hokkaido, Kikai, Okinawa, and Tokyo. Kochi Grace Church and Kikai Christ Church are growing in



OMS Headquarters in the U.S.

T & M . In 2019, with Pastor Saeki of Kochi Grace Church, we

began a seminar in Japanese only, with 144 pastors and leaders attending in February and March.

Seminars are scheduled every month until March 2020. We believe that this activity will spread throughout Japan and promote deliverance, discipleship training, and church multiplication.

In March 2018, I went on my first mission to Brazil. Coordinated by my friend Missionary Edson, I did missionary work in various places, visiting three times during the past year for a total of two months, with a total of 5,000 people gathered and 500 people confessed their faith. The work of the Spirit is remarkable, accompanied by healing and miraculous works along with the Spirit of salvation.

This is a wonderful glory of the Lord and joy of the people, but even with the salvation of the soul, a person's faith is weakened if he or she does not become a disciple of Christ. Jesus' missionary command is disciple-making. Disciple begets disciple, and the goal is for all the nations to become disciples of Christ, and T&M supports that. I dedicate my life to the Lord for His disciple-making.

Missionary Hideki Kina

One Mission Society

Hand-Off Mission

How can we call upon Him whom we have never believed? How can we believe in Him whom we have never heard? How can we hear if we have no one to proclaim? How can we preach unless He sends us?" (Romans 10.14)

As Paul said, in order for salvation to come to each one of us, we need someone who is sent by God to proclaim, and we need to hear what he has to say and call out to him, believing in the Lord.

The work of mission has continued uninterruptedly over the past 2000 years, and the gospel, which had been preached orally, was eventually translated into writing and then into print and spread throughout the world. It is now being conveyed in more diverse ways through a variety of media. However, no matter what media are used to carry it, the work of preaching is still the same as it was in Paul's time. Faith and salvation, like missions, have always been handed down from person to person.

At the beginning of His ministry, the Lord said, "Follow me. I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4.19)

He told Peter and Andrew, and He also called the brothers James and John to come to Him, in order to hand the gospel directly to them as they walked together toward the death of the cross and the resurrection.

The gospel was handed to the disciples by Jesus, and that gospel is none other than the Word of God made flesh, Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God. The salvation of mankind was realized only when the Word of God became man, and this is also the event in which the gospel was handed to man by the Word of God becoming flesh and becoming man. This happens in the same way when we try to preach the gospel. If we try to convey words that have not become flesh, they will only resonate in vain. It is necessary to pass on words that have been absorbed into the body. Words that animate and animate the one who proclaims them, words that are imbedded in the body, have the power to bring about faith.

Paul said of his ministry, "The world is surrounded by the wisdom of God, but it has not come to know God by its own wisdom. Therefore, God decided it would be better to save those who believe by the foolishness of missionary work." (1 Corinthians 1.21)

Is missionary work a foolish means? Considering that missionary work is a hand-off, it is certainly not an efficient method. There will be misunderstandings, misunderstandings, and stumbling blocks. There are probably some faiths that could not be handed over. Why was the means of missionary work chosen in spite of this?

The last thing God wanted to hand over through His mission was our salvation, that we might live the eternal life given to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Eternal life is revealed in the image of God's life, the life of the communion of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The eternal life that Jesus brought is the life of communion. This is clearly manifested in the first community born of faith in the res-



Catholic Diocese of Niigata Bishop's Palace
(Courtyard)

urrection of Jesus. In the Gospel of John, after Jesus' death, the disciples closed the doors of their

homes in disappointment and fear. They could not live in fellowship. But, when they began to walk in faith in the resurrection, they "all became one" and "with one heart" were "breaking bread" and "praising God," the Acts of the Apostles notes. (Acts 2.42-47)

By believing, the disciples received eternal life, which is fellowship. Eternal life was transmitted through the communion of God and man, man with man. Life can only be transmitted through communion. This is also why the mission of handing from person to person was necessary.

Just as the seemingly foolish cross was the most appropriate way for man's salvation, the seemingly foolish way of mission is the most appropriate way to convey the most precious eternal life.

Priest Kouichi Ootaki

Secretary General of the Catholic Diocese of Niigata

Life is Determined by Encounters with God and People

He has three previous convictions and a total of 20 years in prison. While in prison, he had an encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ and was converted. I took Mother Teresa as her mother in faith through her interaction with the sisters of the "Missionaries of Divine Love." After my release from prison, I founded the "Motherhouse," a private non-profit organization, to practice true love and forgiveness. Since then, I have been sharing Jesus Christ along with caring for inmates and released prisoners.

In May 2014, we officially launched Motherhouse as a non-profit organization and are currently working on correspondence (love letter project) with approximately 750 inmates nationwide and supporting more than 50 people who have been released from prison.

Although we provide support to victims and perpetrators of crime, few places are willing to open their doors to the stories of former prisoners who have turned, and there is a noticeable indifference. As love begins with knowing and "if it is not accompanied by deeds, it is itself dead" (James 2.17) , any faith or church

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that is not accompanied by actions is a dying state.

The "Maria Café" of Motherhouse, a non-profit organization in Sumida-ku, Tokyo, is where former inmates released from prison brew coffee and sell it for 100 yen. This is a place where they can find a place to stay, interact with many people, and build a foundation for their lives.

To prevent recidivism, a solid foundation is necessary. To do this, they need a place where they can feel "alive, kept alive, and connected," and a place for each of them is the Motherhouse, where Christ is present.

As Christ teaches, those without a foundation are likely to crumble, so the Motherhouse supports those inmates who truly desire to return to society and who put this into practice.

In prisons, there is prison work, but the reward is only 5 yen an hour for an apprentice worker, with a maximum of 50 yen. Many inmates have no one to turn to or place to stay once they get out of prison and have



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no place to connect with society. If former inmates become isolated and stuck in life with no income, some will turn to crime again, so Motherhouse also provides employment support to help them return to society.

Motherhouse has been able to provide a helping hand in this situation, and after their reentry into society, they also provide handyman services such as selling coffee, cleaning, moving, etc.

In my childhood, my family did not love me very much, and I was a bit of a gregarious child in junior high school. Nowadays, there are news stories of child abuse and adults nagging children at home and in the church. As Jesus said, "Do not stop the little children from coming to me" (Mark 10.14) , I believe that children should be given more freedom.

After his third arrest, while in prison, he came across the Bible and books about Mother Teresa and read these devouringly, asked a chaplain who visited him in prison to teach him about Christianity, began correspondence with priests and sisters, and was baptized in the Catholic Church after his release from prison.

Based on my experience in prison, we are asking inmates to donate their personal books that they have

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finished reading as a used book donation. One organization sells these books and receives a portion of these proceeds as a donation, which is then used to provide livelihood support to those released from prison and to help victims of crime. We hope that this used book donation will make people feel that our actions are helping someone else and that we should think about the other person, because the thought of "as long as it's good enough for me" leads to crime. This kind of thinking cannot be fostered when one is in prison.

Based on the words, "Let us love one another, not only by words and words, but also by deeds and truth" (1 John 3.18) , we offered the "Mass for Prisoners" on October 13, 2018 at the Main Cathedral of Kojimachi Catholic Church so that prisoners will be guided to salvation. The celebrant is grateful to the following.

Main Officiant Archbishop Isao Kikuchi
Archbishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Tokyo
Co-officiant: Pope's Ambassador Joseph Cenotto

Hiroshi Igarashi
Member of St. Ignatius Catholic Church, Kojimachi, Tokyo
President, Motherhouse, a non-profit organization

Being Lived as an Orthodox Christian

I believed that nothing was insurmountable through hard work, but one day in my mid-40s, I found myself in a situation where I could not rely on others or even myself.

I had been going to church from time to time since I was young. I had even thought about getting baptized, but something was holding me back. I had been learning Russian as a hobby, having developed a love for Russian literature, and without much expectation, I went to the Nikolayoi Hall for the first time.

Somewhere in the midst of the unaccompanied chants and prayers, the time came when the bread and wine were replaced by the Eucharist and Precious Blood of Christ (Christ), and the congregation knelt in unison, and I followed suit. I followed suit. At that moment, all anxiety fell from my shoulders. I felt as if I had been told, "Leave everything to me," and I decided to be baptized right then and there. The young priest laughed and said, "Don't panic, study slowly," and the study continued for a year.

We began with the Nicene-Constantinian Creed (Credo Apostolic Creed) , which is the basis of the doctrine, and then moved on to the Eucharistic rite (a service on Sundays and church feasts. We spent time learning about the bread and wine being transformed into the Eucharist and Precious Blood of the Lord, which the believers are to partake of) , the meaning of the drawing of the cross, the church calendar, and so on. At the same time, we were taught that it was important to participate in the Eucharistic rite, that is, "knowledge" and "experience.

One day, after teaching the importance of remembering to pray, the priest told us this allegory.

