Every nation has different stories about their independence day. The term independence means freedom. Every nation would like to manage and arrange their plans to develop their countries. The story of Independence Day must be remembered and learned in school. I really believe that an independence day is one of the most important days in every nation.

Looking back at the history of the Independence Day helps us to figure out why many people would like to fight for freedom. For example, in Indonesia before 1945, many people were volunteers to join in the army. They fought and died for freedom. The only thing in their minds was freedom. They wanted to give and do their best for their nations. They lost their families, children, husbands, wives, and even their lives. They did not want another country controlled them anymore. Indonesia had been controlled by the Netherlands for 350 years before Japan went there and controlled Indonesia for 3 years. Millions Indonesian died when they fought against Netherlands and Japan.

We should honor the people who died for freedom. Remembering and celebrating the Independence Day is an example of how to honor the people who died for freedom. For this reason, I understand and accept why we have to celebrate Independence Day. Another example is we go and visit cemeteries where people were buried.

As a student, I have an obligation to honor all my patriots. Studying about the history of my independence day motivates me to do my best wherever I am. I have to keep freedom that my patriots fought and died for. I should bring it to other people whom I meet serve.

Independence Day is a special day. It is a day to challenge people who have never fought for freedom. In my country we celebrate the Independence Day as the birthday of the country. It is on August 17.

Marsel
Reading books is very good for everyone because reading is necessary to our minds, as food is necessary to our bodies. We can extend our knowledge through reading many books and it will make our world bigger. Furthermore, our vocabulary is greatly increased by reading. However, real knowledge might be gotten through direct experiences. When our book knowledge combines with our direct experiences, it will enrich our daily lives. I think that life experience is more important for success in life than book learning.

Reading can make a large difference in our lives. When I was an elementary school student, we had been having a special time for reading every morning. The whole school included all the teachers must have joined for 10 minutes before beginning our classes. We were free to choose favorite books by ourselves. However, at that time, I did not like that time because, I wanted to play with my friends. If we had not had the time for reading in school, I would not have made the time for it by myself, and probably, my life would have changed dramatically. One day, I chose a book "Jesus Christ" from a series of life stories. It was connected to my music life, which was formed with religious music and religious life.

We need to have our personal experiences in order to learn. Studying a new language is also related to the importance of our life experience. We learn new words, sentences and grammar with textbooks, but if we do not use them, we forget them. I believed knowledge that comes from personal experience gives us more confidence and practical skills required for the real world.

By Sr. Josephina

Every person in the world wants to be very successful, but how to do it? What is the best way for success in life? Some people say that a college education is the most important, other say that gaining real life experience is more valuable than book learning.

I agree with both of them. I have an experience from Poland that the best way to be successful in life is to connect the two ways: a college education and life experience. When I finished high school, I was studying IT in the university. During my studies there, I met a lot a very intelligent people. They did not have any problems with class or homework. They studied very well. They knew answers for all the teachers’ questions every time. But they had knowledge only from books. They did not have any practical knowledge.

I met also other students who were a little bit different than they. They had knowledge similar like the students from the first group, but their knowledge was not from books. Their knowledge was from life. Even though they did not how to explain some problems, they knew how to do it, and they did it every time very well. For them it
was very easy to find a job even though they did not finish studies. Many times other people from different companies offered them jobs and money to continue their studies and when they finished studies, they got a job.

In my experience in the university, I saw that if you want to be successful in your life, you have to connect a college education and life experience. They are like a two legs. If you have only one leg, you can move but not well at all. But if you have two legs, you can walk or run very fast.

Lukas

I am sure that all people love a completely healthy body. Have you ever heard the Latin’s phrase “Mens sana in corpore sano” it means a healthy body makes a healthy mind or a healthy soul. I agree with this statement.

As a tree has some parts in itself like roots, stems, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits, a man also has parts in his body. Each part is connected with one another. The three big parts of human beings are mind, body and soul. Now, I would like to talk more about our mind. Our mind has an important function in human life. Every activity starts from the mind’s direction. Our mind, that we call brain, is like a motor to move other parts in our body to do something that we need. Can you imagine how what would be like our mind didn’t work well?

