


# A New Church in the Rising Sun: Saint Francis Xavier. Father Costantino Ruggeri, arch. Luigi Leoni

*Una nueva iglesia en el Sol Naciente: San Francisco Javier. Padre Costantino Ruggeri, arq. Luigi Leoni*

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## ABSTRACT

Among the wealth of buildings consecrated to the Shinto religion, Yamaguchi has a Christian place of worship: the Sanctuary of Saint Francis Xavier. The lot chosen is the same on which the previous church stood, symbol of the city and destroyed by a fire in 1991. Consonances and relations could be found with spaces that have wished to express with force the tension towards the Absolute not only in our Western world but also in the spaces of Oriental architecture, in particular Japanese, where the striving towards that spoliation and essentialness of things that is, a bottom, a thirst for truth is perceived. Finally, our effort had as its aim to make the architecture speak a universal language of the hearth of man, rapt to the infinite desire to experience beauty and to find himself once again within it to have an authentic experience of interior joy.

## KEYWORDS

Religious Architecture, Japan, Yamaguchi, Saint Francis Xavier, Costantino Ruggeri.

## RESUMEN

Entre la riqueza de los edificios consagrados a la religión sintoísta, Yamaguchi tiene un lugar de culto cristiano: el santuario de San Francisco Javier. El solar elegido es el mismo sobre el que se erigía la iglesia anterior, símbolo de la ciudad y destruida por un incendio en 1991. Se han podido encontrar consonancias y relaciones con espacios que han querido expresar con fuerza la tensión hacia el Absoluto no solo en nuestro mundo occidental sino también en los espacios de la arquitectura oriental, en particular japonesa, donde se lucha hacia ese exopolio y esencialidad de las cosas que es, un fondo, se percibe una sed de verdad. Finalmente, nuestro esfuerzo tuvo como objetivo hacer que la arquitectura hable un lenguaje universal del corazón del hombre, absorto en el deseo infinito de experimentar la belleza y encontrarse una vez más dentro de ella para tener una auténtica experiencia de alegría interior.

## PALABRAS CLAVE

Arquitectura religiosa, Japón, Yamaguchi, San Francisco Javier, Costantino Ruggeri.

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Fig. 01. Basilica of the Twenty-Six Holy Martyrs of Japan (Ôura church), Nagasaki, 1864.

## INTRODUCTION

In Japan Christianity has its beginning with the preaching of the Jesuit Saint Francis Xavier, in the sixteenth century. In August 1549 he landed on the island of Kyūshū, the southernmost of the four large islands that make up the Japanese archipelago, to subsequently reach the island of Honshū, where he founded a community in Yamaguchi. It can be assumed that the spread of the Gospel proclamation initially took place in private houses, as it did in the early times of Christianity two thousand years ago.

The Italian Jesuit Valignano came to proclaim the Gospel after St. Francis Xavier. During the sixteenth century the Catholic community grew to 300,000 Christians, but, at the end of that century, a violent persecution exploded, and many priests and lay people were martyred. It was feared that evangelization would undermine the military structure of Japanese society and, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Catholic religion was banned. The first churches built were demolished, and nowadays there are no trace. For two and a half centuries, until the mid-nineteenth century, only trade was able to connect Europe and Japan. The port of Nagasaki, its surroundings, and the islands off the coast (Hirado, Narushima, Iki) offered refuge to the few surviving Christians who remained hidden, passing down their faith from father to son without priests and churches.

Only in the nineteenth century, with new way of foreign relations, many missionaries of Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox faith arrived. Christianity entered in the country through trade and embassy routes, landing in the ports of Kobe and Yokohama. Pope Pius IX in 1862 canonized the twenty-six Christians martyred in Nagasaki in 1597 and in 1863 French missionaries built a church in their memory: the Church of Ôura (Fig. 01). Ôura Cathedral is Japan's oldest Gothic-style wooden architectural work. It was conceived by the French missionary Furet. The construction, finished at the end of 1864, was supervised by the master carpenter Koyama Hideoshin and the church officially opened for worship the following year. In March 1865, the faith of the Christians of Urakami was officially proclaimed, who until then had secretly professed it, after 250 years of bitter persecution. In 1933 it was designated a national treasure but during the Second World War it was partially damaged due to the atomic bombing. Later restored, in 1953 it obtained the recognition as the oldest church in Japan. In 2018, this church was designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

In 1888 the right to freedom of worship was recognized, further extended in 1899 as the right to promote one's own religious faith and to build sacred buildings. European models were an inspiration for the new churches with their own accentuations of national



Fig. 02. Former Gorin church, Warabicho, Goto, Nagasaki, 1881.

