

RADIANT FAITH: The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States
Report on Circles of Harmony 2

FAITH EXPRESSED
Pillar A: Identity

Converts devoted as new Catholics
Embrace others to be part of the large community
Promote celebrations of saints in all parishes
Faith manifested in one another
Express faith through sharing it with others
Understand and relate to others
We are the image of Christ
Joyful presence in the lives of others especially those from API backgrounds
We share our API identity by sharing cultures, especially food in our community as well as outside in our homes and workplaces.
We are recognized for our sense of joy being catholic and a member of our API community (in the midst of our suffering).
We are also recognized for our gift of understanding about other cultures and our passion for teaching others about our expressions of faith through many ways.

Our API Catholic identity is best expressed through the Holy Mass celebrated in our native tongue or language, through our cultural gifts, such as wearing cultural outfits to express our unique identity

Our young people experience a cultural shift during multi-lingual masses as if it only allows one portion of a meal instead of an entire meal. There needs to be a balance of the needs of the identity in the context of the Mass.

FAITH ENGAGED
Pillar A: Identity

Smell the flock, priests go to Buddhist retreat
Hospitality, food, music,
Outreach
Connect with other people of other ethnicities
Our service through ministry as well as our strong faith and specific cultural ways of practicing our faith

The emphasis is mainly on active participation in parish life but not so much in our ethnic identity. Our ethnic groups feel that we are not seen, and not recognized as our true ethnic group within our parishes.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
Pillar A: Identity

challenge: mixed marriages (Catholics married to Catholics (in a Buddhist culture)
Challenge? stereotype (ex. Indian vs Hindu)
Training in devotional practices
Understand and learn the different languages to break the barrier for certain groups and the youth
Language barrier has been affecting intergenerational harmony. There's a fear of losing the language. If language is lost, the fear is that culture will get lost too.

FAITH EXPRESSED
Pillar B: Generations

The general theme was the importance of listening

Generational gap is what causes disconnections - parents want to apply the catholic teachings to children, however some family members grow up catholic, but does not practice it.

Feels that some youth are a little isolated and separated in the church. Youth born in America have a different mentality.

Faith was a stable place for immigrants when they settled in the U.S.

Prayed as a family.

FAITH ENGAGED
Pillar B: Generations

A bishop who was brought to us by the director of the Newman center had to know about the cultures of everyone he ministered to. He said that his role was to listen first. Listening is important, we can achieve more.

A second generation sister felt that she felt belongingness in community she belonged to. If she was not with her community she felt as she did not belong. As a campus minister she learned she had to truly listen.

Another 1st generation priest spoke and said that being sent to minister to Burmese refugees would have a significant influence on the community. They listen to him, they respect him a lot.

Religious and clergy have been resources for families to bridge or reconcile inter-generational challenges.

Communication resonates loudly:

- No communication due to language barrier among generations
- Miscommunication-- one way communication, lack of listening
- a two-way communication – of receiving and offering

Accommodation to bi-lingual Mass to appeal to family also with Rel Ed classes and encouraging more multi-lingual parish programs.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
Pillar B: Generations

Engage diversity

Balance + accomplishment (church does this, like a mother should)

Commitment and communication

Challenge: Parents less strict on their children. Parents without knowledge are still passing down their knowledge of catholic practice to children even have stronger faith.

Western culture pressure of secular world especially awareness of younger generation and the influence of the secular culture affecting their faith expression.

“Reverse Missionary” – encourage the culture of U.S. church to receive 'missionaries' so we become a model of mission.

FAITH EXPRESSED
Pillar C: Leadership

Understanding culture is important in order to become good leaders so that one is able to communicate well, be sensitive to the needs and uniqueness of a person or community: i.e. God came down, took on human form so we can relate.

Culture is like a garden – one has to understand different plants and their habitat or if they need more sunlight or not and know how to nurture their differences

Good leadership allows a community to create expression

Every culture has its gifts and limitations. Leaders need to recognize that it is not to be taken for granted.

To have good leadership, it is necessary to understand the culture of your members and the organization.

Culture is complex and has various influences. It is important to take this into consideration in order to be good leaders. People's leadership styles could be more individual or collective. There needs to be a desire to know and understand.

