

In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary  
of the Discovery of the Japanese Christians

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***“SANTA MARIA WAS THERE!”***

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Performance in Nagasaki  
Venue: Brick Hall

Script written by  
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Translated into English by KAROLDVD-JC

[ENGLISH TRANSLATION VERSION]

Before the start of the play, there are photo slide projections on the backdrop, which intend to make the viewers to familiarize with some episodes and overall background of this extraordinary story. Each photo slide has short explanatory lines as follows:

[ Chanting a hymn in Latin ]

In commemoration of the 150th Anniversary  
of the Discovery of the Japanese Christians  
“SANTA MARIA WAS THERE!”

Statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Discovery  
of the Japanese Christians  
- Oura Catholic Church, Nagasaki -

Francis Xavier (1506-1552)

*“I believe Japan should be the perfect country to accept and retain Christianity.” “Nothing will be in vain for this mission.”*  
( Xavier's letter )

The Hachinoko Island seen from the Site of Yokoseura  
Most of the work of the missionaries was done around the trading ports. Omura Sumitada became the first Christian lord, and his vassals followed. It was in June 1563.

Shimabara Peninsula, the Cradle of the Japanese Church  
Groups called “Confraternity of Mercy”, “Confraternity of Santa Maria” and “Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament” were organized there. Shimabara Christians believed what they were taught, put their belief into practice, and lived it. It was the most important thing to them.

A Scene of The Twenty Six Martyrs of Japan (1597)

“Let us stand with the Martyrs” was the slogan that supported the Christians after the Martyrdom of the Twenty Six. The martyrdom, believing in secret and “resurrection” are the strength and wonder of the Japanese Catholic Church, which resulted from the Twenty Six Martyrs and spirituali.

### Justo Takayama Ukon (1552-1615)

Exiled from Japan, Ukon passed away in Manila on Feb. 3, 1615, at the age of 63. His family, Joan Naito and Fr. Morejon were by his bedside. His last words were, “Jesus, Maria.”

### The Martyrdom of Arima (1613)

Diego ran through the flames and clung to his mother Martha. Pointing up, she said, “Diego, look up to Heaven.” Those were her last words.

### Shimabara Castle seen from Ariake Sea

Torture of the Christians started on February 21, 1627. Five year old Ignatius had three fingers cut off both hands. Silently he looked at his bleeding fingers as if he were viewing beautiful rose blossoms.

### The Martyrdom of Shimabara (1627)

Three sons of Paul Uchibori Sakuemon were stripped and thrown into the cold Sea of Ariake in February. Antonio, the second son cried out before sinking in the water, “Father, let us thank the Lord for such a grace!”

### Flag of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament

This flag was used when the members of the Blessed Sacrament offered prayers. It was also used as a war banner during the Shimabara Uprising. (1637)

### A Cove in the Kintsuba Valley

Fr. Kintsuba prayed at night hiding in a cove. He had the heart of the Good Shepherd. The priest disguised himself as a stableman, samurai, jail guard, farmer, and merchant. The Good Shepherd knew the voice of his faithful followers, and they knew the voice of their Shepherd.

### Kurose Trail where Gaspar Nishi Genka was martyred

Ikitsuki Christians secretly planted a pine tree there. (‘Kurose’ came from the word ‘Cross’.) “Standing there in silent prayer, you adore Jesus on the cross!” They passed down this message to their descendants.

### A Scene of Nagasaki 'Fumie' investigation

To flush out the Christians, trampling on the sacred images was made compulsory every year. The Act of Contrition followed. Then life returned to normal for the Christians. It was the sign of the Grace of forgiveness.

### Oura Catholic Church at the time of foundation

“The foreigners in the ‘French Temple’ must be the ‘Padre’ (Father) if there is a statue of SANTA MARIA.” The Christians wanted to confirm the legend of the ancestors as early as possible.

### Father Bernard-Thadée Petitjean (1829-1884)

*“SANTA MARIA! - There was no doubt when I heard her gracious name.” “The people before me are undoubtedly the descendants of Japanese Christians from long ago.”* ( Letter of Fr. Petitjean )

### The attic Chapel of the Immaculate Conception

Educating the seminarians started nine months after the discovery of the Christians. The trained Catechists taught the people. They never spared their effort in teaching the faith.

### Investigation of the Urakami Christians

The Christians, empowered by their encounter with the priests, appealed to the village headman to sever relations with the Buddhist temples. The Deputy Magistrate became angry and destroyed the secret chapels and arrested the leaders of Urakami Christians.

### The beginning of ‘The Journey’

In 1868, the Christians in Urakami were forced into exile in 22 domains in Japan. They called it “The Journey.” They accepted the hardships of the journey because of their strong faith. It is a sign of their great love for our Holy Mother.

### Domingo Matsujiro Mori (1835-1902)

Matsujiro chose to live in deep silence and led people into hiding to observe the faith. A man can be proud of his weakness when he finds God's blessing in it.

Sen-emon Takaki (1824-1899)

“The day will definitely come when the ban will be lifted and we will be able to voice our prayers openly.” “When that day comes, I will build a large cross on the hill of Urakami and I will pray openly and loudly,” said Sen-emon.

Fr. Auguste Florentin Bourelle (1847-1885)

Fr. Bourelle was sent to the Kami-Goto Islands and made a place for orphans with his supporters. The house was called, “Children's Room,” which became a Light of Hope for the islanders.

How was the faith handed down to the descendants?

What “legacy” has the Church in Japan received?

Here is the answer.

[ Chanting “Ave Maria” in Latin ]

♪... *Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ...* ♪

♪... *Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ...* ♪

SANTA MARIA WAS THERE !

Slide Projection ends and The Play starts here

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< ACT 1 >

with 3 Scenes

[ BELLS RINGING ]

Curtain opens 10 seconds after the bells of the Urakami church ring. After the bells stop ringing, the projector is set up on the backdrop and the narration starts.

*Narration (1):* Katharina Sugimoto Yasu, my grandmother, went to heaven with her rosary in her hands on April 7, 1962. There was a statue of our Holy Mother by her pillow. She was 94 years old. She was born in 1868 in the family of Yashiro Ide and Naka. Before the age of two, Yasu and her family were forced to leave for Wakayama. Later on, they returned to Urakami where she was to experience further

sufferings, namely the Nagasaki Atomic bomb raid when she was 77. Long indescribable hardship left deep wrinkles on her face. Our Lord might have given some special role to her extraordinary life of 94 years. Yasu was the last person alive from the age when hidden Christians were discovered and exiled. Fr. Manri Nakashima, a pastor of Urakami Church, held her funeral with all the members of his church. “She was just a humble person without fame who carried the love of our Lord in her heart,” said Fr. Manri during his sermon, tears in his eyes.

The stories I tell you are the ones I have heard from Grandma Yasu from time to time since my childhood. Since I am getting older, I must pass on important things from her to you correctly. I want to share with you what I received from her.

The backdrop is opened after the narration ends  
and the scene of the Fumie is illuminated.

< SCENE 1 >

- In the yard of village headman -

Characters

Shinkichi of Ippongi

Officer No.1: Shin-emon

Officer No.2: Tokunoshin

Officer No.3: Umanosuke

Sato of Noboritate

In the center of the stage, the Fumie examination is being conducted  
by three officers. Spot lighted over that area only.

Officer No.1 with a notebook and a brush pen in his hands, calls a  
name.

*Shin-emon:* Next. Shinkichi of Ippongi.

*Shinkichi:* Yes, sir. (He comes hobbling in from the stage right.)

Happy New Year to you, sir.

I thank you every year.

*Tokunoshin:* Good.

*Shinkichi:* What a cold winter, isn't it? Look how chapped my feet are!

(He shows his limping foot wrapped in bandages.)

*Shin-emon:* (Being frustrated by the slow pace of Shinkichi) Stop talking. Hurry up and step on it.

*Shinkichi:* My foot hurts at the slightest touch. (Hobbling his foot, Shinkichi steps forward and slightly touches the edge of the Fumie.) Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! (He starts leaving with a limp.)

*Umanosuke:* (Watching from an oblique angle in a crouched position, he quickly says) Wait, Shinkichi!

*Tokunoshin:* You haven't really stepped on it, have you?

*Shinkichi:* But, sir. I really did it!

*Tokunoshin:* You only touched the edge. You can't fool me! You're trying to fool me right at New Year!

*Shinkichi:* No way, sir!

*Tokunoshin:* (Quickly changes his facial expression, and smacks his knee.) Well, then. You may be a Christian. Right? Hey Shinkichi! Tell the truth!

*Shinkichi:* (Bowing himself to the ground) Never. No way, sir.

*Umanosuke:* Mr. Tokunoshin. You say the word Christian too loudly.

*Tokunoshin:* Um?

*Umanosuke:* We need to confirm he really stepped on the plate.

*Shin-emon:* (To Shinkichi) Stand up, Shinkichi!

*Shinkichi:* Yes. (Urged by Shin-emon, he comes back to the former position.)

*Umanosuke:* It would be awful to repeat the Amakusa error! The rumor spread that 4,000 Christians were in Amakusa. The authorities of Shimabara spent six years to check this out thoroughly.

*Tokunoshin:* But they concluded the rumor to be false.

*Umanosuke:* Right, and they were not punished. But our domain is under the Magistrate for Christian Control. It would be bad for us.

*Tokunoshin:* Mr. Umanosuke.

