*IN MEMORIAM*: RUTH NARITA DOYLE, PH. D.

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Asian and Pacific Island Affairs

Our friendship and professional lives intersected so often since we first met in the 1980s until we both retired from active service. Dr. Ruth Narita Doyle and I collaborated on numerous projects and programs, first in Honolulu, Hawaii when I was the Diocesan Director of Catholic Charities’ Immigration Center and she was the New York Archdiocesan Director for Pastoral Research and Planning.

Asian and Pacific Islands Catholic (APIC) Ministry was Ruth’s second passion next to pastoral research and planning. She devoted her professional skills, thousands of volunteer hours, even her own financial resources to ensure that the Catholic Church in the United States recognize the richness of Asian and Pacific Island Catholic traditions; that the gifts they bring are valued and enrich their local churches; and that APIC pastoral leaders are formed and provided opportunities to join local church leadership structures.

Dr. Ruth Narita Doyle was one of a handful of pastoral leaders in the country who earnestly laid the foundations to Asian and Pacific Islands Catholic ministries. She taught me the complexities of working across layers of Catholic Church structures – parish, diocese, national, Catholic organizations and the USCCB. She shared her network of bishops she knew personally, ministry experts (many were her former students at Fordham University), academic colleagues, pastoral leaders who advised me as I served the Catholic bishops in the USCCB Office for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Refugees (OPCMR); and later as Assistant Director of the USCCB Secretariat of Cultural Diversity in the Church/Asian and Pacific Island Affairs. Moreover, Ruth compiled several editions of data about Asian and Pacific Catholic populations in all Catholic dioceses, the only written resource then, which served as bases for pastoral planning and responsive program development.

Dr. Ruth Narita Doyle researched and edited the first scholarly resource book on the history of migration, Catholic practices, cultural values and traditions of Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese American immigrant Catholics for the National Catholic Education Association in the late 1990s. In addition, she conducted a study on the needs and aspirations of Asian and Pacific Islander Catholics in 1998 commissioned by a USCC bishop’s committee. This project culminated in a national consultation meeting among select Asian and Pacific Islands Catholic leaders with Bishop John Cummins and led to the writing of a landmark USCCB pastoral statement. In 2001, Ruth was invited to be a consultant to the USCCB Committee which formulated the first pastoral statement***, Asian and Pacific Presence: Harmony in Faith.*** She also assisted the planning and roll-out of eight regional Asian and Pacific Summer Leadership Institutes offered by OPCMR between 2002 and 2009 and, the first National Gathering of Asian and Pacific Islander Catholics held in 2006 in Arlington, VA.

Ruth always exerted positive energies, quiet firmness, and total commitment to the mission to integrate APIC’s to the Catholic community in this country. It was joy and inspiration to work with her. She was a model of what unqualified friendship and institutional dedication can mean. I credit Dr. Ruth Narita Doyle for two most important legacies. First is the formation of the *Asian and Pacific Catholic Network*, the first nationally recognized organization dedicated to promote collaboration and unity among diverse Asian and Pacific Catholic communities in service to the Church. Second is the group of dedicated Asian and Pacific pastoral leaders scattered in different regions in the United States who she inspired and empowered to step forward and lead their ethnic communities and are now serving in various leadership capacities in their local Catholic churches.

Thank you, Ruth, for your visionary leadership, relentless enthusiasm, and professional guidance. Rest in peace with our Father who you served faithfully.