A bishop, a man of virtues and respected by the world, was crossing the lake by boat. When the bishop learned from the boat passengers that there were three hermits on a small island who had completely renounced the world to serve God, he was eager to meet them. When the bishop arrived at the island in a boat provided by the captain, he was met by three people with full-length hair and beards and dressed in garments spelled with leaves of trees. The bishop was moved and asked, "How are they praying?" The three of them shouted in unison. "You are three, we are three!" The bishop felt sorry for them and taught

them, at least, the "Lord's Prayer" (Lord's Prayer, Our Father who art in Heaven.....) . The three who finally learned were very happy and the bishop's heart was filled with joy as he returned to the ship. That night, terror struck the ship. "Monsters, lake monsters!" When the bishop went out on deck, he saw three lights running across the surface of the lake at a tremendous speed. When they stopped just in front of the bishop, he saw that they were the three hermits. "Bishop, I have forgotten my prayer! Tell me again," said the bishop, kneeling down and worshipping the three of them. "You may leave it as it is. Pray for me in my sinfulness." Tears streamed down the bishop's cheeks. The three turned and walked back to the island.

When Father finished telling this story, I was crying. This experience is one of the origins of my faith.

* "You also three" means the Most Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) .

After my baptism, my difficulties in life were resolved with God's help. Later, my husband was also baptized. A few years later, my husband passed away, but he showed me how to be a holisteannin (Christian) until the end. It was truly "the latter became first."

The Lord taught me through various events that after my husband's death, there is a connection that transcends life and death.

Two years ago, I was in a monastery in Kosovo. I was asked by a priest, "Why did you become Orthodox?" and I wasn't sure how to answer. Not only because of my lack of English skills, but also because I felt that whatever I said would be out of line with the essence of the question. When I returned to Japan and thought about it again, I realized that I should answer, "My sins were so deep that I could not be saved unless I became an Orthodox Christian," and I was filled with gratitude. As the first verse of the prayer I read on the morning of my reception of the Holy Eucharist says, "Where sin abounds, Thy grace abounds more and more."

The unity of life and faith based on the Church calendar is a characteristic of the Orthodox Church. Morning and evening prayers are according to the prayer book, which is a compilation of the prayers of the Holy Fathers. The reason for not praying in one's own words is to avoid the intrusion of ego. Abandoning the self and burrowing into obscurity is "humility,"

which is the "ornament of the Orthodox". Our most important prayer is very simple. "Lord Iesus Haristos, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner."

* Iisus Haristos refers to Jesus Christ. Being a church of apostolic tradition, ancient Greek is often used. Also, in the Orthodox Church, just the word "priest" is considered an expression of respect, and it is common for priests to be married.

Akiko Suzumura

Tokyo Resurrection Cathedral Church Congregation



Tokyo Resurrection Cathedral Church
(Nikolaïdo)

I am God's instrument

I was the youngest of six children, and by the time I can remember, my older brothers and sisters were in school and not at home during the day. When I expressed to my mother that I wanted to go to school too, she took me to a new kindergarten that had just opened near our house. It was a Catholic kindergarten with a large garden and an Italian priest who sang very well. That was my first encounter with the church.

At the kindergarten, we were taught stories and songs of Jesus, and although the landscape still bore the scars of the postwar period, it was as if we were living in a dream.

When I entered elementary school, I became good friends with Junko Morisaki, who lived nearby. Junko-chan's family was a devoted Catholic family. One day, Junko-chan told me, "A priest is coming to my house to speak, and I want your mother to come too." I went home and told my mother about this. I was relieved and told Junko-chan that my mother would go. When I returned home from school that day, I found

that our guests had arrived. I asked my mother, "Why won't you go to Junko's house when you promised!" As soon as she replied, "I can't go because a guest is coming," I said, "I really need you to go!" and she started crying. My mother was troubled because I was crying forever, and my brother, who is a college student, came home. When my mother told him what had happened, he said, "Then I'll go to your house," and he went to Junko-chan's house.

When my brother heard Father's story, he was very shocked. He wrote about this in detail in the "Meguro Salesian Church 50th Anniversary Book". After that, he started going to church every week to listen to Father's story, and a year later, without his parents' permission, he was baptized. After that, my brother invited Father to our home to listen to him, and a year later, my mother, sister, and I received the grace of baptism. A year later, my mother, sister, and I were baptized, followed by my sister and, shortly before his death, my father. My parents are now resting in peace at the Catholic cemetery in Fuchu.

Even now, more than 50 years have passed since then, I still have vivid flashbacks of that time in my

mind. I feel God's plan that "He planned it in advance to be realized in Christ" (Ephesians 1.9) . God used me as a tool in a truly mysterious way.

My life would not have been the same without my encounter with Junko-chan, and without the fact that "there is a time for everything under heaven, and a season for every activity." (Koheler 3.1) If my brother had not returned to our home that day, I am sure my life would be different now.

I will continue to devote myself as God's instrument
for the realization of His Kingdom.

Chieko Houjou

Member of Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church



Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church Baptismal
font in the cathedral

My Ending Note

As for how I came to the Catholic faith, it was in 1954 (Showa 29) that I received the grace of baptism. This was largely due to the influence of my younger sister, Chieko, who was in her second year of college when I was a sophomore and she was in Salesian kindergarten. The head of the kindergarten was Father Dalhuiol, who came to teach an introductory course in Christianity at the home of a believer near our house.

And we were baptized on Christmas Day of that year. At that time, the cathedral shown in the photo had just been completed, and our baptism was the first baptism in the cathedral. The cathedral was named the "Santa Maria of Edo" Cathedral after the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, which Father Sidocci brought to the cathedral that year, which was discovered by chance. The real holy painting is a national treasure and is housed in the National Museum, but this copy is displayed on the small altar of Himonya Church. There are many cathedrals around the world dedicated to Mary, but we believe that Himonya

Church is the only cathedral dedicated to Santa Maria in Edo.

Later, I graduated from university and went to work at the National Institute of Radiological Sciences of the Science and Technology Agency in Chiba City, where I was engaged in radiation measurement and physics and engineering research on medical applications of radiation. I also studied at the Department of Medical Physics at the University of Leeds in England for two and a half years from April 1960, which took me away from Himonya Church for a little while. After getting married, I commuted from my current home in Meguro to the National Institute of Radiological Sciences in Inage-ku, Chiba City until my retirement at the age of 60. During that time, I served as a church committee member of Himonya Church, a caretaker of the youth association, and the president of the Joseph Society (mature members' association). I am now 85 years old and have retired from all church positions.

Recently, perhaps because of my age, my physical strength has deteriorated and I can hardly help out anymore, but I pray to God that I will be able to attend the Lord's Day Mass as long as my health permits.

My recent activities are related to the radiation leakage caused by the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant during the Great East Japan Earthquake eight years ago. I have a great interest in this issue because I have been engaged in research on the medical use of radiation. The Fukushima accident has had a tremendous impact on the Japanese public regarding the health effects of radiation. Many of you may have heard of the term "sievert" for the first time.

The problem is the spread of radiophobia among the public, the belief that any small amount of radiation is harmful and affects health. Japan is the only nation in the world that has experienced radiation exposure from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and from the Fifth Fukuryu Maru, so to some extent this is unavoidable, but science has proven



Himonya Catholic Church (Salesian)

that small amounts of radiation are not scary. In Japan, we are exposed to over 1 millisievert of ra-

diation per year from cosmic rays and radiation in rocks, and over 4 millisieverts of radiation per year from medical diagnoses. Japan is also known to have the highest medical radiation exposure in the world.

As a radiation expert, I would like to appeal to you that the current radiation dose to the people of Fukushima Prefecture does not cause cancer or other harmful effects. Rather, it is the loss of many lives due to the evacuation that is the problem. Radiation is invisible and has no smell, so we feel afraid of it, but it can be easily measured. Humans have coexisted with radiation since the beginning of our existence on earth.

Currently, the dose limit for the general public is 1 millisievert per year, but we hope that people will know that exceeding this limit is not scary, and we hope to reduce the reputational damage caused by Fukushima as much as possible. In the future, I believe it is first necessary to educate medical students about the correct risks of radiation.

Takeshi Iinuma

Member of Himonya Catholic Church

Living in God's Will

Ever since I can remember, I have been immersed in the Christian world. My mother took me and my older sister to Katase Catholic Church, where I was baptized at the age of three at Christmas. My mother, who had grown up in a temple, seemed to be convinced that this was the one when she encountered a Bible course during the turmoil of the postwar period. I then went to a mission school right next door from kindergarten through high school. I prayed in the morning, at noon, and at dismissal from school, spent Saturday afternoons in church school, and attended Mass without fail on Sundays with my mother and sister. What I am especially grateful for is that my parents gave me a life of living with God from the beginning.