*Umanosuke:* We may be forced to resign to take responsibility. I'm afraid for my wife and our little children. She might have to raise them by herself. (With deep sigh) I'm afraid for my wife and our little children. She might have to raise them by herself. I wish I had not been born into a Samurai family. (Cries out of tears)

*Tokunoshin:* What a sad sigh you make! Mr. Umanosuke. I've been meaning to ask you ... Why are you so pessimistic? That's a bad habit, Mr. Umanosuke.

Don't you agree, Mr. Shin-emon?

*Shin-emon:* Calm yourself, Mr. Tokunoshin.

*Tokunoshin:* During our last lunch, his chopstick broke. That's considered bad

luck ...

*Shin-emon:*

Yah?

*Tokunoshin:*

You said “My chopstick broke. That’s bad!” “I must be careful on the way home.” And you left earlier.

*Shinkichi:*

(Excessively laughs. Meeting the officer’s eye, (he) quickly looks down.)

*Tokunoshin:*

Where in the world can you find relief?

*Umanosuke:*

I don't know where.

*Shinkichi:*

Excuse me, sir. I'm still waiting. May I leave now? (Saying so, he bows and gets to leave.)

*Shin-emon:*

Wait, Shinkichi. You made this an issue by faking. I don't care if you have chapped skin or not. Trample on the image with your whole foot. I mean it.

*Tokunoshin:*

You are taking time!

*Shinkichi:*

Yes, sir. As you say.

*Shin-emon:*

This is a terrible job, isn't it? Making people step on the image every year for 250 years. And converting all of them to Buddhism.

*Tokunoshin:*

Well, it’s all to get rid of Christians.

*Shin-emon:*

Oh, yes. But we've been doing it now for over 250 years already. Now, there's no Christian in this country. How long will the authorities keep us doing this? We have to work every day until mid-January, checking their feet all day long.

*Umanosuke:*

That's been my worry, too. Mr. Shinemon. It's really hard to confirm that no Christians are left in this country.

*Shin-emon:*

That's bad! Mr. Umanosuke.

*Umanosuke:*

In a book Christians treasure, there's some saying that “*The things of man, perish. The things of God, endure.*”

*Shin-emon:*

I’ve heard this saying sometime before. Yes, me, too. But so what?

*Umanosuke:*

If that saying is from a god, Christians could still be hiding somewhere. And we'd be the ones who are against that god. They say Christians transmit messages without distortion.

*Tokunoshin:*

Stop talking nonsense! I just told you that this is your bad habit. If you were right, Mr. Umanosuke, I'd be ready to surrender and join them as a Christian.

*Shin -emon:*

Are you sane, Mr. Tokunoshin?

*Tokunoshin:*

No Christian has been found in these 250 years, you know.

*Shin-emon:*

Right.

*Tokunoshin:*

Don't worry.

By the way, Shinkichi. Hurry up and step on it!



*Shinkichi:* Yes! (Whispers to himself) Oh, it's tough!  
*Tokunoshin:* What do you mean?  
*Shinkichi:* All right. Now. (This time he slowly steps on the Fumie and he bows deeply toward the Fumie with his hands in prayer.)  
Is this enough, sir?  
*Shin-emon:* That's enough. Thanks for your cooperation.

(Shinkichi bows and walks away.)

*Shin-emon:* Next. Sato of Noboritate.  
*Sato of Noboritate:* Yes. (She comes in from the stage right.)

### [ THE ACT OF CONTRITION ]

Shinkichi goes off to the stage left. 5 seconds after Sato steps on the Fumie, the light is dimmed and the backdrop comes down. At the same time, the prayer, The Act of the Contrition starts. After the prayer (about 20 seconds long), soon starts the narration. During the narration, the scene of 'Fumie' is screened.

Sato of Noboritate comes in as Shinkichi goes off. Shinkichi who finished Fumie test, goes off to the stage left and sits on the chair which is placed in front of the backdrop. He pours water in a little bamboo tub, washes his foot with which he just trod on the Fumie, wipes it with a towel he has on his waist, and then drinks up the water in the tub little by little. He bends over and starts chanting the prayer of The Act of Contrition. While he prays, Sato of Noboritate stays keeping her foot on the Fumie which is placed in front of the backdrop. Focus the spotlight from the ceiling, only on the scene of Shinkichi. Sato is silhouetted against the light of the projector.

*Narration (2):* This was "Fumie", stepping on the Holy Image, to search for Christians. It was conducted every year in January and February, at village headmans' houses and Buddhist temples. It started in 1627 when missionaries went underground and continued until 1856 when Japan opened the country. Seven generations suffered this "Fumie" persecution for 227 years, which was a horrible torture for Christians to endure. No one can see the mind of another. Christians stepped on the Holy Image to hide their faith. They did not step on the Holy Image with their soul, but rather, they cried in their hearts. They

washed their feet at home after “Fumie” and drank the waste water to atone for their sin. They prayed for the forgiveness of the Lord with the act of “Konchirisan”, Contrition, the Act of Contrition which had been passed down from generation to generation.

Though it was an intangible annual torture on their heart, through this very “Fumie”, they passed down their faith. Once in every year, they confirmed they were Christians facing “Fumie”, praying for forgiveness and atonement. They felt restored and forgiven, and realized the grace of God. They knew that they would be blessed by God, however difficult their actions had been.

There is another tradition passed down for 250 years through the age without a single priest. That is baptism. Grandma Katharina Sugimoto Yasu may be the last one baptized by Mataichi Iwanaga, the Baptizer of Urakami.

When the narration ends, backdrop is lifted, and there light is lit on the scene of baptism.

< SCENE 2 >

- Mataichi’s house -

Characters:

Baptiser Iwanaga Mataichi

Ide Yashiro

Ide Naka

Ide Yasu (baby doll)

Godmother Tama

In the center, is baptizer Mataichi. In front of him, there is a mother holding a baby in her arms. Beside her, are the baby’s father and a woman who is going to be the baby’s Godmother. Behind Mataichi, is a nando (a chest of drawers with the double doors) opening outward and Maria Kannon (a statue of disguised Virgin Mary) is placed in it. Beside Maria Kannon is a lighted candle.

*Ide Naka:* There, there, (Dandling the baby) don't cry. Be a good baby. You will be a child of God, now.

*Ide Yashiro:* Mataichi-san, I thank you today. God gave us another daughter. Please make her a child of God. We've got nothing at all, but we

have our faith. We want our baby to become a child of God for all of her life. Please baptize and bless her, so that she can live with joy even in difficult times.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Oh, it's a good baby. What's her name?

**Ide Naka:** Her name is Yasu.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Yasu is a lovely name.

Tama, stand by me with the basin of water.

**Tama:** Yes.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** I baptize her now. I pray for the blessing of God.

**Ide Naka:** Yes.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Do you renounce Satan and all of his works?

**All:** Yes, we do.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, in Jesus his only Son, and in the Holy Spirit?

**All:** Yes, we do.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** And in the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

**All:** Yes, we do believe.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** *Yasu, ego te baptizo in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen. (Yasu. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen)* (Saying the prayer, he pours water three times on the baby's forehead. When finished, the baby starts crying) Alright. Now this baby is a precious child of God. I will give her a Christian name of Katharina, same as her sponsor. Remember it, will you?

**The Ides:** Yes.

**Tama:** Katharina Yasu. It's a beautiful name! This baby is so lovely and God will be pleased. I'll be praying for you.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Could you let me hold her? We can live with God because we were baptized. Our parents have been baptizing babies for generations, and we lived our lives with the word of God without any Padre. Baptism is the best treasure parents can pass on to a child. Without baptism, we cannot keep our faith and our community.

**Ide Yashiro:** That's right. Mataichi is right. Baptism and the help from our community made it possible to live in hardship. If we were to live alone without our community, my family would have perished. Baptism is an indispensable blessing to us. I will tell my offspring never to cease baptizing. Thank you very much Mataichi.

**The Ides and Tama:** Thank you very much.

**Bapt. Mataichi:** Now we will offer our prayers to Santa Maria.

Surrounding the baby, all kneel in prayer to Santa Maria facing Maria Kannon.

*All: Santa Maria, full of grace, the Lord is with you,  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Santa Maria, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.  
Amen.*

5 seconds after the start of the prayer, gradual black out and the backdrop falls. Soon after the prayer finishes, narration begins. The screening of the images begins on the backdrop.

*Narration (3):* This was the baptism of Katharina Sugimoto Yasu. Twelve years before Yasu was baptized, in 1856, there arose the Third Christian Persecution. It was triggered by an anonymous tip to the authorities. The anonymous tip in exchange for money came from among the Christians themselves. In this Third Urakami Persecution, the seventh village elder of Urakami Christians, Kichizo, was tortured to death in jail. Soon after the church settled in Japan, there arose a Christian movement to help the poor. To follow the way of Jesus, Christian organizers helped poor people. They also took care of travelling missionaries who needed a night's lodging. They were very dependable. After missionaries left Japan, Christians used to elect three kinds of lay organizers among themselves for 250 years: "CHO-kata", the village Christian elder as liturgist (calendar, prayer) and catechist (catechism, document), "MIZU-kata" who baptized people, Baptizers, and "KIKI-yaku" who announced church information in secret. They served their communities by teaching the faith and organizing their community life. Those lay organizers worked for their hidden churches where no missionary was assigned. After the Third Persecution, "CHO-kata", the village Christian elder, and "KIKI-yaku", the messengers, all disappeared. And Domingo Mataichi Iwanaga, "MIZU-kata", in charge of baptism, was the only lay organizer to remain. Furthermore, Mataichi's eyesight became weak during his four years in prison. And yet he continued to

baptize new born babies in Urakami. Mataichi knew well that they should pass on their Christian faith in order that the “legendary promise” be fulfilled. The “legendary promise” said that after seven generations, the Pope in Rome would send a Confessoro to Japan. Baptizer Mataichi was like a gatekeeper remaining alive to accomplish the “promised resurrection” by a Confessoro. (A priest who hears confession and gives absolution.)