It is the reason why we need to keep our mind healthy. We need a good lifestyle. Discipline is an important behavior that we should have. We eat, work or study, sleep, exercise and pray with a good balance. In this essay, I used five points that we need to pay attention to.

The first is food, we need to eat or consume good food. Good food does not mean expensive only but it has enough vitamins, minerals and proteins. Second, we do our job like work or study with a right attitude. We need to organize, and make a good plan for our job. We spend our time effectively and efficiently so when comes the time to take a rest we can do it that is the third point. Our body needs time to renew itself when we sleep. Fourth, we need to exercise, for example walk thirty minutes every day, run or play some kind of sports. Other interesting activities we can do in our free times like gardening, watching a good movie or reading good books. The last one, don’t forget prayer. When we pray, we build up relationship with God who creates us. The times to say thank you, ask for blessing and energy that we need to continue our life. I call that time, is a time to give nutrition for our soul.

When we have a disciplined life style, I am sure we will have a healthy body and a healthy mind. It means we have created a good quality for our whole body. In a healthy body, blood and oxygen are easily sent brain and then our minds can work well.

Sisilia SSpsS
A healthy body is very important. It makes a healthy mind. How do we feel if we have a flu, headache or stomachache? These conditions can cause pain in our bodies and minds. It makes us distressed and we cannot stop ourselves from doing what we want to do. They affect to our bodies and minds.

First, we should try to eat regularly. I think regular eating is important, especially when we are stressed or depressed. For example, you can eat like breads, potatoes and rice which provide energy for our body. We need three portions of fresh fruits and vegetables every day. Eating too little, or not often enough can also cause problems. You might not have enough energy, so you will feel tired and depressed.

Exercise is also important. It makes you feel happier and it can reduce tension, anxiety and anger. It also improves self-esteem and self-confidence. There is also evidence that exercise can reduce symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Recent studies also suggest that exercise may be effective in treating the symptoms of schizophrenia. Dr. Melissa Conrad, an assistant professor of pathology at Georgetown University, states that one of the best ways to reduce stress is through exercise. “Exercise can emotionally remove one temporarily from stressful environment or situation.”

I think it is difficult to separate our physical bodies from our minds. I believe that many people say “healthy body makes a healthy mind”. I try to do simple things in my daily life to keep my mind healthy. Try it. It can make your life happier.

Dominika SSps

Independence

This vast life with uncountable things that happen in every moment sometimes makes us living without thinking. Even though when we have been under controlled of something or someone, we seem do not care about those things because those are too familiar with us. But we occasionally need to alert to perceive that “who we are or how our life is going”. These questions came up with me every time that when I have been thinking about my country and its independence, I wonder: “if it is true or not”.

In our lives, independence is very precious. Each one of us can be very comfortable to complete our lives in our own way if we have freedom. We also are not limited in our work and we even can be more creative to make our world become perfect.
I was born and grew up in a Communist country. Therefore, I can understand about how capricious independence is. When we live in a dependent situation, we cannot live with our own way. Such as, we haven’t been allowed to practice our own religion. We do not have freedom in speaking. We have to depend on and follow all of the rules that the government gives us even some things we do not agree with to fulfill them.

Moreover, in my life, I have had many experiences about being limited in working. In my convent, because we all live in religious life, that life the government does not want to exist, they try to destroy us in every way. For example, they do not allow us to improve our education, teaching in schools, or working in hospitals.

When we were limited in many ways, we cannot develop our life. It also makes us less creative in our minds. Many times we can create something to contribute to life but we cannot do it because we do not get support from other people. How difficult it is when we have to follow or live dependent others if we do as we want. We will easily get suffering.

For me, independence is very important in our lives. We need to have it to help our own lives and others keep going in the best way. I just want to mean about we need to have independence to develop our lives. Of course, in that situation, we also need have the rules to lead us to follow the right way. Therefore, we need to fight for it to get the right independence for our lives.

Sr. Sang

Why the independence is important for East Timor?