When I started attending college in Tokyo, I realized for the first time that most of the people there were strangers to Christ. My friends were good people, but I felt something was missing, and my days were ordinary in an environment that was completely different from the one I was used to. As I spent my time

absorbed in finding a job, getting married, and raising my children, I gradually found myself drifting away from God. I felt as if I had forgotten something and was not at ease if I did not attend Sunday Mass. I was feeling a sense of emptiness after losing a great source of support when I met a priest who was assigned to Katase Church and found a ray of light.

He was a very loving and humane person, and He was very enthusiastic about giving Bible classes and inviting everyone to attend. He gave me a place to learn, even though I was baptized as an infant and had only acquired sensory perception. Gradually, I began to look forward to the weekly lectures, and as I studied them diligently, I realized how lax my faith had been up until then. "What have you not received that you have?" (1 Corinthians 4.7) I realized once again that everything I had was a gift from God. There were days when I did not think of God, the Creator of all things and the absolute Lord of existence, even once a day. It was truly God's will that He did not abandon me or forsake me, but led me back to conversion.

Father is very passionate about missions, and each member of the congregation is a part of the mission,

and Christ must always be present in our thoughts and actions on a daily basis. He also tells us to always ask in our hearts what Christ would do.

And this we do, people around us may see and come to know Christ. And if we are weak and find it difficult to do it on our own, we should have time to pray every day, surrender ourselves to God and ask for help, and pray constantly. He talked happily with us, sharing his own experience with us.

Another story that stuck out to me was that we should be mindful of our relationships with others. For me, I used to think that faith was to some extent a relationship between myself and God, but as it says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18.20) , God is pleased if we all join our hearts together and pray as one. "What you did to my brother, one of the least of these, you did to me" (Matthew 25.40) . I realized many things from Father, who is practicing it himself, about the importance of treating even the most troublesome people as if they were Christ. It seems that God always works through people when He accomplishes something.

The more I savor the words of the Bible, the more I feel my own inadequacy, and while repeatedly asking God for forgiveness, I pray and seek every day to gradually become more like Christ.

Momoko Hagiwara
Member of Katase Catholic Church



Catholic Katase Church

Watched over by the Lord

When I was in the fourth grade, my older sister, who went to a girl's school, used to sing the hymn "Merciful" loudly at home, and I liked the lyrics so much that it became my favorite song.

The town I lived in was on the outskirts of Takamatsu City, and at the time there were no churches in the area, and I wanted to go to church someday.

When I became a working adult, a friend invited me to a tent evangelism meeting in this town. There were about seven missionaries from a group called "Teem" who lived in Takamatsu City at the tent evangelism. This meeting lasted about a week, after which the first "Foshozan Christ Church" was born here in Foshozan Town.

The pastor was a missionary called David Martin, and the service was held every Sunday in the reception of the former junior high school principal's house, with about 30 people in attendance. Mr. Martin spoke about sin in very good Japanese.

He often said in his worship sermons that to have a heart of hatred is to have the same sin as a murderer

before God, because if you have a heart of hatred for others, your hatred will gradually increase and you will want to kill people. He said that if you die with sin in your heart, you will not go to heaven.

He told us that Jesus Christ, who had no sin, bore our sins, took our place, hung on the cross, and bled and died. Believing this, in July 1960, I was baptized along with several of my brothers and sisters at a pond a short distance from the church.

After my marriage, my father-in-law, with whom I lived, told me that he did not like Christianity, so I silently went to a church near where I married until my first daughter was born.

After that, I moved to Osaka and one year later my first son was born, but I did not go to church and read the Bible at home. I realized that my baby son could not attend the dedication ceremony at church, and I prayed, "God, please help my first son to be a useful person for you when he grows up.

Later, when we moved from Osaka to Yao City, my oldest son was invited by a friend to a Christian meeting. Then, we attended a newly built church three houses down from our house, and my eldest son be-

lieved in Jesus and was baptized. I had not been to church for a long time, so I felt that God was telling me that if there was a church near here, I would be able to go.

I always prayed for my husband to have a good witness as a Christian and for him to be saved as well.

When our oldest son graduated from college, he got a job at a bank in Tokyo, but he wanted to devote himself, so he left the bank he had worked so hard to get into to go to Trinity Seminary in Chicago, USA. At that time, I thought about how I had prayed for my eldest son to be useful to God. I thanked God that He is the one who remembers my prayer properly.

Our oldest son graduated from seminary, got married, and then returned home. The eldest son and his



New Creation Church

wife were not given a child, so they went to see a major hospital, and it seemed difficult for them to be given a

child. Later, I was welcomed as the head pastor of a church in Sakai City. I went to a hospital that this church member introduced me to, and one year later my first daughter was given to me. I thanked God that He led me to this church and also gave me a grandchild.

My husband also started going to the church that is three doors down from our house on his own. When our grandson was born, he was not in very good health, but he wanted to go to church with our oldest son, and then he started listening to the sermons of our oldest son. When my husband's health began to deteriorate, I was baptized by my eldest son on the hospital bed where he was hospitalized. Three months later, he was called to heaven, and his funeral service was held with his eldest son officiating.

It had been 10 years since my husband's death, and as I was at home alone, my eldest son asked me to move to Ichikawa, Chiba to live with him. I believe that our family must preach to the many people in Ichikawa who do not yet know God.

As we enter our third year in Ichikawa, we pray that salvation will come to many people who do not yet know Jesus.

Do not dwell on what has gone before. Behold, I am doing a new thing. Do you not know that even now it is budding? I will indeed make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43.18-19)

Mitsuko Miyoshi

New Creation Church Congregation

Ichikawa Breakfast Prayer Meeting

Missionary Nuns of Bellis Merses

800 Years of the Order of Merses

The year 2018 marked the 800th anniversary of the birth of the Order of Merses in Spain and the official papal approval of the founding of the Order in 1218. Let's retrace these steps.

The Western World in the 12th and 13th Centuries was a Time of Change

From the late 12th to the 13th century, the Western world underwent major changes in its economy, culture, social conditions, and the lives of its citizens. The manor-centered agricultural economy that had existed until then gradually experienced a commercial revival, accompanied by the establishment of cities and the growth of remote trade on the Mediterranean Sea.

These social changes also brought about changes in people's lives and ways of thinking. An example of this is the rise of the money economy, the widening gap between rich and poor, and the concern of people to follow Christ's example of poverty. This resulted in major

changes in the history of the Church and monasticism.

Controversy over poverty also arose, especially in southern France, and the struggle between orthodoxy and heresy and theological controversy continued for many years.

In the midst of this controversy, the presence and actions of St. Francis of Assisi, as evidenced by his publicly giving away all of his possessions when his father, a merchant, publicly chastised him for his actions, the spirituality of poverty (*relationship between God and man*) both won people's hearts and created rifts among them.

The Birth of the Order of the Mendicants



Coat of arms of the Society for the Pledge (Esqd.)

The spirit of following Christ's poverty gave birth to a new order called the Order of the Mendicants, which denied or restricted individual property rights, but still believed that it was good to hold property as a religious order.

Like St. Francis and

his companions, the Dominicans, who took to the streets to bring God's word to the people, generated enormous energy in this century. These two societies and others like them were called mendicant orders.

The mendicant orders are represented by the Franciscans and Dominicans, but many other orders were born with this characteristic, even though their numbers were small, and this way of life and way of being was pioneering for the times.

The founding of the Franciscans and Dominicans changed the way of religious life, and a new type of religious order emerged, which was a significant change from the previous way of life of the Benedictines and others. This was a period of great change in the way the Church was and the way religious life was based on the changes in the Western world. Various church history writings even describe these congregations, which demonstrated this new religious life, as "the great mendicant congregations". In fact, the existence of the Mendicants brought about a historic reformation in the history of religious life, and it is fair to say that all subsequent congregations were influenced by them.

Birth of the Order of Knights

In addition to this, a society called the Order of Knights was born, in which knights became monks in order to practice the justice of Christ in the world. The nature of this order changed with the times, and at one time it was associated with the Crusades. In modern times, it remains as an entity that honors the defense of Christ's righteousness.

Gospel proclamation close to the people

A simple way to describe the aspect of this change is that in the past, there was a clear gap between the people and the clergy and laity in society, but in this era, it became not uncommon for the clergy to go before the people to preach the gospel and receive personal spiritual guidance. Of course, not all congregations were reformed with the advent of congregations that represented the new way of life of this era.

The Birth of the Society of Merses

In 1218, the Society of Merses was born. It was founded by a Frenchman named Petro Nolasco, with the support and assistance of the kings and bishops

of today's Barcelona. It was a knightly and mendicant order.

The Order of Merses acted in search of new solutions to the greatest problems of the Iberian Peninsula during this period, using the evangelical method.

Practicing the Word concretely

Specifically, the Gospel of John 15:9-13 says, "This is my law, that you love one another as I have loved you. No man can have greater love than this, to lay down his life for his friends." (Gospel of John 15:9-13)

By putting these words into concrete practice, a congregation was created to liberate those who had been "taken captive" in order to put an end to the long-running conflict.

