

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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Upon Inauguration of New Primate of NSKK

The Most Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu

Peace of the Lord be always with you.

At the 56th General Synod of Nippon Sei Ko Kai held in Tokyo from 23rd to 25th of May, 2006, I was elected Primate of NSKK. I felt that I had to accept this new assignment solemnly, because the General Synod had chosen me and behind the process of election should be prayers of many people in the NSKK. The Lord knows that I am only a trifle instrument, I cannot do anything but to rely on Him, who, I believe, will lead me to the right direction and help me with my new assignment. At the same time I trust all the bishops of NSKK who constitute the House of Bishops would collaborate with me in this new task ahead.

I am now wondering what are required for bishop or primate? If a political skill or financial foresight is the major requirement, or profound knowledge or excellent leadership is required, then, I regret to say I am not the qualified one. I am well aware that I am neither a politician nor economist, neither a theologian nor charismatic leader. I do not have such capacity or skill. However, even so, I have long been working as an ordained priest and bishop of the Holy Church.

I am always enjoying myself being a clergy of the NSKK. I attend the services, say prayers, listen to the Holy Scripture, and meet with church members and other people. These have given me the significance of life and encourage me tremendously. As a diocesan bishop I make Episcopal visits to each church in the diocese, and every time I do it, I have graceful time at the worship with parishioners, and enjoy meeting, talking and eating together with them. Besides the office of the diocesan, I am working also as a priest-in-charge at several churches and a chaplain to the kindergarten. I am in particular fortunate that even now I am given occasions to visit the sick at home or hospital to hold the Eucharist by their bedside, to attend the persons' deathbed, to keep company with little children and their parents at the kindergarten. On several occasions, I laugh together, weep together, worry together, and say prayer together. I strongly feel that for me being a bishop or primate is, first of all, to live as a priest among the people who are in need of pastoral care.

I am well aware that NSKK is now confronted by several serious problems. It is true that in a long history, the Christian church has by no means been smooth sailing. It is of course necessary to have a sense of crisis. Nevertheless, we must not be too pessimistic or to make undue haste. We know there is hope in Christ, who has power to solve any problem. The primary job for me is to pray, listen to the words of God, and attend the services, which should make us to ascertain the will of God and be confident to live our life.

It seems that the Anglican Churches worldwide are in a state of confusion. We all know that there are many conflicts. In admitting our fault that in the past we as the church had actively participated in the war of aggression, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, even though a small church in Japan and in the Anglican Communion, has set a series of mission goal, that is, NSKK should be the church which walk together with the people marginalized, discriminated, and deprived of their dignity or human rights in the society. As Primate of NSKK, I do hope that NSKK should continuously proceed to become such church as walking and working together with those people as an instrument of peace and reconciliation in the world.

NSKK the 56th General Synod Report

N (Nippon) S(Sei) K(Ko) K(Kai) / Anglican Church in Japan

Paul Ryuichi Sakata, Secretary of NSKK

NSKK General Synod was held from May 23rd to May 25th at St. Barnaba's Church, Ushigome, Tokyo Diocese. General Synod is held every two years, the most authoritative decision-making body in NSKK, consists of 55 assembly members within 11 Bishops of 11 Dioceses, 2 clergies and 2 Lay-persons of each 11 Dioceses. The Synod was managed by: the Chair person was Rt. Rev. Tohru Uno, the Prime, Vice Chair was Rt. Rev. Shoji Tani, and the Chief Secretary was Rev. Nobuaki Suzuki.

The most important resolution was the issue of New Hymnbook which was approved after 47 years from present revision. The Committee has worked to revise Hymnals last 12 years. "The New Hymnbook of NSKK" will contain 580 hymns and is scheduled to be published in November, 2006.

Since Rt. Rev. James Tohru Uno, the Primate, will be retiring in two years, the Synod has elected Rt. Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu as the succeeding Primate and installation ceremony of the Primate was held on May 25th, 2006.

During the Synod, the proposals discussed and approved are mainly as follows:

(1) A partial amendment of election method of bishops.

1. New system will provide more personal information regarding the Bishop candidates before Election Day.
2. When the incoming Bishop is elected, he will also be consecrated immediately.
3. Early retirement of Diocese Bishop was more clearly defined.

