

Heart Beats



Newsletter Of The International Community Of Sacred Heart Cathedral

September - October 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,

Welcome back to Sacred Heart! I hope you all had a good summer either here in Japan or in other parts of the world. In the previous months, we had several encounters here at Sacred Heart Cathedral that witnessed our commitment as a church that strives to be united in the midst of our diversity. We thank, of course, our leaders in the International Community Council (ICC) especially, our former co-chairpersons Charles Boliko and Karen Gomez who together served for a period of a year. Under their leadership and guidance, we achieved new milestones and successfully organized ambitious endeavors that cemented our bonds with each other.



Now, as we also welcome the newcomers to our community, let us also support the new ICC head, Sean Kelly from USA. Together with the ICC members, may we continue to make this Church 'a home away from home' for everyone and a place where nobody is stranger to each other.

As we move further along in this vision for our community, let us look to the deep spirit of hospitality imbedded in the Japanese culture, which is called *OMOTENASHI*. Probably, most of us may have heard this word all around this country since it was popularized during Japan's candidature speech to host the 2020 Olympics two years ago. This word became the bandwagon campaign to make the entire country and her people ready to impress upon the world what Japan is truly about.

May it also be an invitation for us to evangelize one another through the spirit of selfless hospitality as a community inspired by the most Sacred Heart of Jesus for all humanity. Let us not forget that *Omotenashi* in the Christian sense is Jesus Christ because He is God's hospitality towards each one of us. So, let this be our guiding principle as we continue to build and nurture our community.

- ✠ *Omotenashi* is our way of blending service and stewardship. From the perspective of a Japanese host, *omotenashi* is the rendering of services without expectation of favor or reward. If we are to be true Christian representatives of God in this world, then let us continue to be a community that is ready to serve and takes responsibility for one another and for the church.
- ✠ The Japanese etymology of *Omotenashi* comes from *omote* meaning "surface" and *nashi* meaning "less". Combined together the concept signifies sincerity without superficiality. Saint Paul to the Romans (Romans 12:9) reminds us to let our love for one another be without hypocrisy in all situations. May our love for this church community stem from the love of God alone and not from personal gain.

Continued

Bishop of the Diocese	: Most Rev. Raphael Umemura, DD
Parish Rector	: 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)

✠ *Omotenashi* is what leads us to unity and community spirit. The Japanese *Omotenashi* is based on a non-dominant relationship between equals. As long as we demonstrate a selfless hospitality towards each other and others, we are becoming more like Christ and one in Him. A concrete example of this *omotenashi* is evident at the foot of this church's entrance where we come together and greet one another after mass. It is the sense of love and comfort that flows from individuals as they receive each other, exchanging hellos and shaking hands. May that atmosphere be extended beyond the borders of this church compound even to one's own backyard.

The selfless hospitality in our parish is the basic expression of the love of Christ. It is the sense of openness and warmth people feel when they come into our midst.

心づくしのお持て成しをさせていただきます！ kokoro zukushi no **omotenashi** wo sasete itadakimashou! As God's instruments, may we all heartily welcome everyone to this place we call home!

Fr Roed Desamparado



Sunday School Catechists Needed



We are a team of dedicated catechists and we are looking for new catechists to be part of our team.

If you like teaching or have some experience dealing with children and would like to sow seeds of faith into young hearts, kindly contact us at :

heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com

Training and guidance will be provided.

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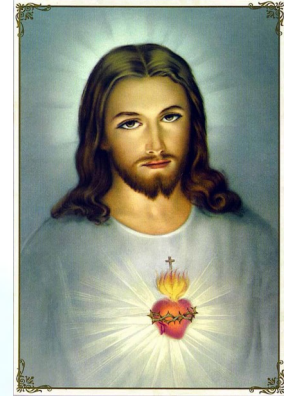
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Prayer of Consecration To The Sacred Heart Of Jesus

- 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.





International Night cum Welcome Potluck Party

As has been tradition here at Sacred Heart, a welcome potluck party is held every September to welcome the newcomers to our church – foreigner families who arrive in Yokohama at the start of the new international academic year.

Since last year, we have also been calling it 'International Night' as the one night where we celebrate our multinational character as we, foreigners, from around the globe, congregate as one international church community here at Sacred Heart. While the international community at Sacred Heart goes way back, there has been always been a great deal of movement within as foreigners come and go.