The battles that appear here are known in history as the Reconquista, a mid-7th century battle in which the Muslim and Arab worlds attempted to conquer the Iberian Peninsula that lasted until the 1st century.

From the Christian point of view, most of the battles were lost, and the majority of the prisoners were taken from the Christian side. On the other hand, even in the midst of warfare, Muslim Arabs and

Christians actively exchanged their cultures and technologies with each other.

On the Christian side, many people were taken captive, that is, enslaved. There was only one way to free these enslaved people. There was only one way to free the enslaved people: to ransom them and take them back. The Christians desperately tried to raise funds and redeem their fellow countrymen, but it was extremely difficult. The Mersesite congregation decided on a second method. If the ransom could not be collected, the members of Merses themselves would take the place of the captives and free those who were suffering in captivity.

Movement to take the place of prisoners of war flourishes

The actions of the Merses Society, which sought to put the Word of Christ into practice as it was, flourished in Barcelona, the birthplace of the Merses Society, and other places. Even today, the emblem of the Merses Society used at this time is everywhere in Barcelona and is still used as the city's coat of arms. From the very beginning, the girls were also involved in this movement. Many of the tasks of raising

awareness of the situation among others, collecting ransom money, and providing the necessary medical attention to those who were recovered, were carried out by the girls.

They also played an active role in caring for those who were freed from slavery and set free. These moves were repeated many times, and it is reported that many times when a knight was unable to ransom himself, he remained in captivity himself, and the number of those who died there was in the thousands.

From the late 13th century onward, warfare shifted from the Muslim side to the Christian side, and in the 15th century Spain drove the Islamic powers from the Iberian Peninsula and established a unified state. Thereafter, "geographical discoveries" turned the eyes of the people of the Iberian Peninsula primarily toward Central and South America.

The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Bellis Merses, which embarked on a new path

During this period, the Society of the Women's Merses, which supported the actions of the knights who existed in various places and received the healing

of the wounded, realized that this role was over and gradually became the Merses Society of Contemplation. The bond with the Men's Merses Society remained unbroken and continued into the 20th century.

The Society of the Contemplation of Women Merses, the basis of our current Society, was founded in the mid-16th century in the cold village of Bellis in northern Spain by a priest and just a few women members. It inherited the fourth vow (the vow of captive redemption, to remain there for others in case of need, even at the risk of losing one's life) handed down from the early male Merses congregation, and by the 20th century the congregation numbered about 100 nuns. Margarita Maria Maturana, who received the



Founder Margarita Maria Maturana

mission from the contemplative life (life in the convent) to mission, reformed the congregation into a missionary order, and in 1924, it received papal approval as the Congregation of Missionary Nuns of Bellis Merses.

Celebrating 800 Years of Founding

In 2018, the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Merses was celebrated together by the Society of Merses for Men and the eight existing families of Merses for Women in various parts of the world.

Pope Francis has sent several messages to this Family. Here is an excerpt from the message he sent on December 8.

"Following Christ is not a matter of method, but a way of life in which He precedes us and determines the rhythm of our steps, both individually and communally. The charism of the Congregation of Merses is a grace that our time needs, and you are called to take on board the questions from the new, redemptive action of service." [hereinafter abbreviated]

Activities of the Missionary Nuns of Bellis Merses

Worldwide Locations

Headquartered in Rome. Spain, Japan, Mexico, Central America, Micronesia, Congo, South America, USA, China, Philippines.

Activities in Japan

Headquarters: Koenji, Suginami-ku, Tokyo.

Branches: Chigasaki, Kanagawa Prefecture; Hatsu-kaichi, Hiroshima Prefecture; 10 monasteries in Hagi, Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Main Apostolate

Educational activities: kindergartens, elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools.

About 65 sisters are working for the care of foreigners, for the camps, for visiting the detainees, for justice and peace, for environmental issues, and for prayer and rest.

September 24 is the Feast of Our Lady of Merses

Our First Patriarch, Blessed Margarita Maria, still exhorts us that there is no greater art than to convey the love of God with the heart of a mother.

Sr Etsuko Ozaki

Missionary Nuns of Bellis Merses

*About the References

There is no particular source material. This is a compilation of what I have heard from various senior members based on some of the materials I have read and some of the materials left in the association.

Society of St. Mary's Nuns

Founder Jeanne de Lestonnac

Jeanne de Lestonnac, founder of the Congregation of the Nuns of St. Mary, responded wholeheartedly to the difficult events in her life as a blessing from God. Her life was a process of self-dedication and transformation that led her to grow and discover the wonder of God's work for her and those around her.

In 1556, Jeanne de Lestonnac was born in Bordeaux, France. This was also the year of the death of Ignatius de Loyola (founder of the Jesuits), a time of religious wars and a crisis in humanism (the idea of caring for human beings).

Her father was a Catholic and her mother a Calvinist, and the religious conflict between her parents caused her to suffer



Society of St. Mary's Nuns Jeanne de Lestonnac

from an early age. Through her prayers to God, she gradually developed a desire for religious life.

God's message to her, "Do not extinguish the torch you have lit in your heart," strengthened her trust in God that even if she could not become a nun right away, her wish would be fulfilled.

She learned about humanism from her uncle Michel Montaigne. On her father's advice, she married Baron Gaston de Montferrand at the age of 17 and had five children. However, at the age of 41, she was widowed by the death of her husband, and later lost her first son in an accident. She watched her second son take over the reins of the family, and in 1603, at the age of 47, she entered a Cistercian monastery, which she had desired since childhood. However, the life of poverty she had diligently pursued took a toll on her health, and after six months, the doctor advised her to leave the convent. In the midst of frustration and anguish, she prayed for God's will.

"God, I heard the Word that You gave me. And I followed that recommendation.Was I wrong though? Or do you have other plans for me? If I am not faithful and do not deserve to stay, I will atone

for everything by suffering. Lord, please speak to me."

In the darkness of despair, she saw young people falling into the perdition of their souls. Then she realized that it would be me who would reach out to these perishing people.

She left the Cistercian order and, encountering many difficulties, founded the Society of St. Mary's Nuns in 1607, the first women's religious order to work for the education of girls, authorized by Pope Paul V. She was the first to be admitted to the Society of St. Mary's Nuns in the United States.

At the beginning of the 17th century, the only women's congregations were hermits (*3) , who had a closed area (*1) and engaged in a contemplative life (*2) . St. Jeanne designed a building that could educate girls by welcoming them into the nunnery, rather than allowing them to leave it, while preserving the previous hermitages. She also tried to create a form of religious life in which women could devote themselves to educational activities as apostles to the extent that their status permitted. Here was born the sign of a new era. The Society of the Nuns of St. Mary was born out of

her frustrations and failures. It began as a convent for women with the spirituality of Ignatius de Loyola.

The Virgin Mary was a source of strength for her, and the foundation of her life, nurtured by the biblical Word, went on to create a grand project in her life.

St. Mary, the whole identity of the Society of the Nuns of St. Mary.

Mary is the perfect model of what we hope for, Mary lived as a poor woman of Nazareth, sharing her hopes and sufferings with her people. Mary was a woman ready to live for God, a woman who received

gifts from God.

"I am the Lord's handmaid. May this be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1.38) As this words,her obedience flexibly accepted the invitation to cooperate with God's plan of salvation. Responding to



Society of St. Mary's Nuns, Statue of Mary

the invitation indicates dedicating oneself to God's plan and living it.

Mary was obedient to Jesus, poor and humble. With unflinching determination, she stood at the foot of the cross, experienced the mystery of the Resurrection, and lived the dynamism of the Gospel, "losing her earthly life in order to gain eternal life." And she herself was transformed by the joy of the resurrection.

In the journey of her life, Mary experienced the Passover of God in the midst of darkness, in the midst of doubt, and in the midst of joy, taking all things into her heart and contemplating them.

Mary was a prophetic woman, proclaiming God's mercy and holiness, and acting throughout history to help the oppressed.

Mary walked with the Church community, and her faith enabled her to walk righteously in service to the realization of the Kingdom of God and in the creation of a new humanity.

Education at the Congregation of the Nuns of St. Mary

The Congregation of the Nuns of St. Mary continues to create a legacy of education through its service to the

Church and society. Specifically, we are in dialogue with reality, constantly developing our educational content and teaching methods, and striving to adequately modernize what is necessary for our time. We have dedicated ourselves to nurturing and educating the foundations of Christian humanism in man, in life, and in the world.

