

ABSTRACTS

道 THESAURUM 信 FIDEI

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

FIDES ET SPES

«errando per le strade ondose»

Pilgrimages between Japan and Europe

September 3rd 2025 10am -6pm

Auditorium Italy Pavilion | Expo 2025 Osaka

Expo 2025 in Osaka, Japan: 1-chome, Konohana-ku, Osaka City, Osaka Prefecture
Osaka Metro - Yumeshima Station

PARMIGIANO
REGGIANO

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM THESAURUM FIDEI

FIDES ET SPES

«*errando per le strade ondose*»*

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*the quote “... *errando per le strade ondose* ...”

the quote is taken from the literary text by Angelo Grillo, a Benedictine, composed on the occasion of the pilgrimage of the Japanese Christians at the monastery of Polirone in Mantua in 1585.

The international Symposium at the Holy See Pavilion (Expo 2025, Osaka) aims to approach the international community to the topics of the cultural meeting between Japan and Europe from XVI century until today. In particular, the activities of the missionaries and “hidden Christians” in Japan continue to be lifeblood for the life of the Church, and thanks to their faith and courage to “errare per strade ondose” in every place, they are an irreplaceable and fundamental guide for establishing peaceful dialogues. Faith, Hope, Life, Beauty, Salvation, Courage, constitute the key words on which we are invited to question ourselves by analysing the long pilgrimages of those who, for the good of the world, have faced the unknown and known how to look “beyond”. The project aims to organize a cultural pilgrimage from Italy to Japan to celebrate the first intercultural exchange among these countries after 440 years. The first diplomatic meeting is documented in Rome in 1585 and so after 440 years together, Japanese and Italian scholars met at the Universal Exhibition to remember this important historical memory, a sign of brotherhood and a bridge of peace.

OSAKA, JAPAN

September 3, 2025

LOCATION

Auditorium | Italy Pavilion Expo 2025 Osaka

SPECIAL GUESTS [OPENING H.10.00AM]

H.E.R. Card. Jean-Claude HOLLERICH S.J.

Archbishop of Luxembourg

H.E.R. Card. Thomas Aquinas Manyo MAEDA

Archbishop Osaka-Takamatsu, Japan

H.E.R. Card. Tarcisio Isao KIKUCHI, S.V.D.

Archbishop of Tokyo, Japan

H.E.R. Mgr Francisco ESCALANTE MOLINA

Apostolic Nuncio in Japan, Venezuela

H.E.R. Mgr. Paolo GIULIETTI

Archbishop of Lucca, Italy

H.E.R. Mgr. Rino FISICHELLA

pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Vatican City

H.E.R. Mons. Andrea LEMBO, PIME

Auxiliary Bishop of Tokyo, Japan

Scientific Coordinator

Prof. Olimpia NIGLIO, University of Pavia; Archdiocese of Lucca

Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan

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M.R. Edgar Gacutan, C.I.C.M., Bishop of Sendai
M. R. Paul Daisuke Narui, S.V.D., Bishop of Niigata
M. R. Mario Michiaki Yamanouchi, S.D.B., Bishop of Saitama
M. R. Raphael Masahiro Umemura, Bishop of Yokohama.
M. R. Michael Goro Matsuura, Bishop of Nagoya
M. R. Paul Yoshinao Otsuka, Bishop of Kyoto
M. R. Paulus Toshihiro Sakai, Aux. Bishop of Osaka-Takamatsu.
M. R. Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama, S.S., Bishop of Hiroshima
M. R. Josep Maria Abella, Bishop of Fukuoka
M. R. Peter Michiaki Nakamura, Archbishop of Nagasaki
M. R. Sulpice Shinzo Moriyama, Bishop of Oita
M. R. Francis Xavier Hiroaki Nakano, Bishop of Kagoshima
M. R. Wayne Francis Berndt, O.F.M. cap., Bishop of Naha

10.30am

Introduction

Nuno Alexandre Henriques DE LIMA
Tamatsukuri Catholic Church, St. Mary's Cathedral di Osaka
Deputy Commissioner Expo Osaka 2025

Portugal

Speakers [MORNING]

Chairman: Prof. Olimpia NIGLIO, University of Pavia; Archdiocese of Lucca

11.00am

Evidence of the strong bond between the Vatican and the Japanese Christian Church

Shinzo KAWAMURA, SJ. Japan
Professor at Sophia University, Tokyo.
Director of the Sophia University Kirishitan Bunko Library

In 1617, Pope Paulus V issued an edict of the Holy Year on completing the Basilica of St. Peter. At that time, he attached a letter of "consolation" to the Church in Japan. In 1621, the Japanese Church sent gratitude letters to the Pope. The letters serve as a compelling historical testament to the strength of the bond between the Pope and Japan. Four hundred years later, we should recall the weight and significance of that bond. The Pope loved the persecuted Japanese Church with all his heart, and the Japanese people accepted his love and stood up to their difficulties. The Pope's encouragement will be remembered by many as a treasure of the Japanese Church. This presentation intends to unravel the background of this history.

