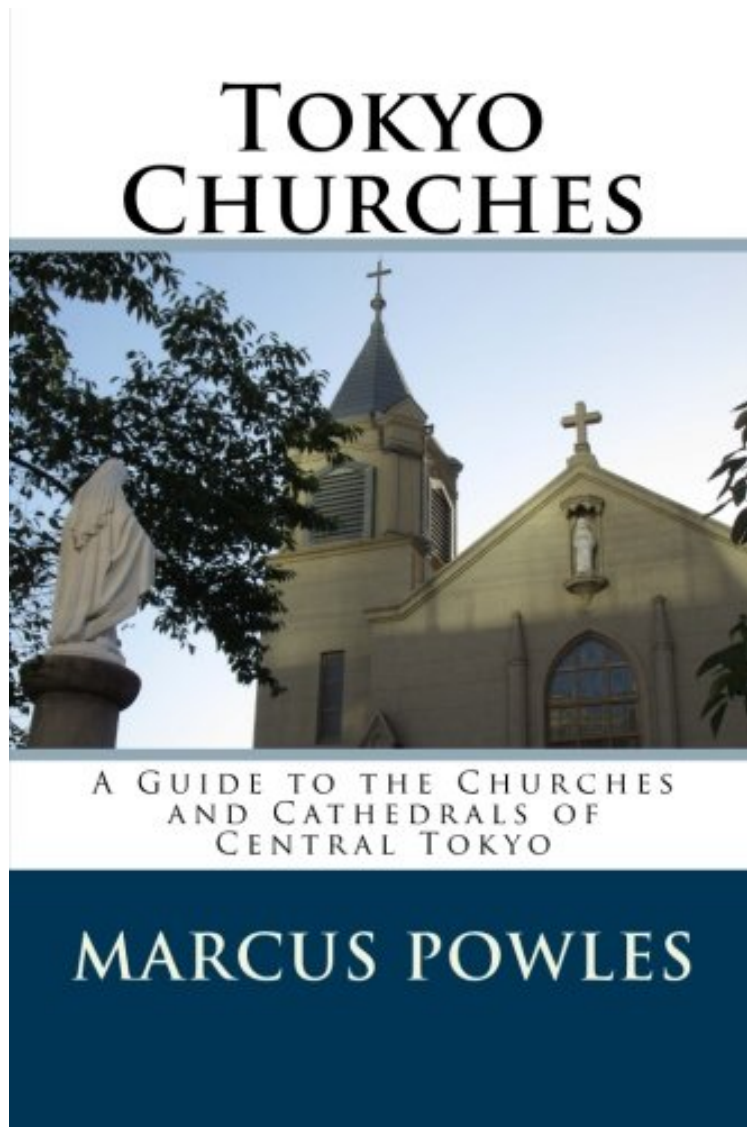


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Tokyo Churches: A Guide to the Churches and Cathedrals of Central Tokyo

Marcus Powles

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Marcus Powles : Tokyo Churches: A Guide to the Churches and Cathedrals of Central Tokyo before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tokyo Churches: A Guide to the Churches and Cathedrals of Central Tokyo:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tokyo through select ChurchesBy miriam wattlesThis book is a treasure, going far beyond being a simple guide to churches and cathedrals in Tokyo. It's organization is helpful and

clear. After an introduction which includes a summary of the almost 500 year history of Christianity in Japan, a brief overview of important denominations, background on the author, and a section designed to ease any hesitation to enter churches, the following chapters separately describe about 38 churches in Tokyo: Anglican/Episcopal, Catholic, and "Other" ("Orthodox, Lutheran, Quaker and other Churches"). Beginning with the basic access information, Powles describes each church's architectural space and atmosphere while relating the history of that particular church and its founders. In the Anglican and Catholic sections, each chapter ends with a brief biography of the saint for whom the church was named. The book ends with sections on "Bookshops and cafes", an appendix with maps and web resources, and (so rare now) a good 15 pages for the reader to write notes. Overall, I am left with a richer history of Tokyo and Japan. The book as a whole sets each individual church history against the background of the stories of these Christian denominations in Japan, not passing over the hardships of wartime; it all adds up to a dimension of modern institutional history that is often disregarded. Written in crystal-clear prose, the book's greatest strength is the immense enthusiasm and personality of the writer. Powles points out that "this book is the work of an amateur" and states his lack of scholarly background but the love of the amateur infuses each vignette to give a perfectly enticing glimpse of each of the churches described. His reports on the churches that I do know from personal experience, the Quaker Meeting in Mita and the St Alban's, rang true. Almost every entry left me with the desire to get on the train or subway, to take a look and see and experience that particular sacred space for myself, not forgetting to write notes to myself on those back pages. As can be seen from the photos that begin each chapter, most of these spaces do not look like much from the outside. In passing by on the streets of Tokyo, I haven't felt that these are spaces to enter and imbibe. But this book has changed my mind; I have promised myself to venture into at least a few of these churches that Powles most thoroughly recommended (perhaps St. Timothy's?). Yet, even if I don't manage to actually make the time to visit most of the churches, I feel that that I have been treated to the best of armchair journeys as the doors of dozens of churches have been opened to me. The book reminds me how the church, aside from being a place to gather in worship, and a place to gather strength through meditation, has traditionally also been a place of refuge. I had heard as a child that all church doors were left open and was early disappointed that this was not often true. I take heart in learning that many churches in Tokyo are open to visitors.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A charming booklet. By Daniel Ogilvie Before I review this book I should, for the purposes of openness, declare I am a friend of Marcus, albeit we have never physically met, and being neither a Christian nor living or intending to visit Tokyo in the near future I am perhaps not the best qualified. Having said all of that I found this book, as with Marcus's earlier book on Tokyo temples, to be quite charming. It contains a wealth of information about churches in Tokyo which by itself I found quite fascinating to read. The book includes a short preface about the history of Christianity in Japan which is written in an informative yet informal manner - this book never preaches to us non-believers. Each church, apart from giving us the details of services and directions, allows anyone to make the most of their visit by highlighting features or artworks we may otherwise miss. Towards the back of book we find additional resources such as websites, Christian bookshops and even coffee shops that have some affiliation to the churches described. Some maps are also provided but there is no sense of scale on them. However each chapter provides a good description of how to find the church so that is not so important. I would urge anyone visiting Tokyo with any interest at all in visiting any of these churches, or just wishing to see something a little off the usual tourist tracks, to buy this book, if only so Marcus can afford to buy some photography lessons and a decent camera (the photographs are the reason I only gave this review 4 stars instead of 5).

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is a great resource for anyone looking for a church in Tokyo. By Tokyo Purplegirl This is a great resource for anyone looking for a church in Tokyo, or someone who is already a member of a church but would like to know more about their Christian neighbours. It is obviously the result of a huge amount of research, done with enormous enthusiasm. It is not only a guide book but also the diary of a pilgrimage and a hymn to Christianity in Tokyo. There is great attention to detail, and the descriptions make all the churches come alive. It is clear how much the author loves all his neighbours in Tokyo.

Tokyo Churches