

Interview with the Rev. Shintaro David Ichihara of the Diocese of Tokyo, Nippon Sei Ko Kai

SDI=Rev. Shintaro David Ichihara

DA=Devon Anderson

DA: Thank you so much for doing this interview and for all of your emails and all of the effort to schedule this talk, I really deeply appreciate it. We had a meeting last night of the Standing Commission on Liturgy. And then we're going to meet in person at the end of this month, and they're very excited to see this conversation between the two of us. So, I speak on behalf of everybody just telling you how appreciative we are and how grateful we are that you give us this time, so thank you.

SDI: My pleasure and honor.

DA: Thank you. So I'm going to . . . I'll just ask you the questions, but just from the sheet that I sent you. And what we're doing is, at our last General Convention there was a resolution that was passed and it asked our Standing Commission to come to the next General Convention with a plan for prayer book revision. So it's not starting on the plan, but it's to create a plan. And we decided that we wanted to make sure that the church really wanted that, and so we're doing . . . we're using this time before the next General Convention to research and to talk to our Anglican brothers and sisters and learn from them from their experience so that we have a lot of information to consider when we come together. So kind of what we're doing right now is gathering information, and a large part of that is talking to Anglican provinces that have either revised their prayer book or created a prayer book or have had some season of renewal around liturgy. So that's why we're talking to you because we want to learn from you and we want to know your story and what your project looks like and, you know, what you've learned along the way so that we can learn from you. So we'd like to benefit from everybody else's learning. So, can you describe for me your province of the Anglican Communion and give me a little description about, kind of, what does your province look like . . .

SDI: Okay.

DA: . . . and then what's your role in all of that as far as the liturgy.

SDI: Okay. One of the characteristics of the province of Japan is that the four different missionary societies worked together to establish the province. So, you know, both the CMS and SPG work together.

DA: Okay.

SDI: I think this is a very extraordinary history because that's, you know, very easily something else.

DA: Yes.

SDI: They have been competing at their original country, but of course we had a missionary from America, Texas, and my own diocese, the Diocese of Chubu was established by a Canadian missionary. So we have eleven dioceses, which is obviously too many for one small province. You know, Taiwan is just three dioceses, and they're part of the Episcopal Church, and Korea

three, and Hong Kong three. So eleven is too many, but that depends on the history, how we were made. So it's—

DA: So it's Korea and Taiwan?

SDI: No, no, no, no. Each of them are independent provinces, but just to explain to you how the number of eleven is big comparing with other Asian provinces.

DA: Okay.

SDI: And we are a quite small province. Maybe the active member is less than 20,000.

DA: Okay.

SDI: And maybe around 200 clergy, so you know, choosing eleven bishops among 200 is another difficulty we're facing every time we have a bishop election. Each diocese has a strong inheritance of something, including liturgical inheritance. For example, the Diocese of Yokohama and Kobe are established by SPG missionaries, while Hokkaido and Kyushu are CMS dioceses. And Tokyo is a mixture. So historically those dioceses have a very, very different atmosphere. And you know, some dioceses, Yokohama and Kobe for example, still do not accept ordination of women to the priesthood. So even in a small province there . . . I don't call it diversity because it can be a positive word, but in many cases what we are facing is differences, which cannot be always positive. We need to manage that. And since such different missionary societies worked together, especially both English and American missionaries worked together so there was a possibility of having two different prayer books for both missionaries. You know, for example the Eucharistic prayer of the English prayer book and the American prayer book are different. And that was a very, very debatable issue when they started working together. And English missionaries are under the umbrella of the Bishop of Hong Kong, while Bishop Williams was a missionary Bishop of the Episcopal Church. So while there was a possibility--mm hm?

DA: So—no, go ahead.

SDI: Okay. While there was the possibility of having two different prayer books, they decided to make one unified prayer book. So the Bishop Williams, an American Bishop, said it was okay to use an English Eucharistic prayer. And they incorporated some portions from American prayer books, so we just made a one prayer book from the beginning.

DA: What year was that?

SDI: Hold on. It was in 1879.