Fig. 03. Kuroshima church, Kuroshima-cho, Sasebo City, Nagasaki, 1902.

Fig. 04. Nokubi church, Nozakigo, Ojika, Nagasaki, 1908.

derivation, according to the origin of the missionaries, but also for the profound transformations that affected Japan from the end of the nineteenth century. There was a tendency to transport prepackaged projects in Europe to mission countries; at the end of the nineteenth century, neo-Gothic and neo-Romanesque styles as well as neoclassicism were prevailing in Europe. In every country of the world, in places of Christian missions there are proliferating examples that refer to these styles in various ways.

There are the churches of Nagasaki Prefecture among the many churches testifying the reopening to the cult of the Christian faith: the wooden Gorin church from 1881, the brick Kuroshima church from 1902, with the same material of the Nokubi church from 1908 (Fig. 02-04).

On June 30, 2018, thanking UNESCO for being admitted to the World Heritage List, the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe publicly stated that hidden Christian sites «convey the form of a faith that is unique to Japan and that they truly are unparalleled in the world as a world heritage site» (Unesco 2018).

Father Costantino Ruggeri in his text contained in the volume *Spazi di Luce* (1995), referring to a trip around the world in 1967, denounces the presence of projects without reference to the culture and traditions of the mission places where churches are built for the new communities converted to Christianity.

Furthermore, from an historical point of view, at the end of the 19th century, while in the West the preciousness of the Chinese and Japanese art repertoire was being discovered, in Japan with the revolution started by the young emperor Meiji, Western architecture was introduced under an extended program of modernization of national policy. However, other decades had to pass before the new languages of contemporary architecture that were affirmed in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century were acquired, far from the revisitation of the styles of the past. After the Second World War, Japan experienced an even deeper social transformation, welcoming every contribution from the Western world with the assumption of new values and expressions in every field, including contemporary architecture.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 05. Kenzo Tange, St. Mary's Cathedral, Tokyo, 1961-64.

## THE CATHEDRAL BY KENZO TANGE

The example of Kenzo Tange's Tokyo Cathedral dedicated to Santa Maria is significant (Fig. 05).

In 1945 the Catholic St. Mary's Cathedral, erected in 1889 in the Bunkyo-Ku district of Tokyo, was destroyed because of military action. Sixteen years later (1961) there was a competition for a new church, and this was won by Kenzo Tange, who came out ahead of such leading participants as Kunio Mayekawa and Yoshiro Taniguchi. The new cathedral was finished between 1963 and 1964, in association with the consultant Wilhelm Schlombs of the Cologne Archdiocese and the engineer Yoshikatsu Tsuboi, who has also assisted Tange on so many other projects. Tange was also aided by the Swiss architect Max Lechner of Zurich.

After lengthy and careful study, it was decided to build the church, with a seating capacity of around 1500, on a cruciform plan. On this plan the diagonally ascending walls are placed consisting of eight hyperbolic paraboloids. They open out upwards in the shape of a cross of light. This symbolic roof effect is balanced by the four vertical strip windows on the four corners of the church.

The interior of the cathedral has been left in rough concrete. The external skin of the main church building consists of stainless steel, which gives the edifice its radiant effect. Above all in comparison with the Olympic arena's, created in Tokyo at the same time, it is apparent, nevertheless, how important it is to achieve congruence of problem and resolution (Tange and Kultermann 1970).<sup>2</sup>

### THREE CHURCHES BY TADAO ANDO

It is significant to recall the sacred architecture designed by Tadao Ando in recent times in various places in Japan. Two of these architectures are on the island of Honshû and one on the northern island of Hokkaido.

The three realizations of sacred spaces were presented in 1996 at the competition organized by Father Costantino Ruggeri in Pavia: the International Prize for Sacred Architecture, established with the aim of carrying out an awareness and promotion action in the field of the *church built*.

