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# ❖Restoration Village❖

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February 2012

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Shusaku Endo was visiting a museum in Nagasaki, Japan and was intrigued by the display of relics from the seventeenth century of some of the Christian martyrs of Japan. It was a *fumie*, blackened with the footprints of hundreds of long forgotten apostates that demanded his attention and caused him to wonder: Would he too have apostatized?

## FUMIE

**In** 1614, the shogun of Japan expelled all Christian missionaries and required all Japanese to register as Buddhists. Thousands of Christians were soon to be tortured and killed if they refused to renounce their belief. Some of the believers were to be thrown into the volcano near the city of Nagasaki. Others were to be tortured over the cruelty and dreadful method of anazuri known as “the pit.” The pit was a diabolical public torture where the victim hangs upside down over a trench filled with excrement. After hours, sometimes days, small incisions were made behind the person’s ears and on their forehead allowing for the blood to drain slowly from their body. It was a painfully slow death that could be averted by renouncing Christ and stomping on a bronze *fumie* that had the image of the Virgin Mary and Child or an image of Christ on the cross.



17th Century  
Fumie

Those who stepped on the icon were called apostates, the fallen ones, and were to live their rest of their lives with the shame and guilt of their life saving decision.

Endo, that day at the museum, spent much thought about the brave martyrs who refused to trample the icon and died such terrible slow deaths. He thought also of those who did abandon their faith which caused him to ponder the question of: “Who is Jesus Christ for those who have failed in life, for those who succumb to temptation and bear the burden of guilt?”

Endo’s response to his inner question is developed in his most famous book, *Silence*. The book is based upon factual history and is an inquiry into the silence of God and the lack of intervention to save believers from the inquisitors. The main character of the story is Catholic Priest Rodrigues who has a chance to save many peasants who are hanging over “the pit” if he would just step on the fumie. Rodrigues hears the moans of the people and then Jesus appears in the jail cell, and he sees a face of Jesus: “Yet the face was different from that on which the priest had gazed so often in Portugal, in Rome, in

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Gao, and in Macau. It was not Christ whose face was filled with majesty and glory; neither was it a face made beautiful by endurance to pain; nor was it a face with strength of a will that has repelled temptation. The face of the man who then lay at his feet [in the fumie] was sunken and utterly exhausted... The sorrow it had gazed up at him, as two eyes spoke appealingly: ‘Trample! Trample! It is to be trampled on by you and I am here.’”

In Japanese the phrase “Trample! Trample!” is in a permissive rather than an imperative mood and could better be translated to mean, “You may trample, I allow you to trample on me.” “The priest raises his foot. In it he feels a dull, heavy pain... This is no mere formality. He will now trample on what he has considered the most beautiful thing in his life, on what he has believed most pure, on what is filled with the ideals and the dreams of man... How his foot aches!”

God has chosen to not eliminate suffering, but to suffer with humanity, and he allows for our weaknesses.

Endo has his priest discover that God is not silent to suffering; God does not “do nothing.” Christ takes on the pain of the world in his mission. God has chosen to not eliminate suffering, but to suffer with humanity, and he allows for our weaknesses. He was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities (*Isaiah 53:5*) and Endo in his book is asking us to turn our gaze away from some Sunday School pristine image of Jesus and look into the face that is exhausted, sunken, bruised, and offering forgiveness, redemption, and an invitation to accept sacrifice as the means for the transformation of others.

Walking the halls and into the medical examination rooms of the Children’s Advocacy Center you can read the first names of hundreds of children who have written their names inside of the stars on the wall after their lengthy interviews and medical examination. These dear children, ones who know the inhumanity of those that are supposed to love them, and in their private thoughts wonder “why me?” The faces I see cause me to pause and wonder if



“I could be an apostate?” Each year at Christmas at Restoration Village we put a Christmas tree in the dining hall and decorate it with the cut out stars and the pasted pictures of children who have lived here over the years. On the back of each star is the name of the child and the date of the year they lived here. I think of the sorrow, the hurts, the emotional turmoil, and all they had seen and heard prior to becoming a resident here and wonder what they are doing today? Would I have turned my back on those children and

allowed the torture to continue? Am I willing to lay down my life for those innocent, helpless ones by lending them my voice and embracing radical forgiveness?

