

Heart Beats



Newsletter Of The International Community Of Sacred Heart Cathedral

February 2015 - March 2015

“May the words of our mouths (and those we write) and the meditations of our hearts, be pleasing in Thy sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer” - Psalm 19:14

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Parishioner,

Watching the brutal death of Japanese journalist Kenji Goto on the news brought home to us in Japan the reality of suffering and violence in the Middle East. We do not merely see the cry for justice, it is now actually a part of us. This was further aggravated by burning a Jordanian pilot alive a few days later. These incidents are part of the reality of brutality that continue to perpetrate our world every day. It is a reality that has affected the lives of millions of people.

Thanks to the media today, these realities are brought right in front of our eyes. This eye-opener has brought several nations and leaders together in solidarity and a united condemnation against these brutal acts. However, as an eye-opener, we hope that these realities may also bring nations, people and leaders to look inwardly on how we contribute to the perpetration of violence and hatred in this world. That these realities we concretely see and feel can also be byproducts of our collective and individual apathy and indifference to the needs of others.

This invitation to look inward while condemning injustice and violence is a good reminder for us upon entering the season of Lent in the Catholic Church. The 40 days of Lent starting on Ash Wednesday represent the time Jesus fasted in the desert, and the 40 years that the Israelites spent in exile after the Exodus. Those were the days and years of trials and testing until they came to understand their identity and mission. In like manner may we, by our meditation and reflection in this Lenten season, come to a sincere repentance and renewal of our own selves. We need to repent for sowing seeds of bitterness, anger and hatred in our midst, for example by our harsh words, bullying, cheating, etc. And we must renew our lives in terms of our commitment to the Lord.

The Church gives three practical methods to lead us to repentance and renewal. These are praying, fasting and almsgiving.

Why Prayer ? It is because we have a need and a longing inside us that cannot be filled by ourselves or anything of this world but instead by God. He put it there Himself so He could fill it. Prayer opens our hearts to God and connects us to Him.

Why Fasting ? It is because when we deprive ourselves of a basic necessity, we are reminded of our dependence on God. In the early church, the money saved while people fasted was given away to the needy and the poor. Let us follow that practice today and recognize the poor closest to us.

Why Almsgiving ? It is through giving that we realize that what God has given us is not meant only for us. It is given to us, for us to use in the service of others, like good stewards.

Continued on Page 2

Bishop of the Diocese	: Most Rev. Raphael Umemura, DD
Parish Administrator	: Fr Keisuke Suzuki
Parish Assistant	: Fr Roed Desamparado, CM
Mass Schedule (Japanese)	: Daily Mass at 07:00 on weekdays : Sunday Mass at 07:30 & 11:30 : Sunday Mass at 18:00 on Saturdays
Mass Schedule (English)	: Sunday Mass at 09:30
Mass Schedule (Spanish)	: Sunday Mass at 14:00 on the second Sunday of every month (except August)



However, this God - the source of our being and the true meaning of our existence - can be found and felt concretely through the context of relationships and community (Matthew 18:19-20). This follows that every act of charity is a deed done unto God Himself. May our efforts to redeem our real identity in Christ and His mission for us through these Lenten practices help us also to create lasting peace in our midst. A peace free from pettiness, gossip and strife. A peace that starts with each one of us - individually and collectively, as the community of Sacred Heart Cathedral.

A blessed and fruitful Lenten season!

Fr Roed Desamparado



Christmas Mass

After being suspended for many years, the English mass was reintroduced this Christmas Eve at the request of the ICC and with support from Fathers Suzuki and Roed.

The turn-up alone provided sufficient evidence that the mass had been long overdue. It brought together members of the international community at Sacred Heart, besides Catholic worshippers from other cities and a sizeable number from the local Japanese community. Breaking the monotony of the old years, our international choir, joined by the whole assembly, executed a series of carols before mass, thereby warming the hearts and spirits of those present on that particularly cold night.

During mass, the choir director on that day, Yutaka Nakamae, mindful of the need for all worshippers to sing as one family, put together a selection of familiar traditional and internationally shared hymns. By putting the real spirit of Christmas at the centre of his homily, Fr Roed, with his usual sense of humour combined with a wit to communicate complex messages in simple terms, made the night gathering even more relevant and memorable.