We invite you all to join us for this night of fellowship. For those of you who are new here, it is the perfect time to get to know us and we you. We also ask you all to wear something representative of your country and bring a native dish (to share with about 4 to 5 persons) as well as a drink.



Date : September 05
Time : 6 pm
Venue : Sacred Heart Cathedral basement

**DON'T
MISS
OUT.**

Sunday School Registration

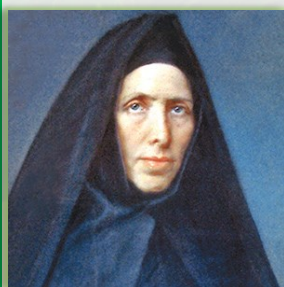
Sunday Bible School commences in September and is held on the third Sunday of every month and is open to children from ages 3 to

12. The children are divided into three age groups - 3 to 6 years, 7 to 9 years and 10 to 12 years. All children will be taught the same lesson (carefully chosen at the start of the year) whilst teaching methods, styles and teachers will be different depending on their age groups. With a team of devoted catechists and the Holy Spirit, this ministry aims to sow the seeds of faith into young hearts and give them a love for the Lord.

Children who are already registered with us need not reapply but for those children who are new here and whose parents would like them to enrol, kindly email us at : heartbeatssacredheartcathedral@gmail.com with details (names, email addresses, ages and grades of your children).



@ St Maur



Spending time in a graveyard does not sound like everyone's cup of tea. Some might even think it's dead boring! However, the Middle School students of Saint Maur International School in Yokohama committed themselves the past school year to spending time each month cleaning some of the graves there and washing the headstones.

2014 marked the 200th anniversary of the birth of our school founder, Mother Mathilde Raclot. She was a remarkable woman by all accounts. She has this year been inducted into Singapore's Women Hall of Fame. It was from Singapore that our founder came to Japan in 1872. She died here in Yokohama in 1911 and is buried in the Foreigners Cemetery.

The students were becoming more acquainted with the person and work of Mother Mathilde, and were showing their respect for her and the other sisters buried here by spending time cleaning the graves and washing the headstones. It's a practical way to be in touch with our roots and develop our identity as a community proud of our history.



Brendan Agnew





Church Cleaning



On August 1st, members of the international community joined our Japanese brethren in cleaning the church sanctuary and rectory. The presence of the members of the international community helped make the work easier and quicker. After the common cleaning, everyone enjoyed a refreshing curry meal and a fruit platter prepared by the Rosary Group (ロサリオ会).



This year's annual cleaning manifests the ICC's growing desire to work together as one community with our Japanese brothers and sisters. The second annual cleaning for this year will be on December 5th. We hope that our participation and communion with the Japanese community as one church and one body of Christ here at Sacred Heart will grow deeper through our worship and labor.

Mass for the Feast of the Assumption

Sacred Heart Cathedral held its annual mass in Japanese on the occasion of the Assumption of Mary on Saturday, August 15. The Mass, while primarily in Japanese, featured elements of English, French and Tagalog, Hindi etc to comprehensively represent our international community. The Word of God knows no language boundaries. Once again, members of the international community joined our Japanese brethren to celebrate the Eucharist together and our international Lector's Group head and members worked hard to coordinate the readings and undertake translations as and when necessary.

The Assumption represents Mary's ascent into Heaven - both body and soul. While this event is never depicted in the Bible, this is part of Sacred Tradition and has been part of Church teachings since the 13th century. The Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary became dogma for the Catholic Church in 1950 when Pope Pius XII declared it to be so. A solemnity is a feast day of the highest rank in the liturgical calendar and usually a Mass of Obligation.



Sacred Tradition

What is a Papal Encyclical ?

Recently, the phrase *Laudato Si* went viral in the social media and reverberated throughout the Catholic world. It is because that phrase came from no less than the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis. *Laudato Si* is the introductory line of Pope Francis' letter quoted from the 13th century 'Canticle of the Sun' by Saint Francis of Assisi. The Papal letters are usually written in Latin and the first line of the letter becomes its title.

