

## Letter to Your Holiness (Leo XIV)

December 11, 2025

Most Holy Father,

Peace be with you.

My name is Toshiji Shimizu, baptized under the Catholic name Peter, and I am a Japanese citizen currently 67 years of age. With deepest reverence, I take the liberty of writing to Your Holiness, moved by a matter I earnestly wish to convey and humbly place before you.

I was not originally a Christian, yet throughout my life I have pondered deeply upon the existence of God. I have come to feel that God's existence cannot easily be proven through logic or words, for an encounter with God is essentially a profoundly personal experience. It may be only through seeing, hearing, or feeling—through the body itself—that one truly recognizes His presence.

In my childhood, I experienced something that has never faded from my heart. When I was in the fourth or fifth grade of elementary school, nearly sixty years ago, I did not hear an external voice, but rather a question quietly arose from within me: "If by offering your life in place of the Emperor, he might be saved, would you be able to accept such a sacrifice?" This thought came to me one morning as I awoke in a half-dreaming state. Perhaps I had seen a television program the day before that suggested such an idea, yet I cannot say for certain. I do not claim this was a revelation, but it became the starting point of my lifelong reflection on human responsibility and the salvation of others. I have never spoken of this to anyone until now.

In Japan, as Your Holiness may know, former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was tragically assassinated in July 2022. The background of this event involved the despair of a young man whose family had been devastated by excessive donations to the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (formerly the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity).

Subsequently, the Ministry of Education petitioned for the dissolution of this organization, and on March 25, 2025, the Tokyo District Court ordered its dissolution on

the grounds of “legal violations and unlawful acts, including issues related to excessive donations.” The organization immediately declared its intention to appeal, claiming infringement of religious freedom, and on April 7, 2025, it filed an appeal with the Tokyo High Court.

As Your Holiness is aware, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan officially judged in August 1985 that the doctrine of the “Divine Principle” was incompatible with the authentic teaching of Christianity and therefore heretical. In my youth, I attended some of the seminars of this group, though I did not become a member. Looking back, I regret that I did not fully recognize the problems in its teachings at that time.

The Divine Principle may be described as an attempt to understand Christianity through a scientific perspective. Yet I have felt that this understanding was insufficient. In response, I prepared a proposal and created a website, later compiling its content into a video presentation, which I believe reflects messages I have received from God. The video is titled "Science, Religion & Emperor."

\* Website: (<https://an-open-letter.com>)

\* Video (English, approx. 10 minutes): (<https://youtu.be/TTvfzJbR2mk>)

The website contains writings suggesting that His Majesty the Emperor might serve as the inaugurator of a new form of Christianity, along with reference materials.

Nevertheless, I cannot avoid asking: how might the Catholic Church receive and guide those who have walked under teachings that contain error? This is the question that weighs upon me.

Therefore, with humility, I beg Your Holiness to consider not the preservation of the Family Federation itself, but rather the possibility that those who have sought faith and salvation within it might be led into the true path of Christ. I ask whether the Catholic Church might have a role in such guidance. I feel compelled to make this request because I believe it to be entrusted to me by God. For this reason, I have offered proposals such as those expressed in my video.

As I, once not a Christian, was eventually led to Christ and to Your Holiness, so too may those who wander be guided by your strength to become servants of the Lord. I do not

wish to impose my own will upon them; rather, I speak on behalf of their own desire to be led.

I am deeply concerned that those who once lived under mistaken understanding might be forever cut off from the path of healing and return to God. This concern arises from my own long journey toward faith. Though the possibility of such fulfillment may seem very small, the dissolution is not yet final. As long as even one person prays for such a possibility, I believe it is not entirely lost. Yet I cannot imagine the steps by which such a hope might be realized.

I fully understand that the ultimate judgment and guidance rest in the hands of the Church and of Your Holiness. This letter does not demand any action, but simply conveys the question and plea of one seeker of faith in Japan.

If Your Holiness would remember in prayer the path by which those who wander may be guided in truth and mercy, I would desire nothing more.

Finally, I pray with all my heart that God's abundant blessing may rest upon Your Holiness, upon your health, and upon your service to the universal Church.

With profound devotion,

Toshiji Shimizu

JAPAN