

## *Life Within Kami*

Good Morning, everyone! Happy New Day, Week & special “Thanks” for joining today’s service. This is our monthly service for April 2021.

Mr. Massimo Claus, 57, is an Italian and a genuine seeker of true faith. We have exchanged messages almost every day for more than 20 months. I would like to share our recent messages with all of you today. I feel they are most important for all of us. They shine a light on our relationship with the faith and how to live within the very midst of Kami – inside Kami’s bosom, may we say.

As you know, March 7<sup>th</sup> we had our Spring Memorial Service. I sent him the following message:

“Thanks to the prayers of those like you, we had a wonderful Spring Memorial Service full of indescribable gratitude, even though only our family members witnessed it, due to the coronavirus restrictions. I will post the group photo.”

His reply was:

“Dear Sensei, What a beautiful family! I too feel a deep gratitude inside me. Konkokyo healed my fear of living. I want to improve and to work hard. I have quit smoking and I'm on a diet. I feel like I'm a kid again. All this has happened all the while people keep dying and the Coronavirus – again – has become stronger. I feel it's because of people's arrogance.

We live in Kami's world, and I wish I could help everyone, and take them by my side into Kami's light. I feel like I'm the only person who's really living in my country. I really feel I'm a person of faith. And because of all of this, I feel so grateful.”

I then wrote to him:

“Thank you very much for your kind words & wonderful message. I was very much touched by it. Let us continue to live with faith and deepen the peace & joy in our hearts to influence people around us far & wide.”

The next day immediately he sent this message:

“Dear Sensei, I'm aware that what I feel is a really great blessing and I believe that through this, Kami wants to show me what His wishes are for me. My improvement both physically and mentally is my answer to Kami. I don't know whether Kami makes every believer feel His closeness as clearly as He does with me every moment. Sometimes it is so strong that it leaves me breathless, because through all of this I feel that what Kami wishes for me is something really great.

Could you help me understand? Could you ask Kami what His great wish is for me?”

Then, during the morning prayer service the next day, I received an important revelation about him, and sent this message to him:

“Hi, Massimo! I am very happy to know you are experiencing the essence of Konko Daijin’s faith through your single-hearted sincerity toward Kami. Anyone can clearly feel Kami’s closeness like you, when they respect the process of life; that is, to take up everything that happens as Kami’s Sacred Doing.

Shodai Oyasensei showed us the Way anyone can live an ordinary life, communicate with Kami, and become a living Being. As you know, the believers of KC Airaku are reciting *Konko Daijin’s Revival* this year. The depth of closeness with Kami differs from each believer, but those believers at KC Airaku clearly feel Kami’s closeness each & every day. They now strive to blaze a trail into the active world of Konko Daijin, and experience

the essence of his faith — as if by touching they would feel it’s warmth and by poking blood would spurt. When we feel Kami’s closeness, we can overcome any obstacle with gratitude.

You are definitely walking on the true way of Konko. You will gradually realize Kami’s great wish for you step by step, like our founder. It is very important, so I haven’t asked Kami about Kami’s great wish for you at this time.

However, I clearly received a revelation about you. It was the Japanese words 神中. There is no such idiom in Japanese, but it has a lot of meaning. 神 is Kami and 中 is *inside, center, on the way, middle*, and etc.

You are now *inside* or *within* Kami. You are revealing a Kami-centered world. You are on the way to manifest mutual fulfillment between Kami and you. Kami wishes you to be humble enough – to think you are *in the middle*, no matter how blessed you become or what difficulties you may be facing.”

I continued writing to him adding:

After my morning prayer service, I received the following teaching for you. It was *Selected Teachings of Konko Daijin #6* in the book, titled, Peace & Joy in Konko Teachings.

To my surprise it was the teaching that indicates 神中. It reads:

*‘Although Kami cannot be seen, you are constantly walking within and through the midst of Kami. Even while fertilizing a field or walking along a path, you are in Tenchi Kane No Kami’s hiromae. The whole world is Tenchi Kane No Kami’s hiromae.’*

Please read the three mini-interpretations about this teaching by Shodai Oyasensei as well.”

Here is Massimo’s response:

“Dear Sensei, thanks for giving so much importance to my messages. I have read and meditated on Shodai Oyasensei’s teachings you had told me. I was very impressed. I, too, am renewing my heart and will keep working hard on this. Sometimes I feel a deep beatitude inside me. It doesn’t last long, but it’s an indescribable sensation. I believe Kami had me born in a country where there are no Konko churches in order to teach me how to live by just trusting Him completely. This helped me build a very strong bond with Kami, who leads me each and every moment of the day. I can’t really express what I feel with words. I know this sounds very presumptuous to say, but it’s the truth. And, I believe sincerity has a fundamental importance in the Konko Faith.

The Japanese words 神中 describe my life. This has deeply impressed me. Do you remember when I asked you for a new name for me? This could really be my name, but it would be very pre-sump-tu-ous.”

I wrote to him as follows:

“Hi, Massimo! How nice & important it is for you to understand Kami had you born in a country where there are no Konko churches in order to teach you how to live by just trusting Kami completely!

Your last name, ‘Claus,’ has *almost* the same pronunciation as ‘close.’ 神中 indicates a *close relationship with Kami*. So, I think 神中 (*Kaminaka*) is the best for your Japanese last name. Your first name is, ‘Massimo.’ The suitable Japanese words for ‘Massimo’ are 真志. The actual pronunciation of 真志 is *Masashi*. However, since the Kanji characters of Japanese names can be pronounced more freely, I would suggest we pronounce 真志 as *Massimo*. So, your Japanese name is 神中真志 which is pronounced, *Kaminaka Massimo*. 真志 means true will or true aspiration. I think this Japanese first name describes you the best.”

Then I thought over this Japanese name for him. And sent another message to him:

“As for your Japanese divine name, I think it’s better to read 神中真志 as かみなかまさし (*Kaminaka Masashi*). 真志 (*Masashi*) is a common first name in Japan and usually is read as such. Of course, there is ‘マッシモ’ (*Massimo*) included in its base. So, I would like to call you either, ‘Kaminaka Massimo’ or ‘Kaminaka Masashi’ from now on.

Massimo loves his Japanese divine name so much that he wrote as follows:

“As for the divine name, this may sound like I’m crazy, but I really want to become an *Ikigami*. To me, to receive a divine name - is like - wearing - Kami’s - robe. Maybe this sounds like exaggerated, but to me - it is so. The divine name Kaminaka Masashi reflects my life and my heart.”

It is now Massimo’s request that I write him, “Hi, Masashi!” I believe Massimo has received his Japanese divine name from Kami through these pro-ces-ses of life that are Kami’s Sacred Workings. I have not yet seen him in person. However, by frequently exchanging e-mails I have got to know of his genuine pursuit of true faith, his joy to become involved in the Konko Faith and his enthusiasm to serve Kami and people. I really think ‘神中真志’ describes him -- divinely -- well.

I hope and pray all people, who actually have been given life between the blessings of Heaven and Earth, shall come to realize their potential to shine in faith and develop their own relationship with the Sacred Divine Workings of life. Kami has hopes and desires for each and every one of us.

Through steadily deepening his faith, our founder had received his final divine name, Ikigami Konko Daijin. Kaminaka Masashi is a present-day example of his journey as he gets closer to the Sacred Heart of Kami. May we all do our best to deepen the *peace & joy* in our hearts so as to receive our own divine name from Kami.

I pray that Kami will take much pleasure and joy in our efforts to shine with faith in Kami.