

Iwanaga Maki

Founder of the Urakami Cross Society

Iwanaga Maki (Nagasaki Junshin Catholic University Museum)

Iwanaga Maki (1848–1920), had been one of the 3,394 Japanese Christians expelled in 1869. After the ban was lifted in 1873, Iwanaga at the age of twenty-five, returned from Okayama, where she had been in exile, to Urakami.

When a dysentery epidemic broke out in Urakami in 1874, Iwanaga participated in nursing activities carried out by Father de Rotz (1840–1914).

Iwanaga, together with the young women who received support from de Rotz, started taking care of orphaned and abandoned children following typhoon damage and smallpox epidemics.

These women, under the instruction and guidance of de Rotz, founded the Urakami Cross Society, and raised and adopted 294 orphans. Up to this day, the activities pioneered by Iwanaga are continued by the Ave Maria Society.