Chizuru Yamada profile

*The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet have recently welcomed three new candidates to our congregation! Sally Koch, Tracy Watson and Chizuru Yamada were all able meet each other and to join a huge delegation of our sisters, associates and partners in ministry at the Sisters of St. Joseph Federation Event in Orlando, Florida in July. The three of them come to us from different corners of the world—New York, Nebraska and Japan—but they are united in a draw to our charism of “love of God and love of dear neighbor without distinction.” We are excited to share each of their stories with you.*

Chizuru Yamada grew up in Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan, as an only child. Compared to her quiet childhood home, living in community now with eight of our sisters in Tsu, Japan has been a challenge, but a good one. “I lived by myself for many years, and this is my first experience living with others,” she said. “Community life is sometimes happy, sometimes difficult.”

After studying chemistry at the University of Tokyo Agriculture and Technology, Chizuru has led an interesting life with many different jobs. She has worked as a recording engineer, a chemical researcher and a Catholic correspondence course teacher. Her favorite job was as the editor of a Catholic encyclopedia, which she did for three years.

She first met two Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet at a bible study at her church about 25 years ago. Later in life, as she practiced the Ignatian Spirituality Exercises, she heard God inviting her to become a sister. Answering that call, she became a candidate one year ago. “I admire the sisters because they are free. While they are part of society, their hearts and minds are free.”

Last year, Chizuru worked as a volunteer librarian at St. Joseph Joshi Gakuen, our high school in Japan. She hopes to eventually work as a spiritual director.

Chizuru came to the United States in June to attend the Sisters of St. Joseph Federation Event in Orlando. At the event, she said she was moved by the themes of reconciliation and unity. “It does not mean making everything the same. It means ‘respecting diversity.’ We are different from each other. We are important to each other. So we must have conversation again and again, and we must listen to another one's voice.”

Now, she is now spending three months at Holy Family Center in Los Angeles improving her English. She sees this opportunity to travel in the United States as a way for her to connect with sisters. “I want to be a bridge between diverse cultures and generations,” she said. “God invited me to be a bridge between people.”