

## Casting the Net Far and Wide at LAREC

by Eunice J. Park, MTS/MAMC, Pastoral Associate – Most Holy Redeemer Church

On Sunday, February 23, 2020, five of us sat at a table on a stage, looking out onto a room of workshop attendees at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress (LAREC), the gathering of about 40,000 Catholics from every corner of the US and beyond. Our panel discussion was entitled: “Casting the Net Far and Wide: Implementing the New Pastoral Response for Asian and Pacific Island Communities.” The presenters were Bishop Oscar A. Solis, D.D. (Salt Lake City), Bishop Alex Aclan (Los Angeles), Fr. Ricky Manalo, CSP (New York), Ms. Jayne Mondoy (Honolulu), and myself (San Francisco). We were sharing, from our various ministries and geographic perspectives, some of our best practices, pastoral suggestions, and learned lessons from our work in API ministry. This was a great opportunity to share and dialogue with others working on the ground in this important ministry, as well as to hear from the workshop attendees during the Q & A session.

Most of my own ministerial experience has been at the specific intersection of API ministry and Young Adult ministry. As such, I spoke on this particular topic that day, to a room full of mostly middle-aged and older participants, a great opportunity! In this work, I have seen how API young adults often have to navigate difficult intergenerational conflicts in their lives: Cultural norms; Language differences; *American* values vs. country of origin traditions; Religious and devotional practices vs. the trend of “nones.” And straddling all these is the general practice of silence and stoicism among so many API communities, so that these daily challenges – mental health issues, sexual violence, LGBTQ taboos, academic and financial pressures – often lead to heartbreaking and tragic consequences.

So, in trying to navigate these challenges to minister to our API communities of both young and old, these opportunities to gather, dialogue, and share with each other are incredibly valuable. By having these kinds of workshops, retreats, classes, meetings, programs, days of reflection, and – of course, as API – gatherings over meals, we can continue to honestly listen to each other and honor each other’s journey. Let us offer each other spaces of nurturing and safety, so that we can share and grow, in harmony.