DA: Oh, wow. So that was the first Book of Common Prayer for your province. Okay. So—thank you, I wanted to know that, so thank you. Can you talk about what your role is and specifically as it relates to your prayer book and your liturgy life in your province?

SDI: My role is a specialized staff of the prayer book revision committee as well as a priest in charge of the cathedral of Tokyo. I'm not a parish priest now. I had been a school chaplain for last twelve years. So that's me.

DA: Okay. And so there's a prayer book revision committee?

SDI: Yes, as well as a liturgical commission.

DA: Okay. For the province?

SDI: Yes.

DA: Okay, okay.

SDI: I belong to the Diocese of Chubu, which is a quite small both rural and urban diocese, but I live in Tokyo now.

DA: Okay, so the revision committee is the province committee and the liturgical commission is the diocese committee?

SDI: No, the liturgical commission is the provincial standing committee, and the prayer book revision—or I would say liturgical commission, because it's a standing commission—which has a special role in the province. And also a prayer book revision committee was established by the last General Convention in 2016 just for the purpose of revising the current prayer book. So it's also a provincial committee, but it's sort of a task force.

DA: Okay. Thank you, I understand that. That makes sense. Okay, good. What about, are there lay people that serve on the revision committee or on the standing liturgical commission?

SDI: Mm hm.

DA: Okay. How did they get there, how did they become members?

SDI: Okay. All the members of the commission or committee are named by the . . . technically the general secretary of the provincial office. That's practically the priest in charge and the secretary, general secretary, work together to pick out people. And at this moment all members of the liturgical commission are clerical.

DA: Okay.

SDI: Three male, two female. And we have thirty members of the prayer book revision committee and there are four lay people.

DA: Oh, great. Okay.

SDI: The main reason why we choose just the clergy for the commission is that, you know, most of Japanese people are too busy during the daytime.

DA: Right.

SDI: So it's a sort of a maintenance and quite a theological work, which they are in charge of. So I think a . . . not always very necessary to incorporate laypeople. We thought it is very necessary to have lay people in the group because a . . . it's a prayer book for everybody. I think this is the first time to have lay people in the revision committee in our history. The last revision was completed in 1990 and I think just one or two members were laity but they were scholars of the Old or New Testament.

DA: Yes.

SDI: So I think all members of the committee were clergy.

DA: So your last revision was completed in 1990.

SDI: That's right, that's our current prayer book.

DA: That's your current prayer book. So what were the reasons for calling for a new prayer book this time?

SDI: Okay. We had a poll, Uncade, two years ago in the process of preparation for the revision. If you're interested, I can explain a bit about the process.

DA: Yeah, I'm interested.

SDI: Okay. Before we organized the revision committee, the General Convention decided to make a preparation committee for prayer book revision.

DA: Okay.

SDI: So it was established in 2014 General Convention. In summer of the year 2015, we made a poll about the prayer book revision through both parishes and individuals. And the interesting thing is that the more than the half of the independent parishioners are quite satisfied with the current one. But I don't think it's a positive value, they just didn't say "I have a strong opinion against it" or "I can't find anything lacking" because they don't know. For example, our prayer book was the first one which had some alternative in some portions like Eucharistic prayers but there was a strong opposition for having, you know, two Eucharistic prayers, because some people said there must be only one thing which is the best. Only the best should be in the prayer book.

DA: Right. Okay.

SDI: You know, of course our understanding is that that's right, but the best can depend on the situation or background.

DA: Or the season.

SDI: Mm hm. So as a compromise, the current one has just two Eucharistic prayers. I don't think it's a good number. And we do not have any options for intercessions. We have just one specific form. And also our current lectionary is based on the 1979 prayer book.

DA: Yes.

SDI: You have already switched to RCL, right?

DA: Yes, the lectionary? The revised common lectionary? Yes.

SDI: So maybe we would incorporate that to our prayer book, too. And the . . . another power to push us for the revision is that there's a new common translation going on at the Japan Bible Society.

DA: A new Bible translation?

