

神様がおかれた布石

マリア 三竹静子

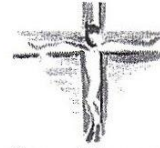
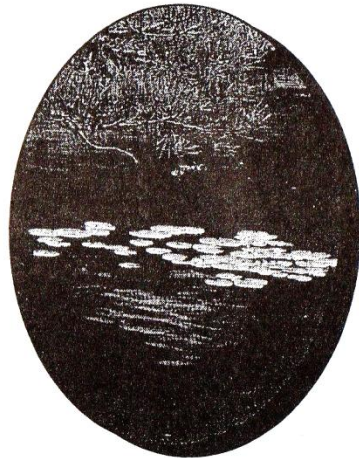
大聖年二千年に、私は誓願宣立三十八年を迎えます。振り返ってみますと、その時は意味が分からず先が見えなかったのですが、今はあざやかに、遠藤周作の言葉を借りれば「一布石を置いて主が導いて下さった」ことが分かります。

母が結婚後間もなく受洗したので、私と弟（洋一）も入学前に、マリアとオグスチノという霊名を頂いて、神田教会で下山正義神父様から洗礼を受けました。大きな円柱の並ぶ聖堂、ステンドグラスから射し込む光、お祝いをしているような木彫りの天使たち、中央線の微かな音を聞きながら、私は落ち着いた清々しい嬉しい気持ちになりました。その後私たちは、カテキスタの森雅子先生から、堅信のための公教要理をしっかりと習いました。先生は上智大の舎監をしながら、「ファビオラ」という本を訳された方ですが、ご自分のお弁当（パン）を子供たちに分けてくださり、また手紙を下さったりしました。母が病気になった時、献身的で温かいシスターと出会い、それから子供たちを神様に捧げたいと考え祈り続けた由。後で私たち姉弟は、本当にその恵みを頂きました。

第二次世界大戦中、父は仕事で軍属として南方に行き、私たちは自然に恵まれた父の故郷、渥美半島に疎開しました。当時、殆ど本の出版はなかったのですが、戦争直後カトリック新聞に紹介された「薔薇の聖女—幼きイエズスの聖テレジア」と珠玉の童話と言われた「光の子」を求め、私は何度もそれを繰り返し読みました。イエズス様の為にどんな苦しみも喜んで引き受けた聖テレジアから、私は初めて修道生活の本質を教えてもらいました。日頃遊んでばかりいた私も、本を読むときは殊勝な心になるのでした。

父の帰国後、私たち六人家族は、北九州に移りました。ある日、学園移管の労を取られたルリエ神父様が、私をジープに乗せて学園に連れて行き、「もうすぐ明治学園高等部ができるから、ぜひ入学しなさい。」と薦めてくださいました。それは高校だけでなく、私の生涯の奉献生活を定める入学となりました。私たち新入生は新緑の森のような、エネルギーに満ちた創設期の姉妹方、教職員の方々に会いました。校長のシスターコーションを中心に、若い姉妹方、シスター菊地、シスター木村、シスター穴澤、シスターパーマ方が一致して主に向かい、ひたすらに歩んでいる姿から、言葉にならない大きな影響を受けました。卒業と同時に大阪に越した私の所に、ある日、担任をして下さったシスター菊地から手紙が届きました。「一人の姉妹が病気になりました。学期の

途中ですが、しばらく小さい子供たちを教えてくださいませんか。」と書かれてあり、小冊子も入っていました。そこにはCNDの説明と共に、十字架上のイエス様の写真が載っており、私はとても心を引かれました。レジオ・マリエの活動で、病気の子供を見舞いに行った帰り、川の土手に腰を下し、いつの間にか修道生活を考え祈っていた答えがそこにありました。



GOD'S PREPARATORY STONES

Maria Shizuko Mitake, C.N.D.

I am 38 years professed in the year 2000. In the midst of each step, we do not grasp the meaning of the experience, but in looking back, borrowing the expression of Shusaku Endo, I can see God's strategic placing of *go* (Japanese board game) stones in various stages of my life.

Since my mother was baptized soon after marriage, my brother Yoichi and myself were baptized before school age, Augustine and Maria, by Father Masayoshi Shimoyama at Kanda Church, Tokyo. I can still recall the peace and happiness I felt in the church where there were large round pillars, lights coming through stained glass windows, and the distant noise of Chuo Line trains. The angels carved in wood looked as if they were celebrating the grace we were receiving. After that, Ms. Masako Mori, the catechist of the parish, gave us good, solid lessons in preparation for confirmation. Ms. Mori was a well known writer, who translated *Fabiola* into Japanese when she was a dormitory supervisor at Sophia University. She was a warm hearted person, and she used to share her own bread at lunch with us children. She also wrote us often in later years.

One time when my mother fell ill, she encountered a very warm and devoted nun. My mother was so impressed that she started praying that she, too, might offer her own children to the service of God. Years later, Yoichi and I each received the grace that my mother asked for.

During World War II, my father was sent to South East Asia as a civilian in the military service. In his absence, the rest of us moved from Tokyo to my father's native place, Atsumi Peninsula, where nature was truly beautiful. There were scarcely any new books in those days, but as soon as the war ended, the serial publication of the life of Thérèse de Lisieux started to

appear in *Catholic Weekly*. The collection of excellent children's stories named *Hikari no Ko* (Children of the Light) soon came out, too. How I loved reading them, over and over again! Little St. Thérèse, who accepted any sacrifice for the love of Jesus, showed me for the first time the meaning of religious life. Although I always loved to play with other children, I would become quite serious when I read such material.

When my father returned home, our family, all six of us, moved to Kita Kyushu. There Father René Rouillier was working hard for the transfer of Meiji Gakuen to the C.N.D. One day, Father Rouillier took me to Meiji Gakuen in his jeep, and said, "These nuns are starting a senior high for girls here very soon. I advise you strongly to go to this school." So I entered this new high school, a decision which determined my whole life, i.e. the life of consecration. Sister Rose Cauchon, principal, was the central and uniting force for her young companions, Sisters Thérèse Kikuchi, Maria Kimura, Germana Anazawa and Margaret Palmer, whose generous love for the Lord influenced me beyond words.

Immediately after graduating from Meiji Gakuen, my family moved to Osaka. One day there, I received a letter from Sister Kikuchi, which said, "One of our Sisters has become suddenly ill. Could you come and help us teach little children, though this is the middle of a term?" Inclosed was a little booklet explaining the life of the C.N.D., with a picture of crucified Jesus on the cover, which enchanted me. In those days, on my way home from visiting sick children as a member of the Legion of Mary, I would often sit down on the grass of the river bank, and find myself praying and thinking about religious life. This request from Sister Kikuchi was the answer from the Lord, waiting for me like another strategic stone.