And the following are our educational emphases

- (1) Based on Christian humanism, we nurture the potential of each individual as our founder said, "No one has the same dimensions."
- (2) Effectively enhance the quality of education at each stage of the educational process.
- (3) Contribute to change and improvement in each context, aiming for social responsibility, its development, and education in solidarity.
- (4) To create opportunities for integrative education and the fostering of intercultural experiences beyond the boundaries of classrooms and regulations.
- (5) We work together with others and complement each other.
- (6) Together with our co-workers, we witness and serve the essential values we want to convey through our words and our way of life.

We accompany young people to look for the Lord's call in their reality, to be aware of their gifts, and to respond to the Lord. The evangelization of youth is a top priority of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary.

Evangelization in Japan

In 1959, the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary came to Japan with three sisters from Spain. Later, learning Japanese, supported by other congregations, and with support from St. Mary's nuns abroad, they established a house in Izumi, Suginami, in 1960 and started a dormitory for girls in 1962; by 1965, several sisters from Spain had arrived in Japan; in 1966, in Tokyo, and in 1967, in Chiba, they started a kindergarten in 1966, a kindergarten was started in Tokyo, and in 1967, a kindergarten was started in Chiba.

Our sister schools abroad wanted to establish a school, and each year our graduates asked us to establish an elementary school as soon as possible, so we prepared a plot of land in Chiba for this purpose. However, God led him to help establish Sophia Junior College in Hadano through an encounter with

a Jesuit priest, and in 1973, he opened a student dormitory in Hadano, and has been cooperating with Sophia Junior College in anthropology, languages, etc.

In 1982, we founded a convent in the Philippines. After many twists and turns, the convent now has a kindergarten in Cagayan de Oro, Mindanao, and a dormitory for girls in Manila, where members are engaged in educational activities.

The Congregation of the Sisters of St. Mary has a long tradition as an educational congregation, but since the Second Vatican Council, it has also been involved in the work of helping the poor and oppressed, especially women, to live more human lives.

Since its foundation in France, its activities have spread to Spain and 5 other European countries, 10 countries in Latin America, 5 countries in Africa, 1 country in Asia including Japan, and Lebanon. In most countries, the apostolate provides school education from kindergarten through high school and runs girls' dormitories, but depending on the needs of the country, it is also involved in hospitals, clinics, vocational training for women, education for handicapped

children, feeding of children, support for immigrants and refugees, and more. In addition, the number of young members of the Society is increasing in new mission fields in Asia and Africa.

Feasts cherished by the Society of St. Mary

-Consecration Day-

On May 15, 1949, Jeanne de Lestonnac's educational projects and her deeds and way of life were recognized and canonized by the Pope; every year on May 15, in various countries around the world, we give thanks for all that she did, the education she started and has carried on in the countries of the world, Jeanne de Lestonnac Day is celebrated.

-MARIAN FEAST (Consecration of Mary) -

Every year on November 21, all schools of the Society of St. Mary celebrate the feast of Mary as instituted by Jeanne de Lestonnac. This is the day on which the young Mary consecrated herself to God in the Temple. She wanted her students to consecrate themselves to St. Mary, and she sincerely hopes that they will follow in her footsteps and follow the path that God is calling them to. It is a day to remember that we are all differ-

ent and that each of us is accepted by God as a blessed being in the Lord, and it is also a day to convey the splendor of Mary.

Sr Kazuko Tamura

Society of St. Mary's Nuns

Explanation of Terms

- (※1) Forbidden area is a place where the general public is not allowed to enter, except for monks and clergy.
- (※2) The contemplative life is a life of obedience to God through prayer and labor in a monastery.
- (※3) A hermit order is a religious order that renounces its relationship with the secular world and strives to serve God and people in a designated place, such as a monastic community.

The 53 Martyrs of the Yonezawa Clan

Introduction

On Monday, November 24, 2008, at noon, "Peter Kibe and the 187 Martyrs" were beatified at a beatification ceremony held in Nagasaki City.

Peter Kibu, a Jesuit priest, and the 187 martyrs were chosen from among the Christians who had been martyred in various parts of Japan. The largest number of martyrs among them was 53, including Uemon Amagasu, a vassal of the Uesugi family in Yonezawa, Yamagata Prefecture. These believers defended their faith and gave their lives in the hope of perfect union with God.

The beginnings of Christianity were nurtured by the blood of martyrs. In Japan, the existence of 53 martyrs in Akita, Yamagata, and Niigata was the foundation that could enrich and nurture the church community, and at the same time, we can learn how to live our faith from the martyrs.

They were firm in their faith, struggled against the secular values of their time, and tried to live the gos-

pel. This way of life influenced those around them, and although it may seem like an old way of life from the perspective of modern society, this was the way of life of the martyrs.

Martyrdom of the Samurais

The incident occurred on January 12, 1629 (December 18, 1629) .

The Christians did not flee, but dressed themselves in fine clothes and volunteered to be beheaded. It is said that Yonezawa was the only place in Japan where Christians were martyred with the banner of the Virgin Mary flying high. The "boiling water torture" took place in Unzen Hell on the Shimabara Peninsula in Nagasaki Prefecture. Yonezawa was called a "beautiful martyrdom".

For them, offering their lives to an eternal, unchanging god in heaven was a more satisfying choice than earthly prosperity.

The attitude of Shuuri Shida, a retainer who continued to defend his Christian vassal to the end, was reminiscent of Kanetsugu Naoe, who was considered a great general of the Uesugi family.

The Tokugawa shogunate was now in power, and the suppression of the Christianity had to be strengthened to ensure the long-term security of the shogunate. Despite this situation, Shuuri Shida, a retainer of the shogunate, was determined to let the Christianity die out as warriors. In addition, the Yonezawa people were forced to endure a harsh lifestyle due to the reduction of their land from 1.2 million koku in Aizu to 300,000 koku in Yonezawa, and through enduring this, the Yonezawa people's character gave birth to the Christianity.

The 53 martyrs were devoted believers who worked in the "Kumi" of the shinshinkai. Amakasu Uemon was the general head of the "Kumi" and visited villages with other general heads to raise and baptize seekers, so it is likely that there were more



Cross at the site of the Kitayamahara Martyrdom

than 53 Christians. The Shogunate institutionalized the prohibition of Christianity and entrenched the pagan view of Christianity among the people.

In 1590, Ujisato Gamou, a Christian feudal lord, entered Aizu, and in 1598, Kagekatsu Uesugi moved to Aizu from Echigo. Before the Battle of Sekigahara, Ieyasu Tokugawa ordered Uesugi to move to Aizu, but Uesugi rejected the request, saying, "It is unavoidable." and Kanetsugu Naoe also made his confrontational stance clear. In August of the following year, Ieyasu ordered Kagekatsu to relocate to another province, and the 6,000 vassals of the Uesugi family, their families, and about 30,000 temple and shrine workers crossed the 1094-meter-high Hinohara Pass in the late fall of 1601 to enter Yonezawa, where they were greeted with bitter cold. Compared to Aizu, Yonezawa's territory was reduced to one-fourth and its vassals' stipends to one-third, but no one criticized Kanetsugu Naoe. Later, the Christians of Aizu and Yonezawa were linked by a red thread.

At the time, Yonezawa was a small castle town with 800 houses and a population of 6,000. Eighty percent

of the vassals who moved to Yonezawa had no homes, and many low-ranking samurai built shacks in the suburbs to serve as temporary residences.

The construction of the town in Yonezawa was carried out under Naoe's direction, and by the time eight years had passed, the lives of the vassals in the Yonezawa domain, though poor, had settled down, and it was around this time that Uemon Amakasu became a Christian.

The single character for "love" on the helmet used by Kanetsugu Naoe is unusual for a warlord and represents Kanetsugu's philosophy. He had great love for his men and compassion for his people. Kanetsugu passed away at the age of 61, but was succeeded by the second lord of the domain, Yoshihide Shuuri Shida, the first retainer of Sadakatsu Uesugi. In addition, there were many Christians among his vassals, and Shida did not want to lose them, so he defied the orders of the shogunate and defended the Christians.

Ieyasu Tokugawa spread the prohibition of Christianity throughout the country, breaking churches and monasteries, and severely punishing or killing those

who refused to apostatize. Bateren (missionaries) were banished abroad, and on November 7 and 8, 1614, a junk (ship) with Ukon Takayama, his family, and a teaching priest left Japan for Manila or Siam, as the era of tacit acceptance of missionary work ended and severe repression by the shogunate began.

The Christians in Yonezawa enjoyed a brief period of peace, and they cleared the wilderness to sweat, and itinerant priests held open-air masses. The number of believers increased rapidly during this period, partly due to the influence of Christians who fled persecution. Even during the reign of Kagekatsu Uesugi, the rivalry against the shogunate was maintained, and there was no prejudice against Christians.

Believers in Yonezawa formed religious associations called "confrariyas" or "groups" and engaged in activities. The reason for the rapid increase in the number of believers even under persecution was the circle among believers and the concrete practice of love and virtue.