The Third Persecution of Urakami ended after four years. The port of Nagasaki was opened to the world. Many foreigners came and left here. New western style houses started to be built. Some even had forbidden crosses on the roofs. One of those buildings was called “the French Temple”. People gathered to see it even before its completion. A new wind started to blow in an age with an uncertain future. Christians in Urakami had feelings of excitement never felt before.

On Christmas Eve in the winter of 1864, Christians gathered in secret at the house of Mataichi.

When the narration ends, the backdrop is lifted and the inside of the baptizer Mataichi’s house is illuminated.

### <SCENE 3>

#### Characters:

Tsune  
Tose  
Shigehachi  
Mitsu  
Mataichi  
Shinkichi  
Hachi  
Sakichi  
Hatsu  
Shigematsu  
Officer No.1; Shin-emon  
Officer No.2; Tokunoshin

On the night of Christmas Eve  
Inside the Mataichi’s house

The Nando (a chest of drawers) is in the center of the room, and a statue of the Virgin Mary is placed in it.  
All are sitting in a circle.

Tsune knocks on the door and comes in from the stage left out of breath.

- Tsune:* Sorry to be late. I had to put the children to bed. (beating the snow off her kimono)
- Tose:* Oh! You could have brought them with you.
- Tsune:* Oh no! I have ten children. How would we come in the snow?
- Shigehachi:* You have ten children!
- Tsune:* God gave them to us. They are gifts from Him.
- Mitsu:* You are right. Children are gifts from God that we all value highly. But ten is a lot of gifts. It is because God loves you so much.
- Mataichi:* We are all here together to celebrate Christmas. So we have many ceremonies to hold. Today is as important as Easter. I'm sorry it's cold outside, but Shinkichi, watch outside. Officers may be roaming.
- Shinkichi:* Don't worry. This is a good chance to atone for my everyday laziness in practicing the faith. Otherwise I can't go to Heaven and meet my parents.
- Sakichi:* Come on, Hachi! Stand up before you are told to. Come on!
- Hachi:* Who is to blame? I know what I should do. I was about to stand up now. Children resemble their parents. You blame me to get rid of your stress simply because I am like you. Don't make me sick! Please Dad!
- Mataichi:* Excuse me Hachi. I am always assigning you a difficult role.
- Hachi:* Don't mention it, Uncle Mataichi. "It's surely an easy task." (saying this, he takes a dramatic pose)
- Mataichi:* Good! I like that. Hachi, you are not from a Samurai family, but who taught you an authentic phrase like that?
- Sakichi:* Oh it's the only phrase he remembers. His late grandpa taught him to reply, "It's surely an easy task" and respond immediately when he was asked by others to do something. In Hideyoshi's time, there was a Christian lord named Takayama Ukon. When a missionary asked for anything, he used to take an action right away. So, even Hideyoshi and Ieyasu gave him respect, I heard. Many missionary padres counted on him. He was a great man in our Church history.

Hachi learned this in his childhood, and tries to act like Takayama Ukon since then.

*Mataichi:* Sakichi's father used to know many things. Hachi is lucky. He learned a lot from his grandpa.

*Tose:* Hey, it's cold outside. Put this coat on.

*Hachi:* No, no, I don't need it!

*Tose:* You may catch a cold.

*Hachi:* No, I can't put it on. Tonight is Christmas Eve, aunty. The Infant was born in a stable on a cold night. So, it's nothing. "It's an easy task." (He taps on the chest.) This is the power of Ukon. "A fool never catches cold." This is Dad's pet saying.

*Sakichi:* You stop that nonsense. You whistle with a blade of grass when officers come. Now try once.

*Hachi:* Now let me play a tune.

Hachi tries, but isn't successful twice.

*Hachi:* I blow better usually. Ah! Today's Christmas Eve. Grass may be on Holiday, too. I'll go and find some grass that works even on Holidays.

On the third time, he gives up and goes out to the stage left imitating sounds of grass whistle with his voice.

*Mataichi:* Now it's about time to start praying "*Pater Nostre*" (Our Father) and "*Santa Maria*" (Hail Mary).

They begin praying to the statue of the Virgin Mary. When they say "*Forgive us our sins as we forgive...*" grass whistle of Hachi blows and Shinkichi shouts.

*Shinkichi:* Now, they come! Officers are coming! Hurry!

As soon as Shinkichi shouts, women set the table in a flurry. Tose carries sake bottles, trays and dishes. They shut the door of the altar in a hurry. While they are keeping up appearances, an officer knocks on the door loudly.

Men sing songs pretending to be drunk. Two officers appear

from the stage left.

**Shin-emon:** We are from the Magistrate's Office. (In loud voice) Is Mataichi in?  
**Mataichi:** Yes, sir. I am he.  
**Tokunoshin:** I heard people got together recently. What for?  
**Mataichi:** Yes, sir. We deal in ropes and straw mats, so many people are coming in and out. And my daughter is getting married. My son just got married. That's why people gathered today. We are celebrating a family affair, Sir.

Shigematsu approaches the officers reeling drunkenly.

**Shigematsu:** We appreciate your concern for us. Today, Uncle Mataichi called us to join the feast. I said I won't go as sake is not my favorite. But my wife told me I should attend.  
**Hatsu:** You are talking nonsense. I didn't say so. You get nasty when you drink. Without children, we would have divorced long ago.  
**Shigematsu:** What are you saying? You remember what you said when you were young? (Imitating Hatsu's voice,) "I love you Shigematsu. I'll die if we can't get married."  
**Hatsu:** Oh in front of officers. I am ashamed to hear that. I don't know. I'm going home.

Hatsu stands up and prepares to leave.

**Tokunoshin:** Hey, hey, it's a feast. Quarreling is not good for Master Mataichi.  
**Shigematsu:** The officer is right. Let's change the mood. Hatsu, such a sullen look spoils your beauty. So, let's start our village dance.  
**All:** Hey, it's a good idea! (Everyone cheers.)

With Sakichi's shout "Oh Yattoh, Yattoh", the village dance begins. Each one enters into the circle of dancing. Some beat time by tapping dishes.

"♪Oh Yattoh, Yattoh, Eraiyaccha Eraiyaccha Yoi Yoi Yoi Yoi  
all fools, so let's all dance! ....."

Two officers say, "Good feast, good feast. Enjoy yourselves." and exit to the stage left smiling. When they finish dancing, Shinkichi who serves as a guard, pursues the officers from the stage left. Hachi follows them, too.

**Shinkichi:** Now, you can stop it. The officers are gone.

Mr. & Mrs. Shigematsu stand still. Just then, a stern look came



back over Shigematsu's face.

**Mataichi:** Oh, yes, they are gone. (in a sad voice)

**Mitsu:** It's so sad and frustrating. Without this, we can't maintain our faith. Our life shouldn't be like this. I heard a confessor will return after seven generations and the day will come when we can all pray in a loud voice. Will a confessor really return? Is the promise true? Have we missed the day?

**Mataichi:** (Sadly) We have to believe anyway. Mitsu, how come you get so discouraged? The promise was the only hope of our ancestors. They lived through 250 years without giving up their faith. 250 years! This would be a miracle. I heard that it was Sebastian who promised it. But the one who promised this I believe is God. God never breaks His promise. So Mitsu, let us keep believing a little bit longer.

**Shigematsu:** It's sad. How long do we have to hide our faith? How long do we have to put on a show like this? We are running out of patience. We are tired of believing.

**Tose:** God seems merciless. Do our children have to continue on like this? Mataichi can be wrong. Isn't it possible that God promised us but has already forgotten it?

**Mataichi:** No, no! God will fulfill His promise to us. I say once again. Our ancestors were Samurais serving the Christian lords in Osaka and Arima. They abandoned everything, their status, stipends and swords for the faith. And they became farmers. That wasn't all. How many lives of the believers were sacrificed for the faith since the days of Padre Xavier 300 years ago, saying, "*Without faith, we can't save our souls. We can't be honest people, either.*"

**Mitsu:** Right. My late grandpa often told us the story of the horrible hot springs in Unzen. He said many had boiling water poured on their heads and died praising God, saying not a word of complaint.

**Mataichi:** Right! Seeds of the Christian faith were planted in many places such as the Unzen Hell, the Arima River, Hirado, Ikitsuki, Nishizaka... The faithful never die in vain. God is always with them. We have to take care of the plants from those seeds. Let's wait. Let's wait a little bit longer.

**Mitsu:** Mataichi, I understand what you mean. But there is one thing I don't understand. The God who created the world is said to be a God of Love. Why does He keep silent while His children are suffering?

**Hatsu:** Mitsu, I don't know what God is planning either, but if we wait, there will be something marvelous waiting for us.

**Mataichi:** For me, it's hard to understand. If Padre were here, he could explain. I heard and remember this. Most people who were killed for the faith, forgave the accusers. And at the moment of death, they did not cry out but died at peace. Perhaps they knew clearly that there is a better life than our present life. We farmers weed sweating in summer because we believe the harvest will come in autumn. We don't complain about today's hardship if we believe there will be a harvest in the future.

**Hachi:** Difficult! I mow the grass because Dad tells me to do it. If we work in summer, we will harvest in autumn. We can't foresee the future, but we do what we were told. That's all.

