# OUR LADY OF AKITA

Mary, Silence, Repentance, and Tears for the World

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## BACKGROUND

This reflection arose from an opportunity for 84 hours of retreat, from Sunday, 20 September 2026 at 10:00 p.m. until Thursday, 24 September 2026 at 9:00 a.m., at the chapel of 聖体奉仕会 (Seitai Hoshikai). Silence, the prayer garden, and daily Mass with the Sisters provided a space to listen to the Word, pray, and review life before God. Akita is considered through the past, present, and future: remembering the past carefully; responding today through prayer, repentance, reparation, the Rosary, the Eucharist, and silence; and hoping for a future shaped by greater love. The deepest hope is not an extraordinary phenomenon, but a changed heart returning to Christ.

## ABSTRACT

Our Lady of Akita is associated with the experiences of Sr. Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa in Yuzawadai, Japan, in 1973. Reports included experiences of hearing messages and tears falling from a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The events underwent ecclesial investigation; on 22 April 1984 Bishop John Shojiro Ito of Niigata issued a pastoral letter concerning them. Akita is reflected upon as an invitation to repentance, prayer, reparation, the Rosary, the Eucharist, silence, and a return to Christ. As a private revelation, it adds nothing to the fullness of revelation in Christ.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Akita is a spiritual event known in the Catholic life of Japan. Public Revelation reaches its fullness in Jesus Christ; private revelations do not replace Scripture, Tradition, the sacraments, or the teaching of the faith. The essential question is not only whether something extraordinary happened, but what invitation it offers the human heart: to listen, repent, pray, and return to Christ.

## 2. AKITA: AN EVENT IN JAPAN

In 1973, Sr. Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa reported experiences of hearing messages associated with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Yuzawadai, Akita. Reports also included tears falling from the statue. Such events call for careful ecclesial discernment; extraordinary phenomena are not the centre of faith.

## 3. SR. AGNES AND THE EXPERIENCE OF LISTENING

Spiritual listening means opening oneself to the Word, not merely hearing sounds. Jesus says: “ Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear. ” (Mark 4:9). Amid noise, silence helps people listen more deeply.

## 4. THE CENTRAL THEMES OF AKITA

Repentance is a change of direction and heart. Jesus proclaimed: “ The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news. ” (Mark 1:15). Prayer and reparation do not purchase forgiveness; they express love and responsibility before God.

## 5. MARY ' S TEARS

Tears speak of suffering, loss, love, and compassion. The reported tears in Akita may be contemplated as an invitation not to become indifferent to human suffering. They should lead to prayer, repentance, and care for others rather than fear.

## 6. THE WARNING ABOUT SIN AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

The message reported on 13 October 1973 speaks of sin and its consequences if people do not repent. It should not be turned into a calendar for predicting disasters. The central spiritual question is: how am I living before God today?

## 7. THE ROSARY: A CHRIST-CENTRED PRAYER

In the Rosary, the faithful contemplate the mysteries of Christ with Mary. At Cana, Mary says: " Do whatever he tells you. " (John 2:5). Mary does not replace Christ; she points to him.

## 8. AKITA AND FATIMA

Akita and Fatima share themes such as repentance, prayer, reparation, the Rosary, and concern for the world. They are nevertheless distinct events arising in different historical, cultural, and pastoral contexts.

## 9. THE RECOGNITION BY THE BISHOP OF NIIGATA

After an investigation, Bishop John Shojiro Ito of Niigata issued a pastoral letter on 22 April 1984. Ecclesial recognition of an event does not make it a new public revelation or a required foundation of faith.

## 10. MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

Mary is a model of faith and the mother of Jesus. Her words at Cana, " Do whatever he tells you. " (John 2:5), show that authentic Marian devotion directs people to Christ.

## 11. AKITA AND THE EUCHARIST

The Eucharist is the centre of the Church ' s life. Extraordinary phenomena must never replace Christ, who is present and gives himself. Akita can be contemplated in the light of Eucharistic life and the love it calls forth.

## 12. AKITA AS A WAY OF SILENCE

The Psalm invites us: " Be still, and know that I am God. " (Psalm 46:10). Silence is not emptiness but a space of presence and listening. The movement is noise, silence, prayer, repentance, love, and Christ.

## 13. AKITA IS NOT PRIMARILY ABOUT FEAR

A spiritual warning is not an invitation to live in fear. Do not wait for disaster to repent. Repentance is a call for today.

## 14. AKITA FOR THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Advances in technology and information do not automatically produce interior depth. Akita invites us to ask whether we still pray, listen, repent, and remain attentive to the suffering of others.

## 15. THE DEEPEST MEANING OF OUR LADY OF AKITA

The invitation can be summarised: listen, repent, pray, make sacrifices in love, and return to Christ. Tears, prayer, silence, the Word, repentance, life, and Christ form a spiritual journey.

## 16. THE CONTEMPLATIVE DIMENSION OF MARY ’ S LIFE

Mary listens to the Word: “ Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. ” (Luke 1:38). She treasures and ponders events in her heart (Luke 2:19), and stands near the Cross (John 19:25). Her life teaches listening, keeping, pondering, receiving, becoming, and giving. Contemplation is not merely a technique; it is a way of living before God.

## 17. CONCLUSION

Akita invites us to stop, be still, listen, repent, pray, and return to Christ. Mary stands with those who suffer and points to her Son. Christ is the centre. Per Mariam ad Iesum — Through Mary to Jesus.

## FOOTNOTES AND SOURCES

Scripture: Mark 4:9; Mark 1:15; John 2:5; Psalm 46:10; Luke 1:38; Luke 2:19; John 19:25. Further reading: Catechism of the Catholic Church; public documentation on Our Lady of Akita, Sr. Agnes Katsuko Sasagawa, the Handmaids of the Holy Eucharist, and the Diocese of Niigata; pastoral letter of Bishop John Shojiro Ito, 22 April 1984.

聖体奉仕会 2026年9月20日（日）22:00 ー 2026年9月24日（木）09:00