Sr. Callista Roy, RN, PhD, FAAN

Biography

Sister Callista Roy is a highly respected nurse theorist, writer, lecturer, researcher, teacher and member of a religious community. She currently is an Adjunct Professor at Mount Saint Mary's University and Professor Emeritus at Boston College Connell School of Nursing. Her name is one of the most recognized in the field of nursing today worldwide. She is considered among nursing's great living thinkers.

In her personal and professional growth Dr. Roy credits the major influences of her family, her religious commitment, and her teachers and mentors. She was born in Los Angeles, California, on the feast day of Saint Callista on October 14. A deep spirit of faith, hope, love, commitment to God and service to others was central in the family. Her mother was a licensed vocational nurse and instilled the values of always seeking to know more about people and their care and of selfless giving as a nurse. Dr. Roy noted that she also had excellent teachers in parochial schools, high school, and college. At age 14 she began working at a large general hospital, first as a pantry girl, then as a maid, and finally as a nurse's aid. After a soul-searching process of discernment, she entered the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Carondelet, of which she has been a member for over 50 years. Her college education began with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in nursing at Mount St. Mary's College, Los Angeles; followed by master's degrees in pediatric nursing and sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Ph.D. in sociology at the same school. Dr. Roy completed a 2 year post doc in neuroscience at the University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Roy is best known for developing and continually updating the Roy Adaptation Model as a framework for theory, practice, and research in nursing. Books on the model have been translated into many languages. Two important works are reviews of research based on the Roy Adaptation Model. The first, titled The Roy Adaptation Model-based Research: Twenty-five Years of Contributions to Nursing Science, was published as a research monograph by Sigma Theta Tau. This is a critical analysis of the 25 years of model-based literature, which includes 163 studies published in 46 English-speaking journals, and dissertations and theses. Secondly, the next 15 years of 200 studies based on the Roy Adaptation was published by Springer in 2014 entitled, Generating Middle-range Theory: Evidence for Practice.

Dr. Roy has been a major speaker throughout North America and 36 other countries over several decades on topics related to nursing theory, research, curriculum, clinical practice, and professional trends for the future. She was a Senior Fulbright Scholar in Australia and has had visiting faculty appointments in South America, Europe and Asia. Dr. Roy was a Charter Member of the Nursing Research Study Section, Division of Research Grants, National Institutes of Health and has received 42 research and training grants covering a wide range of topics including neuroscience. Dr. Roy was honored as a Living Legend by both the American Academy of Nursing and the Massachusetts Association of Registered Nurses. She has received many other awards, including the National League for Nursing Martha Rogers Award for advancing nursing science; the Sigma Theta Tau International Founders Award for contributions to professional practice and was one of the inaugural inductees into the Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame of Sigma Theta Tau International; and holds 5 honorary doctorates. She has received the Massachusetts State House recognition for her volunteer work with women in prison.

The Roy Adaptation Model has been in use for more nearly 50 years, providing direction for nursing practice, education, and research. Extensive implementation efforts around the world, and continuing philosophical and scientific developments by the theorist, have contributed to model-based knowledge for nursing practice.