Independence come from the word in and depends on. We use the word independence to show that before a person, country or something depend on another person or country. In this writing, I want to tell about independence in the contest political life.

East Timor is a new country in the world. It is the last country on the list of the countries in the political map. It was colonized by Indonesia for 27 years, under the government of Suharto. He was military leader and became president of Indonesia for 33 years. On May 21, 1998, he proclaimed his inability to continue his presidential power. Therefore, many political parties presented their president candidate. Some provinces or states of Indonesia wanted to independence. One of them was the East Timor; they voted for independence from Indonesia on 30 August, 1999 and became an independence country on 22 May 2002.

East Timor was a province. It was one of the priorities in the government planning for developing and an especial attention because they had civil war, and they were very poor. The declaration of the president of the Indonesia was an opportunity for them to think and make sure their plan for independence. At the time, East Timor had several groups from difference ethnics. They have their own military. The Indonesian’s Army made militia with some of the groups but the plan failed because many people wanted to become independence than stay in Indonesia. It was the beginning of the strong civil war. Thousands of people died and the Indonesia Army destroyed many of the important buildings.

East Timor wants to become independence from Indonesia because Indonesia’s government treated unjust with the society, and because East Timor was a Catholic state. The Bishop went to Portugal and Australia and spoke
out about the situation in East Timor. Therefore, the Australian and Portugal governments helped them to become independence from Indonesia.

East Timor is new country in the world and new government so the United Nation is helping them to build the country. They have three officials’ languages; English, Portuguese and Tetum. The official money is Dollar.

Independence from one country is helpful because they can build their country by their selves. Responsibility of the development of the country is in the hand of the society.

Fr.Beni

These are some of the pictures- East Timor declares state of alert

Many stories were published this year. We can read about them and think about what the authors were thinking. I read a story about John Paul II, our Pope. Then I can tell you why this story is important this year.

The story talks about Pope John Paul II. He is one of the most famous people in the world. However, he also is a leader in the Catholic Church. When he died, many people in the world missed him. They wanted to find many stories about his life. The story about his life was established this year and people wanted to read it. Why did people want to read the story about Pope John Paul II? because, he was very famous person, and also brought peace to this world. I respected him very much when I watched his funeral movies, even though I have never met him before.
The story explains that Pope John Paul II was one of the most important news stories this year. A famous person can make a famous story. Never having a story can make a person become famous. Therefore, the story of the famous person can be the most important news story. Many people want to read his story. Many people can know more about him. The story was read by many people who respected him, like me. The number of publications will tell you that the story is very famous. The stories are sold to many people and translated into many languages.

On the other hand, the story which is very important in the world makes people have respect for somebody. People will respect the person’s life in the story they have read. Sometimes, the person in the story can make a strong impression on those who read, their life, and what they believe.

In conclusion, the most important news story the year can be a story about a famous person. That person has loads of influence on people who respected him or her. Then the story can be an important one.

Ha Manh Do

Fear is a part of human life. Every person has one or more types of fear. Fear is an obstacle in our daily life, but we can overcome fear and we do not need to live with fear.

First, we can try to find the source of what makes fear in our life. We should try to remind ourselves the first time we recognized fear; what is the reason that we are afraid about something or someone. Maybe when we were very young, something happened and now we feel fear.

Second, when we are afraid we should share our feelings with other people, because maybe other people can help us to overcome the fear. Every person should have one special friend that she or he can share all with that person. We do not need to be alone in our lives. Together is better.

Lukas

Mgr Alejandro Labaca and Sr. Innes are Martyrs

Napo is one of the provinces in Ecuador and it belongs to the Diocese the Orellana. Mgr Alejandro Labaca was the first bishop designated in the Diocese. He was in the Carmelite Order. He got his designation to work in Ecuador when he came back from China. In the beginning of his mission, it was too hard because the government had the political problem with the native people, especially with the Secoya, Shuar, Siona and Zaparo. The Ecuadorian government wanted to expand the petroleum mining in the new area but the native people did not allow it because they believe that the land was their mother so
we could not destroy it. The land gave them a place to live and foods every day, so nobody can destroy it. The government did not respect their faith, and killed thousands of them. Many of them died because they drank the contamination water and diseases.

