

Last Week's Sermon Summary

"The Annunciation"

Pastor Takaaki Inoue

Isaiah 7:10~14, Luke 1:26~38

❶ **[What is the traditional theory of Mary]** The angel Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary in the city of Nazareth and said: "Congratulations, blessed one, the Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28) When Mary heard this greeting, she was confused and pondered. Then Gabriel said, "Mary, do not be afraid, you have received grace from God. Thou shalt conceive and give birth to a son, and thou shalt name him Jesus." (verse 31). Maria was only about 15 years old at the time. Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but she was not yet married, so when she said, "How can that be, I do not know a man?" Gabriel replied, "The Holy Spirit (the Spirit of God) will descend upon you, and the power of the Most High (God) will envelop you. Therefore the child who is born will be called holy, the son of God." (1:35). Man needed salvation, while God needed a body to live and die with man. Infant Mary provided the body for it. For the first time in her, God and man became one, and Jesus was born. Mary did not give birth to a mere human being. It was God who dwelt in Mary's womb. Therefore, the Council of Ephesus in 431 gave Mary the title of "Mother of God" (Theotokos), and the Council of Chalcedon in 451 summarized the Nativity of Christ. After this, the Catholic Church has adopted the doctrine of "Mary has no original sin (Immaculate Conception)," "Mary is an eternal virgin," "Mary ascended to heaven with body and soul together (Assumption)," "Mediator of prayer," and "She is the Mother of the

Church." The Orthodox Church does not recognize the Immaculate Conception of Mary, but believes in the rest of the teachings. All we know is that Mary is not to be worshipped, but to be respected.

❷ **[I may be as He says]** In response to Gabriel's message, Mary immediately offered herself, saying, "I am the Lord's servant, and I may be as He says" (verse 38). When Mary accepted God's word, Christ, the Son of God, was born in her. What happened to Mary is to all people. When we also believe and accept God's Word, Christ is spiritually born in us through the work of the Holy Spirit. But dedication is not easy. God's will is sometimes harsh. Because they are told things they don't want to follow. So these words of Mary smell of the cross. My image of Mary is not that of a beautiful and pure Virgin, but of a patient and silent Mother. Sister Kazuko Watanabe said, "When I was young, I had the courage to take on new challenges and achieve something, but as I get older, I am taught that I need to have the courage to accept the unacceptable." But that's what dedication is all about.

❸ **[Christ is formed in man by suffering]** "Did Luther revere Mary?" I read a book titled: Luther seems to have respected Mary throughout his life. He used it as a model for the Christian life. This is what I wrote. "Mary is adorned with the roses of the three virtues, faith, humility, and modesty," and "the holy virgin walks a long way on foot from great humility to old Elisabeth." "When Mary was in Nazareth, she was a lonely, poor young woman, and no one paid attention to her, ... No one wants to feel the great miracle she has received. She is also silent about it, considering herself an insignificant ♪

Weekly Report

The United Church of Christ in Japan
Miyakojima Church

Mission Established December 1, 1957

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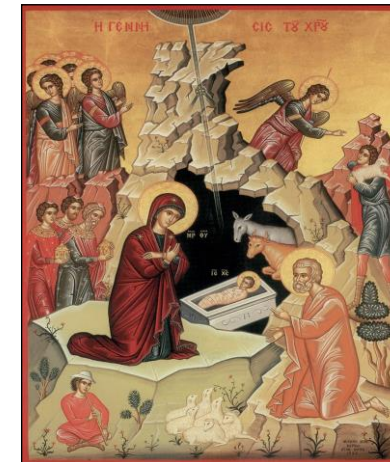
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《Nativity》

Miyakojima Church's 2024 Mission Policy

Motto : "Let's prepare for the construction of the church "

Scripture : "No one can lay any other foundation, ignoring the foundation that has already been laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:11)

Goals for FY2024

- 1 Observe worship services every week and aim for an average of 27 people to attend services.
- 2 We invite one person to worship in one year.
- 3 Make concrete preparations for the construction of the church.
- 4 Cultivate the consciousness of building a church together.