

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

NIPPON SEI KO KAI Provincial Office

Editor : E. Hajime Suzuki

65 Yarai-cho, Shinjuku-ku,
Tokyo 162-0805 JAPAN

Tel. +81-3-5228-3171

Fax +81-3-5228-3175

JOINT CELEBRATION OF THE NIPPON SEI KO KAI AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN JAPAN

Joint Communiqué *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* Japanese Translation publication

A 40th Anniversary Service of International Dialogue between The Anglican Communion and Roman Catholic Church was held.

The Rev. Francis Renta Nishihara

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (Joint Committee Chair: NSKK: the Rt. Rev. Hiromich Kato, the Bishop of Tohoku Diocese; Roman Catholic The Most. Rev. Takeo Okada, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Tokyo) organized The Joint Service to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of ARCIC at SEKIGUCHI (St. Mary's) Cathedral on Feb. 1st 2008. It was also to celebrate the translation *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* into Japanese as a consensual communiqué of ARCIC.

There was a full congregation from both churches. There were not enough pews for the people, even though the service was held at St. Mary's Cathedral. The Service was magnificent, with beautiful hymns sang by the Tokyo Diocese Choir of the NSKK and the Caritas Sisters of Miyazaki.

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, sent a special congratulatory address based on the resolution of Inter-Anglican Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations which was held in Cairo, Egypt at the end of last year.

Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ is the final agreement in dogma in the second period of the ARCIC. It is very clear to me, that amongst numerous dogmas, one of the most difficult themes in the agreement between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church has been the theory of Mary.

In the Agreement, the understanding concerning Mary, common to both churches, was concluded as follows:

- (1) It would be impossible not to pay attention to Mary as a human, when we study the Bible faithfully.
- (2) Both churches confirm that only Jesus Christ mediates God and human, and deny any interpretation about Mary which makes this understanding ambiguous. Understanding Mary should be inseparable from the theories of Christ and the Churches.
- (3) Both churches acknowledge Theotokos, the particular Blessing and Vocation of Mary.
- (4) Both churches find that Mary is the good model of Holiness, Obedience and Faith which all Christians and churches should follow.
- (5) The Anglican Communion and the Roman Catholic Church have kept the common tradition of praying and praising Mary since ancient days. Mary is a special mediator who connects all Christians and Christ. The tradition of praying through Mary and all the Saints should not separate us from mutual communion and fellowship in both our churches. As far as the basic agreement in the doctrine exists, the piety that has been developed in each church tradition should be allowed.

The difficult issue concerning the theory of Mary between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church is "The Immaculate Conception and Assumption of Mary", which is the dogma in the Roman Catholic Church. Anglicans would not directly acknowledge that point.

Likewise in the Roman Catholic devotional, actions expressing adoration to Mary are quite common in daily lives, but these are not familiar to most of the people who belong to the Anglican Communion. However, the understanding on Mary will be an issue requiring further dialogue and mutual understanding between both churches.

With the Agreement, the dialogue between both churches will step forward to the third stage that has been already confirmed between The Archbishop of Canterbury and Pope Benedict the 16th.

■ Archbishop of Canterbury's Message

Joint Celebration of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan

It gives me great pleasure to send you my greetings as you celebrate our longstanding commitment to Anglican Roman Catholic dialogue. The translation of *Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ* into Japanese represents a tangible sign of this commitment and a valuable contribution towards our growth together in unity and understanding. As together we recall the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, may we marvel, as did Mary, at the salvation to which Simeon bore witness with her child in his arms.

I pray that our forty years of international dialogue will enable the Nippon Sei Ko Kai and the Roman Catholic Church in Japan to give more eloquent expression to this salvation in their common life and witness, to the glory of God.

+Rowan Cantuar

Report on the Anglican Diocesan Women's Conference in Sri Lanka

Michiko Kikawada, Kyoto Diocese; Officer, Women's Desk of NSKK

Kaoru Yoshitani (Kobe Diocese) and I, from Japan, participated in the First Diocesan Women's Conference in Colombo from November 22nd-25th 2007. The conference's theme was "Towards a New Humanity"; the purpose of our participation was to express our solidarity as Asian Anglican women. It was the second time for me to visit Sri Lanka. My first visit was in July 2005 when I was a member of the fact-finding team on the tsunami that struck communities there in December 2004.

Since the first visit, I had been concerned about two aspects of this country. One was how far the reconstruction of the communities had gone after two years. And another was the influence of the civil war upon ordinary people's lives there. Also, just before we arrived in Sri Lanka, it had been reported in Japan that the battle between the government forces and LTTE had gradually been intensifying. (LTTE: Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam, a radical minority Tamil group. They rule over North and East areas, demanding to be separate and independent.)