SDI: Yes. And the current translation is by both a Catholic and Protestant. I think Japan is one of the countries where common translation is working very, very nicely. But the current prayer book has a . . . not a common translation . . . it is so-called a colloquial translation which was made just after the World War 2. So the change of the Bible translation is another reason for the revision. And also we realized that there are many new issues in the society which we would look at in the prayer book. For example, we do not have any special liturgy or even a prayer for the anniversary of atomic bombs as well as the end of World War 2. There has been discussion over the responsibility of the war as well as a remembering the victims of the atomic bombs. And these things were a little bit too early to be discussed in the church because it's a, you know, very difficult issue for some people to talk about. But I think it's time and also, we for example, we had a Asian gathering of the Asian liturgical conference last November in Hong Kong. Did you hear about that?

DA: I . . . you know, Lynnette told me about that. She told me about that, yeah.

SDI: Yeah. It's a sub conference of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation, IALC, and one of the things we discussed together was the possibility of building a common Eucharistic prayer over Asian countries. So the regionality is, the new thing which has been coming up, and also we had a mission conference in 2012.

DA: Your province?

SDI: Yes. And the liturgical issue was one of the things they put in the resolution.

DA: What was it?

SDI: So as a church which lives in the 21st century, we need to have a new liturgy for a new society and new generations.

DA: Okay.

SDI: Yeah, I can list up so many, but maybe I think that is enough.

DA: Yeah. Okay. Maybe you can email, because I'm interested, we're interested, in you know, the reasons why. Because it's so much work, and it's . . . you know, it costs money and it's hard work and it's a huge process. And so the reasons have to be very compelling, so we're real interested in that.

SDI: We're listed at a, you know, ten items for the reasons.

DA: Oh, really?

SDI: Mm hm.

DA: Okay. Can you . . . would you email those to me?

SDI: Yeah.

DA: Just list them out, you don't have to do the whole document.

SDI: It's written in Japanese, so it will take me some time.

DA: (laughs) No, don't write the whole document, just like a sentence. Okay?

SDI: Sure.

DA: I don't want to add to your work list. Okay? But we're very interested in that. We're very interested in that. Can you talk a little bit about, you know, what you're talking about is creating some liturgies that are relevant and that are needed at this time in your common history and also to create more resources for Sunday morning or, you know, more Eucharistic prayers and maybe some more intercessory prayers. How do you make decisions about how big the project is?

SDI: That's exactly what we have been discussing.

DA: Yeah?

SDI: We just started our work last June. Not June, June is the time of the General Convention. It took a few more months to organize the work, so yeah, it's just a several months since we've started. And also we need to define how, and before how, what we are doing. So I think your question is too early to answer.

DA: Too early, yeah.

SDI: But basically the minimum is just to incorporate the work of the past few decades which was done by the liturgical commission. But I don't think that's enough. This is my personal perspective, but the current prayer book is already 27 years old, and still it will survive in the next decade or so until the new prayer book will come up. So if we just, you know, make a maintenance revision at this moment, the prayer book would be too old.

DA: Quickly, yeah.

SDI: Yeah. I think we need to make a totally brand new prayer book. Which is a lot of work for us.

DA: So you're at the very beginning of this process.

SDI: Right.

DA: Okay. When you have defined your scope and then you start developing the work, who decides? Are you set up like the Episcopal Church, with the . . . you have General Convention with the deputies and the bishops, or who gets to decide about your liturgy ultimately?

SDI: So there are some layers of decision making. The final decision must be made in the General Convention.

DA: Okay.

SDI: Our rule is that two sequential General Conventions must approve the new, or you know, any change in our prayer book.

DA: We do that too.

SDI: But before that, of course the consensus of a House of Bishops must be made. The chair of the committee and commission and the House of Bishops work together. So in many cases the chair goes to the House of Bishops Synod to report what we are doing. And of course we need to have

a consensus among the commission and the committee, so I think that's the technically minimum.

DA: Yes.

SDI: But of course we need to incorporate some opinions of the church members by someplace. For example, having lay people in the committee is one of the ways to communicate with parishioners around them. So our province is not a very big province, so communicating with each other mustn't be so hard.

DA: Yes.

SDI: We will make another poll in the next year or so or a little bit later than that. Officially have the opinions.

DA: Yes, you get feedback from people.

SDI: But, you know, to get a feedback we need to show them something.

