

## IHSS Research Seminar Program 2023

Keynote address, international workshop, *Gender and Emotion in Japanese Christianity (1549-1638)*, presented by the Gender and Women's History Research Centre

### “Deciphering Kirishitan women, emotions, and persecution”

**Professor Haruko Nawata Ward (Columbia Theological Seminary)**

Co-convened by: Dr Linda Zampol D’Ortia (ACU, Ca’Foscari University of Venice), Dr Jessica O’Leary (ACU), & Dr Kristie Flannery (ACU)

**Tuesday 7 February 2023, 9-10am AEDT**

To be held in room **MEL-460.4.28**, room 24, level 4, 250 Victoria Parade, Melbourne and online via Teams  
Contact [ihss@acu.edu.au](mailto:ihss@acu.edu.au) for joining link

**Abstract:** In this lecture, I would like to discuss my ongoing queries and challenges in my search to come closer to the historical truths about Kirishitan women. These women converted to Catholicism during what we customarily call the Christian century in Japan, ca. 1549–1650. Although we do not have the exact number of these conversions, we know that over 100 Kirishitan women died as martyrs. First, I will pose questions about the documentary sources. As no original writings by these women remain, it is taxing to decipher their inner thoughts and feelings. However, many Jesuit sources provide us with hints. I introduce two categories of these sources: Kirishitanban devotional literature and the Jesuit letters, and make some suggestions about potential ways to read them. Second, I will briefly ponder the terms for and meaning of emotions in studying these Kirishitan women as a non-specialist in the history of emotions. Third, I will introduce examples of Kirishitan women's expectations, experiences, and expressions of the "joy" in persecution from these two categories. Lastly, I will invite other methodological ideas that may help our search for a clearer understanding of the inner world of women in early modern Japan and beyond.

**Bio:** Haruko Nawata Ward is Professor of Church History at Columbia Theological Seminary. Professor Ward’s research interests include the age of Reformations, the Jesuits, encounters of cultures and religions, women and religious vocation, history of biblical interpretation, history of Christianity in Asia, and justice issues in Church history.

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*Madonna of the Thumb*, Tokyo National Museum.  
Source: [ColBase](#)

