

## May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders form a small but vital piece of the US Church. Some worship in ethnic parishes such as Our Lady of Viet Nam in Silver Spring. Others bless parishes like ours with their presence.

“Pope Francis writes, ‘In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity.’ ... Harmony is a very common theme in Asian and Pacific Island cultures, and therefore it makes sense that in the encounter with the Gospel, the Holy Spirit would transform this jewel of Asian and Pacific Island cultures and make it a blessing to the Church.”

[https://www.usccb.org/resources/Encountering%20Christ%20in%20Harmony%20A%20Pastoral%20Response%20to%20Our%20Asian%20and%20Pacific%20Island%20Brothers%20and%20Sisters\\_0.pdf](https://www.usccb.org/resources/Encountering%20Christ%20in%20Harmony%20A%20Pastoral%20Response%20to%20Our%20Asian%20and%20Pacific%20Island%20Brothers%20and%20Sisters_0.pdf)

There are over 800 Filipino and 400 Vietnamese priests in the US, and about 12% of our seminarians are Vietnamese. Martyred Asian saints include groups of 103 from Korea and 117 from Viet Nam.



Servant of God Darwin Ramos was born to a very poor family in the Philippines in 1994. He scavenged in trash heaps to support his family, but eventually they had to live on the streets. By age 7 he had difficulty walking and was diagnosed with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. His alcoholic father then parked him in his wheelchair at the train station to beg.

At age 12 he was taken to a Catholic home for disabled children. He never spoke of his illness but of his “mission.” He was cheerful, never complained, and offered up his sufferings, saying, “I think Jesus wants me to hold on until the end, just like he did.”

Eventually, his disease overwhelmed him.

His last two sentences in his notebook were “A huge thank you” and “I am very happy.” He died in 2012 at age 17.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darwin\\_Ramos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Darwin_Ramos)

We praise God for the goodness and wisdom of the peoples of Asia and the Pacific Islands.

For the name and story of each person who claims this heritage,  
we praise your love.

For the art, music, innovations, food and culture they share with the world,  
we praise your goodness.

For the security and peace of their homes, businesses, and places of worship,  
we ask your protection.

Keep all descendants of Asia and the Pacific Islands in your care, hold them in your love and make of us fierce advocates and allies for welcome, inclusion and the common good.

<https://www.chausa.org/docs/default-source/prayers/asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-month.pdf?sfvrsn=0>