We have learned some lessons from this reinstated mass. In particular, it appears that the time of the mass (22:00) might have been challenging for parents with small children. Also, questions were legitimately raised as to why there was no English mass on 25 December. These elements will be factored in the ICC's planning for Christmas later this year, bearing in mind also the needs of the entire Catholic community at Sacred Heart and the guidance of our Bishop.

We thank our Bishop Umemura, Fr Suzuki and Fr Roed for allowing the international community to have a Christmas Eve mass in English, thereby ensuring the whole-hearted participation and support by the international community, enabling them to worship and celebrate the birth of our Savior and take home a profound message on the same.

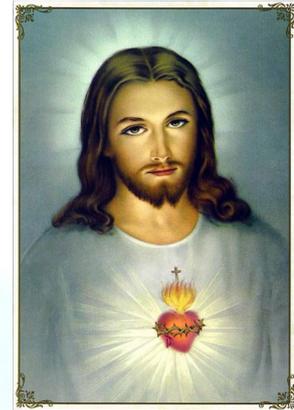
Charles Boliko



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Prayer of Consecration To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus

- Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque



I give myself and consecrate to the Sacred Heart of our Lord Jesus Christ, my person and my life, my actions, pains and sufferings, so that I may be unwilling to make use of any part of my being other than to honour, love and glorify the Sacred Heart. This is my unchanging purpose, namely, to be all His, and to do all things for the love of Him, at the same time renouncing with all my heart whatever is displeasing to Him. I therefore take You, O Sacred Heart, to be the only object of my love, the guardian of my life, my assurance of salvation, the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy, the atonement for all the faults of my life and my sure refuge at the hour of death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification before God the Father, and turn away from me the strokes of his righteous anger. O Heart of love, I put all my confidence in You, for I fear everything from my own wickedness and frailty, but I hope for all things from Your goodness and bounty.

Remove from me all that can displease You or resist Your holy will; let your pure love imprint Your image so deeply upon my heart, that I shall never be able to forget You or be separated from You.

May I obtain from all Your loving kindness the grace of having my name written in Your Heart, for in You I desire to place all my happiness and glory, living and dying in bondage to You.

Sweet Heart of Jesus, make my heart like unto Thine! Amen.



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Mission Outreach

Churches and congregations in developed nations are called to support and help those in developing nations. As part of its charitable mission to offer financial and other aid in support of education and peace, the ICC decided, at its meeting held on January 25, to provide a one-time financial grant for the ongoing reconstruction of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Basankusu, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Africa.

The cathedral, second by its size and capacity in a country four times the size of France, was built during World War II, at a time cement was rare and could only be used in limited parts of the edifice. Cracks in the two bell towers forced the removal of the latter nearly 30 years ago. In 2012, further cracks raised serious safety concerns and it was decided that the whole cathedral be destroyed and rebuilt in the exact same model. Reconstruction work has since started, relying entirely on voluntary contributions from Basankusu community members as well as individuals, churches and organizations throughout the world.

The cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul has played a key role in bringing together worshippers from various tribal groups, thereby facilitating intercultural exchange and understanding and contributing to peace and security in the area. The Catholic Church is the main provider of quality education in the country, and the best schools in Basankusu are Catholic and have traditionally drawn heavily from the teachings of the Lord Jesus to build a harmonious society in which all feel part of the same body and share the same values.

By providing its support, the ICC hopes to contribute to sowing the seeds of peace and good education for a harmonious development in the diocese of Basankusu. A special collection for the same will be made at all the masses this month. Your generous donation coupled with a certain portion of the ICC Welfare Fund will go towards supporting this worthy cause. This will go as a grant from our international community here at Sacred Heart.



Registration for First Holy Communion

The registration for children eligible to receive their First Holy Communion this year has begun. Those parents who intend for their children to receive their First Holy Communion can sign up with Chisato Nakamae after Sunday mass or contact her via email at

y-cdream@khaki.plala.or.jp

There will be no registrations accepted after February 22. The preparatory sessions for the same will commence on Saturday, February 28. The scheduled date for First Holy Communion is June 7, 2015. Children enrolled will need to be baptized, 7 years or above and capable of understanding the catechesis in English. A separate catechesis for children who only speak French is also available.

