

# Vision of Praise

January 2014

*From the editor*

This time, we'd like to share with you Pastor Peter's message "The Hour of Cosmic Worship," given at the *Church of the Wind* on December 3, 2013.

---

## The Hour of Cosmic Worship

Peter

Over the centuries the Christendom has professed faith in God using Creeds. The most famous one is the Apostles' Creed, which was composed in around the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It was a simplified form of the Nicene Creed, which was adopted at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD and revised at the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD.

Both Creeds consist of four basic confessions in Latin.

The first confession is *I believe in God the Father.*

The second is *I believe in the Son Jesus Christ.*

The third is *I believe in the Holy Spirit.*

And the last one is *I believe in the holy catholic Church.*

In our worship service, we often sing the praise *Credo*, citing the above four confessions.

It was during our first praise tour to Europe in 2009. After the concerts, we walked in the old city of Barcelona, Spain, and accidentally came across the old cathedral, Santa Maria del Mar Church. When we entered a small sanctuary beside the main sanctuary, Mitsuko heard the beautiful sound of praise *Credo* and saw the beautiful vision of emerald

green light. She has no knowledge of Latin. Upon returning to Japan, we discovered what she had heard was the very Creed in Latin, namely the four confessions of God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church.

The fourth confession, *unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam*, is translated as “(I believe) in the only, holy, catholic and apostolic church.” We omit *apostolicam* from our praise because it does not fit into the melody. However, this fourth confession is essential to our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The affirmation of *unam, sanctam, catholicam Ecclesiam* (only, holy, catholic Church) is not to acknowledge the Roman Catholic Church as the supreme church on the earth, but it denotes the unique aspect of Christian Church in the deepest sense of the word. *Catholicam* means universal. The only holy universal Church she is. She is far beyond the visible form of denominational churches on the earth. The fourth confession is, therefore, the affirmation of the Church Universe.

Since the very inception of our church, *Kohitsuji no Mure*, we have affirmed our faith in the Church Universe. We have no affiliation with any established denomination. Nor do we insist on our independency. We simply keep our eyes on the only holy universal Church, which is the magnificent Body of Christ. It has reigned for the centuries as the invisible entity, and now emerged into the visible world as the eschatological Ecclesia.

In confessing our faith in the Church Universe, we envision the Cosmic Church, which includes both visible and invisible worlds. As a matter of fact, the Church Universe reigns over the entire universe: things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth. (Philippians 2:10) Indeed, the whole creation is on tiptoe to see its appearance on the earth.

Let me share with you my naive impression on the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, Spain when we first went there in 2009. The construction was ongoing and the site was full of dust and noise, but what made me astonished was not so much the huge towers and the great cathedral as various mosaic figures on the outer walls. In addition to the traditional biblical figures, it has a number of reptile figures such as snakes and lizards, and even of the unclean entities in the darkness!

The Sagrada Familia is a masterpiece of the genius Antoni Gaudi. No doubt it is one of the most significant buildings in history. What strikes me most is his conviction in the redeeming work by Christ. Certainly I was aghast at Gaudi's design at first, but gradually came to see his universal vision. He must have been convinced that Christ's redemption should include the entire creation, even the creatures under the earth. Nothing should escape from the love of Christ, because the Savior achieved the total reconciliation for the whole creation.

The Apostle Paul says: "All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

Since God Himself opened the door of the total reconciliation for us, the whole universe is invited to be merged into the divine life of Christ, our Lord.

When we visited the Sagrada Familia in October this year, our choir was given a special permission to praise from the balcony on the third level. At first the church's head director was not in favor of our request, and officially

declined it before we parted Japan. After all, we are a small Christian group from the Orient, and not even Catholic. A minute before our praising, however, the most dramatic incident took place. He changed his mind and granted our request to ascend to the third balcony. Quickly Mitsuko and choir members, twenty of them, took an elevator and appeared on the high balcony.

Oh, what a magnificent praising it was! It was pure beauty. Down on the first floor of the Basilica was our praise group of more than 230 souls, echoing the *heavenly praise*. A number of tourists from all over the world bumped into this unexpected presentation of the heavenly praising, and rejoiced with us for sure!