**Tose:** Yes, Hachi is right. Faith is not based on reason. Right, Hachi?

**Mataichi:** There was a man, Paul, who followed Jesus. Paul said, "*I became a fool after knowing Jesus Christ.*", "*But I was proud to be a fool for Jesus.*"

**Hachi:** I know that. Fool means thoughtless. Ukon-dono said the same thing, "*Man can be useful when he becomes a fool.*" Uncle Mataichi, I have a question. Many call me a fool, a perfect fool, but they also say, "Hachi, you are not useful when it is really needed." Does it mean that actually I'm not thoughtless at all, Uncle Mataichi?

**Mataichi:** You are right. Perhaps they don't know you are a fool for Christ. The fool for Christ is different from the ordinary fool.

**Hatsu:** Other people may say we are all fools. But it's all right. There will be something good later. It's pretty tough now, yet let us believe and wait. We will see what may come.

Hachi immediately stands up and sings as if he were crying out.

**Hachi:** ♪ *Oh the Pope's ship on the ocean!* ♪  
♪ *The name, 'Maria' is written on the sail.* ♪  
♪ *Spring has come and summer has come.* ♪  
♪ *When will Santa Maria come?*

When Hachi finishes singing, lights down gradually, and the backdrop falls. The narration begins and the screening of the images begins.

## < ACT 2 >

*Narration (4):* In July 1864, Fr. Bernard Petitjean, a Paris Foreign Missionary, arrived in Nagasaki. He was very happy to be transferred there from Yokohama. One year before, Pope Pius IX canonized the 26 Martyrs who died at Nishizaka in Nagasaki in 1597 and admiration for the 26 Saints of Japan grew in Europe. Fr. Petitjean dreamed of coming to Nagasaki, the Martyrs' land. The city of Nagasaki was open for trade, but the ban on Christianity continued. Yet, walking in the streets of Nagasaki, he could feel the aura of Christians. He thought he might accidentally meet Christians on street corners. To begin with, Fr. Petitjean had to find the place where the 26 Saints were martyred. He also had to complete the church under construction, for Japanese Christians now in hiding. Preceding Fr. Petitjean, Fr. Furet had completed the priests' residence and prepared the land for the church.

When the narration ends, the backdrop is lifted. Lights are on to illuminate the stage.

- At the yard of the priests' residence -

Characters:

Fr. Petitjean

Fr. Furet

Fr. Laucaigne

Nagasaki Magistrate : Kawazu-no-kami

Servant of Kawazu-no-kami: Yosaku

Fr. Petitjean, Fr. Furet and Fr. Laucaigne, three of them are talking having tea.

*Furet:* Fr. Petitjean, the church will soon be completed.

*Petitjean:* This is the work of Fr. Furet. I am just directing them to follow Father's plan.

*Laucaigne:* Still, the construction work is slow and taking much time. So these days even Fr. Petitjean is getting a little impatient.

*Petitjean:* I want to put the word "Tenshudo" (Church) under the cross on the

roof. But the chief carpenter Koyama doesn't agree saying there is no brush large enough available in Japan.

*Furet:* He is a carpenter from Amakusa, isn't he?

*Petitjean:* Yes, he is from a family of carpenters building shrines and is a superb engineer, but he is very stubborn.

*Laucaigne:* Fr. Petitjean says the Amakusa used to be the islands of Christians. His ancestors might have built churches. And Koyama might have been a Christian at birth.

*Petitjean:* I was hoping so first, but now I have given up the idea judging from what he says and does.

*Furet:* No, Father, our mission is to find the offspring of Japanese Christians who persisted in their faith in spite of the persecution. I believe the hidden Christians will come out and gather in this Church that will soon be completed.

*Petitjean:* Fr. Furet! The Martyrs' site of the 26 Saints! We found it at last! Did you hear that?

*Furet:* I didn't know for sure. But I found the directions in the book of Fr. Leon Pages.

*Petitjean:* I searched the area with the information in his book and also asked many people in Nagasaki. Look over there. That hill is Onna-kazagashira, locally called Tateyama. That's the hill of the 26 Martyrs. By chance that holy place is facing this church.

*Kawazu-no-kami and his servant Yosaku appear talking from the edge of the stage left.*

*Yosaku:* Sir, the foreigners in the French Temple, are they really “padres”?

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Yosaku, how come you know the word “padre”? You said you are from Kiri in Goto. Who told you the word “padre”?

*Yosaku:* Nobody told me that word. The people who visited the temple were talking about it.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Forget such a rumor. You must be careful in talking. If you are suspected of being a Christian, I may lose my job and have to do “Hara-kiri”. Don't talk about it any more. *(Looking a little displeased)* Hurry! *(He urges Yosaku to lead the way to the French Temple.)*

*Yosaku:* Excuse me, Sir. *(Approaching the yard of the priests' residence, he shouts in a large voice.)* Magistrate Kawazu-no-kami has come to talk to you.

*Petitjean:* *(Looking a little surprised.)* Oh, what does Magistrate Kawazu-no-kami want? Please come in.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Oh, you three were talking together. Didn't you ever discuss taking

over this Nagasaki town? It's a joke, a joke. It's a sin even to suspect padres. Excuse me.

But recently, foreigners in general are behaving poorly. Especially the sailors. I appreciate your advice.

*Petitjean:* I'm sorry I can't be of any help. There are many foreigners; American, English, Russian, etc. We French alone can't do anything.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Yes, I know, I know. People of your country are different. By the way, Master Petitjean, I came to talk with you today.

*Petitjean:* Well, what can I do for you?

*Kawazu-no-kami:* You know we've made a French language school? We have students. But we don't have teachers. Could you accept my request to teach?

*Petitjean:* Thank you. I am happy to be of help. By the way, I have a problem.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* What is the problem?

*Petitjean:* The construction of the church is delayed. My friends are scolding me about that. The original plan shows that it is already overdue.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Oh, it's easy. Don't worry about it. The chief's name is Koyama? I will order him to complete it right away. When do you want to finish it?

*Petitjean:* By February 5th of next year, we must finish it by all means.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* February 5th? It's an odd day. You must have a reason for it. Let me hear what it is if you don't mind.

*Petitjean:* I am too timid to speak before Magistrate Kawazu-no-kami, but that day is the anniversary of the death of the 26 Saints who were martyred at Onna-kazagashira Hill over there 267 years ago. I would like to complete the church before then and hold the ceremony on that day.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Oh, it's a memorial day. You are faithful. O.K. I got it. I will have it completed before the end of January on the condition that you take care of the French school.

*Petitjean:* With pleasure.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* My worry is gone. Thank you, Master Petitjean. To be honest, finding an appropriate person was a headache for me. Yosaku, we will go home.

The Martyrs' Memorial... Memorial, Memorial...

*Murmuring, Kawazu-no-kami is about to go back to the stage left, when he turns back as if he realized something.*

*Kawazu-no-kami:* *(Glaring at the fathers as if he coerces them)* The talk we had before.

*Laucagne:* *(He stands up.)* What is it, Sir?

*Kawazu-no-kami:* You were talking about the martyrdom of the 26 Saints. For you, they

may have been martyred, but for us they were sinners confusing people with an evil doctrine. 260 years doesn't change anything. A sin is a sin. Don't misunderstand this. Yosaku, bring it here. (Yosaku says 'Yes, Sir' and holds out a document of the Christian Banning Order from the box he is carrying on his shoulder. Kawazu-no-kami continues in a coercing manner.)

I tell you again. Your religious activities outside residential areas are forbidden. Keep this in mind. The Christian Banning Order is still in effect. This is this and that is that. Please don't forget that, Professor Petitjean.

*Petitjean:* Yes, I fully understand to the best of my ability.

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Right, right. But I wonder. Does this church seem too large for you? Some people in the Magistrate's Office are not pleased. Too much Commotion makes my position weak. These days the whole country is in turmoil. Let's do it moderately and quietly.

*Furet:* Oh. Is there someone who says so?

*Kawazu-no-kami:* Oh, just out of jealousy. So don't worry. But it's better not to be suspected. There's no smoke without fire. Oh, I stayed too long. Yosaku! Don't be absent-minded. Let's go.

*Yosaku:* Yes, Sir!

*Kawazu-no-kami and his servant Yosaku go back to the stage left. Petitjean, making sure that they are gone.*

*Petitjean:* Fr. Furet, aren't you concerned about what he just said?

*Furet:* About the Christian Banning Order still being in effect now?

*Petitjean:* Yes, the ban is still in effect. Doesn't it mean that Christians are still living somewhere even now? That's why they become so unpleasant about Christians?

*Laucaigne:* Fr. Petitjean, since you came to Nagasaki, you are always repeating, "The offspring of the martyrs are alive somewhere in Nagasaki hiding their faith."

*Furet:* Certainly, the work of God is immense. It's a miracle if any Christians are alive. But it has been over 250 years since we have had any Catholic priests in this country.

*Laucaigne:* Yes, 250 years. Christians without a priest are the same as sheep Without a shepherd. They must have been scattered and fallen prey to wolves. And you see "The Parable of the Sower." Some of the seed fell on rocky ground and the birds ate it up or it may be dried up covered with thorn bushes.

*Petitjean:* No, if you say so, I'd rather believe "The Parable of a Grain of Wheat." Thousands of Christians in Nagasaki dedicated their lives for the future of this land. They died bleeding, burnt in fire or being drowned in the sea. I don't think they died in vain. No, it can hardly be. *"Even if a mother forgets her baby, or a woman forgets a child of her own," "I will never forget you."* Those words in Isaiah are a promise made by God, and are my hope.