It was midnight when we arrived at the house of Rev. Malini Devananda, who very kindly let us stay during the conference. She serves as the representative of BOWW (Church of Ceylon Board of Women's Work) and also served as a member of the executive committee for this conference. Her husband, Yohan, a retired priest, also waited up to welcome us. He politely made cups of tea for us. Yohan is the leader of an NGO, where religious leaders from Asia and all over the world discuss peace-building programs for Sri Lanka. Both Malini and Yohan are concerned with peace issues and gender-equality issues in church and society.

The Cathedral of Christ the Living Savior where the conference and a service were held, stands on an extensive site with lush greenery near the central area of Colombo. There is a pedestal type altar in the center of this Cathedral, built with bare concrete walls. When it was time for Holy Communion, people came to receive the sacrament around this altar forming a circle. It was explained to us that this pictured togetherness. There was truth in that; when I received the sacrament, I felt exactly as if everybody was gathered together as one body around the one table.

There were about 200 participants from every corner of the country. The main objectives of the conference were to afford an opportunity to the women of the Diocese for interaction, sharing experiences, mutual learning and fellowship.

Through the Bible stories in the main lecture and the Bible sharing, we considered what challenges Jesus gives us in today's context. And a special workshop about HIV was held on the morning of the third day. The lecturer of the HIV workshop was Hilda Vember who is an Anglican from South Africa; she works at a University, teaching HIV prevention. Hilda taught very clearly and concretely about how to prevent HIV infection, and I thought it was also important for Japan. (Japan is the only advanced country that has an increasing number of HIV positives.)

In addition, Rev. Malini Devananda had also written a booklet for church members about sex education; and the Rt. Rev. Duleep de Chikera, Bishop of Colombo Diocese, wrote the preface of this booklet. I was surprised that the issue of sexuality was clearly situated in the church educational program.

There were also 10 other workshops: "Women in the Family", "Women in Society", "Women in the Church", "Women in Vocations in the Church", "Women in the Workplace", "Migrant Women" (Many Sri Lankan women work in Middle Eastern countries and Southeast Asia), "Women Affected by War", "Women and Peace", "Women and Domestic Violence", "Sexually Gender Based Violence", and "Women and Empowerment".

After getting closer to some participants, I noticed that there were churches in the north area ruled by LTTE, and that there were participants from there. I was surprised at that fact, because the image I had of the north area was a desolate

field without any ordinary people, but only terrorists. In fact, the road to North had been blockaded; therefore, those participants had to come to Colombo by airplane, like traveling to a foreign country. I found out that a lot of “ordinary” people, not only terrorists, lived there. At any rate, women risked coming to Colombo for the conference through the civil war. How brave they were!

The peace-building dialog between the government and LTTE has not moved at all. The workshop I participated in held a discussion about how people could make changes to this situation. It seemed that even Sinhala, the majority people, who do not tolerate terror, do not support their government in its plan to suppress the minority by force.

I, as a foreigner, talked about my experience. The information we have in Japan is limited and biased, towards the majority or the government side. So, if I hadn’t known the real facts, I could possibly have mistaken the type of person with whom I should think, and also how I should think, about this problem. I thought it was very important to meet directly in person and consider the issues together.

The Sri Lankan is multilingual, speaking mainly Sinhala, Tamil, and English. I was surprised that a simultaneous interpretation system was used in the simple Diocesan chamber. Each participant could hear the speech in her selected language, through interpreters in booths. The prayer book for this conference was also written in three languages. Because of this, I could understand that the people of this country had continued to make much effort and many concrete mechanisms in order for them to understand one another’s different languages and cultures.

During the program, I was able to talk with Svendorini Kakuchi, a journalist and the representative of NGO TECH Japan; the year before last, NSKK sent a contribution to support their work. TECH Japan built the sawing training center at Vabunia, in the southern part of the north area. She says, “Every finished product here is the proof of the women’s bravery.” With other staff members of the NGO, she consistently helps women in the war zone to become empowered and independent. Her words, “There is a will, there is a way”, remain in my heart.

The theme of this conference was “Towards a New Humanity”. The skit in the opening service showed a scene of women’s oppression and another scene of a conversation between women disciples who hoped to follow Jesus to spread the Good News and male disciples. Jesus calls for equal partnership to women, men and all people.

Most people may feel timid to go outside the framework of consciousness in which they naturally live. However, by doing so, I feel that we can build new relationships and also find hope to change ourselves.

At this conference, we were able to meet four women priests; it was a wonderful experience for us as we support women’s ministry all over the world. And there were also several male priests who supported this conference. It was nice for us to know we had their support.

We were able to go to Sri Lanka thanks to contributions from many people. (The budget of the national office for this trip was limited to only one person, but supporters helped us.) Thank you very much. Kaoru and I had some very special experiences. We thank all staff members of the committee who supported the conference and all the courageous women in Sri Lanka.

A Letter from Rev. Lynne Coull, Diocese of Highveld, South Africa

– Buckling down to the eradication of HIV/AIDS and empowerment of women –

Every year the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) has contributed the Lenten Offerings of the year, collected from all the members of the NSKK, to those who are in need in Asian and African countries to help them.

