

AN OPEN LETTER  
(Translation)

May 23, 2013

The Most Reverend Leo Jun Ikenaga S.J.,  
Archbishop of Osaka  
2-24-22, Tamatsukuri, Chuo-Ku,  
Osaka 540-0004  
Japan

Your Excellency,

Subject: The article in the Yomiuri Shimbun of Feb. 21, 2013 and  
the one in the Catholic Weekly Online of Apr. 11, 2013

First of all, we wish to let Your Excellency know that all of us are practicing Catholics. We were consternated by Your Excellency's following statement in an article captioned "The Most Reverend Leo Jun Ikenaga, Archbishop of Osaka, speaks" in the Yomiuri Shimbun evening edition of February 21, 2013: "Last summer, when I received an invitation letter to a mass in the Netherlands on the occasion of 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Martyrdom of Bishop Frans Schraven and Companions by Japanese Army in China in 1937, I wrote a letter in response to it apologizing for the atrocity and praising the heroic act of the deceased." and "According to that letter, the Bishop is said to have been burnt to death after he refused to hand over 200 Chinese women taking refuge in nearby women's monastery as comfort women." Your Excellency was quoted to have said, "I frankly accept the fact even if it is disgraceful."

According to the Catholic Weekly Online of April 11, 2013, "a beatification process has been inaugurated in the Netherlands for the bishop and his companions who were said to have been murdered by Japanese Army in China during the World War II" and "the Reverend Masakatsu Fukamizu (Tokyo Archdiocese) took part in the commemorating mass. During that mass, the Reverend Fukamizu read out the Statement signed by the Most Reverend Leo Jun Ikenaga, the president of Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan,

expressing regrets and an apology for the incident involving Japan and conveying his intention of praying for the beatification process in progress.”

Concerning these reports, we would like to make the following 5 items of requests to Your Excellency:

1. We would request Your Excellency to make public the original Japanese version of the letter apologizing for the atrocity of Japanese Army and praising the heroic act of the deceased. (We assume that the English version is: <http://www.mgrschraven.nl/PDF/Abp.Japanese%20Message%20in%20English.pdf> Is it correct? If not, we would request for its English version as well. )
2. We would request Your Excellency to make public the integral text of “the invitation letter to the mass in the Netherlands on the occasion of 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Martyrdom of Bishop Frans Schraven and Companions by Japanese Army in China in the year of 1937”, to which Your Excellency wrote the above mentioned letter in response.
3. We would request Your Excellency to make public the integral text of the Statement from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, signed by Your Excellency, read out by the Reverend Fukamizu on Your Excellency’s behalf in the Netherlands on October 14, 2012, as well as its Japanese version.
4. Are both documents, i.e. Your Excellency’s letter in response to the invitation to the said mass and the Statement from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan signed by Your Excellency, supported by all or the majority of the bishops of Japan? We would like to know.
5. By the very fact that Your Excellency apologized for the atrocity of Japanese Army, Your Excellency is supposed to have endorsed the veracity of the information provided with the invitation letter in question. For what reason have Your Excellency done so? We would request Your Excellency to provide us with the proof.

Consternated by these reports, we have collected and are collecting the newspaper articles and other information of those days concerning the martyrdom. These will be made public if necessary.

This open letter will be displayed on the Web. Its URL is as follows. We would request Your Excellency to confirm.

<http://www.yokohama-yamate.jp/ksy/openletter2013.05.23.html>

We would request for Your Excellency's permission to display alongside all the responses for our requests as they are.

We are expecting to receive the responses to our 5 items of requests within 2 weeks after Your Excellency will have received this letter. In the case of no reaction, we would assume either that Your Excellency has deemed it unnecessary to respond or that Your Excellency has no proof to back up the veracity of the information provided with the invitation letter in question.

As Your Excellency may be well aware, many people including well-known politicians have already been questioning the attitude of the Catholic Church of Japan concerning this matter. However, we would like to draw Your Excellency's attention to the fact that we are acting on our own independent of other groups or individuals. We intend to send the copies of this letter to the following parties:

1. All the bishops of the Catholic Church in Japan
2. H.E. Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Joseph Chennoth
3. The Reverend Masakatu Fukamizu
4. Mr. Kawagoe, the editor in chief of the Catholic Weekly
5. Other Catholic priests and Catholic laymen and laywomen
6. The Yomiuri Shimbun and several journalists

We are conducting in this obtrusive way to find out the truth about this matter because we do not wish the Catholic Church of Japan to be misunderstood by the general public in any way.