The first prize, in 1996, was awarded to the architect Tadao Ando with the following motivation:

His religious architecture —the chapel on Mount Rokko at Kobe (1985-86), the water chapel at Tomamu (1985-88), the church of light at Ibaraki— is marked by a clear simplicity of form, by purity of line, and by a mystical intensity, elements which are essential for the characterization of any space as sacred. The poetic emotion which distinguishes Tadao Ando's work communicates a sense of the presence of the Spirit of God, achieved by the sparing and intelligent use of the relations between space, surfaces and light. A further significant source of emotion is the way in which the landscape in his work —natural elements like plants, the sky and water— plays a constructive, poetical role in the constitution of the sacred space, projecting an architectural statement onto a cosmic plane (Ruggeri et al 1996, 11).

This International Prize for Sacred Architecture, of 300 million Italian lire, pays tribute to the artistic validity of Tadao Ando's sacred spaces, and recognizes that they can give to the interior act of prayer the visible form of truth.<sup>3</sup>

The overall aim of this Award is to offer models for architectural research, in the belief that the principles of simplicity, discipline and purity of form are primary values for which there is no substitute (Ruggeri et al 1996).

The architect Giorgio Trebbi, in the year in which the award was awarded, expresses himself as follows on the review *L'Architettura*:

In its mystery, a church by Tadao Ando is a masterpiece of eloquent silence, and it tells us a great deal more than any lengthy, wordy discourse could ever encompass. Nothing in his churches is ephemeral. An allusion to the fascination of mystery in this 'essential' architecture of the sacred seems to breathe life once more into the message of St. Francis. (...) Empty space is thus freed from any possible element of distraction; it is even endowed with an admirably controlled poetical force of its own which brings to mind Le Corbusier's definition, 'space ineffable' (Ruggeri et al 1996, 14).

This small chapel is built on a grassy slope near the summit of Mount Rokko. It consists of the chapel itself, with its belltower, and a colonnade which links them to the wall that marks them off from the natural world of their surroundings. The colonnade is flanked with walls of frosted glass, and the last bay of its structure affords a spectacular view over the forest, with the ocean visible in the distance. Sunlight, softened as it is filtered uniformly through the frosted glass, fills the long, narrow space of the colonnade. After moving through this gallery of light, one enters the chapel, and here the orientation of the light has, by contrast, been carefully oriented. The theme of this chapel is thus a passage from light to shade, a contrast between clarity and darkness. The pilaster and beam which on the left intersect the window cast on the floor a well-defined cross-shaped shadow. The cast-iron seating here has been designed especially (Ruggeri et al 1996).

The chapel on the water in Tomamu is located on the northernmost island of the Japanese archipelago. The latitude is almost like that of northern Italy, but the surrounding nature and climate point towards countries that refer to northern Europe. This can be understood for the island's protrusion towards the

ocean open to all the strongest disturbances. The environment is full of suggestions, like everything wrapped in an enchanted atmosphere.

The Chapel on the Water is located on a plain in the middle of mountains northeast of the Yubari Range in Okkaido. The area is covered with snow from December to April and becomes a beautiful white expanse. Water has been diverted from a nearby river, and an artificial lake of 90 x 45 m. has been created. The depth of the artificial lake was carefully set so that the surface of the water would be subtly affected by the wind, and even a light breeze would cause ripples.

Two squares, one 10 m. on each side and the other 15 m., overlap in plan and take the pond. Wrapped around them is a freestanding Lshaped concrete wall. Walking along the outside of the long leg of the wall, one cannot see the artificial lake. It is only when one turns 180° at an opening cut out at the end of the wall that one sees the pond for the first time. With the pond in view, one climbs a gentle slope and reaches an approach area surrounded on four sides by glass. This is a box of light, and under the sky stand four separate crosses. The glass frames the blue sky and directs one's vision toward it. One is enveloped in natural light which evokes the solemnity of the occasion. From there one descends a curving, darkened stairway leading to the chapel. The pond is spread before one's eyes, and on the water is a cross. A single line divides Earth and Heaven, the profane and the sacred.

The glazed side of the chapel facing the pond can be entirely opened, bringing one into direct contact with nature... the rustling of leaves, the sound of water, and the song of birds... sounds which make one more conscious of the overall tranquility. Integrated with nature, one confronts oneself. The light and the water create diverse melodies and will continue to sing for years to come (Dal Co 1994).

The other famous chapel of Tadao Ando is in Ibaraki. The same architect expresses himself in this way when speaking of this evangelical parish church:

During the process of designing several chapels, I have naturally thought about the nature of sacred space and what it means to me. In the West, a

sacred space is transcendental. However, I believe that a sacred space must be related in some way to nature, which has nothing to do with Japanese animism or pantheism. I also believe that my perception of nature is different from that of nature-as-is. For me, the nature that a sacred space must relate to is a man-made nature, or rather an architecturalized nature. I believe that when greenery, water, light, or wind is abstracted from nature-as-is according to man's will, it approaches the sacred (Ruggeri et al 1996, 38).