The Papal Letter is not just an ordinary letter for us Catholics. We call these letters *Papal Encyclicals*. The term 'encyclical' came from the Greek word for circle. Therefore, an encyclical, as its name implies, is a "circular letter" written by the successor of St Peter addressed to the bishops, priests and the entire Catholic faithful. It is one of the highest forms of teaching from a pope as he interprets Catholic doctrine in view of the social concerns affecting the faithful.

The first papal letter that was called an encyclical was issued by Pope Benedict XIV on December 3, 1740. Since then, popes have written nearly 300 encyclicals. The most recent one is *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis where he declares an urgent need for all Christian communities to work together to curb climate change and to end policies and personal habits that destroy creation. It is a call to each one of us to take to the new path of living.

Fr. Roed Desamparado





Continued from the last issue.....

The Exodus 1

During the period of the Patriarchs, God raised up fathers for the new family he was calling to himself: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (later named Israel) and Joseph. The last patriarch, Joseph, gives us a picture of the way Israel would one day bless the world through Jesus. As Joseph was raised quite literally from a pit to power at the right hand of Pharaoh, from which position he reunited his brothers with their father and provided food to the world, so Jesus was raised from the pit of death to sit at God's right hand, from whence he reunites his brethren with the Father and provides spiritual food to the world.

Exodus 1-2 tells of the plight of the Israelites in Egypt after Joseph, his brothers and sisters and all that generation died. When a new king came into power who didn't know about Joseph and all he had done, he got nervous about the multiplication of Israelites in his land and therefore, decided to reduce them to slaves. Exodus 1-2 also tells of the birth of Moses, the man God would call on to deliver them. Moses was saved from Pharaoh's edict: "Throw into the river every boy that is born to the Hebrew, but you may let all the girls live" (Exodus 1:22). And he was providentially raised by Pharaoh's own daughter in his own palace, "who adopted him as her son and called him Moses; for she said, 'I drew him out of the water'" (2:10). As a grown man, Moses fled the country after killing an Egyptian he saw beating a Hebrew. He lived forty years as a shepherd in Median (in the desert of southeastern Sinai and west central Arabia).

"The Israelites groaned and cried out because of their slavery. As their cry for release went up to God, he heard their groaning and was mindful of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." (Ex 2:22-23) So God, after an apparent silence of 400 years, reveals Himself to Moses and appears to him in fire flaming out of a bush. "Come no nearer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob." (Ex 3:5-6) Consequently, Moses is appointed by God to go to Pharaoh and deliver this message: "Thus says the Lord; Israel is my son, my first-born. Hence I tell you; Let my son go, that he may serve me. If you refuse to let him go, I warn you. I will kill your son, your first-born." (Ex 5:22-23)

Moses inquires about the name of the one who sends him on a mission. "God replied: 'I am who am.' Then he added: 'This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I AM sent me to you.'" (Ex 3:14) The name by which God wants his people to know him is in Hebrew YHWH (pronounced Yahweh) from the Hebrew verb "to be." It means I AM, or I AM HE WHO IS, or I AM WHO I AM. It has no tense and encompasses all tenses. God is holiness itself and must be approached with fear and due reverence. God is personal ("the God of your father"); He is faithful ("the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (the God of the promises); He is ready to intervene on the behalf on his people ("I have come down to deliver"); He works not alone, but through people to accomplish His will ("Come, I will send you"); and He desires the worship of His people. God has revealed Himself: I AM. I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. I AM all-sufficient and all-powerful. I AM being itself. I WILL BE with you. Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush is the most profound, direct revelation that God has yet made of Himself.

In Exodus 7-12, there will be a battle between God and Pharaoh, who sees himself as a god. By claiming Israel as his first born, God is staking his claim on Israel. Pharaoh counters that they are his slaves. The stakes are high: Whose people are these? Who's the boss? Whom will they serve?

God's opening salvo - turning Aaron's rod into a snake - was a declaration of supreme power. When Aaron's snake swallowed the magician's snakes, it trumped Pharaoh's protector, Wadjet, the cobra goddess, and demonstrated God's sovereignty over Egypt, Pharaoh, and the magic they relied on. The snake was the emblem of divine majesty in Egypt and could be seen in the image of a cobra on Pharaoh's crown.