FAITH ENGAGED
Pillar C: Leadership

Methods of communication and relationality that adapt to a culture adds to competence.
i.e. direct or indirect communication for more effective conflict-resolution situations. Filipinos “beat around the bush” not in a bad way, but to help “save face” of others.

Thriving parishes can share their cultures with other parishes.

Conduct a retreat for both the old and young.

We need to bring back the importance of community and communication. We need to learn to adapt and constantly change in order to reach everyone. Especially need to learn to put away our phones and technology so as to truly build community.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
Pillar C: Leadership

Some of the problems that affect culture: young generations not involved in the church, bridging the gap of young and old on a retreat

Explore ways to express and engage Individual vs Collective Culture in the Church. Finding the middle ground to understand each other. Adjusting to Asian-American culture. i.e. saying and/or receiving the gesture of ‘thank you’ is a learned new habit – Asians culturally will not say or receive gratitude because what we do is viewed as an obligation or duty.

How can leadership provide resource for the young people who are being bullied for going to church. New ways of encouraging kids to keep the faith.

“CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE” – understanding “why” people are the way they are and not to impose the do’s and don’t’s, rather to know the reasons behind their actions.

Cultivating culture in Church – there are parishes that are thriving and others that don’t. We hope that with the synodal process, parishes who are thriving will be able to share the culture that helps them thrive. We also need to understand that culture needs to change in order to sustain the workings of the church.

FAITH EXPRESSED
Pillar D: Cultural Encounter & Dialogue in Faith

Culture is like a dish with a lot of ingredients that if you put them together it's amazing!

We start losing culture because of the impact of technology to the young generations

Attitudes that encourage intercultural/interreligious dialogue:

- patience, openness, mutual understanding,
- allowing the Holy Spirit's guidance
- self reflection on prejudice
- tolerance, no judgement, respect
- curiosity in listening
- courage to share and have your voice heard.
- mindfulness that recognizing difficulties in understanding language.

FAITH ENGAGED
Pillar D: Cultural Encounter & Dialogue in Faith

Direct and indirect communication of culture affects our relating to one another

i.e. people from India have a more indirect non-confrontational approach

i.e. Intergenerational families come into conflict with communication due to difference in cultural and generational lenses.

Invite younger group to meet, which will result to participation of parents

Eucharistic Celebrations, processions, potlucks, fellowship.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
Pillar D: Cultural Encounter & Dialogue in Faith

Having cultural translators, not just in language but someone who can bridge the harmony among cultures

Report on Circles of Harmony 3

The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States

LITURGY IN DIVERSE ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND COMMUNITIES

- Bishop commissions all churches that will celebrate Simbang gabi
- some are trilingual presenting different symbols or artifacts
- whites and Hispanic also participate 2000 hail mary in one day once a month
- in the liturgy, bishop discourages "dancing part"
- different food shared during world mission Sunday.
- a lot of Marian devotions or popular group devotion in parishes
- platforms like zoom, or facebook groups enliven faith community
- processions
- inviting non-API faithful to celebrations: sharing the origins of celebration
- integrate the celebrations to the liturgical calendar of the parish, share popular piety
- Rosary and Flores de Mayo, etc.
- Multi-lingual cultural Mass
- English Mass but music setting in the ethnic language
- vestments of the clergy inculturated, inviting priests that speak the language

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION

LITURGY IN DIVERSE ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND COMMUNITIES

- In Myanmar (Burmese) community, many are devotees of Our Lady of Xyang lay pin who was said to appear to the people 100 years ago. Because Myanmar also shares a border with India, many Burmese also are devotees to Our Lady of Vailankanni, the popular Marian devotion of many Indian Catholics.
- the Myanmar community has many dialects among them but they have one common language. Many 1st generation Burmese can only respond to prayers in their first native language.
- a need for Mass in the native language of immigration communities to address the first and second generation reality. Subsequent generations who prefer Mass in English still value the integrity of the mother tongue.

The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States
EVANGELIZING CATECHESIS IN API PERSPECTIVES

- Even though we came from different countries and through different channels as an immigrant, a student, a refugee, etc., we share a common faith: the Lord led us here and accompanied us along the way, and that God has a purpose for bringing us here and for calling us to different ministries/ services.
- we can use this experience as an active missionary disciple by being a joyful presence in the lives of others (members of our community, other API communities, non API Catholics)
- we are also encouraged to be open to the gifts of others and to be humble enough to ask for help/ contributions

I am called:

- To be a bridge of communication between intergenerational families, between parents and children
- To further help ethnic parents, and their American-raised children
- To be a servant-leader that gathers people together to further understand ourselves
- To evangelize others, to share our faith and persevere despite the turmoil and challenges that we face
- To continue to raise our family in faith
- To be grateful for priests/pastors who were persistent and who never gave up on us.