The Chapel of the Light represents an effort to architecturalize or abstract natural light. Space is nearly surrounded by substantial concrete walls. Inside is true darkness, in which floats a cross of light. That is all there is. Outdoor light that has been architecturalized and rendered abstract by the opening in the wall imparts tension to the space and renders it sacred.

#### THE NEW SANCTUARY OF SAN FRANCESCO XAVIER IN YAMAGUCHI

In 1952, on the 400th anniversary of the death of St. Francis Xavier, the church dedicated to him was built in Yamaguchi. In 1991 a violent night fire destroyed the Jesuit church built in Yamaguchi on the hill of Kameyama overlooking this city (Fig. 06).

It was designed by a Jesuit priest in a neoclassical style. The external walls were covered with stone, but the structure in elevation and the roof were made of wood; the fire devoured columns and roof beams in a short time, before the firefighters arrived from their barracks, located right at the foot of the hill. To the visitors of the sanctuary, only rubble appeared that hinted at how the ecclesial hall was developed.

The church, located in an eminent position in the city panorama, with two bell towers rising into the sky, was become the undisputed symbol of Yamaguchi, to underline how was important, after 500 years, the mission started by St. Francis Xavier in this distant land of the East for brotherhood between peoples.

In the nineties of the last century the superior of the Jesuits was Father Domenico Vitali. Born in Marche (a region of Italy), his vocation to the priest-



Fig. 06. St. Francis Xavier pre-existing church, Yamaguchi, 1952.  
Fig. 07. Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, St. Francis Xavier church, Yamaguchi, 1993-98.



hood in the Society of Jesus had grown in him fascinated by the figure of Father Matteo Ricci, born in Macerata and a missionary in China in the sixteenth century. Father Vitali's purpose was precisely to follow in the footsteps of his countryman, who had realized the dream of St. Francis Xavier, who died on the island of Sancian, near the coast of China, opposite Canton, where he wanted to expand the proclamation of the Gospel. When he finished his studies, father Domenico's superiors chose the Japan for him. So, instead of Chinese he learned Japanese, which he speaks correctly and reads fluently.

Yamaguchi has the largest community of Catholics throughout Japan. The Jesuits are much loved and considered: they are holders of the prestigious Sophia University of Tokyo.

Once the Yamaguchi church building was demolished, the question was how to proceed. Father Domenico Vitali came in Italy; in Milan he met with the Jesuit confreres of the San Fedele Center to obtain from them the names of architects in the reconstruction of the Sanctuary.

His confreres suggested he meet Father Costantino Ruggeri and visit him in the convent of Canepanova in Pavia, where he worked. Father Vitali came, saw the studio and he could evaluate the great works in progress. In those years, Father Costantino Ruggeri was very involved in the studies and construction of two churches in Rome: the Parish Church of *S. Bernardo di Chiaravalle in Centocelle* and the new Sanctuary of the *Madonna del Divin Amore* on the Ardeatina road.

After only one talk, father Vitali was already full of enthusiasm, and he proposed to father Costantino a trip to Japan. This meeting opened the way to the Far East, a dream that I had been cultivating since my university years in which I attended the faculty of architecture in Milan, fascinated by the works of Kenzo Tange.

Yamaguchi assumed a significant cultural importance since ancient times: it is known for being the birthplace of illustrious men of culture and politics and for the numerous social and religious buildings that characterize its landscape.

There are several contemporary buildings that increased the fame of the cultural island of the Rising Sun, including the Nakahara Memorial Hall and the Akiyoshidai International Art Vita by Arata Isozaki. Among the sacred buildings of this city, capital of the prefecture in which live about 600,000 inhabitants, the Rurikoji pagoda is certainly the most representative: it rises into the sky with the superimposition of five orders of architectural elements. We were brought here by the journalists, who greeted us at the train station upon our arrival, so we could admire the masterpiece preserved in their city.

Almost all the sacred buildings belong to the Shinto religion, so we were admired that the local population had welcomed such an important architectural sign and symbol of the city, the church of St. Francis, despite its belonging to a different religious faith than the official Shinto one. There was, however, a problem: the presence of supporters for the reconstruction of the church in its original form, in the neoclassical style. This position created difficulties in the acceptance of the population our contemporary architectural proposal.