Ash Wednesday Mass – Bring Your Palms

The English Mass on Ash Wednesday - February 18 - will be at 7 pm in church. You are kindly requested to bring your palms of last year to church up till February 15. This is so they can be burned in time to collect ashes for Ash Wednesday. There is a box placed at the entrance of the church where you can leave your palms.

Choir Director Needed

Our huge international choir that sings at our Sunday masses needs a choir director! If there is anybody with some experience in directing a church choir and eager to serve the Lord through this role, kindly get in touch with Fr Roed or Yutaka Nakamae who is temporarily directing the choir at the earliest.





Lenten Recollection

Our Lenten Recollection this year will be held on March 8, 2015 after the Sunday mass from 11 am to 2 pm. Fr Alfred Burke OSA, who is no stranger to long time parishioners, will be conducting it. The venue this year is the Xavier Centre, just opposite the Negishi Park and next to the Yokohama International Baptist Church. It is also a 15 minutes straight drive from Sacred Heart Cathedral.

The recollection will begin with a short prayer service led by Fr Roed, after which we will break up for a quick lunch. Please remember to bring a packed lunch or your bento box! Fr Burke will take over from 12 noon. All are welcome.

International



Apostolic Trip of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Philippines

Pope Francis had a 5-day visit to the Philippines from January 15 to January 19, 2015, bringing his Apostolic Mission for 'Mercy and Compassion', especially to those who cannot do us good in return. His visit was, above all, pastoral. He came in time for the Catholic Church to celebrate the first proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus in the Philippines. Vast crowds showed up to cheer the Pope as he made his way to the various events in Manila.

On January 16, his first destination was in Malacanang Palace for a courtesy state and apostolic visit to the President of the Philippines, the authorities and diplomatic corps. In his first speech to them, the pontiff challenged them to reject corruption and instead work toward the common good. He highlighted the need to end scandalous, social inequalities and prioritize the uplifting of the lives of the poor. As he celebrated the first Mass at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, he asked the Filipino clergy and the religious to be genuine ambassadors for Christ by living in poverty. He stressed that it is only by becoming poor ourselves, by stripping away our pride and complacency, will we be able to identify with the least of our brothers and sisters.

“If you don't learn how to cry, you can't be good Christians.”

On January 17, he continued his journey to visit Tacloban and met with the priests, religious groups, seminarians and families of the survivors of the typhoon. There he had a personal encounter with the survivors of typhoon Yolanda and expressed his love to those who endured the suffering, loss and devastation. He did not know what to say but indeed, in his very presence, comforted and blessed them. He admired the heroic strength, faith and resilience demonstrated by so many Filipinos in the face of this natural disaster.

On January 18, he had a brief meeting with the religious leaders of the Philippines at the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila and then proceeded to meet with the youth at the Sports Field of the University. Thereafter, he celebrated Holy Mass with the public in the afternoon at Rizal Park in Manila.

“God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If he gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand and receive it.”

On January 19, the leave taking ceremony took place at the Presidential Pavilion of Villamor Air Base in Manila. He departed for Rome that same day.

The Filipinos can take pride as a people that have been able to have the Pope in five days of meaningful encounters, under the most trying circumstances - in rains, in the face of an approaching storm, in huge meetings attended by vast concentrations of people, all with an order maintained not just by security forces but also by thousands of volunteers. The Filipinos hope that the people and officials of the nation will take to heart Pope Francis' appeal to help the poor, end corruption, uphold the values of the family, and answer the call for them to be missionaries of the faith in Asia and around the world.

“To be wise, use three languages: think well, feel well, and do well and allow yourselves to be surprised and be loved by God. That will guarantee a good life.”





Early World 2

Man was created on the 6th day and brought into a love relationship with his creator on the 7th day, the day of the Lord's rest. With his intellect, man can reason and with his will, he can choose to do good and love others in return. Like God his creator, Adam participates in creating life by "becoming one body" (Genesis 1:24) with his mate Eve. "God looked at everything He had made, and found it very good." (Genesis 1: 31).

Then our story brings in a new character, the serpent, "the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made" (3:1). In a subtle way, the snake intimidates Eve by bringing doubts in her mind: "Did God really say...? You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it (the fruit of the tree of life), your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil" (vv. 4-5). The enemy insinuates that the creator is a deceiver and should not be trusted. Do I trust God in my everyday situations or do I let other gods receive my allegiance?