DA: Yes. Did you ever consider kind of what the Church of England has done where they kind of leave the prayer book alone and then kind of build up around it? Did your province talk about that or consider that, or was it always prayer book revision is what you want to do?

SDI: Right. One question is, how shall we publish the new prayer book? Well, another interesting result of the poll was, I mean survey, was almost a 60 or 70 people who answered the questionnaire are over 60.

DA: Oh, they want the book.

SDI: So that's a reality of the church, so they do need to have one prayer book.

DA: Yes.

SDI: And quite many of them answered that they choose a big one prayer book rather than having, you know, small booklets. And another thing we noticed was, you know, being Christians in Japan is sometimes quite hard. So they need to have something they can use daily for . . . to help them. So the new prayer book should cover the private sphere as well as the common prayers. So the committee would decide to make one prayer book while some additional resources can be delivered via Internet or something. And I think a younger generation would prefer a, for example, smartphone version. So the daily prayers can be delivered to them via, you know, smartphones or things like those. But that's just an idea at this moment.

DA: Okay. Yeah, we have been talking about that. About—can you hear me? Can you hear me?

SDI: Mm hm.

DA: Okay. Just about how if you move all of the resources online, there's benefits to that, there's good things about that, but it also has the effect of moving the prayer book to kind of church professionals, you know, people that have to plan services or that are priests in charge at cathedrals, right? That would become a resource not for people in the pew or lay people. So, you know, that's something that the church will have to struggle with because the delivery

system is so much more accessible if it's online and at the same time it does have some impact with access and private devotion and, you know, who's using it, right? So we've been kind of struggling with that.

SDI: My personal frustration as a priest is that people very often look at their prayer book rather than me when we celebrate the Eucharist.

DA: (laughs) They have their face buried like this, right? Yes, I know that well. So at this early part of your process, if the Episcopal Church decides that it wants to revise its Book of Common Prayer, instead of these other options, would there be some advice that you have for us or things that you think it's important for us to consider at the very beginning?

SDI: Can you give me a few minutes to answer that?

DA: Yes, yes.

SDI: I'm from, originally from Tokyo, but I moved to a rural area of Japan when I had a job there. So I was a member of a parish where regular Sunday service attending was just five or so. So there was a deanery, and quite many parishes of the deanery were something like that. And at that moment I was at the beginning of 30, and we had an idea of having a deanery gathering of young people. Not technically young people, but you know, church is a very special community where the average age is quite high, but you know. Just my wife and I were the younger generations at that time in my parish, so that doesn't make sense to have such a gathering only at my parish. So we extended to the deanery wide. They recruited some other Christians from other denominations like Lutherans or some Evangelicals, and that became a gathering of 20 or 30. So it was a very nice meeting. My wife is a Roman Catholic woman, and you know, her parish is quite big, considering the you know, just five.

DA: (laughs) Yeah.

SDI: Never has a such an idea for having a gathering not just in one parish. So she said how good it is to be poor.

DA: Yes, right. (laughs)

SDI: I have the same feeling with the Episcopal Church. Your 1979 prayer book is a very, very important resource, not just for you, that's a very big contribution to the whole Anglican Communion. But on the other hand, you're too rich sometimes.

DA: Yes, yes.

SDI: Especially in the human resource side, so you can recruit everybody only within your province or even within one diocese to do something. So I sometimes have a feeling that would eliminate the possibility of widening the idea of the church. For example, I just said we had a Asian gathering of liturgy by three or four provinces. That wasn't a big gathering, but that was a very, very good time for knowing each other and creating an atmosphere of doing something together. At the IALC conference, there's a custom at this moment to celebrate the Eucharist not only by one province, but also by several provinces. I think that happened when three Asian provinces worked together for a noon time Eucharist in 2009 in New Zealand. So I experience

the power of doing together and you know, you claim yourself as the Episcopal Church because your idea is that you're not bound to the northern American continent, right?

DA: (laughs) Well, I don't know about that.