The representatives of the municipal and regional administrations welcomed our project proposal with great openness and availability, attributing great significance to the architectural features expressed, without religious preconceptions. They supported us in the development of the project, assisted by the local studio of the architect Akimoto; the development of structural studies was made by engineers from Hiroshima. We met at the headquarters of the Municipality of Yamaguchi for a final confrontation between the two factions: who supported the reconstruction and who the new project. At the end of an open and lively debate, the Commission unanimously approved the project, convinced that its realization would constitute a significant urban reference for the city (Fig. 07).

The work was entrusted to the Shimizu Corporation; the population lived through all the events in a participatory manner, from the planning, with frequent *inkai* (meetings) in the parish, to the realization of the various construction phases. The implementation steps have primarily concerned the arrangement of the places with the construction of the earth retaining of the walls;



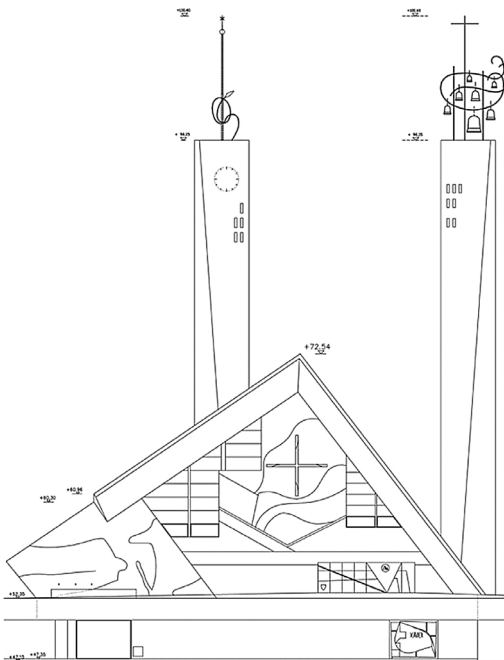
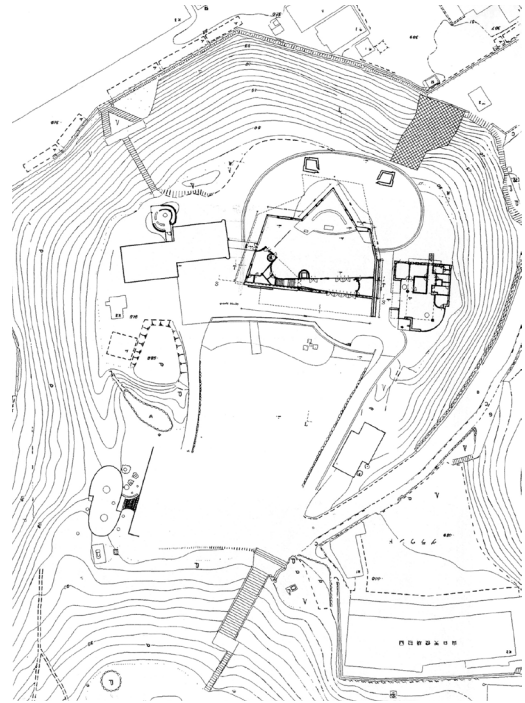
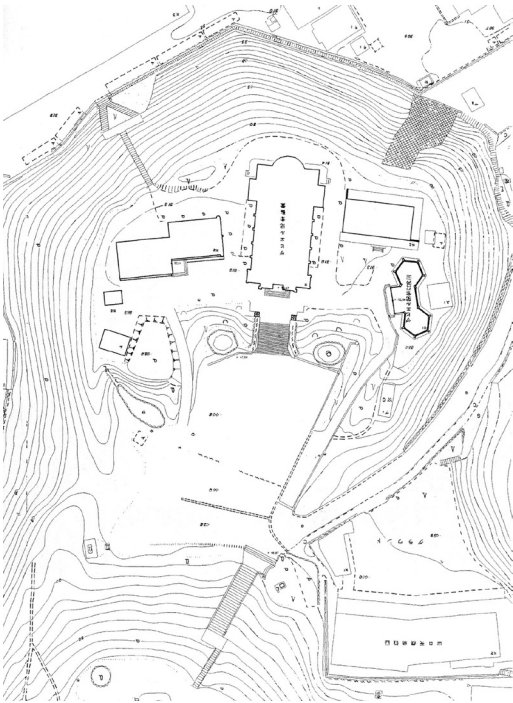


Fig. 08. Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, St. Francis Xavier church, Yamaguchi, 1993-98; ante-operam general site plan.