*Furet:* Three years ago, there was a canonization of the 26 Martyrs in Rome. That may be a "Sign of the time" prepared for us. Fr. Petitjean, I also believe that something unbelievable may be prepared.

*Petitjean:* (Pointing out of the window) Look at that! That big camphor tree is 600 years old. It holds rocks so tight and their roots so deep. For 600 years, none gave water nor fertilizer but it is still alive. Look at the deep dark green leaves. It gives cool shade in summer, lodging birds in spring.

Lights off gradually, the backdrop falls. Then the narration starts and the screening starts.

< ACT 3 >  
with 2 Scenes

< SCENE 1 >

SABBATH MEETING

Living room of a farmer. There is a statue of Maria Kannon.

Characters:

Teru 45 years old

Taju Teru's husband, 55 years old

Yuri 50 years old

Tsuru 45 years old

Hachi 30 years old

Yone Daughter of Yoshizo, 30 years old

Matsu In the 40's

Sumi In the 40's

Samo In the 40's

Sasuke of Tsuji In the 30's

Yasutaro of Ippongi In the 30's

Kumehachi of Hira In the 40's.

*Narration (5):* The Oura Catholic Church, newly built under the leadership of Fr. Petitjean, was dedicated on February 19, 1865 by Fr. Girard, Deputy Vicar General from Yokohama.

The white church in Minami-Yamate had a golden cross on the tower and overlooked the port. People in Nagasaki called the church “the French Temple”, and hundreds of visitors came every day to see it. Of course, there were Christians among the visitors.

At this time, Christians strongly hoped that the legend of Sebastian was true – that confessors would return after seven generations. So their visit was not for sightseeing. It was something completely different. Because of the continuation of the ban on Christianity, the vigilance of the Nagasaki Magistrate was still very severe. There was a risk of recurrence of the Urakami Persecution. Therefore there were two groups of Christians; one, to go and find out, and the other, to wait and see. Every evening they discussed this. Here is a scene of one Sabbath (Saturday) gathering.

When the narration ends, the backdrop is lifted and lights are on to illuminate the yard of Taju's house.

In the early spring twilight, Taju hits straws in the yard.

Teru enters hurriedly from stage left with vegetables in a basket.

*Teru:* It's getting dark. What time is it?

*Taju:* (While hitting straws, he turns back and looks out at the sunset.)

It's winter. The days are short. I don't remember what I've done today, and it's already twilight.

*Teru:* Tonight it is our turn. We have to prepare something to eat.

Oh, nothing is prepared yet. What should I do?

*Taju:* Yah! It's Saturday. We have a Sabbath gathering.

Taju cleans up the area and stretches his hips, and sits down on the bench.

*Taju:* By the way, Teru. The Sabbath gathering is alright, but you folks are talking too much about the French Temple. You should not be talking about the temple.

*Teru:* There is nothing wrong with such talk. The talk in the village is just chattering over tea.



*Taju:* All right, then. But be careful. The world moves fast before you know it. They say, in Oura, foreigners with red hair are walking around the town with Maruyama geisha in the day time.

*Teru:* (Pours tea to a cup, then offering it to the side of Taju,) People say there is a cross on the top of the French Temple. The cross is the sign of Christians.

*Taju:* I heard that.

*Teru:* Not only that. The foreigners there are wearing black, and hanging something like a cross around their necks.

*Taju:* That's the point. I worry about that.

*Teru:* Why would you worry?

*Taju:* A black suit and a cross doesn't simply mean a padre. You remember three years ago. There was a white house in Higashi-Yamate with a cross on the roof. We went there to find out if a padre was there. The man was a kind foreigner and spoke of Christian teachings. But, when we were leaving, he said, "Next time, bring your family, then my wife and children will be happy." He said he is married. We were surprised, weren't we? We all heard that a padre never gets married, but serves God and the people. Three years ago, it was different, and we were shocked and ran away.

*Teru:* I remember that. It was different. So it is better to go and check out the French Temple in Minami-Yamate. Are you scared? We waited and waited, and now you don't have courage.

*Taju:* No, that's why I say women are fools.

*Teru:* (Smiling) If going is foolish, and men are only talking about whether or not they should go, they are bigger fools.

*Taju:* After all, this is a big issue. So women shouldn't poke their noses into this.

*Teru:* (Smiling) Women are fools, and no use when they are needed. Who said there is no faith unless you become a fool? If we don't become fools, then faith is just knowledge. Knowledge is like a bandage - it will fall off when we sweat. Your faith was a bandage. Taju! When did you become such a coward?

*Taju:* Don't get sulky. I am saying this because I am thinking of you.

*Teru:* Thanks, thanks for loving such a fool.

*Taju:* (Again facing Teru) So, I will tell you. Listen to me well. The issue was discussed among the elders from four sub-villages. Some, like you, say we should go and find out. Three years ago, the story turned out not to be true. How do you think the village would react?

You remember nine years ago, Kichizo, the Christian head, was caught and died in jail. The whole village became chaotic then. Everything now will also be in chaos.

*Teru:* (Stands up and clearing things) You may call me a fool again if I say this. But after seven generations, padres will be sent by the Pope in Rome. It's the legend. I counted, and found we are the seventh generation. But, don't worry. We will never ever make men lose face.  
(She opens the sliding partition and disappears into the next room)

*Taju:* All right. That's good. Prepare the meals. The others may come by later.

Light down gradually. Teru walks to stage right to fetch the dishes. After black out, the draw curtain opens and the people are praying the Hail Mary. Then turn on a light

< SCENE 2 >

- Living room, Taju's House -

The stage is dark. Only small spotlight shines on the statue of Maria Kannon.

Women are praying the Hail Mary in a circle.

The stage is illuminated gradually, and then fully when the prayer ends.

*All:* *In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Santa Maria, full of grace. The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Santa Maria, Mother of God, pray for us sinners  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

The dishes are on the low table.

Teru opens the sliding partition and emerges from the deep stage right with "soboro" in a bowl.

*Teru:* Sorry for my poor preparation. I wish I had better food to offer you.

Please enjoy it.

*Tsuru:* My goodness! Minced “Soboro” dish.  
I know Teru makes a very good Soboro dish.

All take “Soboro” into their individual small dish and begin to eat.

*All:* Let's eat.

*Matsu:* Oh, it's so tasty! My husband complains of the Soboro dish I make.  
He says it isn't good and is always salty.

*Yuri:* (In lonely manner) You are lucky to have a husband even if he complains.

*Matsu:* I envy you, Yuri. You are lucky because you are a midwife. You have a job, and you can make your own living.

*Yuri:* I didn't care much about my husband because of my job. It's too late because he is dead. I should have taken better care of him. I sometimes regret that.

*Sumi:* He was a very nice man. He had strong faith. I think he has gone straight to heaven.

*Teru:* Well, my sister, you talked about going to the French Temple. Did you go?

*Yuri:* Matsu of Kosone was getting close to the month of delivery. So I went to see her. And on my way back I dropped by the temple.

All lean forward to Yuri.

*Teru and others:* How was it? Did you see the foreigners?

*Yuri:* He had a beard on his chin. The man had clear eyes.

*Tsuru:* What did he wear?

*Yuri:* Long black suit with a cross on his chest. I couldn't see well from far away. And he looked very gentle.

*Teru:* I wonder if he is really a padre. I hate to see a fake again like three years ago.

*Yuri:* I don't know. The legend says padres will return after seven generations. But no one knows what they will look like.

*Samo:* Ah! My late grandpa told me how to distinguish the padre.

(Then in melodiously)

One: Is he sent by the Pope in Rome?

Two: Does he have reverence for Santa Maria?

Three: Is he celibate?

*Tsuru:* What is celibate?  
*Yuri:* That means he doesn't marry and dedicates his whole life to God and the Church. He lives his whole life serving others.  
*Teru:* Did the foreigner you saw look like a celibate?  
*Yuri:* How can I say just by appearance? He could have a wife or children somewhere. Yet, he looked so pure. How can I say it? When I looked quickly at him, (touching her bosom) I felt great warmth in my heart. He is a padre for sure! That's what I thought.

Sound of grass whistle nearby. All stand up in panic.  
Teru hurriedly tries to hide the statue of Maria Kannon.  
Hachi enters from stage left whistling the grass ever so innocently.

*Yuri:* What? Hachi.  
*Hachi:* What do you mean?  
*Yuri:* You gave a grass whistle.  
*Hachi:* Oh, this whistle? The stars are so pretty, so I wanted to whistle.  
*Yuri:* Hachi, you shouldn't have whistled at night for nothing. Your whistle is a signal. It has astonished us.  
*Matsu:* I thought the officers came. My heart beats so strongly.  
*Hachi:* Officers are not coming, but three men are coming.  
*Yuri:* OK, OK, Hachi. Do not feel down. Hachi is not charming when discouraged. Did you eat?  
*Hachi:* Not sure about eating. Lord Ukon-dono said before, "A Samurai is proud even when starving."  
*Yuri:* Put Ukon-dono aside. Come on in and eat. You are hungry.  
*Hachi:* (Waiving his hand sideways) No, No. I don't want to. My late mother used to say, "Don't visit a house at supper time. You are not a beggar..... Even if you find a Soboro dish, don't slobber like a dog." (Saying so, he swallows saliva and looks at the table with the Soboro bowl so enticing.)  
*Teru:* Don't hold back. Go ahead. Help yourself. Come on in.  
*Hachi:* (Blushing) There will be gossips throughout the village if this handsome fellow goes among the ladies.  
*Sumi:* Hachi, you are really handsome.  
*Hachi:* You joke again. I prefer to hear a true story.  
*Yuri:* (Gently) All right. Whatever. Come on and eat.  
*Hachi:* Gee, how can a man refuse this? I shall accept your hospitality and enjoy the food. My deepest gratitude to you all.

