

WE WORSHIP ALL AROUND THE WORLD

*the last in a series of reflections by Reiko Simmons
celebrating Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month*

May 14th, 2022 was our last Parish School of Religion class for this school year. Coincidentally, the topic of our 4th to 6th grade class discussion was titled: *We Worship All Around the World*.

The cover of the Gospel Weeklies booklet featured the total number of Catholics in the world. The number is one billion, three hundred twenty nine million (1,329,000,000). I could not refrain from asking the following questions: 1) How did our number get so big? 2) Jesus started to spread the word with how many of his friends/disciples?

The gospel for Sunday, May 1st had to do with “Jesus Makes Breakfast for His Friends.” Our 4th to 6th grade students quickly answered who Jesus’s friends were and how they were encouraged to follow Jesus’s direction to catch fish. They also understood the answer to the question, “Jesus wanted his friends to fish for what?”

Next, we looked at a map of the Mediterranean Sea, also in the same booklet, which showed cartoons of disciples traveling to various cities and countries around the Mediterranean. The cartoon showed the following information:

MEN WHO TRAVELED TO CATCH FISH					
WHO:	Peter	Philip	Paul		
WHEN:	AD 36	AD 36	AD 46-48	AD 49-52	AD 53-57
BIBLE:	Acts 10: 1-33	Acts 8: 26-40	Acts 14: 8-20	Acts 16: 16-40	Acts 20: 7-12

Each cartoon of the disciples depicted them wearing diverse colors of robes and scrolls which indicated the cities they visited. Of course, we pinpointed the cities and the countries they stayed and what they taught in these locations according to the Bible.

I am afraid we skipped several decades from this point and looked at the images of the globe in the following order: Mediterranean (AD 36); Europe (AD 50s); Americas (1500-1600s); Asia (1600s).

Finally, we emphasized: 1) how the WORD spread to the other parts of the world, 2) it took over 2,000 years for the GOOD NEWS to reach all these parts of the WORLD, and 3) how this information related to the MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

We finished with the idea that we are all encouraged to spread the WORD!

As another PSR school year ends, I hope we can encourage our youth to continue this spread!

In a previous essay, I wrote about how several religions existed in our daily lives in Japan. Soon after I submitted it to Father David, I heard from him. He was asking if I am able to send him my first communion picture. It took me about a week to look among my old photos to find that particular picture. In the meantime, I came up with an idea! For this last essay, I decided to present pictures associated with the information I included in previous submissions.

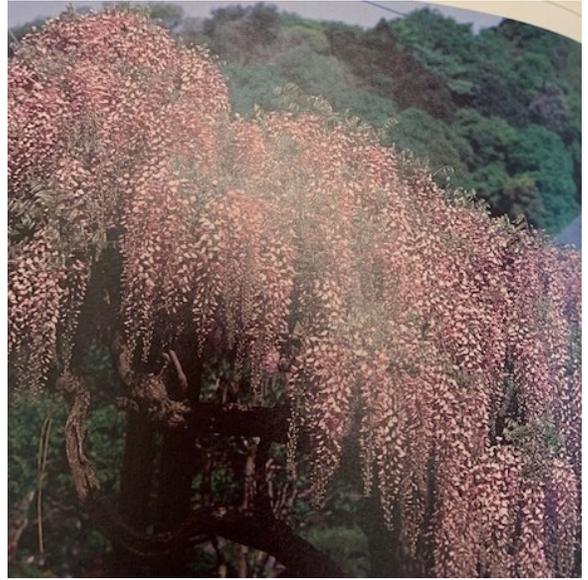
In closing, I wish to repeat my statement and say, “We were very fortunate to live our everyday lives at a time and in a part of the world where religious harmony was respected!”

EDITOR’S NOTE:

The following page reproduces several photographs submitted by Reiko Simmons to illustrate the blessings of cultural diversity and religious harmony she references throughout her essays.



This picture represents the RED GATE of a famous shrine from my hometown of Kamakura. It is the city where the first Shogun built his base with estate and the shrine. Several times a year there are festivals when visitors will congregate.



The second picture shows Wisteria trees in full Bloom at a temple called Kobakkuji.



Children's Choir at a Catholic Church near my hometown.



Seisen Catholic Elementary School Graduation



The photo features my mother's sister, Sister Elizabeth (taller nun), her friend, my other aunt (back row middle), my sister-in-law, and my niece.



My First Communion