Fig. 09. New general site plan.

Fig. 10. Front elevation.

subsequently the construction of the central building conceived on two floors and, together, the construction of the two high towers on the edge of the hill, as sentinels on the mountain (Fig. 08-11).

At the end of the works, during the inauguration ceremony, which took place in June 1998, there was the presence of the national press and television networks. The city was all festively flagged with the presence of personalities from all over Japan.

In the numerous trips, ten in all, in which we were called to follow the work until the end of the work, we had the opportunity to visit all the places in Japan, rich in incomparable artistic beauties, from the southern island of Kyūshū, where Nagasaki is located, to numerous locations on the large island of Honshū; from the most famous Nara, Kyoto, Tokyo to locations reached on the coast of the inland sea towards Korea such as Hagi and Matsue. We also visited to the northernmost island of Hokkaido where is a significant architectural work by Tadao Ando, whom we later met in his professional studio in Osaka.

In these study trips it was easy to recognize the acceptance by Japanese culture of the forms of contemporary architecture: it does not show any distrust of what does not belong to its tradition, even though it is so rich in symbols and meanings. It is necessary to recognize in the Japanese the desire to open to the innovations brought by other populations as contributions that arise from creativity and diversity.

This phenomenon can be observed since the fifties of the last century and has led to the acceptance of the contributions that in every part of the world have determined the development and growth of contemporary architecture, which has established itself at every latitude of the planet regardless of the local cultures of each individual country, without ignoring the influence.

As in painting, the influence of Japanese tradition can also be found on new contemporary architectural expressions, such as the formal essentially of the houses and their furnishings.

These premises must be clear to those who are about to visit the new sanctuary dedicated to St. Francis Xavier, along the steep road that climbs the

hill of Kameyama, built in the exact place where the old church destroyed by fire.

After a sinuous path surrounded by nature, a grassy square appears, at the end of which there is a pool of water with jets, a symbol of the path towards purification. Side ramps to the central green lawn to look like two enveloping arms, with a first straight and then curvilinear course, and lead to the churchyard on the upper floor. The façade is marked by the presence of the two towers, placed on the sides of the main volume (Fig. 12-13).

The church, made up of white Carrara marble slabs and stained-glass windows, is configured as a precious jewel set between the green of the vegetation and the blue of the sky. It is surmounted by the slopes of the roof, which descend laterally until they almost touch the ground, and which underline its profile with its pronounced projection. The façade acts as a screen between the large terrace, bordered by a flowery parapet, and the interior. The large balcony, overlooking the grassy parvis, constitutes a sort of open-air vestibule, from which you enter the ecclesial hall, which can accommodate about 500 people.



Fig. 11. Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, St. Francis Xavier church, Yamaguchi, 1993-98; construction of the foundation for the two towers.



Fig. 12. Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, St. Francis Xavier church, Yamaguchi, 1993-98; front view.

Fig. 13. Fountain at the base of the church.

Fig. 14. Presbytery space.

Inside, the space gradually directs the attention of the faithful towards the altar. The presbytery space is slightly raised by two steps, enclosed by the triangular-shaped apse basin, and covered by a pitch of the false ceiling with sound-absorbing panels, which defines the space by descending behind the altar, up to the corner resolved with large windows in the walls (Fig. 14-15).

The altar is a monolith elaborated with sculptural forms of white statuary marble from Carrara. Behind the faithful, on the entrance wall, between large polychrome windows, there is a splendid German-made pipe organ

The stained-glass windows allow rays of colored light to reflect on the white walls, on the altar, on the gneiss floor of Favale, modulating the shades from light to dark. The structure of the complex was made of reinforced concrete, paying particular attention to the anti-seismicity of the building.

Presenting the project, the architect Santacesaria (2003), according with Engineer Ignazio Breccia Fratadocchi (2000), write:

The skillful play of volumes, the ability to pass from absolute white to a sort of chromatic exaltation, the continuous references between dazzling light and intense shadow are fundamental elements of the composite lexicon of Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, just as the harmonious insertion of the building into the environmental context constitutes the other purpose.