The followers of the "kumi" gathered in each village to encourage the sick, help the poor, and bury the fallen. This action was supported by the words, "Give

food to the hungry and water to the thirsty” (Matthew 25.31-46) , and the Christians tried to live like Christ and get as close to Him as possible.

When Sadakatsu Uesugi returned from Edo, his retainer, Shuuri Yoshihide Shida, called Uemon Amakasu and told him of the limits to the Yonezawa clan's attitude of tolerating Christians because of the martyrdom of Hirose River (1621) and Edo (1623) .

Another retainer, Izumo Tadayoshi Hiroi, who was a whistleblower to Sadakatsu and already had information about UemonAmakasu and the Christian vassals, Shida worked hard to urge Sadakatsu to change his mind in order to protect his men.

On December 22, Sadakatsu ordered the execution of the Christians, and the next day, he invited those who were reverent to the Shogunate and supported the condemnation of the Christians to the tea house. 24th, Shuuri Shida told Sadakatsu that the number of Christians was about 3,000. He defended his vassals by telling them that he was going to kill them and conveying the Ten Commandments, which were recited by his followers.

The altar was decorated with a picture of the cross

and the Virgin Mary, rosaries and medallions were arranged, and lit with all the candles they could find, celebrating the Nativity as freely and solemnly as they could.

In the evening of the day before their execution, two samurai came to Uemon Amakasu and announced the final decision to execute him. Amakasu again proclaimed his faith to the two samurai, spoke of Christ's love and eternal life, and expressed his gratitude to the Shida retainers for their service to them to the end. In the alcove, a white robe, a coffin, and the sword and wakizashi to be returned to their lord were already prepared.

As soon as they left, Amakasu ran to the home of his friend Nishibori Shikibu. Everyone in this family was an unbeliever except his wife, whose father was also a powerful warlord, and he wanted to prevent his daughter's martyrdom.

When Amakasu arrived at Nishibori's house, the two were already surrounded by relatives and friends who persuaded him not to waste his life. Amakasu took the opportunity to talk about the salvation of spirits and finally shared a farewell cup with Nishibori.

Shortly after Amakasu returned home, Nishibori came to return and discussed the procession and other matters on the day of his martyrdom. After that, when the Amakasu family was left alone, the remaining time was spent with his family.

Kazue Banzai lived with his family of seven, his wife and daughter and two small grandchildren, all of whom had been baptized. Banzai served Shida and confessed to being a Christian. Banzai advised his daughter's husband, Sanjuro, to take his wife and child and leave Yonezawa for a time to survive and go into exile, but Sanjuro's heart was firm and he chose to whip himself even harder to bear the suffering of the cross of Christ.

Two hours before sunrise, when the inspector who would lead them to the penitentiary came to the Amakasu family, all of them welcomed them. The family never entered the prison, and before they departed, a flag with the Virgin Mary on it was placed in the center of the sitting room, and everyone prayed together. As discussed the night before, with the exception of

the amazons, the ropes were tied in the back hands beforehand, and a rosary was placed around their necks. The women held the ropes without tying them, and they all formed an orderly line and went outside. The first in line was a 12-year-old peasant holding a banner of the Virgin Mary; the next peasant held a lit candle, followed by servants and ladies with infants in their arms, then two ronin and their sons who had taken refuge in the Amakasu household, and finally Amakasu. Other Christians accompanied the procession and continued to call out to them throughout.

It was a strange sight, the first of its kind in Yonezawa Castle. With the flag of the Virgin Mary flying high, and all dressed in fine clothes and rosaries, they became a troop of Christians trained in the faith. Even the peasants and servant boys dismissed by Amakasu joined the ranks, claiming to be Christians and wanting to work with their masters. Most of the Yonezawa people who had moved from Aizu to Yonezawa and shared their hardships for nearly 30 years were samurai, and some of them were Christians who were close to the martyrs. On the road, he encouraged the group

and sent them parting words of encouragement so that they would meet an honorable end.

When Amakasu reached the Nishibori family, he told them that he would be waiting for them at the martyrdom site one step ahead of them. At that moment, one Christian jumped out from the Nishibori family. He was a wealthy peasant living in the suburbs of Yonezawa who had come to Yonezawa to live with his boss of Kumi, Nishibori. He had just been baptized thirteen months earlier, and his faith was on fire. When he heard rumors of persecution, he joined the Amakasu family in their martyrdom.

When the first martyrs arrived at Kitayamahara, the sun had already risen, and everyone brushed the snow off the execution site. A flag of the Virgin Mary was placed in the center, and the martyrs formed a circle around it, kneeling and praying. A magistrate ordered the onlookers, "Get down on your knees, for it is a man of high rank who lays down his life for the faith to die here!" One of the Christians who followed the line of martyrs took out a medallion with a set of the Holy Eucharist

and showed it to each one of them. They all kissed the medallion, chanting three times, "Let the sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist be praised!" The martyrs were then divided into four groups, first the women and children, and finally Amakasu, who was beheaded. The martyrs were carefully buried by the hands of the faithful.

Soon after, the Itasai family arrived. Itasai, his wife, daughter, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren, ages 5 and 1, were all beheaded.

Nishibori Shikibu (31 years old) , left his wife (26 years old) , at home and the gates were closed. Nishibori Shikibu was not bound, but had a rosary around his neck and a scroll of the Virgin Mary at his waist like a sword. Nishibori Shikibu also made the two boys move forward, like Amakasu, and behind them they carried a coffin and a pincer box. The pincer box contained the change of clothes for the journey and was carried by the squire, thus expressing his awareness of his departure for heaven. When he arrived at the penitentiary, he called the peasant who carried the pincer box and had him take out the money from the box before asking the official to give it to a leper nearby. He then

took off his short sleeves and kneeled before the Virgin's banner to pray. His body was buried with the other martyrs by the faithful.

Three hundred years after the incident, Father Schuentek, a Polish priest of the Congregation for the Divine Word, with the cooperation of Evangelist Mokichi Sato, discovered the Kitayamahara prison site, the site of the martyrdom, on April 28, 1928. On January 27, 1927, he founded Yonezawa Church in Tateyamaguchi, Yonezawa City.

Today we can speak of the martyrs of Yonezawa because a letter dated July 2, 1629 of the Jesuit Father João Baptista Porro arrived in Rome. Father Michiaki Chihara, the 18th head priest of Yonezawa Church, commemorated the 75th anniversary of the church's founding by participating in the Kitayamahara pilgrimage with Father Porro's letter. Father Chihara led the 300-member pilgrimage group, clad in the crimson vestments symbolizing the martyrs, followed by first-grade students holding icons of the Virgin Mary in their hands and second-grade university students holding resurrection candles in their hands, as they

marched about 2 km along the city's main street, thinking of Amagasu and Nishibori.

Martyrdom of 188 persons canonized (1603-1639)

Yonezawa 53 persons, Edo 2 persons, Kyoto 52 persons, Osaka 1 person, Hiroshima 3 persons

Hagi/Yamaguchi 2 persons, Ikitsuki 3 persons, Nagasaki Nishizaka 4 persons, Kokura/Oita/Kumamoto 18 persons, Shimabara/Unzen 29 persons, Arima 8 persons, Yatsushiro 11 persons, Amakusa 1 person, Satsuma 1 person

On January 22, 2019, with permission from the Diocese of Niigata, we excerpted and summarized portions from "Martyrdom of the Samurai" (Don Bosco, 2017) , compiled by the Diocese of Niigata's "Martyrdom of the Samurai" compilation committee. We thank Father Koichi Otaki, Secretary General of the Diocese of Niigata, for his cooperation in granting permission.

Daily life at the end of life

End of Life

1 Background

^{Shuukatsu}
終活 is a term coined by those born in the baby-boom generation, who are now aging, to stand for "activities to think about how to end one's life." "^{Shuukatsu}
終活" refers to preparing for a life without regrets by facing death and spending one's remaining time in a peaceful and fulfilling manner.

2 Purpose of ^{Shuukatsu} 終活

In ^{Shuukatsu}
終活, one must face death, look at oneself objectively, reflect on one's life to date, organize memories and dreams with family and acquaintances, and make realistic preparations for death, while making a "total accounting" of one's life."

(Hebrews 4.13)

3 Benefits of ^{Shuukatsu} 終活

- (1) By engaging in ^{Shuukatsu}
終活, people are reminded that death is the final goal of life, and they actively try to live their remaining time.
- (2) Avoid inheritance problems by making a will.

- (3) By following the example of the wise virgin (Matthew 25.3-10) and making preparations while you are in good health, you and your family will feel an indescribable sense of relief.

Write an ending note

This creation will help you organize how you will live out your remaining time. Specifically, write in an open-ended format your personal history, current health situation, funeral details (prepare a portrait) graves and remains (scattering of ashes should be in powder form) relationships with people (relationships, contact information) , property, wishes regarding care, medical care, life extension, body donation, organ donation, etc. (Please consult the funeral home as well.)