SDI: Yeah, but I'm not sure how closely you work together with the Anglican Church of Canada, for example. I know their BAS and your BCP have a . . . much commonality. But for me the Canadian prayer book is more regional and local. But I feel the Episcopal Church resources are in many cases more universal. I think at first in the beginning it must be the local and regional issue rather than widening it to universal because it's an issue related to your parishioners, your church members. So rather than starting the universal discussion, I would prefer to start from the very local place. When we do something, you know. (holds up the Japanese Anglican prayer book) You can't read the book, you know, this is our prayer book which you can't read.

DA: I can't. I can see the characters, but I can't read it.

SDI: Right. So this is what we are doing. We are making our prayer book, which a quite . . . in the last few prayer book revision committee meetings, we discussed what does it mean. So using Japanese language is just a part of that. While it's an important issue for most of Japanese people.

DA: So can you say a little bit more—I want to make sure I understand what you're saying. So Lizette, she's coming to our meeting in March, and so we've asked her to present about the Anglican Communion in general, you know kind of what's going on out in the Anglican Communion, and then the Church of Canada, specifically. And so what I want to do is I want to ask her about this issue that you're bringing up, and I want to ask her about this point about rather than starting with kind of the universal to . . . it's better to start with kind of the local. But I want you to . . . if you could just say a little bit more about that or give it . . . by local you mean like local communities?

SDI: Mm hm.

DA: Or groups of people or ethnicities or cultures or what, what do you mean by that?

SDI: Okay. For example, there are big debates going on about Okinawa and the US bases in Okinawa. You know, Okinawa was not a part of Japan until 1972. And when Okinawa was returned to Japan and the diocese of Okinawa was established, which was a part of the Episcopal Church before that. And still the Okinawan people have been feeling that they're excluded from the mainland. This is a very local issue, but it doesn't mean it relates to Okinawan people only, it's an issue of a whole Japan. So I don't . . . yeah, there have been some prayers or special liturgies for remembering the Okinawan War, but they're not a part of, they have not been a part of our prayer book. While the new hymnal, which was issued in 2006 has two or three Okinawan hymns.

DA: Oh, okay.

SDI: And also we just started a communion before confirmation from the January 1st of this year. From your perspective, it may seem to be too late or too slow in moving forward, because theologically it shouldn't be justified that the only, you know, confirmed people receive communion. I agree with that theologically, but on the other hand, that was the reality of the

church. For example, I now live in a small parish of Tokyo. I just live in the parish rectory, I'm not a rector of the parish, but my family goes to the services of the parish where they live. And there's a small Sunday school which consists of just a few girls. But my daughter, who is nine years old, loves to join the Sunday school service with her friends. But she is the only member of the Sunday school who is baptized. All others are technically non-Christians, but a quite many of them are pupils of Christian schools and they're interested in Christianity, you know. Can you believe that a ten-year-old girl reads Bible in train when she goes to school?

DA: It's great.

SDI: Yeah. If we just apply the theological issue to a practical situation without considering that background, that can send another sign of, choose your parents when you want to receive communion. I don't think that's any good implementation of baptismal theology. So what we have been discussing is that we need to develop our own baptismal and sacramental theology from our own perspective. So that may not be universal, because the, you know, I know some churches in America, and you know, receiving communion by all people present is working there. You know, St. Gregory of Nyssa.

DA: Yes. Well, the rector there serves on our Standing Commission.

SDI: Oh, really?

DA: Yeah. Paul Fromberg.

SDI: Oh, Paul.

DA: Yes, but I'm a parish priest as well and we practice that open table communion. So this is very interesting, that gives me something to think about. Yeah.

SDI: Do you have any practical schedule for your revision?

DA: Well, what we're going to do is we're going to come back to General Convention with four options. And then we're going to give them a lot of information about each of the options. And so we're using a whole variety of things including interviews, we're doing eight interviews, and what we learn from that we're dropping down into these four options, so you know, make sure you consider this. And the options are, the first one is prayer book revision, just straight up prayer book revision. The other one is kind of like a Common Worship, you know, leave the prayer book alone and build something up alongside of it. Another option is spend another three years talking about it, about what we want, and the fourth is to not engage in a time of revision but deepen the practice of the baptismal theology in our existing prayer book and figure out ways to make that deeper. And, as you're suggesting, you know, how to apply the theology of baptism into practical situations like the one that you articulated. So it would be a deepening, it would be a deepening. And so we'll go back and the next General Convention is in 2018, and we'll go back with all of these options and then ask the General Convention to choose. And the idea is that they would set the scope of our work for the next ten years, you know. And then in addition to that is what are they willing to fund. So you know, kind of picking an option that is connected to how much resources they want to put into that. Because there's other issues in the church that we're dealing with right now that need our attention, a lot around racial reconciliation and