Our first parents stopped trusting in God when they chose to eat the forbidden fruit. There is the loss of grace. They tried to be like Him through disobedience; they followed the serpent instead. Trusting only in themselves brought pride, a disordered self-trust which in turn awoke 'concupiscence', the tendency to do evil in a compulsive manner. Each chose himself/herself over God and the other. They lost the pristine life of the Trinity that dwelt in them. Confusion is set at all levels. They had to hide in shame from each other and from God. Things have never been the same.

The consequences of the Fall are evident immediately in the story. Cain killed Abel. From the remaining sibling grew a civilization that is violent and vengeful. By the time of Noah, the world was full of wickedness. Immediately after the flood, Noah got drunk, his sons sinned and his grandson was cursed by Noah himself. The earth again was filled with people who sought to make a name for themselves. Those who built the Tower of Babel exemplify the choices Adam and Eve made in the garden: they have chosen to trust their own way rather than following God's way.

However the Lord had a plan to redeem man, to bring back this most prized creature to his family of love, to the Holy Trinity. Hope was given early in the story. As God cursed the serpent, he said to it: "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers. They will strike at your head while you strike at their heel." (3:15). This promise of God is often called the "Proto Evangelium" because it is the first enunciation of a good news ahead of the Son (Jesus) of the Woman (Mary) who will come to proclaim in full the Good News, first to the children of Israel and then to the Gentiles (non Jews).

Adam and Eve were fruitful and multiplied. The line of Cain was not the promised seed that will strike the head of the serpent; his descendants were wicked. They were industrious but were violent and polygamous. The line of Seth, the third son of Adam and Eve however, called on the name of the Lord (4:26) and Enoch walked with God (5:24). Noah found favor with the Lord (6:8) who told him after he had decided on the flood: "I will establish my covenant with you. You shall go into the ark, you and your sons, your wife and your sons' wives with you," (6:18).

After the flood, God blessed Noah and his family and assured them: "I will establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all creatures be destroyed by the waters of a flood; there shall not be another flood to devastate the earth. This is the sign of the covenant that I am making between me and you and every living creature with you for all ages to come: I set my bow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth." (Gen 10: 11-13). The descendants of Noah did not fare too well. They defied God whom they did not know by saying: "Let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the sky and so make a name for ourselves." (Gen 11:9). God confused their speech and they scattered all over the world. This disunity signifies the lack of the Holy Spirit.

It is at Pentecost when the Spirit of God fell on Jesus' disciples who began speaking in other languages so that people from every corner of the earth understood them signifying a unity. Even though we still speak different languages, God has gathered his lost children from every continent, every nation and every tribe to bring us into a relationship with him.

This ends our first section THE EARLY WORLD, Genesis Chapters 3-11. In the next issue, we will deal with THE PATRIARCHS (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) when God will start building a people to prepare for the coming of His Son.



St John de Britto (1647 ~ 1693)



St John de Britto was a Portuguese Jesuit missionary and martyr, born in Lisbon in 1647 and died in Tamil Nadu, India, in 1693. After entering the Society of Jesus, he followed the footsteps of St Francis Xavier to India where he chose to work for the humble and the needy in what was then called the Madurai Mission. His patient labour, selfless zeal and genuine love for the poor won for him their confidence. Like Jesus he was “a sign of contradiction” and his success created jealousy and opposition. As a result, John de Britto died a martyr on 11 February 1693, bearing witness to Christ. His feast day is celebrated on February 4th.

Early life and Missionary Work :

John de Britto was the son of a powerful aristocratic Portuguese family; his father, Salvador de Britto Pereira, died while serving as Viceroy of the Portuguese colony of Brazil. John joined the Jesuits in 1662, studying at the famous University of Coimbra, Portugal. He traveled to the missions of Madurai, in southern India, present-day Tamil Nadu in 1673 and preached Christianity in the region of the Maravar country. The ruler of the Maravar country imprisoned him in 1684. Having been expelled, he returned to Lisbon in 1687 and worked as a missions procurator. King Pedro II wanted him to stay but in 1690, he returned to the Maravar country with 24 new missionaries.