The design inspiration highlights consonances and relationships with spaces that wanted to strongly express the tension towards the absolute not only in our western world but also in oriental architecture, in particular Japanese, where one perceives the longing for that stripping and essentiality of the things that are basically thirsty for truth. Ultimately, the creative effort was aimed at ensuring that architecture spoke a universal language to the heart of man, enraptured by the infinite desire to experience beauty and find oneself in it to have an authentic experience of inner joy, which gives true and lasting meaning to his life and call him to be the bearer of hope in the world.

## INTERCONNECTIONS

Japanese culture, which is based on values ??and expressions typical of visions and images of the Eastern world, preserving consolidated models over the centuries, in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century opened to foreign influences, Western, which determined the acquisition of new languages.

The churches of the 19th and early 20th centuries denounce, from the point of view of the architectural layout and in the general figurativeness, the reinterpretation of the styles of the past of the Western European world, especially with a neo-Romanesque or neo-Gothic imprint, while from the second half of last century, as progressively happened in all the nations of the world, contemporary architectural research has established itself, which distances from the forms of the past to conceive new spaces and produce new visions.

Emblematic is the example of Kenzo Tange's Tokyo Cathedral, which determined a break with the past: there are no more elements or messages that somehow refer to values ??that are no longer recognized. After the Second World War we witness the celebration of the rebirth to new life, where we want to forget everything that belonged to the world that passed with the thrill of discover new horizons.

In Tadao Ando there is the perception that research is advanced with extreme courage and rigor, precluding the way to expressions that indulge in superficial reinterpretations, to strongly celebrate the nudity and essentiality of forms that, without disregarding the lessons of the past, place themselves with new emblematic characters.

The magic of the Water Church in Tomamu on the island of Okkaido becomes synonymous with the search for spaces that call to contemplation and silence, in immersion in unspeakable places.

Similarly, in the Church of Light in Ibaraki, Tadao Ando's architecture stands out for its strong aesthetic identity.

With the Church of Hiroo on the outskirts of Tokyo in the 21st century, the essentiality and minimalism, topics dear to the Japanese architect, are confirmed



Fig. 15. Father Costantino Ruggeri and Luigi Leoni, St. Francis Xavier, Yamaguchi, 1993-98; internal view of the main hall with the pipe organ on the counter-façade.

With Ruggeri the language of poetry enters, together with the harmony and song of light and color, in the architectural conception of the new Sanctuary of S. Francesco Saverio, which seeks to interpret the same Japanese spirit in a new way, wanting to manifest and try to interpret what belongs to their sensitivity and the fascination of their traits, making their ways and feelings the founding element of a new conception of ecclesial space.

This has always been the indispensable character of the Ruggerian spirit: the embodiment in the

mentality and in the conception of life of the people where they were called to conceive a sacred space.

## CONCLUSIONS

In a globalized world, where languages and ways recognized as signs of contemporary architecture are transferred, it is significant to grasp the shades and feelings that tell the history and soul of each people for the wealth of elements that are revived in concepts that manifest the multifaceted artistic creativity. It is

necessary to recognize and enhance this creativity in every place on earth, to not generate repetitive and standardized formulas without soul and breath of life.

It is necessary that pure and wise research is supported, which validates the great manifestations of the past through new spatial concepts, because they adhere to the life of the man who is transformed but charged with the historical and human values belonging to the precious art heritage generated in millennia of our humanity. This is how the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops is pronounced in the post-conciliar period:

Since the Church is communion, which joins different units, being present throughout the world, she takes from every culture everything that she encounters that is positive. However, inculturation is different from a simple external adaptation because it means the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through integration into Christianity and the rooting of Christianity in the various human cultures (Sinodo dei Vescovi 1985, 78).

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## NOTES

1. On modern Japan architecture, see Tafuri 1964 and Tapié & Haga 1961.
2. On Kenzo Tange, see Riani 1969, Tange & Kultermann 1970, and Tange et al 1983.
3. On Tadao Ando, see Ando 1982, Ito 1990, Dal Co 1994, De Martis 1995, Drew & Ando 1996, Ruggeri 1996, Ruggeri et al 1996, Jodidio 1999, Baek 2009, etc.

## SOURCE OF IMAGES

- Fig. 01. Tourist in Japan 2020.  
 Fig. 02. Discover Nagasaki 2022.  
 Fig. 03. ICOMOS 2019.  
 Fig. 04. Stunning Scenery Gallery 2014.  
 Fig. 05. Wikimedia Commons 2018.  
 Fig. 06-15. Fondazione Frate Sole Archive.