

Celebrating

Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

“Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together”

– May 2026 –



Share, Learn, and Celebrate

**The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington
Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach**

Celebrating Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Share, Learn, and Celebrate

The *Share, Learn, and Celebrate* initiative of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington (ADW) is designed to acknowledge, educate, and embed multicultural awareness in our diverse communities. Through *Share, Learn, and Celebrate* we hope to heighten awareness, knowledge and understanding through the engagement of Archdiocesan parishes, ministries, and the faithful in relevant activities. Stakeholders will be encouraged to share the achievements, identity, beauty, richness, and importance of each of our cultural communities as part of celebratory and historically significant occasions. Please see the following recommendations for consideration to Share, Learn, and Celebrate Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This year's theme is "*Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together.*"

Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – History

Each May, we celebrate Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Heritage Month, honoring the rich cultural, historical, and spiritual contributions of these communities to the United States. The first official observance began in New York in 1977 as a ten-day Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. It received national recognition in 1979 and was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1992. In 2009, the observance was renamed Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and in 2021 Native Hawaiians were formally included to acknowledge their unique cultural heritage and enduring contributions to our nation. As of February 2025, the U.S. National Archives recognizes the celebration under its current title.

This month invites us to reflect with gratitude on the diverse cultures, histories, and faith traditions that enrich our Church and our country. For information on the countries and communities included within the API designation, please refer to the resources provided by the U.S. National Archives and related federal agencies. For information on the countries considered part of API [here](#).

Archdiocesan Level Activities and Resources

Learn Resources have been curated to support parishes and schools in the celebration of API Heritage Month. The Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach can assist in providing the resources described in this document. Please contact culturaldiversity@adw.org for more information.

Share As the archdiocese celebrates API Heritage Month, it is important to highlight their crucial role in keeping the Catholic community alive and vibrant in the United States. We suggest using the resources provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to learn more about the diverse presence of API Catholics in our region and nation. To learn more, see [here](#). Contact OCDO at a culturaldiversity@adw.org for information on our Asian and Pacific Island Ministry or its population in our region. Please click here to find the parishes celebrating Mass in many Asian and Pacific Island languages.

Celebrate Join us for the [Annual Asian and Pacific Island Catholics Marian Pilgrimage](#) at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., on the first Saturday of May. The Asian Pacific Catholic Network organizes it in collaboration with the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church and with the support of the ADW. The pilgrimage honors the Blessed Mother and celebrates API Heritage Month. Attendees included diverse communities and representatives from more than 20 API national and ethnic groups. It includes worship and celebrates faith and culture. For more information, please click here.

Parish Level Recommendations

- Share** Asian and Pacific Islander Catholics represent a rich tapestry of diversity while sharing a profound commitment to our universal faith. We warmly invite parishioners with API backgrounds to share their stories and experiences related to the Church. This presents an invaluable opportunity for us to deepen our understanding of one another, explore the ways in which Catholicism has influenced their lives, and recognize how their unique cultures have enriched our collective faith and family connections. Engaging in these meaningful dialogues can strengthen our parish community and cultivate enduring relationships among all members.
- Learn** The social and cultural influence of API Heritage has significantly strengthened Catholicism. Host a seminar at your parish to discuss the history, diversity, and complexity of API cultures. For resources and dialogue recommendations contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org.
- Celebrate** Plan liturgies to celebrate the cultural expression of Asian and Pacific Islanders in the Church and our country. Consider scheduling opening/closing Masses for API Heritage Month, or services specifically recognizing API communities and traditions. Engage your parish's intercultural committee or others to plan and participate. Contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach at culturaldiversity@adw.org for assistance with liturgical resources such as [Prayer of the Faithful](#) and *Prayer cards*.
- Share** The API community has been blessed with multiple saints, and many more are on the path to sainthood. Most Catholics outside of Asia are only familiar with the Middle Eastern saints who walked with Jesus. Some may know the names of the men listed first in the large groups of canonized saints, such as [St. Lorenzo Ruiz](#), [St. Paulo Miki](#), St. Andrew Kim Taegon, St. Augustine Zhao Rong, [St. Pedro Calungsod](#), [St. Andrew Dung Lac](#) and the [117 Vietnamese Martyrs](#). However, there are many other Asian saints and holy people, including numerous women, who are also known for their incredible actions, such as [St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta](#), [St. Mary Zhu Wu](#), and many more.
- Learn** Those featured above are just a few examples of our history's many inspiring API Catholics. We invite you to delve deeper into the lives of other remarkable Catholics and the causes that champion their endeavors. Please click [here](#) to explore and gain further insight into our saints, beatified people, and martyrs.
- Celebrate** Plan events with parishioners to discuss their favorite API saints. This can be an opportunity to talk about their lives, miracles, and their impact on the Catholic Church. This activity can include screening a movie featuring historical API Catholic luminaries. Host these events at your RCIA, religious education, or parent education programs. For movie recommendations, see the resource list included in this document or contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org for assistance.
- Share** Your parish is home to a vibrant and diverse API community, with rich traditions worth celebrating. Consider hosting an API heritage festival that highlights art, music, and cuisine, and invite your API parishioners and neighbors to create exhibits highlighting their Catholic traditions to further showcase their cultural influence in the community. Take the opportunity to highlight prominent API leaders, innovators, and influencers from our nation.
- Learn** Consider hosting a panel discussion virtually or in-person to get to know API religious who serve in our region and learn about their origins and Vocations. You can find a list of religious organizations in the ADW directory by clicking [here](#) for the women's and [here](#) for the men.
- Lay movements and Catholic organizations' charisms are crucial in spreading the Gospel to our communities. If you would like to learn more about these movements, click [here](#). For information on upcoming events click [here](#). If you have any questions, contact the OCDO at culturaldiversity@adw.org.