To me, the balcony praising has opened up a new dimension of the divine plan. Some has called it three-dimensional praise. No longer on a horizontal level, it covers the vertical depth. As I was intoxicated with the *heavenly praise*, the thought struck me with a great impact: “The three-dimensional praise must signify Christ’s redeeming love that covers three dimensions described in the New Testaments: *things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth.*”

I know this is not my fancy or imagination. I believe that the thought is God’s revelation in this eschatological time. We are in the final chapter of God’s salvation history not only for mankind, but also for the entire creation. We are the eyewitnesses of God’s grand operation.

The Revelation is a scary book, for it prophesizes catastrophic disasters on the earth. However, once our eyes are opened to the heavenly dimension through the heavenly praising, the End Time is revealed as the most joyous and thrilling hour, for God’s grand salvation history is to be

completed.

We are in the hour of sounding and resounding *heavenly praise*, together with “the morning stars singing and all the sons of God shouting.” (Job 38:7) We are witnessing the cosmic worship.

Yes, this is the hour of cosmic worshipping of the Lamb. The visible and the invisible are coming together to worship the Lord in exceeding joy. Now all created life are being relieved from the bondage of death and nihilism, and celebrating the risen life in Christ.

Why is it so? Because now is the hour, which the Lord Himself has promised.

Listen to the word of God:

Truly, truly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. (John 5:25-26)

Out of this text we sing the Latin praise, ♪ *Mortui audient vocem Filii Dei* ♪ (The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God).

This praise was born at Santa Maria del Mar Church in Barcelona in our last tour. Before the evening concert, our choir was rehearsing, but it didn't go well. Three years ago when we had the concert at the same place, we were all surprised that the tiny voice of a soloist resounded and was heard at the rear seat of the huge sanctuary. This time, however, for some reason singing voices did not reach the audience. We could not hear them at all. We can't have a concert!

Mitsuko the director was frantic to arrange and rearrange the standing positions of choir members. If this were in our church in Japan, a slight alteration of standing positions

would be sufficient, and the heavenly sound would beautifully resonate. Mitsuko had never experienced such confusion, and finally found out the reason. To her astonishment, praising sounds were being drawn to the back of the altar!

And she saw the most mysterious scene: Hundreds of people wearing a black hooded-mantle gathered behind the altar, yearning desperately to hear the *heavenly praise*. Their salvation seemed to depend on this concert.

No wonder the choir's voices did not go forward. Instead they were being absorbed into the back. When Mitsuko understood the situation, she explained it to the choir and proceeded with the concert on schedule. In fact, the singing voices started sounding clear enough in the middle of the concert.

After the concert, I contemplated on what had happened. Can the dead yearn to hear the heavenly praising? Do they have a chance to get saved by Christ? Who are they in the first place?

Upon returning to Japan, I searched the middle ages history of Europe, and learned of the most eerie past. Barcelona was one of a few cities in Spain where the infamous Inquisition took place. The most inhumane trial started near the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. At first the church with the power of the Spanish monarch tried to convert Jews and Muslims to Christian faith. Those who refused were tried at court and tortured to death. Later the Inquisition escalated its demonic force to persecute Protestants, and sent them to burn at the stake. The hideous acts had lasted for over two hundred years.

I do not know the exact identity of the people in black whom Mitsuko saw in the vision. Possibly they were the

victims of the religious persecutions which happened in Europe in the middle ages. On the other hand, Protestant churches gained upper hand in other parts of Europe and killed thousands of Catholics. Both were far from the kingdom of God and the Man of Peace. Darkness overshadowed the entire continent.

However, I am not here to denounce the past and to give a lecture of humanism. I know why the Lord took us to Europe for the praise tour. It is to proclaim Christ's reconciliation for the dead as well as for the living. All souls must be saved. It is my sincere prayer.

They may be the victims of the religious persecutions, or they may be wrongdoers and assailants. As I say often, the wound of a wrongdoer is far deeper than that of a victim. They are the ones who need God's mercy more than anyone else.

In any event, I pray that "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God" and be saved.

The hour is now.

This is our mission, for the cosmic worship is now upon us.

Loosen the bondage of the tradition. Awake to God's new vision. Invite thousands and thousands of lost souls to the kingdom of God and the redeeming love of Jesus Christ. Those who have been baptized in the *heavenly praise* have the heavenly weapon. Use it. Sing with the angels. Bring the dead to the Throne.

This is your mission, for the cosmic worship is now upon you.

♪ *Mortui audient vocem Filii Dei* ♪

December 3, 2013