If a person does not love, is he really alive? And if a person really loves, will he be killed? I can’t answer those questions, but I do know that when I look at the face of another, I see Jesus – and that makes all the difference.

For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God *in the face of Jesus Christ* (II Corinthians 4:6).

David Engle

## Village News

THE SECOND NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING CENTER IN THE WORLD is over half way into the fund raising goal to begin the renovations to its future site at Northwest Arkansas Community College. Already the presence of this training center is impacting students, social workers, policemen, medical personnel, and others who work with or are involved in the lives of children. In April (National Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention month) another announcement will be made as to the future of the training center, the up-to-date figures of the fund drive and other pertinent information of the center. This Center will have the Southern Region of the United States to serve, 16 states, and also the drawing power from all states as a result of the Nursing program. You may take a virtual tour of the facility and read more information by going to: <http://www.nwacc.edu/web/ncptc> – you will have to scroll down to the NCPTC designation. When you see what the Center offers and the specialized facilities you will grasp the meaning of the slogan of the campaign, “Know Abuse, No Abuse.” This is a campaign that will reach into next century for its impact at securing a safer life for our Nation’s children.

<http://www.nwacc.edu/web/ncptc> – go take a peek.



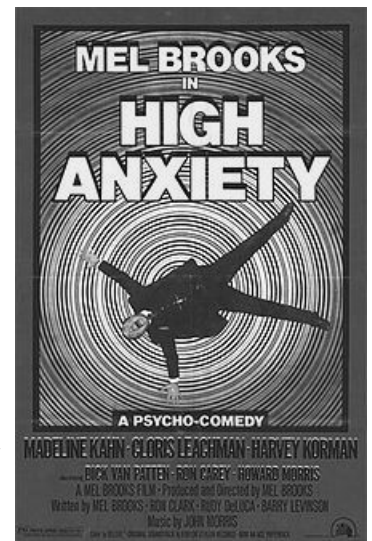
APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION MONTH AND THE MARCH NEWSLETTER will give the dates of the pinwheel placement, the Cherishing Children Banquet, and all related activities that you are invited to attend and be a part of protecting, embellishing, and blessing the lives of children.



ALL CONTRIBUTORS IRS RECEIPTS WERE MAILED FROM RESTORATION VILLAGE DURING THE THIRD WEEK OF JANUARY. You should have received your copy by now. If not, please call us at 479.631.7345 or e-mail us at [restore89@cox.net](mailto:restore89@cox.net). We are grateful for your role in ministering unto others and as the thank you letters often reflect, making a difference in the lives of others.

JUST A LITTLE PLUG FOR SOME OF OUR CURRENT RESIDENTS: There are children, mothers, and a few single adults here, but two of ladies are attending the Community College this spring session. Sometimes it is hard to find a quiet place to study here, but they do, and are doing well.

IN 1948 W.H. AUDEN WROTE A POEM, THAT WON A PULITZER PRIZE, AND I THINK IT IS A RATHER BORING POEM. But the dramatic poem created a phrase that has stuck throughout all these years “The Age of Anxiety.” According to the National Institute of Mental Health, anxiety disorders now affect 18 percent of the adult population and depression and bipolar affect another 9.5 percent. According to a recent survey of 200,000 college students, experts site three main factors as to the increase in anxieties: the first is the increasing loss of community; the second in torrent of information we consume; and lastly Americans have developed habits that vilify our aversive emotions and fight them rather than letting them run their course (we fall victim to positive thinking, feel goodism or take a pill). The notion that we shouldn’t be anxious is causing us to be anxious. All of these are thoughts for the church and to ask “Are we creating an atmosphere for community, are we contributing to overload and are we preaching truth in that ‘life happens and we are not in control?’”



The “age of anxiety does not end.” And neither does the **grace of God.**”

“Nothing else matters in the world but the kindness of grace, God’s gift to suffering mortals.”

Jack Kerouac