11.30am

The History of an Encounter: Japanese Christianity

Renzo DE LUCA S.J.,
Jesuit Priest, Director Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum, Nagasaki

Argentina

In my talk I want to show that the arrival of Christianity in Japan brought a fruitful exchange and growth to both Japan and Europe. I will present documents from both Japanese and European people to support my presentation. While it's common to talk about the negative aspects (persecution, misunderstandings, etc.) of this period, I want to emphasize the positive aspects of this exchange.

12.00am

Re-inventing” Christianity in Early Modern Japan: The Jesuit Educational Enterprise

M. Antoni J. UCERLER SJ

United States

Boston College

Director of the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History

The arrival of St. Francis Xavier in Kagoshima in 1549 began an unexpected encounter between Japan and Christianity. The Japanese had never heard of this new faith; and it seemed unlikely that it would attract a following in the chaos that had enveloped Warring States Japan. Yet, within half a century, hundreds of thousands of Japanese, from the samurai class, nobility, and peasantry had embraced Christianity. One of the greatest challenges the missionaries faced was how to translate not only linguistically but also culturally the faith that they had brought with them. To solve this dilemma, in 1580 the Jesuits established the first schools as well as a college for higher studies. Their purpose was to educate both Japanese and European students through a program that included the classics of both Europe and Japan. Their purpose was to “re-invent” Christianity in Japan, i.e. make it both persuasive and intelligible in its new cultural context. This presentation will focus on the Jesuit educational enterprise and how it was influenced by Japanese language, culture, and thought.

12.30am

Tracing the Jesuit Missionary Road from the Kyoto-Osaka Region:

A Historical Overview of its Origin and Expansion

Takayoshi KISAKI

Japan

The University of Tokyo

Susumu AKUNE

Konan University

During the “Christian Century” that opened with the arrival of Francisco Xavier in Japan, the Kyoto-Osaka region consistently held a significant position in the Jesuit enterprise. Xavier’s aspiration to establish a church in the Japanese capital was realized through the continuous efforts of his successors, who also succeeded in gaining many prominent Christian converts. Based on these accomplishments, the Visitor Alessandro Valignano, during his first inspection tour (1579-82), considered the Kyoto-Osaka region as the most promising and strategically significant missionary field in Japan and emphasized the necessity of allocating maximum resources. For a deeper understanding of the background of Valignano’s assessment, the first half of this joint presentation will revisit the early proselytizing activities in the Kyoto-Osaka region. Specifically, we will examine the process by which the missionaries utilized multiple major routes connecting Kyoto with peripheral Provinces and promoted the construction of churches as well as interactions with Christians. In the latter half of this presentation, focusing on the Jesuit three-decade-long struggle after the “Great Expulsion Edict” of 1614, we will overview their extensive clandestine missionary tours supported by Christians from Kyoto and Osaka. As these cases indicate, Jesuits’ association with them persisted even at the tail end of the “Christian Century”.

Speakers [AFTERNOON]

Chairman: Prof. Carlo PELLICCIA, University of International Studies of Rome, Italy

3.00pm

Western Views of Japan in the Kirishitan Era

Mamoru FUJISAKI

Japan

The University of Tokyo

The arrival of Christian missionaries from the West to Japan in the 16th and 17th centuries provides an important insight into the globalized modern world. This is because it was during this period that the exchange of people, goods, and information began between Japan and the West, two different civilizations with which there had been no direct contact until then, and this exchange has continued to the present day. This presentation will examine what kind of image Christian missionaries had of Japan and how they understood Japan. What preconceptions did the missionaries have about Japan before they arrived, and how did they perceive Japanese people and society once they actually arrived? While there can be correct understandings between different civilizations, there can also be misunderstandings that may later be corrected. This presentation examines the Western gaze on Japan in the early modern period, based on letters and other materials written by missionaries. This kind of work in historiography will also help to promote understanding between civilizations in modern society.

3.30pm

(Re-)Living the Past through Images: Two Martyrdom Paintings at Oura Cathedral, Nagasaki, and the Re-evangelization of Japan

Hisashi YAKOU

Hokkaido University

Japan

Recently, two large canvas paintings, “the Martyrdom of Twenty-Six Martyrs of Japan” (1869) and “the Great Martyrdom of Genna” (1870) conserved at Oura Cathedral were rightly attributed to Cécile-Marie Thorel (Paris, 1840-Versailles, 1908). She seems to have been active in a revitalizing atmosphere of the Church, then being forced to counteract to the secularism of the time, and left us a few curious works with religious themes. Father Bernard Petitjean M. E. P., who was the first missionary to meet the hidden Christians, commissioned the two paintings of Oura while staying in Italy or France and sent them to Nagasaki. This paper will briefly survey the iconographic tradition of martyrdom scenes since Italian Gothic artists such as Giotto and Ambrogio Lorenzetti particularly in terms of venerating martyrs’ relics and will place the Oura works in its context. Furthermore, the role/non-role of images to exhort newly discovered hidden Christians to face the last persecution, Urakami Yoban Kuzure, will be examined.

