

The Hidden Christians Rejoin the Catholic Faith

In 1865, Japan's Hidden Christians revealed themselves to the foreign missionaries at Oura Cathedral in Nagasaki in the so-called "Discovery of the Hidden Christians." This event inspired Hidden Christians from other communities to make their own stealthy approaches to the missionaries at Oura. As well as making contact and sharing the truth about their long-concealed faith, the leaders of the Christian community on the Kamigotō Islands petitioned for a visit from a missionary. When he came, the Hidden Christians of Kashiragashima were among those who rejoined the Catholic faith.

In 1867 Domingo Mori Matsujirō, whose father had been an *omizukata* (an official who handled baptisms) in Sotome and was himself the leader of the Hidden Christians in Kamigotō, moved to Kashiragashima. He took up residence in Shirahama and used his house as a temporary place of worship. It was there that the French missionary from Oura Church was received. A wooden church was constructed near his house in 1887 and remained in use until 1914.

CAPTIONS & CREDIT

Site of the house and mission of local Christian leader Domingo Mori Matsujiro

Kashiragashima Church today

Graveyard of Christians who returned to the Catholic faith; on the shore at Shirahama