



1. What is the ceremony to commemorate the founders of Sophia?

In the Roman Catholic Church, November 2nd is called All Souls' day. This is a day set aside each year especially to pray for the dead. In Europe and North America, the sound of church bells rings quietly through the city streets all day long. The custom on that day is for the living to pray for the repose of the souls of all those who have died. This tradition began in Europe in the 11th century. The annual calendar of feast of the Roman Catholic Church fixed the date on November 2nd. The church leaders decided that this day would be a special day to recall those who had died and to pray for them.

Such prayers for persons who have died would seem to be a common practice in many countries and in almost all religions. A pamphlet published by the Japanese Catholic Bishops' Conference, with the title: A Manual for baptized Catholics concerning the Dead and their Ancestors, includes the following words of explanation.

In Christianity, commemorating and respecting the dead and praying for them, play a central role. Such prayers include prayers offered not only for one's relatives and friends and for others who have some personal connection with each of us; we believe that it is also very important to pray for deceased persons who have no direct relation with us. (omission) In accord with this wide-ranging tradition, the Catholic Church adopts the traditions of each country and cultural area and presents opportunities to recall the dead each year. (omission) Following this pattern, the Catholic Church in Japan wants to put into practice suitable ceremonies that honor the dead based on the traditions that are well developed already in Japan.

Sophia University stands by such honorable traditions as well. Every year, the members of the Sophia family commemorate the faculty members, the staff members, and the students and graduates who have passed away during the previous year in the set of ceremonies called the Commemoration of our Founders. During these ceremonies, we living Sophians recall and praise the wonderful acts of service performed by our



This picture shows the commemorative Mass celebrated in the old wooden St. Ignatius Church in 1969.

academic ancestors, who created the bases for the development of the Sophia University of today. The ceremonies create an opportunity to recall and benefit from the plans and dreams of those who worked at Sophia before us. We push back the time boundary of history to include the spirit of Francis Xavier, who had a long-cherished dream to found an institute of higher learning in the capital of Japan. We continue by honoring in a special way the first president of Sophia University, Hermann Hoffmann, who made Xavier's dream come true. We honor as well all those men and women of wisdom who laid the foundations for today's Sophia. This is the ceremony where we can recall their activities and pray that they can enjoy even higher places in God's Kingdom.

2. The origins of this ceremony

The January 1937 issue of the Sophia Newsletter contains a long article that gives concrete details of the circumstances of the early ceremonies. The Alumni Support Association created this Sophia Newsletter for distribution to its members. It generally

contained details of news related to the university and allowed the members to stay in mutual contact. In this article, the authors describe events that took place on June 23rd, 1935. This date was the fifth anniversary of the death of Fr. Joseph Dahlmann, one of the Jesuit priests who helped to found Sophia. On that day, many faculty and staff members, along with current students and graduates of the Faculty of Humanities, made a special trip to the Catholic Cemetery in Fuchu. There they held a memorial service for Father Dahlmann, in which they included other deceased professors, including Mizuno Hantaroo and Fr. Mark McNeal. On this occasion, a previous proposal was resubmitted to hold an annual event to commemorate the deaths of many who had worked very hard at Sophia. In autumn of 1935 on November 2nd, teachers and staff members and students gathered in the school auditorium in the Building Number One for a commemorative ceremony. This was the start of the Founders' Commemoration Ceremony that is now held every year.

This ceremony was unavoidably suspended during the period of the Pacific War. It was started again in 1950. A committee to promote the welfare of Sophia student activities was started about this time. The members decided to center many such activities in a University Festival (now called the Sophia Festival) to be held in November. The



This is a picture taken at the funeral of Father Joseph Dahlmann, who played a major role in the foundation of Sophia University. He died on June 23rd, 1930. He was the first Jesuit to be interred in a grave at the Catholic Cemetery in Fuchu. His remains were later transferred to the crypt under the main St. Ignatius church.

Founders' Commemoration was included in these events. The plan was that these festival events would clearly highlight the special characteristics of Sophia University. In the years that followed, according to the Sophia Newspaper, there were years when the Festival was cancelled, and years when the Founders' Commemoration ceremonies were shifted to the national holiday on November 3rd. Now the ceremony is fixed as an annual event to be held on November 2nd. Among the current students, the Association of Catholic Students takes much of the leadership. Since the date is in the middle of the Sophia Festival, the managing committee for this festival is much involved. For the memorial Mass for the deceased members of the Sophia family, the Sophia Choir and the Amadeus Chorus are quite important.

3. The Location of the Memorial Mass and some related ceremonies

During the Catholic Mass celebrated of the Founders' Commemoration, prayers are offered that the deceased may participate in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and will participate more fully in eternal life. In his sermon during the Mass held in 2011, Father Masashi Masuda



This picture shows the 1969 ceremony of presenting flowers in front of the bust of Fr. Hoffmann, the first president.

suggested that we pray not only for the members of the Sophia family who had passed away, but that we include in our prayers the victims of the earthquake and tsunami disasters in east Japan in March, 2011.

The location of this Memorial Mass has moved among various suitably sized buildings. Sometimes we used the old wooden St. Ignatius Church, built in 1949. Sometimes we used the on-campus Kulturheim chapel. Occasionally the auditorium of Building

Number 10 was available. From 1999, the Chapel of Mary in the redesigned St. Ignatius property has been used; many of the decorations in this chapel come from the earlier wooden church. At the end of the Mass each year, a bouquet of flowers is placed in front of a picture of the first president. At times, the ceremonies have



This picture shows the commemorative Mass celebrated in the Kulturheim chapel in 1970 or so.

included placing a wreath of flowers in front of the bust of Fr. Hoffmann near Building Number 2.



This picture shows the commemorative Mass in 2010, celebrated in the Chapel of Mary within the St. Ignatius complex. The picture of Fr. Hoffmann is in the center in front of the altar, with pictures on either side of the faculty members, staff members, and students who had died during the previous year. One can catch the solemnity of the ceremony from the picture.