The ensuing plagues sent powerful messages about the relative strength of the Egyptian gods, who represented forces of nature, and of Yahweh, the creator of all things. By turning the Nile to blood, God attacked the lifeblood of Egypt, the god Egypt credited for the nation's existence. By sending a plague of frogs, he rendered Heqt (the frog-headed goddess) impotent - an impotence felt equally by the people, who found themselves surrounded by sacred frogs they could not step on or dispose of. Other plagues attacked other gods or exposed the inability of Pharaoh (who himself was considered a god) to care for his people. The final, abrupt plunging into darkness must have been horrifying, as it left the unprepared Egyptians at the mercy of the night, unprotected by Aton or Amon-Ra the sun god. It is easy to imagine them riveted by the light that remained upon Goshen, which was obviously blessed by the protection of Yahweh: "Men could not see one another, or could they move from where they were, for three days. But all the Israelites had light where they dwelt." (Exodus 10:23)

Continued





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"The Lord said to Moses, 'Pharaoh refuses to listen to you that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.' Thus, although Moses and Aaron performed these various wonders in Pharaoh's presence, the Lord made Pharaoh obstinate, ('the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart' - 9:12) and he would not let the Israelites leave his land." (Exodus 11:9-10)

The tenth plague, the death of the firstborn, brought about the Passover (Exodus 11-12). It called for extensive preparation, each element signifying some aspect of their redemption (bitter herbs for the bitterness of slavery, for example). We will look at the Passover and the Crossing of the Red Sea in our next extolment of the Exodus. Our God is a God who has revealed Himself as powerful, caring with the desire to save us from any slavery and to establish a personal relationship with us as people, as His children, and later on with Jesus, God Incarnated, as brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father. He is God with us, Emmanuel. Alleluia!

Br Michel Beaudin



Your Recipe Space

Shrimp Cakes

Ingredients :

★ Shelled Shrimps (without heads) - 500 gms ★ Green Curry Paste - 2 Teaspoons ★ Egg White - 1 ★ Potato starch - 1 Tablespoon ★ Fish Sauce - 1 Tablespoon ★ Tom Yum Kung paste - 1 Teaspoon ★ Cloves of Garlic (chopped) - 1 ★ Bread crumbs - as needed ★ Vegetable oil - as needed.

Method :

It's better to get unshelled shrimps for freshness. After washing, deshell and devein them. Dice one third of the shrimps, and mince the rest. Combine all the ingredients together, except for the breadcrumbs and oil. Whisk it with your hand until glutinous, for about 15 minutes. Pat 4 small cakes into shape (about 5 cms in diameter and 1.5 cms in thickness). Coat them with breadcrumbs. Fry the cakes until cooked and golden brown color.



Onion Dressing

Ingredients :

Yellow onions - 3 ★ Rice vinegar - 1/2 cup ★ Salad Oil - 1/2 cup ★ Soy Sauce - 1/4 cup ★ Mirin (sweet cooking rice wine) - 1/4 cup ★ Cooking Sake - 1/4 cup ★ Sugar - 1 1/2 tbsps. ★ Salt - 1 tsp.

Slice three regular-sized onions and put all in a large bowl. Add all other ingredients and mix well. Put it in a large glass container with a lid and keep it in the refrigerator. It lasts for two weeks. You can use it for various salads. Also, you can put some on top of sautéed or grilled steaks, pork, chicken and is perfect for BBQs.

Hitomi Fukahori

Heart Beats" invites its readers to share their favourite recipes here. If you would like your recipe to be published in the next issue, please email the Editor.





Saint Maria Micaela Desmaisières López de Dicastillo of the Blessed Sacrament

Founder of the Congregation of Sisters Adorers (Adoratrices) Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament and of Charity.
(1 January 1809 - 24 August 1865) Feast Day : August 25

Early Life

Maria Micaela Desmaisières y Lopez de Dicastillo was born on 1 January 1809 in Madrid during the Spanish war of independence. Her father was a high-ranking officer in the Spanish army and her mother was a lady-in-waiting to the Spanish Queen, Maria Luisa de Parma. Her mother died while Maria was a child.

Maria Micaela's life unfolded in the circles of the Spanish and French nobility. Through her family and social connections, she had very cordial relationships with the Monarchs in Spain, France, and Belgium, and spent most of her young life accompanying her brother, the Spanish Ambassador Diego, to the Royal Palaces. Dances, parties, social gatherings and horse riding were the order of the day for her.