The unique way of transportation is river

For this situation, the church took the action to help the people and the environment. The Carmelite Congregation sent many of its members to minister there. From 1975-1985 many of the Carmelite, missionaries went to Napo to work specifically with the native people. At that time they had not access to visit the communities unless through the river. They had no road, therefore it was too difficult to visit them. The unique way to go there was by river or helicopter. The executives entered in to the interior used the river. They surveyed the situation carefully before acting by mining the petroleum. Sometimes the government entered the interior to invite the native people to become part of civilization. The river was the only one way of transportation for the indigenous to visit other communities.

Some of the native groups already had contact with missionaries but a few of them did not have contact yet. It was a controversy between them. Some of the groups believed that civilization was good but other groups said, “the civilization was the worst because if destroyed their land and contaminated their environment.” For this reason, they did not accept civilization but the consequence many of them were victims. In the beginning, some groups of native people had contact and recognized the missionaries so they knew what the missionaries did. The missionaries came in and taught them the “good news.” Later the government and executives entered and forced them to move to other places. This situation made the native people got angry and did not accept anybody else in their territory. They did not like to see the people destroyed their land and contaminated their river.

This is the petroleum mining The situation was difficult to reconcile because they began to kill each other so that many of them died every day. In this situation, the bishop took a quick action to become a mediator between government and native people. In 1985, Mgr Labaca and Sr. Ines had planning to visit those communities. They came up with an idea to deal with the problem but unfortunately, the helicopter landed them in the place that was close to the strong tribe of Tagaed. Each group did not have contact with the missionaries yet, but they knew the problem was happening in their area. When the helicopter came back and found them, they were death. The Tagaed tribe killed them.

After a few hours, some people from other tribes who knew the missionaries came to that place. They just came there for curios, but unfortunately, they found a bishop and sister had died on the land. The native people especially Tagaed had planned to kill everybody who entered in their territory. They did not know that the man was bishop and the woman was sister. They understood that everybody try to enter in their territory is government and executives. They wanted to begin the exploration so they killed them immediately. One of the eyewitness said, “I came late, they killed my bishop and my sister, they were killed but they still alive in our land.” He
It happened several years ago but the people in Ecuador still have to memory because Mgr Alejandro Labaca and Sr. Ines were working hardly for unity and integrity. They sacrificed themselves to save and defend the rights of the indigenous groups. Sr. Ines wrote a note before they left said, “If I don’t come back, you know where we are.”

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**Saint Teresa Child of Jesus**

In our life, we usually have someone who affects us. This person may help us make our goals or our important decisions in life. Similar to everyone, I also have some people who make my life going better. One of them is a young female saint- Teresa Child of Jesus.

Perhaps, every Christian knows about Teresa Child of Jesus. She is the most famous Saint in The Catholic Church. I have learnt about her when I was very young. I have read a lot about this Saint. And the more I learn about her, the more my admiration increases. I have found out many good things from her brilliant life that I may imitate, because those things are just very simple that I can see in my very life at every moment. For example, when she took away a small trash, she offered that work to God as a prayer for the souls, or she did not talk back to the people who said bad thing to her and she always considered herself like a ball that Jesus could use to play with according to His will. Those all have impressed my mind very much and reminded me about my reflection every day.

Each saint has given us a different way to achieve the God’s path- Some wrote books, some martyred themselves and others just prayed. For Teresa, her life was almost prayer and sacrifice to God. Also she gave life a very precious book. Even just one but this book has been very well-known for a long time since she died - It is named: “The Story of Soul”. My first learning about Teresa is by this book. I admire her writing way: The words are simple, attractive and easy to understand. This way is appreciated by everyone and generation. I really love this book. I think, through it, I have recognized my vocation because I started with my dream about joining the religious life when I read this book. Even though, I have read it many times, I still want to read it again and again because every time when I read it, I also discovered something new. This book has really marked a special point in my life.
After I had already been in the Convent, I still wanted to learn more about Teresa. From this Saint, I can get many good ways to pray, and to be closer to Jesus. I realized that my life in the Convent is not only to be a Christian life, but is it also a very precious life. To follow Teresa, I tried to train myself every moment, such as: my characteristic, my behavior and also my prayer. According to Teresa, with Jesus we do not need to do a big thing, just very small and simple but if we do by our just heart, he will accept our work with His happiness. She always considered herself as “a small flower” of Jesus. That makes her more lovely and attractive among other saints and people.