now we have issues around immigration and refugee resettlement here. And there's a lot of things to which the church is being called. And when you kind of put it all out, where would you like to focus the efforts, and do you want to focus that on prayer book revision or something else. And so they need to kind of make a decision about that. So what we're doing this year, these years, is to just help make, help the General Convention make a very good decision that has a lot of information and conversation and research behind it, so they're making a decision about not so much what's best for me as an individual, but to what is our community—what are we being called to as a community. And so we want to help. So all of our work is trying to help the church make a good decision for itself about that. So I don't think any of us are tied to a particular outcome, but I know there's a lot of interest in taking advantage of the opportunity to deepen our theology. Maybe kind of going back to that comment that you made about, you know, sometimes the being too rich is . . . becomes a problem of, kind of, off to the next thing and really not deepening our practice in our common life. So we have a lot of things to talk about, but we won't be making any decisions until 2018 about that.

SDI: Yeah. I just had a story in my morning devotion that the knowing something or . . . and the feeling something are close but different.

DA: Different, yeah. I think you're right. Yeah.

SDI: So when Ruth was in charge of the . . . SCLM?

DA: Yes.

SDI: She was very quick in moving, I felt. Yeah, I know she's a very, very good scholar.

DA: She's wonderful.

SDI: Yeah. But I also had a feeling that at least her way doesn't work in my country because moving too fast would put everybody else in behind. So we ourselves need to learn to walk at the appropriate pace with the church members of Japan while we need to go forward a little bit.

DA: Yes.

SDI: We have a too long time to bring out the result because for example, this is the first time to hire a staff like me, even not the full-time days, because this is very, very exceptional. So, you know, there are many things to be taken care of provincial wide. But the General Convention decided to hire me as a staff in charge because the task is so big and it's important for the whole province. But you know, that gives a big financial issue to the province. Our province is a very poor province, so even hiring one person is a big, big issue. So at this moment my salary is shared by the diocese of Tokyo and the province. The province can't afford everything.

DA: Yes.

SDI: So half province, half diocese. But essentially the generosity of the diocese, so I spend maybe seventy percent of my time for the prayer book.

DA: Okay. That's a lot.

SDI: Yeah.

DA: Yeah. I think the pace is . . . so by giving them an opportunity to make a decision it will be you know kind of about to what are we being called, the financial, and then also, you know, what the pace is. What kind of pace do we want and we can decide on that. I think when Ruth was the chair they had a very specific mandate around marriage equality and they had to kind of get that done, and so they were very focused on one thing and what happened was is that there was a lot of projects that grew up around it. So by the time that had been resolved, the issue of marriage equality had been resolved, when we came out of the last General Convention we had, you know, prayer book revision, hymnal revision, revise our book of occasional services and you know, forty other things which were too big, you know, the project's just too big. But they had just kind of grown up around the main focus that the Standing Commission here had been focused on for a while. So I think we're kind of in a transition time, and we're getting ready to make a decision that will kind of set our course for the next many years. In your province, are there . . . and when you're working on liturgy and trying to figure out the scope and size of your project and kind of how you're going to organize things, is there an issue about, or sensitivity about, different cultures within your province or, you know, even different regional cultures that you have to . . . I think you gave me an example about the Okinawa people. That there's . . . you know, we're called to common prayer, but we are different in our communities in different cultures and different needs and different histories in some ways. So what can you tell me about that? I know that your province is different from ours and those conversations will be different than ours, but I think there is some commonality in trying to figure out how do we make good decisions for common prayer across a lot of different cultural expressions.