Search for A Vocation

During these same years, Maria Micaela searched for a direction in life. She had inherited from her father a warrior's temperament, which prepared her for the hard battles in her later life, as well as a nobility and generosity of spirit. Her heart, sensitive and compassionate, was guided by her mother towards works of charity towards the sick and needy, and she alternated between acts of charity and the daily life imposed on her by her social class.

She was also **very fond of spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, and it was her love for Jesus in the Eucharist which later became the soul of her work.**



Mission

At the age of 35, Maria Micaela's eyes were opened to the painful realities of life. In her very first visit to the St John of God Hospital in Madrid on 6 February 1844, she met a young girl, a banker's only daughter, who had been drawn into prostitution through deception and was now socially marginalised and facing economic hardship. The story of this girl, as well as those of many others, convinced her that something had to be done to help these women. Making use of her social connections, Maria Micaela set about establishing a Shelter where these women could be helped.

On the Feast of Pentecost, Micaela went through an inner turmoil and received a great light which left profound and lasting effects which remained throughout her life. In one of her mystical experiences, she clearly heard the voice of God saying, **"I want you in my work"**.

The Shelter was officially opened on 21 April 1845 and innumerable young girls and women knocked at the doors seeking assistance. This uncovered a great need which led Maria Micaela to establish the Congregation of Adoratrices, Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament and of Charity in 1856 with the sole purpose of ensuring the continuity of the work. It was approved as a Religious Institute of Pontifical Rights by Pope Pius IX on 15th September 1860.

Micaela's **passionate love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament**, inspired her to choose the name Mother Sacrament. In Micaela's words "The Blessed Sacrament is my life and element". "The Blessed Sacrament is my refuge in everything." "As the desire to accompany the Blessed Sacrament devours me, I get into all the tabernacles I find on the way". "The world is a Tabernacle for me." "Praised be the Most Holy Sacrament, Forever be blessed and praised!"

Mother Sacrament inspired the sisters by saying, "What a joy my dear Sisters! We are the Adorers, the perpetual Handmaids of the Blessed Sacrament! This thought enchants me. Let us be true Adorers. May the divine fire of the love for Jesus in the Holy Sacrament burn in us always as lava of an erupting volcano!"

She was the Handmaid of Charity. Her kindness and forgiving love were remarkable. Not only did she forgive, but also granted favours to persons who offended her the most. She never spoke ill of anyone or let others know a person's faults. She always exhorted her Sisters to love others. Like an echo of St Paul, she said, "Love suffers all, bears all, and does not think evil of anyone".

Mother Sacrament lived in profound humility and confidence in the Lord. Her deep love and respect for the young women, reflected the love of Christ for the lost sheep. She loved them as her own daughters and believed in the possibility of their transformation. During her life, 1,118 young women were taken in by the Shelter of Madrid and most of them owed Mother Sacrament their well being and above all, their eternal salvation.

Continued



Martyr Of Charity

On 24th August, 1865, in Valencia, Mother Sacrament's words came true as she fell victim to the cholera epidemic while attending to some of the Sisters Adoratrices and to women infected by the disease. She said, "By midnight I will not suffer any more". At 8 pm, she made her confession and received Holy Communion. At 11.55 pm, as she foretold, her soul went into the embrace of GOD. A little before her death, the Sisters heard her say, "Peter, open the other half of the door. I am not alone when I enter." In fact another Sister and two girls died at the same time as Mother Sacrament. She was canonized on March 4, 1934.

This year, on the occasion of her **150th Death Anniversary**, through her powerful intercession, let us ask Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament to grant us passionate love for Him and also the grace to love and respect everyone despite their failures in life.

St Maria Micaela, pray for us!

Sr Helen Poovakot

(The writer is a member of the abovementioned congregation).

Sister Adorers (Reihai-Kai) operate two centers - Santa Maria and Santa Micaela - situated in Karasawa 41. These centers help protect and aid young women, mothers and children in difficult situations.



Spiritual Musings

Laudetur Iesus Christus!

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am not a social worker. I am not an environmental or a peace activist. I am not a social justice fighter. Neither am I a psychologist or a teacher. By God's grace, I am a Roman Catholic Priest from Brazil and a Catholic Missionary based in the Diocese of Yokohama.

I work and care for the salvation of souls because only Jesus Christ is my Savior and the Savior of humanity. He is my hope, my life and final destiny. The Blessed Virgin Mary is my beloved mother. The Catholic Church is my family and I hope one day to die in her arms.