Until now, I have never thought that I will stop studying about Teresa. Every time, I see her photo or her books, I also want to read and get something from those of them. Anything from Teresa is always good news for me to know. I also think that not only myself but everyone when he or she reads about her they may also admire her like me. For me, Teresa is a great example for myself, as well as, all people in the world.

Sr. Sang Pham. LHC

In traditional families, some superstitions have been working well. They believed that many good things taught them in their life. My family also believes in some of them. Even though I do not believe a hundred percent, but if they teach a good thing, I respect it.

On Java Island, where I came from most of the old generation believed in many superstitions. They believed that everything in the world has a soul. The superstition that I knew: “that we must finish our food when we eat”. When we did not finish it and would throw it away, the mother earth would cry and be sad. She would not have given us enough food. Others superstition are “if a young lady did not get up early, she would not get a good husband”. Another one is “do not sweep the floor when we have guests, or it will make us unlucky”.

I was a part of that culture. I have grown up around them. Sometimes, I felt it was funny and not logical anymore. However, after I realized I was proud of my culture and the ancestors. I thought they taught us many good things: to respect others more, to take care of the environment and to believe in God who has power over us all.

When I compared it with good values that I learned in school, I could see some connections. For example, so we must finish our food and we cannot throw it out. It wants to tell us “we must know how much food we need”, we take enough and we remember others so every one gets what they need. When each of us keeps the good value, I believe that life in this world will be in harmony.

As long as I know about superstitions, I know they are now fading away. For the modern community, it does not work anymore. Sometimes when grandparent teach their grandchildren about superstitions, they just laugh. So in few generations this thing would be forgotten.

Sr. Sisilia SSpS

BOOK LEARNING AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

Life is a process of learning. People will not know how to socialize in society, if they don’t learn from other people or things. So, people still learn for life day by day. People also learn how to live among other people. For success in my life, I prefer both book learning and life experience because they are very important.
I can learn about something new from a book. I have new information, news, and I get knowledge from a book. There is one statement which could be a principle, “A good book is a good friend”. We can spend a lot of our time with our good friend. Because a book is a good friend, we can spend a lot of our time with a book and discuss topics of a book. As a college student, I need a book absolutely, but only book learning is not enough. I need life experience to improve my knowledge that I learn from a book.

Life experience is another way to be successful in life. I truly believe that learning by life experiences is not easy to forget. Maybe we can forget something that we read from a book, but we can remember forever from our life experience. I really think that the ideas and concepts need an experience. From our life experience we can judge how our study is going. We can find and know if our study works or not in our daily life.

Both book learning and life experience are very important and connected to one another. Not only do we learn from books about what we will do for life, but also we can acquire about our life and our study from life experience. Both of them have a contribution for our lives. For life we should learn from a book and life experience.

Life is dynamics; life is not static. Everybody has to learn about everything that is new. A book could be the first place where we can find something. Another possibility is life experience. Not only do we learn from a book, but also we learn from life experience. Don’t forget life experience is the best teacher and keep in your minds that a book is a good friend.

Marsel

Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan

Many great men have affected human beings who are living in the world, such as John Paul II, Mother Theresa of Calcutta or Diana. Many people have adored or admired them and me too. However, today I want to talk about Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan who has impressed me and me proud of him. He had dedicated and sacrificed his life for the Church. Especially, what he had done and said deserve my admiration.

