



**We are
Called**

TO HEAL. TO UNITE. TO JUSTICE.

Team Reflection—Huddle

No. 13 - Discrimination against Asians and Health Disparities

In the early months of the coronavirus pandemic, many Asian Americans found themselves the target of racial slurs, hate-motivated public comments and even some physical attacks. Violence has continued with reports spanning from New York City to Atlanta, through the heartland, and to the California coast. As of March 2021, one national organization reported nearly 3,800 anti-Asian hate incidents since the pandemic started. [13.1]

Asian Americans comprise individuals from more than 50 Asian countries in the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent. There are several hundred spoken languages and dialects which represent the tremendous diversity within this sub-population. AAPI (Asian American/Pacific Islander) individuals represent about 6% of the U.S. population and it is expected to nearly double by mid-century, making them the fastest-growing demographic in the U.S.

As in other communities of color, health disparities exist among AAPI communities too. AAPI individuals experience health disparities in preventable cancers and chronic diseases, including more than half of AAPI individuals with diabetes who are unaware of their diagnosis. [13.2] The gaps can be overlooked due both to stereotypes about AAPI individuals and a prominent study in 1985 on Black and Minority Health that described Asian Americans as healthier than other racial groups. [13.3]

The U.S. Catholic Bishops decry the racial discrimination experienced by AAPI individuals, lamenting discriminatory requests at Asian American caregivers in health care settings and the harassment targeting Asian businesses. [13.4] Mary Mee-Yin Yuen, a Catholic theologian in Hong Kong, reflects, “it might seem the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty, but the good news of the Gospel shows us that, in the midst of all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers, God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence.” [13.5]

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Consider

What can I do in my work setting to stop anti-Asian sentiment and xenophobia?

Let us pray together,

“Our lives are of great worth if we accept with good grace the situation Providence places us in and go on living lovingly.”

- Takashi Nagai, Catholic physician and radiologist, and survivor of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, Japan; poet and author.

[13.1] Stop AAPI Hate, See Press Release, March 16, 2021: <https://stopaapihate.org/reports/>

[13.2] <https://www.nimhd.nih.gov/news-events/features/training-workforce-dev/center-asian-health.html>

[13.3] <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2020.305846?journalCode=ajph>

[13.4] <https://www.usccb.org/news/2020/bishop-chairmen-condemn-racism-and-xenophobia-context-coronavirus-pandemic>

[13.5] <https://catholicethics.com/forum/persistence-and-hope/>