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Abstract for 2019 Fall MRI Conference

***The Fate of Nagasaki's Urakami Community:
Looking inside the Atomic Black Box***

Long Abstract:

Macau' sister-city of Nagasaki was the center of Japan's Roman Catholic faith and held the largest Roman Catholic church in Asia. One of the Church's most renowned saints, St Francis Xavier, founded the community, while the Jesuits governed it from 1580 until the brutal repressions beginning in 1614. Nagasaki's relationship to Macau has been reinforced until today through the Church of São Paulo (Igreja Mater Dei), to which Japanese Catholics from 1602 to 1640 contributed extensively, as well as the presence in Macau of remains of Japanese Catholics martyred in the Tokugawa repression. The Nagasaki Catholic community survived unknown for over two hundred years until Japan was opened to the world in 1854.

The plutonium bomb dropped this community on 9th August 1945 used a new and more powerful technology than the Hiroshima bomb. The Nagasaki bomb became the basis for the nuclear weapons and arms race that followed. While the Japanese government sought a termination of the Pacific war, the bomb was unleashed on top of the undefended Catholic Urakami Community miles north of the Nagasaki harbor. It killed as many as 78,000 initially with double the number subsequently, many dying in "unspeakable suffering." This article seeks to open discussion on the obscured nature of the Urakami bombing, the decision behind it, and on the bomb's impact on the post-war Catholic mission in Japan.

Short Abstract:

***The Fate of Nagasaki's Urakami Community:
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Macau' sister-city of Nagasaki was the center of Japan's Roman Catholic faith and held the largest Roman Catholic church in Asia. While the Japanese government sought a termination of the Pacific war, the bomb was unleashed on 9th August 1945 on the undefended Catholic Urakami Community miles north of the Nagasaki harbor. This article seeks to open discussion on the obscured nature of the Urakami bombing, the decision behind it, and on the bomb's impact on the post-war Catholic mission in Japan.