Why I have admired him so much, because he had many good characteristics that I like him and he has become my example to follow. For example, he was a friendly, courageous, holy, humble, faithful and
suffered man. However, his most important and special characteristic was hopefulness. When I have faced difficulties, his hopefulness has reminded and taught me to be patient, hopeful and trustful in God.

Nguyen Van Thuan was Vietnamese. His family is Catholic and his uncle was a famous president from 1933-1945. Then, the Communists had increased and killed most members in his family. He had passed his childhood in difficulty, but he still kept his hope and dream in belief in God. He tried to study and overcome all obstacles in his life, so his dream came true; he became a Catholic priest in 1953. After that, he became a bishop when he was thirty-nine years old. However, he was arrested by the communists in 1975.

When he was captured, in a moment, he lost everything; he had no future and no hope. However, he did not give up hope and despair of God. He had believed strongly in Mother Mary and prayed to be humble and received suffering. He took the hardest task in prison, which was to help the others and even the Buddhists and the people who never believed in God, so they could have lighter tasks. Moreover, he always remembered thing that his mother taught him which is “every moment just offer to God, because every moment belongs to God”. He took that extremely and it kept him in union with God in prison.

“There is only one failure: not to hope in God. Hope in God and you will not be disappointed,” Nguyen Van Thuan wrote in his book “Road of Hope” when he was captured in prison and “I do not want to live a spirit of revenge but to look at the future with hope.” They are the philosophies that I love and admire most in this book because it was expressed and demonstrated through his challenging life. Besides, they help me discover real value in the present moment and hope in the future because all things are written by God’s hand.
Cardinal in 2001 and he passed away in 2002. Currently the Holy See is opening a project beatification of him. With hopefulness, I hope he will be canonized soon.

Sr. Que Lam

Writing is important in the world because you need to be able to express yourself through the written word in a way that others can and are willing to understand you. If you cannot do that, you are going to have a hard time getting into college or the writing business. Let me explain the process.

Prewriting is the first stage of the writing process. I think it is very important to get the ideas you are thinking about; what you want to say, and how you want to say it to a reader. If you have some trouble deciding on a topic or coming up with ideas, we can use one of variety of prewriting techniques, such as brainstorming. During brainstorming, you write down every idea that comes up. Decide on one topic for your writing, but you can keep your other ideas.

The second is to take your idea and start to write a rough draft. This draft can contain many errors in about spelling, grammar, punctuation or incomplete ideas. At this point, do not worry about correcting the errors. The main thing is put to your ideas into your sentences even if they are not perfect.

The third stage is revising. It means evaluating your text’s content and making sure you actually wrote what you planned. You can read what you have written. Play the role of the reader. If you are not sure, let others read your writing and listen to what they say about your writing. Maybe they can give you suggestion to make your writing better.

Finally, you must check your writing for sentence structure, each containing a subject and a predicate. Did you use a variety of verb tenses correctly, such as simple present, present progressive, present perfect, etc? Use a variety of language constructions to make your writing more precise and correct; such as comparative structures, relative clauses and conditional sentences. Another important thing is to edit for text mechanics; such as capitalization, numbering, italics, and abbreviations.

Many people use this writing process. I hope this process can work for you.

Sr. Dominika
A person whom I admire

I really admire my father who passed away when I was a novice in 2007. At that time, he was 65 years old, and it was death just as our family members thought that it was a time to enjoy his life after retirement. He had worked hard as a railroad man and contributed to extend the Shinkansen—the ultra-high speed train—lines in Japan. He was a quiet person who did not express his feelings by his words. However, he showed me how to get true happiness in our life through his attitude to life.

When I was a child, I did not like my father because he was not a friendly person. I have never heard him laughing with a loud voice, even when we played baseball, which is his favorite sport, with the neighborhood children. He loved the mountains very much. When he went to the mountains, he was always alone. One day, he said, “The mountains tell me what the meaning of my life is.” I could not understand this meaning until I grew into an adult, and I started to love mountain-climbing. I realized by myself how small I am, and this wonderful view will continue to exist and nothing will change, even if I lose my life. Now, I exist with this wonderful view in my memory. For that reason I must live in the present as much as possible and remove my past regrets or future concerns. When my father was staying in the hospice, his room was filled with many pictures which were of beautiful mountains.

