



In Spite of the Defeat of Japan, the Spirit of Sophia Could Prosper NO.3

1. Sophia University's development in the aftermath of World War II

On March 10, 1945, Tokyo was subjected to the first of three air raids conducted by B-29 Strategic Bombers. This bombing started in the Fukagawa and Asakusa parts of the city. In the bombing conducted during the early morning of April 14th, Sophia University was hit by 74 incendiary bombs and two aerial explosives. The old red brick school building was burned to the ground. The current Building Number 1, a new building from 1932, was only partially damaged; the auditorium was burned but the rest of the building could survive. The third heavy bombing occurred on May 25th in the Yamanote area of Tokyo. This attack resulted in the fiery destruction of almost all of Tokyo, leaving only smoking ruins. In that sad situation, the university welcomed the end of the war on August 15th.

Following the end of the war, Sophia University pushed on into the future with exceptional power. From the Itaya Trading Company, the institution purchased a part of Kojimachi Rokuchome that had become a field of ashes. This land provided an excellent opportunity for the expansion of the university. On this land were build the old St. Ignatius Church, the library, including the graduate program, and the old Building Number 2, which housed the law faculty. Nearby were to be the Sophia Kaikan and the Sophia Men's Dormitory.

On September 5th, three weeks after the surrender documents were signed on the U.S. Battleship Missouri, two Jesuit chaplains from the Missouri and one Jesuit from the U.S. Carrier Hamlin came to check on the health and safety of their Jesuit colleagues at Sophia. The names of the visitors were Fr. Charles Robinson, SJ, and Fr. Paul O'Connor, SJ, from the battleship and Fr. Samuel Ray, SJ, from the carrier. Actually, at that time the Jesuits at Sophia lacked both food and clothing, but what they asked the American



This picture shows the field of ashes around Sophia University created by the American B-29 Strategic Bomber attacks that began on the evening of April 13, 1945, and continued into the dawn of the following day. One can see Building number 1 in the rear of the picture.

chaplains to convey to Rome and to the Catholic world was their urgent request for young Jesuits to be sent to Japan to assist in Japan's rebuilding and in educating Japan's youth. Soon after their request reached Rome, young Jesuits of excellent promise were sent to Japan not only from America but from all over the world. These men's shoulders carried the major burdens of the post-war development of Sophia.



The picture on the left shows St. Ignatius Church (built in 1949) and the Sophia Library and Graduate School Center (built in 1952). The picture in the center shows the Law Faculty Building (built in 1957). The picture on the right shows the Sophia Men's Dormitory and the Jochi Kaikan (both built in 1957 also).

2. Sophia University creates a set of lectures open to the public to respond to the local demands for better information

The people of burned-out Tokyo had been released from the curse of militarism. What they demanded more than anything else was an intellectual environment free from the wartime thought control. In 1947, when Iwanami Shoten Publishing Company issued the complete works of Nishida Kitaro, the demand for these volumes was so great that a long queue of buyers formed a line from the previous evening. To respond to such touching demands for intellectual materials, in May of 1946, less than a year after the surrender, Sophia University opened a series of public lectures. These included series of classes in philosophy, religion, Latin, and English, for example, along with one-off special public lectures ably organized by Fr. Joseph Roggendorf, SJ. The lectures that were announced in the Japanese newspapers included ones by John Higgins, the chief judge of the Far Eastern Tribunal; Joseph Keenan, the chief judge of the International War Crimes Tribunal; and Judge Tanaka Kotaro. Growing out of these series of public lectures, in 1949 a Theology lecture series was started. This opened a way for applicants to follow a two-year program that would lead to a teaching license in religion. In the same year of 1949, thanks to the efforts of Fr. Aloysius Miller, SJ, the International Division of Sophia University was



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opened. This program targeted the soldiers of the allied forces stationed in Japan. It conducted American college-style courses in English. Since many American universities agreed to recognize the credits and degrees given by the International Division, the graduates could be awarded BA or BS American-style degrees. This program brought a very good reputation to the post-war Sophia University. It established a special educational niche that was later filled by the Faculty of Comparative Culture, recently reorganized into the Faculty of Liberal Arts.

3. How Sophia helped to solve the distressed condition of the early post-war students



A picture of the beloved Fr. Franz Bosch, SJ, and the Quonset huts that made up the first on-campus student residence: Bosch-Town.

Sophia opened for classes again on October 25, 1945. The students who returned to the university had little to wear except the military uniforms issued to student militia members. They had no places to live and little food to eat. There was a crisis that might have caused them to abandon their studies. To rescue the Sophia students from such hardships, the university made urgent plans to

create a student dormitory. The leader and energizer of such activities was the Dean of Students, Fr. Franz Bosch, SJ. As a stopgap measure, the university arranged to rent a section of the land in Kichijoji that had been part of the Nakajima airstrip during the war. The university constructed a building where roughly fifty students could live, but the distance to the university made the site unworkable. Next, the university acquired six Quonset huts from the American military authorities. These were relocated to the university property and rebuilt as a student dormitory. One building was used for meals and meetings; the other five were arranged so that eighty students of the university could live a life in common. Because of the close association with Fr. Bosch, the dorm prefect, these buildings were known as Bosch-Town. They continued until 1957, when the land was needed for the Jochi Kaikan, which included the Sophia Men's Dormitory. The warm heart and unending activities of Fr. Bosch on behalf of his dorm students meant that his name would remain carved forever on the hearts of the dorm graduates.

4. Answering the prayers of St. Francis Xavier four hundred years later

In 1949, the 400th anniversary of the arrival of St. Francis Xavier in Japan was celebrated enthusiastically here. The Japanese Catholic Church welcomed a pilgrimage delegation headed by Cardinal Gilroy, comprising about 70 participants from eight countries. From May 29 to June 12, they traveled around Japan with the relic of the arm of Francis Xavier. In each location, a grand liturgical celebration was held. After a



The newspaper picture and article about the relic of St. Francis Xavier are dated June 9 of that year.

St. Ignatius Church was completed on April 17, 1949.

pilgrimage-related Mass in the Jingu Outer Garden park, the relic of the arm of Xavier was brought to the recently dedicated St. Ignatius (Kojimachi) church. Having received the blessing of Xavier, who had prayed and planned four hundred years before for a Catholic University in the capital of Japan, Sophia University pushed ahead with a new inspiration.

