

Although it is still quite early, I would like to offer Christmas greetings to all of you. At the same time, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of you for your involvement in the educational mission in all of the individual schools of the Nanzan School Corporation. At a time when the coronavirus pandemic shows no signs of coming to an end, I am very grateful for your efforts this past year in dealing with the impact of the pandemic and making the safety of our students and pupils the top priority.

I think you all probably remember Dr. Nakamura Tetsu, a doctor associated with the NGO “Peshawar-kai,” who was shot and killed by an armed group in Afghanistan on 4 December 2019. Once, in 2000, Dr. Nakamura gave a talk at Nanzan Boys’ High School. A documentary film portraying his activities entitled “Kōya ni kibō no hi wo tomosu” [Lighting a fire of hope in the wilderness] was produced this year.

That a person who dedicated himself so generously to the people of Afghanistan should die in such a way fills me with great sadness and bewilderment. At the same time, however, we know that what he began did not end with his death. His endeavors have been taken up and carried on by others.

Dr. Nakamura is said to have had two mottoes. One was “Be helpful to someone or something.” The other was “Even if betrayed, do not respond with betrayal.” These are simple words, but in the face of the present state of affairs in the world, we may feel that especially the second motto is very difficult to put into practice. But we should also keep in mind that difficult does not mean impossible.

No matter how tragic the circumstances of the world may be, Christmas is still celebrated every year. We celebrate Christmas in order to “keep the fire of hope burning” no matter how difficult the situation. The Gospel of John, which is read at Mass on Christmas Day (25 December) begins with the following words: “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God. … There was life in the Word. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.” In the next passage, the verb suddenly switches to the present tense: “The light shines in the darkness.” I find the use of the present tense here very reassuring. The use of the present tense gives us hope and urges us to action.

Your daily work and unsung toil carry on this light of Christ in the here and now. I would like to thank all of you again for your involvement and support of Nanzan School Corporation. As we celebrate Christmas, let us pray together for real peace in the world.

MERRY CHRISTMAS !

*Hideaki Ichise, SVD.*

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of Directors  
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