Writing a Will

A will is the definitive document of intent for the inheritance of an estate.

As the saying goes, "dead men tell no tales," and this creation avoids problems. The easiest way to do this is to write a will in your own handwriting. (Please contact us for a free legal consultation.)

Determining a Grave

1 Types of graves

There are public cemeteries, private cemeteries, temple cemeteries, and permanent memorial cemeteries.

2 Selecting a grave

We will check the denomination, location and facilities, environment, transportation, etc. on site in advance.

Christian Life at the End of Life

Objective

From the story of the rich man who went to his father's house in heaven and Lazarus, "..... I am in agony in this fire. But Abraham said, 'Son, remember. You were given good things while you were alive, but Lazarus was given bad things. But now he is comforted here, and you are in agony.' I have five brothers. Be strict with them so that they too will not come to this place of torment." (Luke 16.19-31)

In this life, I give thanks for this day that has been given to me and do my best every day so that I will not regret it when I go to the afterlife.

In the church calendar, Ash Wednesday marks the

beginning of Lent (the 40 days before Easter) . During the service on this day, an "ashing ceremony" is held in which ashes are placed on the foreheads of the participants. The ashes will prompt a turning back to the thought of Christ and the realization that man is as fragile as dust. At the same time, you have grown old and senile, but there is still much land left to occupy (Joshua 13.1) , so there is still work to be done.

Writing an ending note

- 1 (1) Summarize your gratitude for the blessings you have received.
- (2) Summarize the Word of God that has been made alive in your life up to now.
- (3) Start little by little with things that are worthwhile and enjoyable.

In (1) , create a psalm of thanksgiving for Psalm 151, by young children, boys, young adults, mature adults, and mature adults.

In (2) , create a MyBible as a collection of your own words.

In (3) , make a list of things you would like to do, set goals, and take on challenges.

2 Summarize what we have preached

I would not spare this life if I could only fulfill the effort I have received from the Lord Jesus, namely, the effort to testify of the gospel of the grace of God. (Acts 20.24)

Do not go before the Lord empty-handed. (Sira. 35.6) , so it must be a souvenir that you have preached.

3 For the dead

God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. (Mark 12.27) We who are in this life pray that those in Hades and in Purgatory will be invited to heaven soon.

4 The date of death and the manner of death are left to the Lord, and the details of the funeral service and will are prepared.

5 We will put together memories of the people we met.

1) Memories of Mr. Keiji Okawa

Keiji Okawa, a prayer friend of the Ichikawa Breakfast Prayer Meeting, returned to heaven on December 25, 2018. When the owner of the company, Tojuro Iijima (founder of Yamazaki Baking) , got into the car he was driving, the car straddled the center line, which startled

oncoming traffic, which avoided the car, and the owner's car drove straight through without slowing down. He said he felt that no matter how many lives he had, it was not enough.

I am sure that now he is having a Breakfast prayer meeting every day in heaven.

From Mrs. Okawa.

Her husband always went to work in the dark of the morning and did not come home until after dark at night.

One time, around 5:00 in the morning, the owner of the company, Tojuro Iijima, drove up to our house and said in a loud voice, "Is Okawa here?" and after putting my husband in the car, he did not return home after a week had passed, and when my husband returned and asked what he wanted, he said that he was preparing to build a factory at the headquarters. He said, "At this rate, my children were raised by me".

Salvation

God created man in the image of God. Man sinned against God, and God sent Jesus into the world as atonement for this, offering Him to God by crucifix-

ion, so that "He might make you stand before Him holy, blameless, and without blame" (Colossians 1.22) . So, reconciliation between God and man can be established, and man can return to what he is supposed to be, and God and man can be united. Besides this, the birth of Jesus, baptism, the work of the Holy Spirit, worship, fellowship in the church, and walking in imitation of Christ are "salvation".

Baptism

In baptism, God gave us two things.

One is that the previous sins committed by the baptized are forgiven, so that through the work of the Holy Spirit, God and man are reconnected, and man can walk in the world the way God originally created him to walk.

The second is that unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God (John 3.5) . Therefore, through baptism, we have a ticket to heaven, so we can return to heaven.

Man is supposed to die only once and then be judged. (Hebrews 9.27) Therefore, after death and "private judgment," since heaven is the place where God and

man are united, "in the sea they were all baptized and united with Moses." (1 Corinthians 10.2) As in these words, in order for man to be united with God after death, he needs purification to take away his sins completely, and purgatory is the place where this is done.

After baptism, even if one walks in imitation of Christ (in mind, word, deed, and prayer) , one is still weak, and lust is pregnant and gives birth to sin. (James 1.15)

For this sin to be forgiven, "the sacrament of forgiveness" (1 John 1.9) "forgives the fault of man" (Matthew 6.14) . Sins are forgiven, and the Holy Spirit is poured out again, "keeping himself clean from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and becoming perfectly holy in the fear and reverence of God."

And the period of purgatory is shortened because one can be united with God in this life.

"The 53 Martyrs of the Yonezawa Clan" were martyred because they chose to be "united with God" in this world. And one's labors are not in vain if one is in union with the Lord. (1 Corinthians 15.58)

After purification in purgatory, it seems that loved ones and guardian angels will come to receive us and lead us to eternal life.

Thus, this religion, which promises life in this generation and in the generations to come, is beneficial in every way. These words are true and worthy of full acceptance. (1 Timothy 4.8-9)

The Lord "will take vengeance on those who do not acknowledge God and obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. For such people will be punished by being turned away from the presence of the Lord and from His mighty glory, and will be destroyed forever." (2 Thessalonians 1.8-9) , but all who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10.13)

Mission

God's desire is to make the world the Kingdom of God. Therefore, God tells us to go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16.15) , baptize and make disciples (Matthew 28.19-20) .

Sin

The Greek word for sin is "hamartia," meaning "to miss the mark." Disobeying God's will and losing what is humanly possible is sin, and there are three things that are included in this content.

- (1) A person who sins is disobeying the law. Sin is disobedience to the law. (1 John 3.4)
- (2) God is love (1 John 4.16) , and to disobey love is to disobey God, specifically, the Ten Commandments and the Law of Jesus.

The Ten Commandments

Take no other god besides Me.

Thou shalt not make for thyself an idol.

Do not say the name of the LORD your God without praise.

Remember the Sabbath day and sanctify it. Honor thy father and thy mother.

Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not perjure thyself about thy neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. (Exodus 20.3-17)

The first four parts of the Ten Commandments are about love for God, and the latter six are about love for man.

The Law of Jesus

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the most important first law. The second is similar. Love your

neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets are based on these two rules. (Matthew 22.37-40) Thus, it is a sin to disobey this law.

Think of your neighbor as family beyond blood relations, eating together, helping, encouraging, and supporting each other.

- (3) If it offends the conscience, it is sinning against Christ. (1 Corinthians 8.12)

When you do good, your heart rejoices; when you do evil, your heart is upset because you have done injustice, and all injustice is sin. (1 John 5.17) We sharpen the compass of our hearts on a daily basis, and we think, speak, and act so that our hearts will always swing to goodness.



Statue of Piedad

John's Revelation

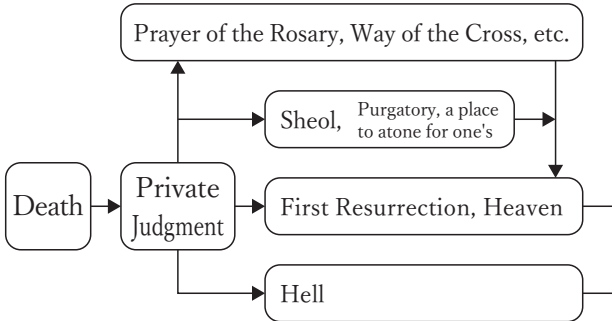
1. Flow about Humanity



- *More severe than the tribulation that occurred before the Exodus journey began.
- *The coming of the age of the loss of faith.

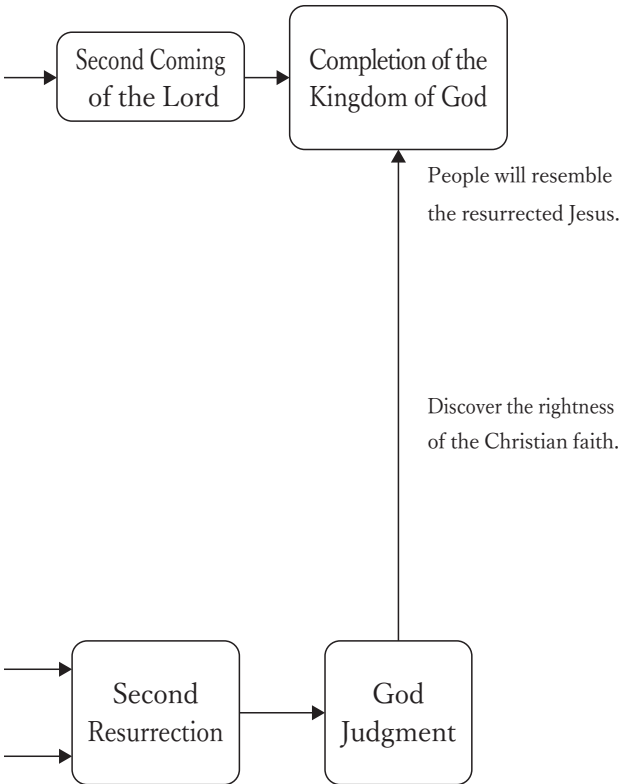
2. Flow about after death of a person

*Like a wise maiden, make preparations for the world to come.