- (2) A partial revision of Church Calendar in Prayer Book was approved.
- (3) Implementation of 150th Anniversary Service for NSKK will be held in 2009.
- (4) Review and finalize the Psalms used in Holy Communion.
- (5) Approved a partial amendment of The Apostles' Creed in Prayer book.
- (6) Establish new committees or organizations as follows:
 1. A special committee concerning issues and problems of female priests.
 2. Appoint the person in charge for the matters concerning women.
 3. Promote and encourage further cooperative work between Dioceses.
 4. Install a preventive system for sexual harassment and begin a model counseling system.
- (7) Approved the budget and the statement of NSKK province accounts.

The Synod also expressed these resolutions against problems as follows, and sent written resolutions with requests to the authorities.

- (1) Against the revision of the fundamental Law of Education.
- (2) Will send a written request concerning "Sayama" case to Tokyo High Court and Tokyo District Public Prosecutors' office.
- (3) Against a new construction plan of US military base in Henoko, Okinawa, and demand reduction of US military base in Japan.

"Send Down the Holy Spirit on Your Servant"

Some Thoughts on Being Ordained a Deacon in the NSKK

The Rev. Kevin Seaver

Kevin Seaver was ordained as a deacon on June 4, 2006 at St. Andrew's Cathedral in the Diocese of Tokyo. He works as a curate at St. Stephen's Church in Tokyo and teaches New Testament at St. Hilda's Girls School. An American, he has lived in Japan for nearly 15 years, apart from three years of study at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia (USA). With his wife, Kumiko, he has three children: Isaac (6), Augustine (2), and Miriam (born June 1, 2006). The title of this article comes from the Ordination of Deacons (NSKK 1990 Book of Common Prayer, page 481). These words accompany the laying on of the bishop's hands.

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I was simply delighted that Pentecost was the day chosen for my ordination as a deacon. As things turned out, there was a downside to the timing: My wife, who has walked patiently and graciously with me all this time, was not able to attend. I thought she had a pretty good excuse, though. Instead of being at the cathedral, she was in hospital with our third child, who was born just four days earlier! Thanks be to God! (Now, whether my getting ordained was a good enough excuse for not being at the hospital with my daughter is a different question altogether!)

At any rate, I could not have been more pleased with the ordination date. And that is because, in the more than five years since I first started out on the path toward ordained

ministry in the NSKK, I have grown absolutely certain of one thing: Just as was true on that very first Pentecost, I am convinced that I, that all of God's people in Japan, desperately need to be filled and renewed by God's Holy Spirit.

Before Pentecost, the disciples had a close relationship with Jesus. They knew their Bibles well. They were faithful in worship. They had personally encountered the loving-kindness of God in Christ. Moreover, they had witnessed firsthand the history-altering event of Christ's resurrection.

And yet, something was lacking. They were still not ready. They had been commanded by their Lord Jesus to "Go forth and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:18), but they still did not have what was needed to carry out that command.

It was in the midst of this situation that the promised Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. By the Holy Spirit, they knew in their bodies the abundant life that Christ died to make possible. They were swept up into the eternal blaze of the communion of love between the Father and the Son. By the Spirit, the disciples experienced a really experienced for the first time a that they were indeed surrounded on all sides and held up by the gracious provision and leading of Christ.

Starting that day, when the Holy Spirit came to them in power, the disciples were truly united in heart and purpose as co-laborers with their Lord Jesus. They went out and changed the world.

In the days leading up to the ordination, I prayed hard that God would work through this time of worship to renew our church. I prayed: Please, Lord, on that day fill me, fill each one of us with your Holy Spirit. Give us the power and the courage and the wisdom to go out as your co-laborers into a nation that is desperate to know your saving grace.

On the day of the ordination, more than 200 people gathered together in worship at the cathedral. The presence of so many brothers and sisters in Christ was greatly encouraging to me at the outset of this new stage in my service as a Christian. Especially during the hymns and during communion, I looked out at all those gathered, and pictured in my mind, too, the many more brothers and sisters throughout Japan, and I thought: Yes, it is possible for us all to be truly united in heart and purpose as co-laborers with our Lord Jesus in this place. Lord, make it so.

My prayers for renewal were by no means confined to the day of the ordination. I constantly ask God for the help of his Holy Spirit. And I continue to pray both for the grace to join with my fellow Anglicans in Japan to seek what is pleasing in God's eyes, and for the boldness to go out and do it.

Members of the English Version of NSKK Newsletter, Autumn 2006 are: as follows:
Ms. Kazuko Takeda, Ms. Toshiko Yoshimura, Mr. Shinya Yawata.
Editor-in-Chief: Hajime Suzuki