(Saying so, he enters the room and starts eating greedily.)

*Sumi:* Hachi, stop the Samurai talk. It doesn't sound good.  
Enter three men from stage left with loud voices. They knock on the door violently and stride into the entrance hall angrily.

*Sasuke:* Are you in?

*Teru:* Wow, Sasuke. What happened tonight?

*Yasutaro:* Sorry for coming at night. We poor peasants can only go out at night.

*Yuri:* (Gently) Please don't be so negative. You came here to tell us something. No nice greetings?

*Kumehachi:* It doesn't matter if it's negative or not. You think we don't know anything about what you have in mind?

*Yuri:* What do you mean, "in mind"? That does not sound good. We are all Christians, so there is nothing to hide.

*Sasuke:* You are pretending, but I know what you are hiding.

*Yuri:* What did you hear and who did you hear it from? And why are you so furious? (Claps once) Ah, you mean that French Temple by chance?

*Yasutaro:* That's right!

*Yuri:* It's my problem. Nothing to do with all the others. That's something I thought of and decided alone. I will do nothing to harm the folks here nor in the village.

*Sasuke:* Oh, a woman with a job is strong, isn't she? You deserve it!

*Kumehachi:* You lost your husband, and don't care about anything, right?  
Taju enters the room quietly.

*Taju:* Aaah...

*Sasuke:* Oh, Taju, are you still awake?

*Taju:* Yes. How can I sleep with so much loud noise tonight. What happened?

*Sasuke:* What happened? It's about these women going to the foreigners at the French Temple.

*Yasutaro:* Not only the women but ...

*Kumehachi:* Women can hardly do this alone. Someone behind is pulling the strings.

We don't know who though.

*Taju:* (Calmly) Me, you mean?

*Yasutaro:* Ask yourself.

*Taju:* (Steps forward in anger) Oh, in Ippongi, you folks talk like this?

If so, I won't argue. Well, Taju is a man. Return and tell the Ippongi people that's exactly right.

*Kumehachi:* Sasuke, you now understand. Let's go home.

*Sasuke:* The whole village will be noisy. Can't do farming calmly..... at this busy time.

*Yasutaro:* Sasuke, let's go home.

*Sasuke:* Hey Taju, I am so disappointed with you.

*Kumehachi:* Let's go. Let's go home.

The three men leave to stage left in rough behavior with a sharp parting shot.

*Taju:* Now it is getting more difficult for us. We lost our Christian leaders. We only have Mataichi, the Baptizer of Hira. Urakami is too large for a single man to care for. We really need a Padre like the one promised in the legend.

*Yuri:* Sorry for bringing this trouble to you, Taju. (She apologies with both hands on the tatami mat.)

*Taju:* Don't you worry. Most of the villagers think in their hearts this time the foreigners of the French Temple are padres. But if we speak about this, our village will be in great confusion. Everybody is afraid of that.

*Teru:* We believe in the same God. I don't understand why they say such cruel things. It's very sad.

*Taju:* No one knows what to do. That's why we are confused. Teru, Yuri is your only sister. How can we allow them to make Yuri a scapegoat?

*Yuri:* Taju, it's so kind of you. I am happy to do this alone if it is all right. I haven't thought that far, but when I heard them talk like that, I decided what I would do. Urakami passed down the same faith for a long time. But now we doubt each other. Our hearts are now apart. I will go and see the foreigners in Oura and confirm the story. Then all of Urakami will be reunited.

*Yone:* Our elders hid the padres at the risk of their lives, and after the officers found them, our elders died on the cross together with the padres. But it's sad to see this state. Yuri, I made up my mind too. If we are mistaken and killed, we will go to heaven together.

Women nod in agreement.

*Sumi:* Yone is right. Yuri, take us all too, please.

*Hachi:* Yuri, all know me as a ladies' man. Let me do the job.  
In my backyard, I have an oak sword. I will bring it with me.  
With me as bodyguard, there's nothing to be afraid of.

*Teru:* Hachi, we are not going to war. We want to find out if the foreigners are padres or not. If we are ever caught by chance, you might be killed too, OK?

*Hachi:* In that case, I will blow this loud whistle and you can run away from the officers. I'm famous in Nagasaki. People call me, "Hachi, number one rooster in town".

[ Sound of grass whistle ]

*Yuri:* Hachi, thank you. (Saying as if convinced) I do believe in Jesus. So many have been martyred for His teachings, in Nishizaka, Unzen, Omura and Ikitsuki. The Christian leader Kichizo died in jail. The precious blood and tears shed by our martyrs are never in vain. We believe that God surely receives them in heaven where they will praise God and help us still on earth. I sense strongly that it's time the seed of our faith that were sown are about to bud. Since they started the construction of the French Temple, I had a feeling I couldn't control. It may be a sign.

< ACT 4 >

[ MUSIC ]

[ Ordinance Board banning Christianity ]  
(projected on the backdrop)

*Narration (6):* Finally the time has come for Urakami Christians to make a decision. Though they knew how to live hiding their faith for such a long time, they did not know how to show it. Trampling on the sacred images, registration to the Buddhist Temple, and religious census kept the Christians silent for 250 years secluded and afraid. However, Yuri Sugimoto, the midwife of Hamaguchi in Urakami was now confident of her faith. Nobody knows what made her so confident. She just wanted to tell someone, the God the martyrs believed and the God who always protected and blessed them during the ban on Christianity, were the same God. Yuri said a final farewell to each member of her family. It was the evening of March 16.

After the narration, open the backdrop, and focus the spotlight inside

of Yuri's house.

< SCENE 1 >

- Yuri's house -

(in the middle of the night)

Characters

Tokuzo 35 years old

Shige 33 years old, daughter of Yuri

Maki 7 years old

Yuri 50 years old

On the eve of March 17<sup>th</sup>, Yuri takes her best Kimonos out of the costume box and folds them. Her daughter, Shige, walks in from stage right, with a child. The child, Maki, has a Japanese lantern in her hand.

*Maki:* Mom, why are we going to Granma again?

*Shige:* She really wants to see you, Maki. I'm not sure why.

*Maki:* I see.

*Shige:* (Whispering to Maki) Call her loudly, now.

*Maki:* Granma! Granma! I'm here!

Shige and Maki open the slide door, put out the fire of the lantern and enter the room.

*Maki:* Good evening.

*Yuri:* Hi, welcome Maki! I'm happy to see you.

You have grown bigger since the last time I saw you.

Yuri holds Maki and enters the room together.

*Shige:* What are you talking about? Maki came to see you yesterday. What's the matter with you?

*Yuri:* Oh, yes? Umm...

Getting older, I forget things so easily.

*Shige:* Getting older? You just turned 50!

*Yuri:* Why don't you sit down for tea?

*Shige:* No thank you. I've just had some.

*Yuri:* Oh, I have some cookies. I got them at a wedding yesterday.



Here, Maki. Help yourself. *(She stands up and takes the cookies out from the shelf.)* Be sure to say Grace before meals.

**Maki:** *(Replies proudly)* I know it well. Mom taught me. I always pray before eating.

**Yuri:** Oh, do you? Show me, then.

*Maki makes the sign of the cross with her hand and says Grace.*

**Maki:** *God, our Father, thank you for your mercy  
and for the food we are about to receive.  
Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

**Yuri:** Good! Very good!

*Maki starts eating a cookie.*

**Yuri:** Well, you know, Shige, I might have told you that we human beings are very weak. Only what we do daily will help us in the end. So, never forget daily prayers.

**Shige:** Our little Maki will live the way God shows us. Because she respects and loves God, Maki has memorized the “Seven Acts of Mercy” of our Christian faith.

Maki, why don't you recite them for us?

**Maki:**

- 1. To give food to the hungry*
- 2. To give drink to the thirsty*
- 3. To give clothes to the naked*
- 4. To visit and care for the sick*
- 5. To offer shelter to those who need it*
- 6. To visit the imprisoned*
- 7. To bury the dead.*

That's all ... *(Watching her mother and nods)* I made it!

**Yuri:** *(Wiping away her tears)* That is wonderful, Maki. You are only seven and you can recite the precious Doctrine from our ancestors. Remember, Maki, be sure to live the Doctrine every day. Those who do that are the real Christians. I'm relieved to know Maki has the same faith as mine. Shige, be sure to recite the Doctrine with her. Once you stop reciting, it means the end of our faith.

**Shige:** *(Changing her eyes to the Kimonos)* Mom, what are you doing at this very late hour?

**Yuri:** Oh, I just took this out. I brought this when I married. I haven't worn this yet. It is new. Take this with you, Shige.

Maki approaches the costume box and looks into it.

*Shige:* (With a suspicious face) I don't need it. At my age, where would I go wearing such a fancy kimono?

*Yuri:* Umm, why not?

*Maki:* (Taking out another Kimono) Look! Who wore this small Kimono?

*Yuri:* What a sweet memory! (Looking at Shige) You wore this when you were small. You were baptized by Mataichi with it on. Remember?

*Shige:* (More suspiciously) I don't remember. I was too young.

*Yuri:* You're right. It was a long time ago.

Maki picks a cookie and sits on Yuri's knee.

*Shige:* You are funny this evening, Mom. You suddenly wanted to see Maki at night, and told me to take the Kimono. It sounds like a final farewell.