The following letter and report were received from the Diocese of Highveld in South Africa, expressing their appreciation for one of the NSKK’s aid programs, for which we give our sincere prayers.

Report on HIV/AIDS Work in The Diocese of Highveld in 2007

Visiting and counseling the patients with HIV/AIDS

The Diocese continues to build on what has been achieved in previous years. 30 community home-based care projects have been established in the Albert Luthuli Municipality in rural Mpumalanga. On average, 481 caregivers working in these projects make 16037 visits to 3207 sick and dying patients each month. In Ekurhuleni, the more densely populated urban region, the Diocese is supporting 11 home-based care projects where 175 caregivers make 9300 home visits to 1860 patients in need of care every month. The caregivers work closely with local clinics and hospitals and fulfil an important function within their communities, offering care and support to those living with all chronic illnesses including HIV/AIDS as well as their families, HIV/AIDS counselling, education around health issues as well as assisting family members to access social grants in order to reduce their poverty levels. It is pleasing to note that the numbers of people

who are accessing anti-retroviral treatment at various sites within the Diocese is increasing thanks to the intervention of the caregivers. The caregivers are currently servicing the needs of 1700 orphans and vulnerable children and work closely with the Department of Social Development. In order to build the capacity of the caregivers, the projects to which they belong and ultimately members of communities served by the home-based care projects, the Diocese in 2007 offered workshops in home-based care, HIV/AIDS counselling, project management, leadership, child care and care of the caregiver. Two ecumenical World AIDS Day services which included the debriefing of caregivers in the rural area as well as one ecumenical World AIDS Day service for caregivers in the urban region were conducted. Monthly support meetings for the caregivers of the 11 urban home-based care projects continue to be conducted. The caregivers very much enjoy these meetings. They offer each other support, share their experiences and workshop various topics of interest to themselves.

Care for the children who lost their parents

The Diocese's Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) programme is developing very well. 91 child care advocates have been trained in the urban region. The child care advocates educate families and members of the community on child rights issues. Child abuse cases are referred to the authorities. Our OVC co-ordinator, Bafana Kunene is in the process of establishing child care forums in various communities. The advocates assist families and guardians to apply for birth certificates and identity documents in order to access social grants for the children from the Government thereby also reducing poverty levels. These child care advocates have identified and assisted just over 11000 orphans and vulnerable children in the Diocese. Another 80 child care advocates were trained towards the end of 2007 and will begin their work in the rural part of the Diocese early this year. 31 educators have been put through the Diocese's Early Childhood Development programme. This programme was established to benefit HIV infected and affected children most of whom were identified through caregivers involved in home-based care in various rural and urban communities. 471 children attend 7 creches /pre-schools and day-care centres. Increasing numbers of children in these facilities are being treated for TB, while others are on anti-retroviral treatment. The Diocese in partnership with the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (NACCW) established the Isibindi Model of Child Care in the townships of Katlehong and Thokoza in 2006. This model of child and youth care targets orphans and vulnerable children particularly children living in child-headed households. A third Isibindi site was established in June 2007 in the Rooikoppen informal settlement in Standerton in Mpumalanga. A fourth site is currently being established close to the Swaziland border, also in Mpumalanga. The child and youth care workers are currently servicing the needs of over 1500 children. The Diocese and the NACCW are at the moment trying to set up safe parks for children in Rooikoppen, Thokoza and Katlehong and to this end are negotiating with the Ekurhuleni and Standerton Municipalities to provide pieces of land for the development of the safe parks.

Parishes in the Diocese have been very generous in providing clothing, shoes and food parcels for the orphans and vulnerable children. 10 parishes have started feeding schemes for orphans and vulnerable children as they return from school in the afternoons. They also provide homework supervision, supervised games and sports. Two parish projects teach the older children computer lessons.

Support for empowerment of women

The Diocese has also started a microlending scheme. This scheme benefits poor, disadvantaged women who borrow money from the Diocese at a very low interest rate in order to start up their businesses. A whole variety of businesses from catering to dressmaking, beadmaking, secretarial services, to hiring of equipment for funerals and many others have been created. Some women have used their funding to expand their small businesses and are now employing other women. As women repay their loans, others are provided with loans.

Acquiring new funding is becoming increasingly difficult and the Diocese is trying by all means to assist in the region of 70 community projects to develop their knowledge and skills base so that they can be sustainable in the long term.

Hearty gratitude for the warm contributions from NSKK

Please would you convey to the Diocese of Nippon Sei Ko Kai Japan, our gratitude for its generous funding of our Diocesan HIV/AIDS programme. The funding which came from your Diocese has contributed enormously towards the alleviation of the suffering of people in many of our disadvantaged communities.

Members of the English Version of NSKK Newsletter, Spring 2008 are: as follows:

Ms. Kazuko Takeda, Ms Michiko Kikawada, Ms Toshiko Yoshimura, Ms. Claire L. Gelder

Editor-in-Chief: Hajime Suzuki