He was a gentle person, but I remember that he scolded severely when I spoke something with complaints. I have never heard his complaints and I had thought that he must have been restraining his dissatisfaction. However, my calculations were wrong. He had taken a constructive way of living so he showed a positive attitude on every occurrence. When I was determined to enter to the convent, he quietly said only a word, “Your happiness cannot be found by another person. When you desire real happiness, all your surroundings will help you.” I can still hear this word in my ears when I have to determine something to go my way. He lived for one year after he was diagnosed with cancer. Even at that time, he strived with all sorts of difficulties without any complaints.

Two months before his death, he lost all his eyesight from a side effect of the cancer’s treatment. At that time, I could not accept his situation that he was not able to see again this world, even my face. I had remembered him when he was healthy, and he devoted every spare moment to stay with nature. One day I visited the hospice, he was standing toward the window. I was surprised that it seemed he was gazing out on the beautiful landscape. I believed firmly that he could see that beautiful view in his mind, and also he was listening to the important messages through the harmony of nature. When I took his hands to move him to his bed, he said, “The sounds of nature would not change in the past, present and future.” After that he continued his words with a little joke, “But the sounds of your piano changes greatly day by day. You have to find out an eternal truth in your mind.”

He endured all sorts of affliction with silence, and it seemed he was enjoying that all bitterness is turned to great joy and it is the same with mountain-climbing. When we stand on a mountaintop and view the panorama, we forget all sufferings we had during the climb towards the top. He learned a lot of important things from the harmony of nature
and it helped him until the last second of his life. I feel that I was called to follow in the footsteps of my father in order to find true happiness in my life, because it must lead me to the footsteps of Jesus, who climbs the hill bearing a cross.

Sr. Josephina

Overcoming Our Fears

I think that fear can be divided into two types. One fear is due to an outside cause, such as the fear of dark places, animals, or flying, and the other one is due to an internal cause, such as the fear of failure, of being alone, of getting ill, or of dying. The former can be avoided as far as possible with changing our environment or considering a prior measure. On the other hand, the latter is more difficult to overcome. We usually feel fear of something which is unclear to understand. This type of fear leads us to hide our true feeling; however, we cannot get the fear out of our mind. We have to try to be clear about where this feeling comes from or what the essential meaning of ourselves is.

Fear comes to our mind suddenly and sometimes it is not clear what the beginning is. When I was a child, I had not hesitated to play the piano in front of many people, but I rather enjoyed. I always had had an abundance of confidence so I seemed to fear no one. However, as I grew older I became very nervous by the presence of the audience. This fear continued until after my graduation from the university. During my student days at the music university, I wanted to overcome my fear and tried to remove them with various ways, but I could not handle the trembles and the moistness of my hands.

When we are in the midst of our fears, we often cannot see the difference between the ideal and the real. After my graduation, I had worked at a high school as a music teacher. One day, I realized that I had no fear even if I was playing in front of over a thousand people. I could not believe what was happening. During my student days, I practiced hard to remove my fear and pass the exam. I tried Zen meditation—seated contemplation as practiced in the Zen sect—for making myself mentally strong and increasing the power of concentration. However, that did not help me to improve, because at that time, I was concerned about getting a good evaluation, more than anything else.

Fear blocks our progress and it makes us unable to move forward. When I was in the midst of my fear, I was afraid to express my weakness. I was thinking that this problem cannot be solved no matter whom I consult, but I needed to open my heart to others. In a similar way, when I play for my beloved someone, I will have to treasure only the present sounds. It is necessary to think about the present moment which could not playback the sound. However, at that time, I had played only for self-fulfillment; therefore, I could not move forward.
In my experience, I was unsuccessful at removing my fear, my challenge, but I was given a lot of awareness. I have been changed with the change of my surroundings through many years. I feel that it is similar to finding a meaning in our life; how we can put some meaning back through overcoming our fear. We should live with a daily awareness that we are being given joy and hope.

Sr. Josephina