SDI: In that sense, making a one prayer book in our province is much easier than in your province. Because Japanese society is a very homogenized society, which is not always good, because that character very easily excludes some people like immigrants, for example. But as for the liturgical culture, both SPG and CMS worked together, so quite . . . some of the parishes celebrate the same prayer book liturgy in different ways, but still they don't hesitate to use the same one. But on the other hand, because of this, we have not paid enough attention to the style of celebration in the past. For example, you know, five church members can't celebrate the Eucharist in the same way with the parish of a hundred or two hundred people.

DA: Yes.

SDI: But I think that part has not been paid enough attention to.

DA: So the size of the congregation have different needs? Yes.

SDI: Mm hm. And what we're quite seriously discussing is if we should include the so-called Service of the Word. A Sunday service celebrated by laity or deacons.

DA: Oh, okay. So we call it Ministry of the Word, so it's the scripture and preaching that comes before.

SDI: Right. Same one. But it really depends on the community where it is used. So one idea is just incorporate the order of the service as a clue to start with, and then the resources can be delivered in other ways, like online or small booklets.

DA: Okay.

SDI: This may not be a part of the culture you mentioned, but it really depends on the situation of dioceses. Even in Tokyo the priest shortage is starting to happen, and in my parish almost a half of the parishes can't celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday.

DA: Because they don't have a priest?

SDI: That's right.

DA: Yeah. Okay.

SDI: And we just released a first English translated text of the Holy Communion of our prayer book. I will give you the URL later.

DA: Oh yeah, I want that, yeah.

SDI: And I think that should be covered by the next generation's prayer book, because while I'm not sure there are many parishes where Eucharist is celebrated in English, it's a sign that our church is open to anyone.

DA: That's right, yeah.

SDI: Even English is helpful for, for example, Spanish-speaking travelers. And also some people want to have a traditional language version, so they prefer to use the old prayer book because of the language. I want to stop this.

DA: Yeah. Right.

SDI: You know, you have a 1928 prayer book.

DA: Yes. I have a wedding, or a funeral, on Thursday, and we use Rite I. And I always have to refresh my memory because I forget the . . . you know. Yeah. My last question for you, and then we can wrap up, is about generations and if you are anticipating in your work, I know you're right at the very beginning, but at your work that's ahead, are you anticipating having conversations about, do you think that the liturgical and worship needs are different in different generations or maybe even it's the delivery of those or how they receive them, but what do you, regarding a generation issue, what do you think about that?

SDI: You just mentioned the Rite I and Rite II.

DA: Yes.

SDI: I think that was a good compromise at that moment to accommodate both kinds of people. But probably it's time to move on to a Rite II only prayer book, while some styles can be provided for all generations and young generations. As I said, our Uncade survey shows our church community is very, very biased in their generation. But you know, our prayer book would take at least the next eight years to be completed, so I'm not sure if the fair chance is to say something to be given to everybody. You know, at some point, a younger generation should have a priority or privilege to say something in louder voices.

DA: Okay, that's helpful.

SDI: And more than half of the church members do not complain about the current prayer book. So the first complaint we will receive is the, "why are you changing it?"

DA: Yes. (laughs)

SDI: So the younger generations must feel it attractive.

DA: Yes.

SDI: So anyway, the direction would be like something like that.

DA: They did a poll . . . the church pension group did a poll about if we were ready for a new hymnal, and it was kind of overwhelming. The response was no, we're . . . but the one small part that wanted change were the people that wanted us to go back to the old hymnal. They were the change agents in that. That was what change was, was to go back to the old one, which I just thought was very funny. So, thank you. I just can't thank you enough for all of your time and all of your hard work and being able to share so much with us, it's just going to help us so much to have had this conversation.

SDI: My pleasure.

DA: We're very, very grateful to you. So just before we stop I wonder if you would just say a prayer for us. Yeah.

SDI: Okay, sure. The Lord be with you.

DA: And also with you.

SDI: Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for this happy gathering of two people at the opposite side of the Pacific Ocean to discuss the same thing which is to praise you, our Lord. Bless us in our daily life, especially in the work we take for you to make the liturgy of the church which you established on earth. Connect us, with your grace, to all people on earth through our prayers and liturgies so that everybody can worship you and praise you. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

DA: Amen.