*The foundation of the soul is those who imitate the Lord (heart, word, deed, and prayer)

Outline drawing



Live in this life with hope in the grace of the Lord's death and resurrection

み言葉の実践 主の道こそ真理 悲しみは死を招く 疑いや怒りを断つ 復讐は主に委ねる
 苦悩には主の軛くびきを負う 主の前に正しい人は報われる 不誠実は滅びる 陽気は良薬
 陰気は骨を枯す 銭の慾は悪 惜しみなく与えるは善 言葉は言霊ことだま 舌を制して成功せよ
 真福八端しんふくはつたんを知る 主の心と言葉と行動と祈りを倣うと自律した人になる 主に感謝せよ
 求めれば与えられ探せば見いだし叩けば開かれる 主は神の僕となり遜へりくだる 前後際断ぜんごさいだん 忘己喜他もうこきた
 霊に満され熱心に祈りあとは委ねる 疲れたら黙想 み言葉と主の知恵と健康こそ財産
 命を捨てる者は与えられ守る者は失う 造られた者に福音を宣教せよ 信仰とは望みを保証し見えないことを確信する
 み言葉は羅針盤 見栄や虚栄を断つ 主と霊で繋つながりみ言葉が有れば望みは叶う
 知恵と英明や良い動機での祈りは叶う 主の祈りや薔薇ロザリオを唱える 信じて祈れば全て叶う

The Liturgy of the Word is a summary of MyBible III (Autonomous Person). If you wish to utilize this as a sutra, please use only the large kanji characters in the GWord-book. The number of characters for the text using only Kanji characters is 318.

御言葉典

神は天地を創造された 土から男が骨から女が生まれ蛇そこのかに唆され罪が入り神と人の間に
溝が生まれる 贖い主の誕生を預言 聖霊で救い主が誕生 主の受洗
神の国は近いと言つて宣教を開始した 癒いやし慰め励まし喜びの奇跡を行う 最後の晩餐で主の体を
食べ血を飲む 受難と十字架刑 三日目に復活 昇天
聖霊降臨 受洗で罪は赦される 人は死で煉獄れんごくにて罪を償い天国又は地獄へ
父と子と聖霊の三位一体 体は霊が宿る神殿 欲や執着は苦を招く
主の掟と十戒を守る 一いちの心と成る 他者を許し寛容となる 善よに聴きく悪あに疎うとい 先祖を敬う
主を畏れ知恵を得る 恐れや失望は主が不在 試練は訓練であり忍耐で救われる
主アドの山ナイに備エえ有レり 無所有が悩を断つ 愛は人を思いやる心 思い悩みは妄想

苦腦主軛負 主正人報不誠實滅陽氣良葉
陰氣骨枯 錢慾惡惜與善言葉言靈舌制成功
真福八端 主心言葉行動祈做自律人主感謝
求與探見叩開 主神僕遜前後際斷忘己喜他
靈滿熱心祈委 疲默想 言葉主知惠健康財產
命捨與守失 造福音宣教 信仰望保証見確信
言葉羅針盤 見榮虛榮斷 主靈繫言葉有望叶
知惠英明良動機祈叶 主祈薔薇唱 信祈全叶

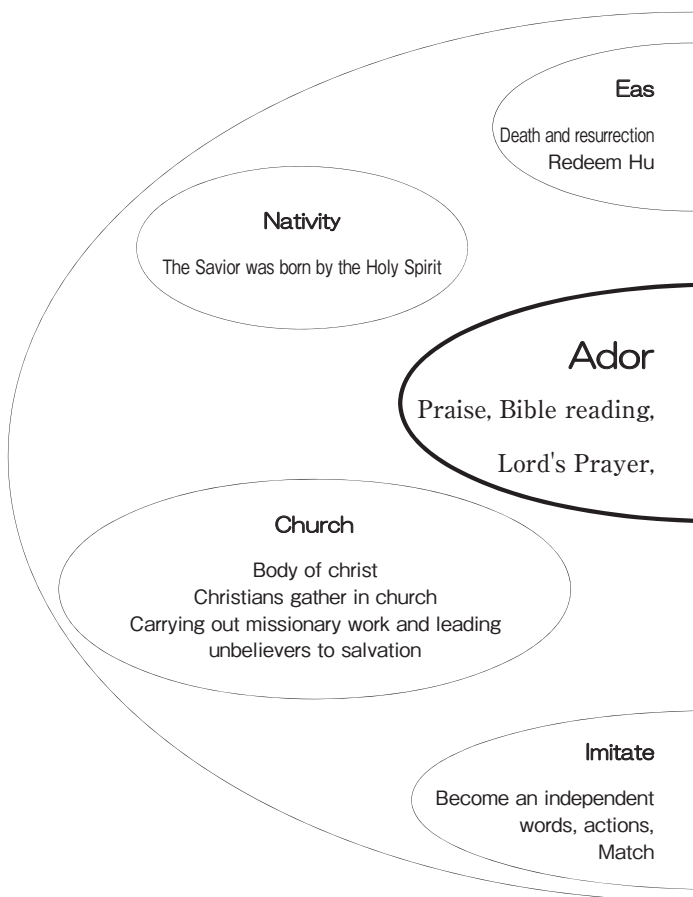
大司教 菊地 功殿 多樣性 一致實現祈念

第一卷 平成三十年七月吉日 蒲池明憲謹書

御言葉典

神天地創造 土男骨女生蛇唆罪入神人間
溝生贖主誕生預言 聖靈救主誕生主受洗
神国宣教開始 癒慰勵喜奇跡 最後晚餐主休
食血飲 受難十字架刑 三日目復活 昇天
聖靈降臨 受洗罪赦 人死煉獄罪償天国地獄
父子聖靈三位一体 体靈宿神殿 欲執着苦招
主提十戒 一心成 他許寬容 善聽惡疎先祖敬
主畏知患得 恐失望主不在 試練訓練 忍耐救
主山備有無所有 惱斷 爱人思心 思惱妄想
言葉実践 主道真理 悲死招 疑怒斷 復讐主委

Schematic of



Christianity

ter

of Jesus on the cross
 manity's Door

Baptism

Sins are forgiven and the Holy Spirit is poured
 out Get a ticket to heaven

ation

Declaration of faith, Joint prayer

Communion

Holy spirit

Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit
 Life changes completely when God and people are connected by the Holy Spirit
 Observe the Ten Commandments and have your sins forgiven

Jesus

person by imitating your mind,
 and prayers
 jesus

Foreword by Isao Kikuchi

November 1958 Born in Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture

1986 Ordained as a priest

He was then sent to Ghana in West Africa as a missionary until 1994.

After returning to Japan, he took a position in the Shingonkai.

2004 Appointed Bishop of Niigata and ordained as a bishop

2017 Appointed and seated as Archbishop of Tokyo

Introduction of the Author Akinori Kamachi

1950 Born in August

Baptized at Osaka Nihonbashi Christian Church of the Japan Free Methodist Church

Transferred to Ikeda Satsukiyama Church of Christ Convention of Japan, to which an acquaintance of my father belongs.

Transferred to Musashi Koyama Church of Christ Convention of Japan, to which his father belonged.

Transferred to Tokyo Ikebukuro Church of Christ Church of Japan upon marriage.

The entire family converted to Catholicism with Shozo Fukukawa (a member of Azabu Catholic Church) as their substitute father.

Became a member of Catholic Tokyo Cathedral Sekiguchi Church
Belonging to Ichikawa Breakfast Prayer Meeting (held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at Yamazaki Baking Company Pension Fund Hall 2F)

Joined The Sanwa Bank, Limited (currently Mitsubishi UFJ Bank)
President and Representative Director, Chiyoda Information Systems Co.

MyBible VI Let the Word of God Keep You Alive

The Japanese Bible is the Franciscan Bible. Punctuation, " ", and other punctuation terms have been partially corrected based on the relationship between the preceding and following sentences.

Author Akinori Kamachi

Translator: Yuta Minakuchi

Published by International MyBible Society

URL <https://mybible.tokyo/>

June 5, 2019 First edition published

©Akinori Kamachi 2019 Printed in Japan