The Madurai Mission was a bold attempt to establish an Indian Catholic Church that was relatively free of European cultural domination. As such, Britto learned the native languages, went about dressed in yellow cotton and abstained from every kind of animal food and wine. He tried to teach the Catholic faith in categories and concepts that would make sense to the people he taught. This method, proposed and practiced by Roberto de Nobili, met with remarkable success. Britto remained a strict vegan until the end of his life, rejecting meat, fish, eggs and alcohol and living only on legumes, fruits and herbs.

Martyrdom :

Britto's preaching led to the conversion of Thadiyathevan, a Marava prince who had several wives. When Thadiyathevan was required to dismiss all his wives but one, a serious problem arose. One of the wives was a niece of the neighboring king, who took up her quarrel and began a general persecution of Christians. Britto and the catechists were taken to the capital, Rannad, the Brahmins clamouring for his death. Thence he was led to Oriyur, some thirty miles northward along the coast, where he was executed on 4 February 1693. Britto was beatified by Pope Pius IX on August 21, 1853. He was canonized by Pope Pius XII on June 22, 1947.

Through the intercession of St John de Britto, let us earnestly ask the Lord to grant us the courage and strength to withstand the obstacles that come our way while we proclaim His name. May we always remain faithful to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life!



Sr Helen Poovakot

Anima Christi (Soul Of Christ)

✠ *To be prayed after Communion* ✠

Soul of Christ, sanctify me; Body of Christ, save me
Blood of Christ, inebriate me; Water from the side of Christ, wash me
Passion of Christ, strengthen me; O good Jesus, hear me
Within Thy wounds hide me; Permit me not to be separated from Thee
From the malicious enemy defend me; In the hour of my death call me
And bid me come unto Thee; That I may praise Thee with Thy saints
Forever and ever; Amen



Sacred Tradition



Is there a specific way to receive Holy Communion?

According to the Roman Missal, the church gives us two ways to receive Christ in the form of the consecrated host. We can receive it either on the tongue or in the hand, depending on the discretion of each communicant. We cannot simply reach into the ciborium or into the cup that contains the consecrated host and take out the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ for oneself. We cannot also take it from the hand of the minister who raises the sacred host in front of us while saying, "This is the Body of Christ". We need to receive the Body of our Lord in a manner that shows reverence either by the way it is placed on the tongue or placed into the hands.

Instead of taking it ourselves, the gesture of receiving the consecrated host makes us completely open to this immense gift of grace that God offers to us. "Let us receive the Eucharist by making a throne, one hand under the other, ready to receive our great King", said St Cyril of Jerusalem in the fourth century.

When we line up for Holy Communion during Mass, let us not forget that we express our reverence first, by a simple bow of the head as we approach the minister. A simple bow does not mean a full body bow nor a genuflection. It is a little gesture of bending our body a little, in the manner that the Japanese show respect to those in authority.

In Japan, the Conference of Bishops reaffirmed the church document from the *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani (IGMR 2002, n. 160)* that communion may be received either on the tongue or in the hand. However, they also established as a general rule that Holy Communion is to be received "standing", the reason being a demonstration of our unity among those attending mass, and to also facilitate a smooth flow of the faithful receiving Holy Communion. Yet, Holy Communion would not be denied to those who wished to receive it kneeling.

Lastly, we shouldn't skip the dialogue of prayer during Holy Communion. This dialogue of prayer are the words exchanged between the faithful and the priest or minister. When the minister presents to us the consecrated host saying, "This is the Body of Christ", we need to respond clearly with an audible "Amen". These words are simple but important. "Amen" means "so be it" or "yes", or "indeed". We are reaffirming our faith by saying YES! I believe! Indeed, I accept the Lord!

And once we have received the Body of Christ and Christ is within us, let us not forget to pray that beautiful Catholic devotional called the 'Anima Christi' (Latin for 'Soul Of Christ' - printed on Page 6), written in the 14th century.