Celebrate Let us celebrate this month and beyond, and join us for special Masses in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington throughout the year. For more information contact us at via culturaldiversity@adw.org or click [here](#) to visit the ADW events section.

Share The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington would like to share the Asian and Pacific Pastoral Plan [Encountering Christ in Harmony Prayer Card](#) created by the USCCB or the [API Heritage Month prayer card](#) from the Catholic Health Association of the United States, to share with your parishioners. Contact the office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach for further assistance.

Learn Consider sponsoring a parish field trip or encourage families in the parish to visit the following historical and educational sites within the Archdiocese of Washington:

1. [National Museum of Asian Art: Washington, D.C.](#)
2. [Asian and Pacific Islander in the Smithsonian Collections: Washington, D.C.](#)
3. [National Park Services Parks, Monuments, and Historical Sites: Virtual/Nationwide](#)
4. [Asian Catholic Initiative Pilgrimage Sites: Virtual/Nationwide](#)

Catholic Schools and Religious Education

Share We encourage you to share the Archdiocesan API Heritage historical facts in school newsletters, announcements, and social media. You can find a list by clicking [here](#).

Learn API Heritage Month provides a wonderful opportunity for students in Catholic schools to learn about and appreciate the rich cultural contributions of Asian and Pacific Americans. Click [here](#) for craft ideas for children and [here](#) to find some engaging ways to celebrate students of all ages this month.

Develop art projects for students to celebrate API Heritage Month and display them throughout the school building. We encourage you to turn this into a contest, with the winner's works being published in the archdiocesan newspapers! You can also host a festival featuring the art, music, and gastronomy of the many nations that make up API region. For more details or recommendations, please email culturaldiversity@adw.org.

Celebrate Celebrate a special Mass to commemorate API Heritage Month. Engage the parish and faculty staff, students, and parents to plan and participate in the liturgy. For resources, please contact the Office of Cultural Diversity and Outreach. To order copies of the of the Encountering Christ in Harmony Prayer Card (USCCB) prayer card, please click on the link [here](#).

Resources

Utilize the curated resources below to explore and celebrate AANHPI Heritage through a Catholic Lens.

Demographic Resources

- o [Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander Catholics in USCCB Regions – USCCB](#)
- o [Broad Diversity of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Population – United States Census Bureau](#)
- o [The Asian American Experience: Highlights from our focus groups | Pew Research Center](#)

Educational Websites

- o [Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Asia of the Holy Father John Paul II](#)

- o [USCCB Asian and Pacific Island Affairs -Encountering Christ In Harmony: A Pastoral Response To Our Asian and Pacific Brothers and Sisters \(English\)](#)
- o [Christianity Beyond East and West – St. John Paul II National Shrine](#)
- o [Fun facts: AANHPI Heritage Month - Census](#)
- o [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage – US National Parks](#)
- o [The Asian American Education Project](#)
- o [Asian Pacific American Heritage Month: Selected Exhibits, Collections, National Archives](#)
- o [How Can You Forget Me: Filipino American Stories - Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center](#)
- o [Christianity among Asian Americans, Pew Research Center](#)

AANHPI Heritage Literature

- o [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Materials: A Resource Guide – Library of Congress](#)
- o [Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month Reading List – NPR](#)

Movies - Documentaries

- o [PBS Asian Americans Docuseries and The Asian and Pacific Islander Experience - PBS](#)
- o [Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month: What to watch - World channel](#)
- o [A Birth, the story of St. Andrew Kim or Story of Korea’s First Priest](#)
- o [Public Broadcasting Service AANHPI Specials](#)
- o [The Catholic Church in China America Jesuit Review](#)

Mass Resources

- o [Prayer of the Faithful](#)
- o [Encountering Christ in Harmony Prayer Card \(USCCB\)](#)
- o [AANHPI Heritage Month Prayer Card from the Catholic Health Association of the United States](#)

Pope Francis’ 2013 apostolic exhortation, “*Evangelii Gaudium*” (“The Joy of the Gospel”), reminds us that our daily encounters with Jesus often come through meeting people of other cultures—encounters that invite us to move beyond ourselves and grow as missionary disciples. Until every member of the Body of Christ feels fully welcomed in our communities, the call to reach out remains before us. Although this pastoral focuses on Asian and Pacific Island Catholics, it serves as a valuable resource for anyone engaged in intercultural ministry.

For more information contact us at:
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Washington