4.00pm

Religioni in pellegrinaggio: per un «Dialogo della Salvezza» (Es 72)

Maria DE GIORGI, mmx, PhD

Xaverian Missionaries of Mary | Shinmeizan, Center Interreligious dialogue,
Nagomi machi, Kumamoto ken, Japan

Italy

Nella sua enciclica *Redemptoris Missio*, San Giovanni Paolo II afferma che: «il dialogo è una via verso il Regno e darà sicuramente i suoi frutti, anche se tempi e momenti sono riservati al Padre» (RM 57). Nel mio trentennale servizio missionario al dialogo interreligioso in Giappone, presso il Centro di spiritualità e dialogo interreligioso Shinmeizan (Nagomi, Prefettura di Kumamoto), ho potuto sperimentare quanto profetiche siano queste parole. Dialogo della vita, dialogo delle opere, dialogo dell’esperienza religiosa, dialogo teologico: in qualunque modo lo si declini, il dialogo è, prima di tutto, un “pellegrinaggio del cuore e della mente” che – bene inteso – permette di incontrarsi in modi inediti e fraterni lungo il cammino esistenziale che tutti siamo chiamati a percorrere verso l’«ultimo e ineffabile mistero che circonda la nostra esistenza, donde noi traiamo la nostra origine e verso cui tendiamo» (NA 1). In questo breve intervento, ripercorrerò alcune tappe fondamentali che hanno caratterizzato l’incontro/pellegrinaggio delle religioni in Giappone, in particolare con il Cristianesimo venuto dall’Europa, a partire soprattutto dall’esperienza maturata presso il Centro Shinmeizan. Come scrive Papa Francesco, infatti: «Tra le religioni è possibile un cammino di pace. Il punto di partenza deve essere lo sguardo di Dio. Perché Dio non guarda con gli occhi. Dio guarda con il cuore. E l’amore di Dio è lo stesso per ogni persona, di qualunque religione sia» (*Fratelli tutti*, 281).

4.30pm

Science and art in the garden: a crossroads of cultural exchanges between Europe and the East

Marco MAOVAZ,
University of Perugia

Italy

Koji KUWAKINO

Japan

University of Osaka

Chen YUTING

China

University of Osaka

The Japanese embassies in Italy, which took place in 1585 and 1615, were investigated for aspects linked to the evangelization of the Land of the Rising Sun; however, as research deepens, other aspects are also emerging, such as interest in the gardens of the respective civilizations. For European and Asian scholars, the garden remained the privileged place to investigate medicinal remedies, the cultivation of ornamental and food plants and the symbolism of the natural world. If we also combine the study of the first embassies with travel reports, exchanges of plants and the diffusion of works of art, we can reconstruct a more complex history of cultural exchanges between East and West.

5.00pm

Relations between Japan and the Holy See during the pontificate of Gregory XV and Urban VIII (1622-1644) based on the sources from the Historical Archives of Propaganda Fide

Flavio BELLUOMINI

Italy/Vatican City

Director, Archive Propaganda Fide

The paper focuses on the history of relations between Japan and the Holy See shortly after the establishment of Propaganda Fide (1622) as the missionary organ of the Roman Curia. Based on the documents in the Historical Archives of Propaganda Fide, we will explore political, religious and linguistic policies implemented by the Propaganda Fide for the mission in Japan during the pontificate of Gregory XV and Urban VIII.

This will highlight the diplomatic-political practice of the Holy See towards the involvement of Spain and Portugal in the missions. In terms of care for Christians in Japan, we will demonstrate that the Holy See supported its flock faced with increasing persecutions. Lastly, the printing activity undertook for Japan will indicate the dedication that Propaganda Fide showed for the mission there.

5.30pm

DIGITAL EXHIBITION

Conceptual Map of the Hidden Christians in Japan

Making an original correlation diagram related to Japanese Christian in 16-17 century

Kan TAKAHAMA

Japan

Writer, Amakusa, Tsukuba University

Ambassador Pavilion Holy See

As a preparation for my historical series, I started to make a correlation diagram of related people. This map includes not only people in official documents but old names of hidden Christians. It gives us different perspective.

General Coordination

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Prof. Arch. Olimpia NIGLIO, University of Pavia, Archdiocese of Lucca, Italy

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Dr. Minako UCHIJIMA, Nagasaki Oura Church, Christian Museum, Japan

Dr. Luigi VIANI, Giacomo Puccini Foundation, Italy

Speakers of the International Symposium from: Argentina, China, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Portugal, Vatican City State, Venezuela, United States.

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