Fr. Rod Desamparado

Your Recipe Space



Frosted Chocolate Fudge Cake - *The Perfect Valentine Treat*

Ingredients

For the cake:

- ✪ 4 ounces unsweetened chocolate (broken into squares)
- ✪ ¾ cup unsalted butter or margarine (softened)
- ✪ 1 cup light brown sugar (firmly packed)
- ✪ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ✪ 3 eggs (beaten)
- ✪ 2/3 cup strained plain yogurt
- ✪ 1¼ cups self-rising flour
- ✪ Confectioners' sugar and chocolate curls (to decorate)



For the frosting:

- ✪ 4 ounces bittersweet chocolate (broken into squares).
- ✪ 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- ✪ 3 cups confectioners' sugar
- ✪ 6 tablespoons strained plain yogurt

Method

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease two 8" round cake pans and line the base of each with baking parchment or wax paper. Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler or a heat proof bowl placed over hot water. In a mixing bowl, cream the butter or margarine with the sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla then gradually add the beaten eggs, beating well after each addition. Stir in the melted unsweetened chocolate and yogurt evenly. Fold in the flour with a metal spoon. Divide the mixture between the prepared pans. Bake for 25-30 minutes, or until the cakes are firm to the touch. Invert the cakes onto a wire rack and cool. Make the frosting. Melt the chocolate and butter in a saucepan over low heat. Remove from heat and stir in the confectioners' sugar and yogurt. Mix with a rubber spatula until smooth, then beat until the frosting begins to cool and thicken slightly. Use about a third of the mixture to sandwich the cakes together. Working quickly, spread the remainder over the top and sides. Sprinkle with confectioners' sugar and decorate with chocolate curls.

Hiroko Smith





Hinamatsuri @ Inatori

Akari o tsukemashou bonbori ni
Let's light the lanterns

Ohana o agemashou momo no hana
Let's set peach flowers

Go-nin bayashi no fue taiko
Five court musicians are playing flutes and drums

Kyo wa tanoshii Hinamatsuri
Today is a joyful Dolls' Festival!

Lalalalalala....have you noticed any particular tune playing on repeat in the convenience store and supermarket these days? If not yet, then you are sure to come across it in the coming weeks. The song is called "Ureshi Hinamatsuri" - Happy Hinamatsuri - and it is actually a very catchy jingle!

March 3rd in Japan sees the celebration of "Hinamatsuri" - Girls Festival or Dolls Festival - a special celebration for the good health and happiness of young girls. Many families with a daughter will have a set of Hina dolls that may have been passed down through the generations and they will decorate these in their homes together with branches of plum blossom. On the actual day, families will often partake in a meal of chirashi-zushi (seafood, sweet egg and vegetables spread over sushi rice) and children will eat "Hina-arare" - sweet rice crackers. Many parents will also sing the Hinamatsuri song with their children.

Hina doll displays come in many different sizes, with the most elaborate having up to seven tiers of dolls and costing over one million yen for a hand-carved set. Smaller homes will often have just a single tier, but that too can be just as elaborate as the multi-tiered displays.

The common theme of all the displays is an Emperor and Empress on a red felt platform, with a golden background and flanked by lanterns, giving the display the feel of an old imperial court. The multi-tiered displays will have the Emperor and Empress on the top tier, with the lower tiers holding such figures as the ladies maids, court attendants, musicians, guards and food offerings. People will place these displays in a prime location in their homes from around the middle of February, taking great care to pack the dolls away again as soon as the celebration is over. Many people believe an old superstition that says that packing your dolls away late may lead to a delay in your daughter getting married...!

Some of the doll displays are really very beautiful and February / early March is the only time you can see them on display. The village of Inatori-Onsen in Izu is one area that is very famous for its dolls displays. A "Tsurushi-Ningyo" doll festival is held there at this time of the year, with this year's festival running from January 20th to March 31st - although some of the events finish earlier than this. One of the highlights is the doll display on the steps of the local shrine, but even if the weather does not allow you to enjoy that, there are plenty of other beautiful displays in the various venues around town.

Although it is a little far from Yokohama, a day trip is quite possible and a trip at this time of the year lets you enjoy the famous "Kawazu-Sakura" - the early blooming cherry blossoms. You can find these cherry trees dotted around Inatori or travel on the train for a further two stops to visit the actual town of Kawazu. Be prepared for the crowds though...Kawazu is a very popular area for day trippers and there is great competition to get the perfect first cherry blossom picture of the year...!

Getting There

Yokohama - Atami - JR Tokaido Line (1hr 10mins)

Atami - Inatori / Kawazu - JR Ito Line (1hr 5 - 15 mins) or JR Odoriko express train direct from Yokohama, stopping at Inatori.

Caroline Kennedy