*Yuri:* Final farewell... that is right because we never know when we will die.

*Shige:* Stop talking about such things at this midnight hour. That's enough. If there's nothing else, we will go home.

*Maki:* (Unhappily) We are leaving, Mom?

*Yuri:* You've just come. Why don't you stay a little longer? Right, Maki? Do you like the cookies?

*Maki:* Taste great!

Eating the cookies, Maki nods.

Folding his umbrella, Tokuzo opens the entrance door and enters the room.

*Tokuzo:* Hello. Are you here?

*Maki:* Daddy!

Maki runs up to Tokuzo.

*Yuri:* Hi, Toku-san.

*Tokuzo:* I came to pick them up because it has started raining.

*Yuri:* It's very kind of you coming after working hard at the farm. I don't have sake, but there are some cookies. Shige, bring the tea I prepared.

Shige goes behind the room, and Maki sits on Tokuzo's knee.

- Tokuzo:** (Tokuzo, looking at the Kimono) Why are your fancy Kimonos taken out at night?
- Yuri:** Living alone, I have nothing to do. I just took them out. I'm grateful to you, too, Toku-san.
- Tokuzo:** What are you talking about? You are talking like a dying person. You look fine.
- Shige:** (Coming back with a tray) She's funny, isn't she? She's different tonight. She says, "Take this, this is for you, I'm grateful to you." She just keeps saying funny things.
- Tokuzo:** She must be lonely because you don't see her often. We should invite her for meals once in a while.
- Yuri:** Oh, no. I'm not lonely at all because you are so nice to me. Shige is happy too because she has such a nice husband.
- Tokuzo:** I hope so. Call us at any time you need us. We're always ready.
- Yuri:** Thank you. Thank you for your kind words. (turning her face away, she weeps) It's getting too late. And Maki seems sleepy. Hurry, go home, and rest. I'm getting up early, too.
- Shige:** What do you have for tomorrow, Mom?
- Yuri:** (Replies in a hurry) Nothing, nothing at all. I just thought you might be early.

Three of them are ready to leave.

- Yuri:** (To three of them, from the back) Maki, come again. Listen to your parents, pray a lot and become a helpful person. Promise me. (Holding Maki's hands, Yuri stares her with loving eyes.)
- Maki:** Yes, Granma. I promise you.
- Yuri:** Shige, take good care of your husband. Be happy together.
- Shige:** (Surprisingly looks back) Mom, you're still funny tonight. You two go home and I may stay with her tonight.
- Tokuzo:** I suggest you two spend time alone once in a while. Mother, she will be with you.
- Yuri:** (She replies in a flurry.) No, no. Don't worry. I am all right. I'm getting sleepy. Take her home, otherwise I can't sleep well.
- Shige:** Oh, she is treating me like a child.
- Yuri:** For parents, their child is always a child. I just got a little lonely this evening. Now I'm all right as I saw Maki and you both. I will go

to bed and have a nice dream.

*Shige:* I hope so.

*Yuri:* Thank you. Thank you, again. I'm really grateful to you. It's raining and dark. Go home safely.

*Maki:* I will come to see you again, Granma. Good night.

Without replying, Yuri nods, with her hands in prayer, sends them off for a long while. Holding Maki's hand, Shige and Tokuzo go home anxiously leaving their hearts behind.

Yuri closes the slide door and sighs. Gradually the spotlight is darkened.

[ MUSIC ]

< SCENE 2 >

Yuri's house/ Early in the morning.

Gloomy/dim

Spotlighted only on the Statue of Mary

Yuri is praying.

It is rainy outside.

Characters

Yuri

Taju

Teru

Hachi

Matsu

Sumi

Samo

Tsuru

*Yuri:* *In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Santa Maria, full of grace. The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Santa Maria, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son*

*and of the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Yuri prays the Hail Mary in the dark. After the prayer, the spotlight is focused on the Yuri's house. A scene in the early morning.

Three women (Matsu, Sumi, Samo) walk in from the left stage. They knock on the door.

*Matsu:* Yuri, Yuri.

Yuri walks to the entrance, and opens the slide door.

*Yuri:* You're early. Hurry. Come in.

*Sumi:* I had a hard time sneaking out, not waking my husband up.

*Samo:* So did I. It was good keeping my clothes in the stable since last evening. It was raining when I got out.

Soon Taju and Teru come in.

*Teru:* You are all early.

*Matsu:* We've just arrived.

*Teru:* Right.

Three others also come in.

*Taju:* So, everyone is here now.

*Sumi:* No, Hachi is not here yet.

*Samo:* He's never on time.

*Matsu:* We do need a watch, don't we?

Hachi comes running into the stage with a rod.

*Hachi:* Here I am. I'm glad I made it. I came running. I was afraid of being left behind.

*Teru:* (Looking at the rod) What is it for? I told you we don't need it.

*Hachi:* Yeah, I am careless Hachi. We're going to be martyrs, aren't we?

*Yuri:* I envy you. You're always ready to die. I have less faith because I am still reluctant.

*Taju:* Yuri, everyone is the same. But someone has to do it someday.

Let's take it that the day God promised has finally come, and we were chosen to help it come true.

**Teru:** We have no time to lose. Let's leave before dawn comes.

**Taju:** Before we leave, let's confirm once again what we discussed last time. Yuri, Teru and Tsuru, make a detour from Doi and go across by boat from Akunoura. Matsu, Sumi, Samo and I will walk over Anakobo from Otsubo. The rest, go to Hamanokuchi and then go through Ibinokuchi. And now I will tell you a very important thing. Yosaku, the servant of the Magistrate, will be waiting at Oura ahead of us.

**Teru:** (Surprisingly) Can we trust him?

**Taju:** Yes, the young man is a Christian, born in the Goto Islands. People in Goto have been waiting a long time for the good news. That's why Yosaku is coming with us to confirm it. Understand? We do it in danger of our lives. (All of them nod deeply while looking at each other.)

**Yuri:** Then, let's pray for Santa Maria's blessing.

They start praying the Hail Mary before the statue of Santa Maria placed in the cupboard. One after another in three groups, they get ready to leave. Three women leave first and Taju's group follows. Hachi is in the last group. Gradually the sound of the prayer is quieter.

When the last group leaves, the light is dimmed and the backdrop Comes down. The narration and the next scene start.

*In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
Santa Maria, full of grace. The Lord is with you.  
Blessed are you among women,  
and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.  
Santa Maria, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.  
In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

[ Oratio, The Prayers in Ikitsuki Island ]

< ACT 5 >  
< SCENE 1 >

- On the Roads to the French Temple -

Characters:

Matsu

Taju

Sumi

Samo

Yasutaro

Kumehachi

Sasuke

Tsuru

Teru

Yuri

*Narration (7)* The mountain road climbing up from Otsubo to Anakobo, the side road along the highway through Hamaguchi to Ibinokuchi, and the seaway taking the boat from Akunoura after walking through Doi. The last journey of the Christians from the dark night of 250 years has begun using these three routes.

After the narration ends, backdrop is pulled up, the light on the stage where the groups gather.

*Matsu:* Yuri and others are late.

*Taju:* Being late cannot be helped, because the sea is very rough.

It's good that we have no officers around thanks to this heavy rain.

*Sumi:* (Pointing to the stage left) Who are they? Three people are running this way. They don't look like officers. Who are they?

Running steps get closer. Three men of Ippongi enter from the stage left, panting.

*Yasutaro:* They are here!

*Kumehachi:* Thank God! We made it in time.

*Taju:* Oh, Ippongi brothers, are you following after us? You are not officers. What have you come for?

*Samo:* Are you here to report to the officers? Go ahead.

We made up our mind to come here. We are not afraid.

*Sasuke:* What did you say? We don't believe like you do, but we are also part of the Urakami Christians. We would never report you to the officers.

*Yasutaro:* The whole village is upset since you folks are not around.

*Kumehachi:* Yes, since this is after the conversation we had before.  
We thought... by any chance... So we came running along.

*Sumi:* And what do you want us to do?

*Sasuke:* We are not fighting! We spoke unkindly last time. I apologize for that.  
We are all Christians. It is not good to fight with each other.  
Anyway, we are worried. So we came.

*Kumehachi:* Taju, elder brother, I am awfully sorry I said those things. I had a little sake then. The sake made me say unkind things. Please forgive me.

*Taju:* You came all the way here to say that? Don't worry. We would think differently if our positions were changed. Now we are even.

*Matsu:* This is a very important moment. We've forgotten all we spoke of last time. It's over. Leave here quickly. If the officers find us, it's a big problem.

*Sasuke:* The very idea is for us to ask you to reconsider, even though you say you have already decided. Brother Taju, can you reconsider once again?

*Taju:* **(Decisively)** We can't reconsider. Anyway, I can't, regardless of who asks. This is not a children's play. Women here all risk their lives. We didn't come by our will alone, but we came here to fulfill the wish of our ancestors. Sasuke, we have summoned all our faith to make this decision. We will stay with that decision no matter what others say. Now is that very time.

**Yuri and two others enter from the stage left.**

*Tsuru:* Taju, we thought we were dying. The boatman said many times he would return. We begged him to take us here.

*Samo:* That's tough. We just came over a few minutes ago.

*Teru:* Now everybody is here! **(While saying, she notices the three men)**  
Wow, you folks ...the last time...

*Yasutaro:* I apologize for the last time. We really want to apologize.  
Yuri, forgive us.

*Sumi:* It is all right now. So leave here quickly.

