

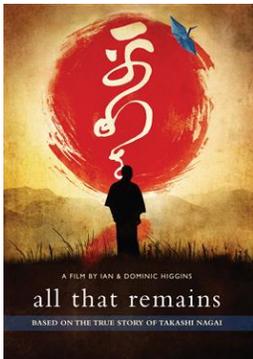
# Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom

## Movie Review – All That Remains

*Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me." - Matthew 25:38-41* - a favorite passage of Dr. Paul Takashi Nagai

**God concealed within the universe a precious sword...The human race, with this discovery of atomic power, now holds the key to its future destiny. A key to survival or destruction. I believe the only way to the proper use of this key is authentic religion. - Dr. Paul Takashi Nagai, *The Bells of Nagasaki***



*All That Remains* is the first English language movie of Dr. Paul Takashi Nagai, Marina Nagai Midori and their family. This film was produced and directed by Ian and Dominic Higgins, who had previously produced and directed *The 13th Day*, a film of the Fatima miracles. Released in May 2016 on DVD, it is a beautiful depiction of the search for God, of faith in Him despite all suffering, and of love for others.

Takashi Nagai was born into a samurai family in 1908. His father was a country doctor, and he was expected to follow in his father's footsteps rather than his own desire to be an artist and writer. He was also attracted to medical research, and so he decided to not attend the prestigious medical schools such as at Tokyo, but rather the more Western-oriented school at Nagasaki.

While he was at medical school Nagai's mother had a stroke. He made it home in time to be at her bedside, and her death caused him to begin to doubt his materialist and atheistic education. These doubts increased after he began to read Blaise Pascal's *Pensees* (which is not shown in the movie), and again after he took lodging with a Christian family, the Moriyamas. He was called up by the army for duty in China and became repulsed by the harm done to Chinese civilians. During this time he was supported by his landlord's daughter, Marina Moriyama Midori, who gave him a sweater and gloves she had knitted, a catechism (in the movie a Bible, a very understandable change), letters, and prayers.

Takashi returned from China and began instructions to be received into the Catholic Church. He was baptized and then married Midori, and they continued to nurture their spiritual lives. After the birth of their son he was sent on another army tour in China, which only deepened his view that it was an unjust war and that Japanese propaganda were lies in the service of corrupt leaders; still, he became a decorated hero for having volunteered to slip through Chinese lines to get help for his surrounded unit. After returning to Nagasaki he resumed his radiology research and hospital service, and he and Midori saw the birth of a daughter.

The rest of the movie covers his June 1945 diagnosis of terminal leukemia from occupational radiation exposure at which he was given 2-3 years to live, the nuclear attack of August 1945 in which he was seriously injured and Midori was killed, his turn to art and Christian writing after he became an invalid, and his death in 1951.

In its entirety the film is very moving and beautiful, excepting of course the war in China and the hideous scenes of the nuclear attack and its aftermath. The directors have made a great effort to depict Japanese culture, but there are a few inaccuracies. The most noticeable is Midori's tears in front of her husband during family tragedies, the absence of which would have confused a Western audience. Some negative depictions of Japanese culture of that time are not shown, in particular the order given Dr. Nagai in China to kill his patients

to prevent them from becoming prisoners of war; the order was rescinded after he spent the entire night on his knees in prayer.

For all these reasons this movie is highly recommended. However, there is a major flaw not apparent to the casual viewer but obvious to anyone already familiar with the life and death of Takashi and Midori Nagai, and the viewer should keep this flaw in mind while watching it.

One manifestation of this flaw concerns Dr. Nagai's injuries from the nuclear attack. He had a severed temporal artery. His colleagues were unable to stop the bleeding, which is depicted in the film. By mid-September 1945 he was dying from this injury and from radiation sickness. He experienced a miraculous healing through intercessory prayer involving a former patient of his by the name of Maximilian Kolbe, and his own faith in God. This healing is not depicted in the movie; there is a vague hint of the possibility of a healing in which Midori appears to him in a dream, but that is all.

The second manifestation regards the 'presentment' that Dr. Nagai was given on December 8, 1941 in which he was shaken by a vision of the destruction of Nagasaki. His research had already made him aware of nuclear energy. When Hiroshima was destroyed he became convinced that Nagasaki would experience the next attack, and he sent his children to the countryside with his mother-in-law. Takashi could not in conscience leave the hospital, and Midori refused to leave his side. In the movie most of this is changed: there is no 'presentment', no vision, and the family members who leave Nagasaki do so *before* the Hiroshima attack.

Why these changes? Not because of an attempt by the directors to minimize Catholic piety for any Christian uncomfortable with it; they show several rosaries, and even change the crucifix on the Moriyama-Nagai home altar to a statue of Mary holding the infant Jesus. Not because of any discomfort with miracles, since they depict them in their film on Fatima.

No, the answer might be that the directors decided these scenes would not be believable to their audience (the Fatima Miracle of the Sun is too well documented by non-Christians to be seriously doubted). Imagine: a devout Christian with a scientific background *knew* from a private divine revelation that his city would die, and he stayed. On August 8, 1945 – the day before the attack - he forgot his lunch and returned to his home, now empty of his children, only to find his beloved wife sobbing uncontrollably on the floor. She *knew*. Neither one fled to the countryside to join their children. They stayed out of love to do their duty to their neighbors and each other, and they prayed that this evil would pass them by. Can we believe this? Can we believe in a miracle that gave six more years of life to a nuclear war survivor - *who was already dying from radiation exposure before the attack* - so that he could write books and essays on Christian faith, suffering, and forgiveness?

The directors have possibly decided that, no, we today cannot readily believe these things, mystical things somehow linked to the hideous, love joined to a radioactive Cross. That conclusion is one that is in our hands, one that we have the power to change with God's grace.

## **Today's Martyrs**

For more information please visit our web site at: <https://todaysmartyrs.org/>

or write to:

**2490 Black Rock Turnpike #455  
Fairfield CT 06825-2400 USA**

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