Missionary disciples are sent forth i.e. medical mission to reach out to the poor, share time, treasure and talent to give others an opportunity to express themselves, for without faith, life is empty.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
EVANGELIZING CATECHESIS IN API PERSPECTIVES

How to keep ethnic and traditional values, gather our families in prayer, teach our children simple acts of life and kindness, continue to do charity work, helping the disabled and less fortunate.

How to be intentional in our ways. How to appropriate our language, meet people where they're at and engage with them.

The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States
BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

- Racism is real and we should not stop educating others about our culture
- respectfully share your culture with the support of your pastor
- ignorance is the largest obstacle bring issues of the office of ministries

With small communities, others either put you down or mistaken you for who you are: generalizing Asian culture
Communicate with Love. We are all one in Christ.
We say the rosary as each bead represents each culture.
Reach out to others and not just to people of your ethnicity. Promoting intercultural realities in the community.
Enriched spiritual humility to build relationship.
Attitude is what affects with stereotypes and how relationships are built.

The basis of evangelization is relationship. In order to build relationship we need to be open to building intercultural competence. This competence is part of the process of building relationships and community. There is a biblical background to intercultural competence. If Jesus practiced this in order to evangelize, why shouldn't we?

Unity in Diversity

- We are so diverse that we must learn and understand each other in order to be culturally competent for evangelization. APIs already do it everyday. Learn the dynamics in order to invite others to the table.

Intercultural competence is the capacity to Communicate-Work-Relate across cultural boundaries. It involves attitude, knowledge and skills to achieve this.

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
BUILDING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE

Racism is real and we should not stop educating others about our culture
ignorance is the largest obstacle bring issues of the office of ministries
Respectfully educating others of our cultures and have the support of the pastors.

Attitude reinforces stereotyping and generalizations or preconceived expectations. Lack of attention from the archdiocese to integrate the different ethnic ministries together.

Advance technology has taken away the interest from young adults to grow and learn their culture, values and traditions. The intergenerational gap has increased.

The more our young ones become "American," the less "Catholic" they become.

The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSION

- Delivering meals to senior citizens, help refugee families find employment and supplies, food lockers
- Thailand refugee parish work, Bali (Indonesia) disability services to provide services, help elderly access health care, help undocumented immigrants with papers
- legal services for gaining citizenship. Employment to folks who don't have documentation
- women's shelter, food pantry, medical and dental clinics
- raising funds to help support refugees in Burma
- One person in their parish invites guest speakers who speak their language to talk about parenting and in-laws.
- Help with elders who cannot speak English

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MISSION

The Witness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholics in the United States
IMMIGRATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S RESPONSE

- celebration and spaces
- listening and hearing their stories
- volunteering services
- volunteer at Catholic Charities
- be open, welcome and compassionate
- migrants caring for migrants
- Feeding welcome refugees and migrants, provide programs such as ESL
- Refugees and newly arrived migrants are introduced after Mass to the community
- Walk with them spiritually and with compassion, hospitality and companionship
- Be outspoken in supporting immigrant
- parish level welcome them by providing food, and other essential needs, and welcome everyone both non catholic and catholic
- provide information to navigate new place
- be involved in the church and serve with new immigrants

Organize activities / events to welcome the newcomers in the community
Visit the newcomers and provide social services like how to find housing, provide groceries, serve as translators
Identify group leaders / head of the family of the newcomers, talk to them to know their needs and respond to them.

To remember that we are all immigrants, we become to care and be in solidarity with the newcomers.

Provide programs such as ESL

Refugees and immigrants are introduced after Mass to community.

Fundraising for soup kitchen

FURTHER REFLECTION ON PASTORAL IMPLEMENTATION
IMMIGRATION AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S RESPONSE

Walk with them spiritually and with companionship for longer journey.
Provide hospitality and social services
In the influx of immigrants, how can they be assisted to stay in the U.S. (currently there are religious sisters who take this as their ministry)