*Sasuke:* **(To Yuri)** We asked Taju again. Couldn't you postpone the plan now?

*Yuri:* Is that your idea, or the opinion of the village?

*Kumehachi:* Well, that...

*Sasuke:* **(Blocking Kumehachi's speech)** OK. Don't say anymore.  
Yuri, it will be a long story if we give all the details, so make it short.



We have a message from Baptizer Mataichi. Mataichi said, "If you can, go ahead and stop them. But if they don't change their minds, it cannot be helped." "You folks join and help them. You could at least watch for the officers." So we came.

**Yuri:** So, you were worrying about us. But it's a wonder. We never thought of this until you came in shouting at us. On the contrary, Taju told us to leave the things to the men and didn't agree with us. But because you said that, Taju said what he never thought of before. God does what is best in the end. God arranges things beyond our human thought.

**Taju:** Yes. I can't understand, but at that time I felt some strong power pushing me from the back. We now think those things are what God had planned for us.

**Yuri:** God knows our weakness, and by using our weakness leads us to the best. The coming of you folks may be in His plan. Now, we can't waste time. Let's go together.

Lights off gradually, and the narration and the screening of the images begin.

**Narration (8):** The people who had many difficult nights knew that God would not desert them through His special providence. Yuri and Teru were the same. They didn't know where their power came from. And they moved directly to the "resurrection" of the Japanese Catholic Church which God had prepared. Silently the women prayed the same prayer as all the others who trusted in God.

*"Lord, bless us and give power to your children.*

*Blessing and mercy on us as we wait for the dawn."*

*"Make us sing the song of joy, recall our hardships and give us the joy of your promise."*

At the end of the narration, the backdrop is lifted. And the lights go on inside the Church.

< SCENE 2 >

- Inside the Oura Church -

The statue of Santa Maria Immacurate is placed in the dark on the upper left corner

## Characters

All people in Scene 1

Yosaku

Fr. Petitjean

Fr. Laucaigne

*Fr. Petitjean is praying at the altar.*

*Fr. Laucaigne enters from the stage left.*

*Fr. Laucaigne:* In the morning, there was a very heavy rain. Now it is clear. Perhaps something good may happen today. Weather in Japan changes easily from cold to hot and back again.

Oh, Father. You are here. You pray a lot.

*Fr. Petitjean:* I pray, because I am weak. Maybe I am impatient. These days, I feel uneasy. It's been already 34 years since Rome ordered us, Paris Missions Society, to re-evangelize Japan. Fr. Forcade came to Okinawa 21 years ago. And Fr. Adnet died there. We missionaries have been preparing with the same heart. But I am overwhelmed when I think that Christians may still be alive in this country.

*Fr. Laucaigne:* That's why you look so downcast these days. I am sorry for any misunderstanding. By the way, the rain of last night stopped and the sky is so clear and blue now!

*Fr. Petitjean:* There could be a lot of visitors again because of the spring weather.

*Fr. Laucaigne:* We are being watched more closely by the officers these days, including rainy days. We are forbidden to evangelize the Japanese. Maybe they are watching for that. So let's open the door only when visitors come, and keep it closed otherwise.

*Fr. Petitjean:* No! This church is built for them. People are coming now because it is unique. It's all right. I believe God will speak to the people who come here. Our church should not be a tourist attraction, but a holy place to talk with God.

*Fr. Laucaigne:* We need to be careful because officers are looking for Christian descendants among the visitors.

*Fr. Petitjean:* If I could identify them, I would happily die immediately. I wish to cry out like old Simeon in the Bible, "With my own eyes I have seen your salvation." But 250 years are too long for men to hope.

*Fr. Laucaigne:* I want to close the Church door for safety, anyway.

*Black out. Silence for a second.*

*There's a sound of shaking the front door.*

*Voice outside:* The door won't open by either push or pull. It's closed yet!  
We came so far.

*Fr. Petitjean:* (Turning eyes to the direction of the sound.) Oh, someone came.  
I will go and open the door.

*Fr. Laucaigne:* Maybe the usual visitors. I must do something else. Father, please take care of them.

Fr. Laucaigne goes out to the stage right.

Fr. Petitjean goes to the stage left. Opens the door and ushers the people in.

*Fr. Petitjean:* Please come in.

Yuri, Teru and Tsuru enter from stage left with stepping carefully, trying not to make any noise.

Dark light. Spot light gradually on Fr. Petitjean.

Yuri, Teru and Tsuru approach him from the back.

*Yuri:* (Suppressing her voice) Hello... Hello...

*Fr. Petitjean:* (Gently turning back) Yes, what can I do for you?

*Yuri:* (Placing her right hand to her bosom, whispers.) WE ARE OF THE SAME HEART AS YOU.

*Fr. Petitjean:* Ah, what did you say now? Say it again please, clearly.

*Yuri:* All of us here have the same heart as you do.

*Fr. Petitjean:* (Surprised, he places both hands to his chest to keep himself calm.)

Is it true? Where did you come from?

*Teru:* We are all from Urakami. Almost all the people in Urakami have the same heart as we do.

A tip of the foot is seen in the stage left. Immediately the three women scatter and start to look around inside the church pretending normal curious visitors. They see Taju and the group standing at the door, and beckon them. Yuri again approaches Fr. Petitjean.

*Yuri:* Please feel safe. They are all from Urakami. They have the same faith.

Taju and the group also approach Fr. Petitjean.

*Taju:* Are you a "Padre"?

*Fr. Petitjean:* How do you know that word?

*Taju:* We know because our parents and ancestors told us that after seven generations, padres will return and they will hear our confessions.

*Fr. Petitjean:* Yes, I am a Padre sent directly to you by the Pope in Rome.  
*Tsuru:* Are you celibate?  
*Fr. Petitjean:* Yes, I am. I have dedicated my life to God, and do not have a wife nor children. From now on, you are my precious children.

All take hands and nod to each other with joy.

*Yuri:* Where is the Statue of Santa Maria?  
*Fr. Petitjean:* Oh, Santa Maria! Santa Maria! Holy Mother, you have guided your children walking in the night without forgetting them even for a moment. (Pointing the Statue of Santa Maria with his left hand) Please look at her. She is there!

The spot light shed on the Statue.

All run toward the Statue and express their surprise and joy.

*Hachi:* This is true!  
*Teru:* It's Santa Maria!  
*Taju:* Oh, Santa Maria is here!  
*Yuri:* She is holding the Infant Jesus in her arms.  
*Hachi:* This is not a camouflaged figure of Santa Maria. This is a true Santa Maria. The true Santa Maria is right before us. (Puts his hands together, kneels down and, shaking his shoulders, begins to raise his sobs.)

*Taju:* We have waited for such a long time. It's so nice. Teru, Yuri! The padre has come. The promise has been kept. (Weeps with great joy)  
*Teru:* It has been so hard for us to keep believing. At times, we had doubts because the wait was so long, but Santa Maria helped us keep our faith. I didn't know that until today.

*Fr. Petitjean:* Oh, Lord. Oh, Lord. Please teach me. I am your little servant, Bernard Petitjean. I have witnessed your great work of salvation. You have shown your wonderful work to this humble priest. Please tell me who you are. (After a pause) Your beloved children have kept their faith alive for 250 years, each generation passing the same faith on to their descendants. Your Holy Mother protected her children!

*Sasuke:* Padre, I have committed a grave sin. Forgive me. Forgive me.

*All others:* We are the same. Please forgive us, forgive us.

*Fr. Petitjean:* *Ego te absolvo in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, Amen.*

*Yuri:* (Holding Fr. Petitjean's hands firmly) Padre... Padre...  
(Pointing to Santa Maria with her right hand) Santa Maria!!  
*Fr. Petitjean:* Holy Mother, please look at them. They are your children.

5 seconds after Fr. Petitjean's monologue, narration starts.  
Gradually the light focuses on the Statue of Santa Maria.  
All the people are motionless until the end of the narration.

*Narration (9)* The door of silence, closed for 250 years, is now open. The people who lived for so long in deep silence have kept the same faith without giving up hope. And Santa Maria was there. This is the faith I received, and the story my Granma Yasu Sugimoto left me as her message.

Three years after the discovery of the Japanese Christians, the Fourth Urakami Persecution started. 3,700 people were rounded up and then sent to 22 separate domains in western Japan. 700 of them were martyred while in exile. The Baptizer, Mataichi Iwanaga, was martyred in Tsuwano. Those who witnessed God's promise did not change their faith during the exile, and continued even after they returned home. They lived the spirit of the Misericordia, caring for orphans and sick people, as God spoke of its importance. And Santa Maria was always there beside them.

150 years have passed since then and many things have changed. Times have changed considerably. But why? It seems that we humans change our priorities when we think we can do anything freely. Now I wonder whether parents, children, grand-children, and our friends..... are living with the same heart and the same faith. Santa Maria is never far from us. So it will be all right. We will now hand on our faith to the next generation. Thank you.

Quietly the drop curtain down.

End of the play

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## Greeting from Fr. Kaoru Furusu

- Director and play-writer –

*Fr. Furusu:* Finally, I will introduce our back stage crew. Stage carpenters & props, costumers, make-up artists and administrative staff. Please come.

In prayer, I followed the story of hope and “resurrection” of the Japanese Church which occurred 150 years ago. From that story this play was born.

When thoughts of those who believe and pray are united, we can see clearly what is important. We learned that we should pass our faith on to the next generation. We would be more than happy if today we delivered to you our ancestors' noble and universal spirit.

WE ARE OF THE SAME HEART AS YOU.

Thank you very much.