I fully embrace the central mission of the Roman Catholic Church: to bring Jesus Christ to those who don't possess him and to bring the fullness of Jesus to those who already possess him.

As members of the Catholic Church, I believe, we are not called to save trees, turtles' eggs or whales but to bring the gift of redemption to the human heart. Because only in Jesus Christ, man and God, we can find true peace and real love in our souls. As Catholics, I also believe that man and woman are called to raise children together, and not pet cats, dogs and parakeets. As Catholics, we believe God created Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve and therefore, we must not give in to the changing social climate of our times and at the risk of sounding "politically incorrect", forego the Christian values we stand for.

I believe that knowing the message of Christ, knowing Christ and identifying with Him, we are holy; we reach the purpose of our Christian vocation and the objective of our earthly life. This is the goal of the Church's mission: to encourage Christians on the path of holiness.

I am richly blessed by the gift of living in Japan with so gracious a culture, so solid a society and her highly courteous people. A country with an outstanding and powerful Catholic history built over the blood and sacrificial love of many great and noble heroes of faith.

I was kindly invited to write in this newsletter to share some riches of Catholic Spirituality. I will start encouraging and inviting you to concentrate your love and energy in this life on the "drama of God" rather than on the "drama of my ego". The drama of my ego is "what I want, my projects and plans; that is my small and limited world." The drama of God is "His plans, His desires, His dreams" - that is the immeasurable world of God who is always found to be more fascinating than we can imagine.

May God mercifully keep you, your family, your parish community and our beloved Roman Catholic Church here in Japan always close to His divine and salvific heart.

Domine Iesu, in Te confido +

Fr Luiz Antonio de Aguiar





The Hights Of Hakuba

Hakuba offers year-round entertainment to those with an affinity for the great outdoors. Although the winter season and Hakuba Village's six ski resorts hold the spotlight, when the snow clears the very same slopes become excellent hiking trails.

With so many options, however, it can be difficult to choose. Happo-One (pronounced "oh-ne" and not like the numeral) is an equally challenging and rewarding hiking experience. I say challenging because although the two ski lifts to get to the starting point are a breeze, the actual beginning of the climb is full of rocks. At this point, I'd like to strongly recommend that you have comfortable, supportive, rubber-and-grip-soled shoes for this and all other Hakuba hikes. The reward comes after the third kellen, in the form of Hoppo-ike (Happo Pond) and a magnificent view of Hakuba Village and beyond. 2000 meters closer to God, with the cool mountain air filling your soul, this is the perfect location to stop for a well-deserved rest and snack.

There are also more leisurely options – let's call them strolls – through the village area. One such stroll may lead you to a quaint gallery featuring one photographer's photos of Hakuba throughout the seasons, to a café offering scrumptious brunch and baked goods, or to a steaming foot bath to relax those overworked muscles.

For those who want a more thrilling and less physically demanding view of the village, I recommend paragliding. Really, it's as graceful as it sounds – who wouldn't want to glide through the air? Simply trade in your hiking boots for a harness and parachute and you'll be feeling lighter than a feather. Sky Blue Hoppo-One Paraglider Schools offers tandem flight courses for beginners, and license courses for those who wish to obtain a pilot license. And although you may be only 650 meters up as opposed to 2000 meters, and although you may feel as light as your wallet, nothing can quite compare to floating in air and casting your own shadow on the village beneath your feet.

Although Hakuba may seem to cater to the extremes only, it only takes the smallest amount of curiosity to find the in-betweens. No matter your personal preferences, Hakuba provides a little bit of every adventure. My advice? Get out there and find it.

To access Hakuba from Yokohama

Yokohama – Shinjuku (Tokaido Line or Shonan Shinjuku Line)

Shinjuku – Hakubamura (Highway Bus) OR

Shinjuku – Matsumoto (JR Azusa limited express train) – Hakuba (JR Oita Line)

The highway bus runs at around 8700 yen round trip, while the train journey will cost approximately 8000 yen one way. Both options will get you in Hakuba in 4 to 5 hours!

Hannak Maki

"Heart Beats" invites its readers to share their local adventure spots and holiday picks here. If you would like your article to be published in the next issue, please email the Editor.

