



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#123 - September 11, 2020

Best Practices: Outreach during these Pandemic Times

Some of our future issues will continue to explore some new things we have learned; new methods we have used; new understandings and perceptions that have shaped who we are and what we do. These new insights and new practices are not only true for these times but for the days, months, and years ahead.

This issue looks at one of the beautiful realities of this time: the experience of living through COVID-19 has not lessened (but, in many places, has increased) the response to help, to be kind, and to serve others.

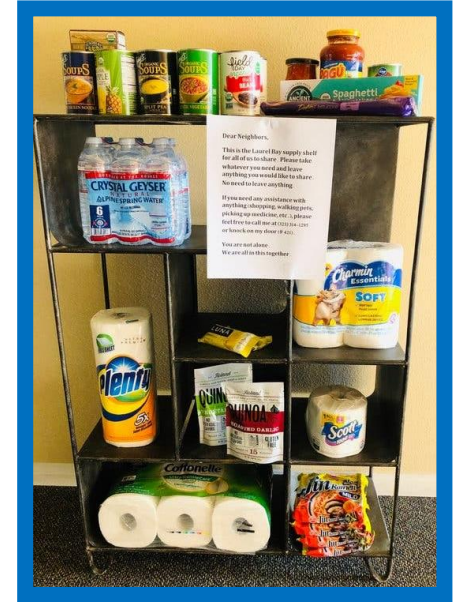
Certainly, there are numerous examples of individuals and families who have been committed to selflessness and caring:

- Jeremy Lowe and his son Caeden from Wadsworth, Ohio, built ten free pantries and installed them around town. Nearly every day he and his family restock six or seven of the structures. They receive donations through porch pickups and Facebook challenges under the hashtag #wadsworthstrong. (<https://www.rd.com/list/moving-photos-of-kindness-in-the-time-of-coronavirus/>)



- Todd Hale from Laurel Bay, CA relates that in his condo building, one of the residents set up a corner to assist those who may be uncomfortable to venture to the stores. Some people take items and then others will replenish the shelving with other or different supplies.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/us/california-coronavirus-good-news.html>)



- A [Cleveland couple](#) went ahead with a small wedding ceremony with their family, deciding to donate the meals that had been meant for their reception to charity.
- In Elora, Ontario, a woman received an email from a neighbor in her apartment building that simply said, “There is a ray of sunshine in the hall for you.” When she stepped out, she discovered that they had placed a vase of spring flowers in front of each resident’s door.
- Isabella Di Pietro, returning home from her senior year in college, built a website and enlisted friends from Harvard to help her create a sign-up and payment system for people to purchase and deliver restaurant meals for overworked hospital staffs.

Di Pietro recently took a leave of absence from Harvard to focus on the organization (Feed the Frontlines) full time with plans to

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

expand FTF to reach New Yorkers experiencing food insecurity as a result of the pandemic.

(<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/05/students-find-ways-to-help-during-the-pandemic/>)

Likewise, many organizations and churches have made service and outreach a priority in these times.

Partners for Sacred Places gathered data between June 26 and July 10, 2020 from a broad variety of faith traditions (19) and locations (37 states). One of their findings stated:

“Congregations have shown themselves to be especially community-minded during the pandemic. While the total number of community programs has significantly decreased, most congregations are continuing to support some kind of community serving program.

- 45% of congregations are currently managing community serving programs
- an additional 15% plan to have programs active by the end of 2020
- 39% are currently hosting community serving programs managed by outside organizations
- an additional 9% plan to host community serving programs by the end of the year.

In total, 61% of congregations are currently hosting or managing community serving programs, despite widespread projections for lost revenue as a result of the pandemic.” (<https://sacredplaces.org/covid-19-impact-survey-of-building-use-and-community-programs-summer-2020/>)

Thomas G. Bandy, in a Ministry Matters newsletter, challenges churches: “Much of the post-COVID-19 conversation is about whether worship attendance, pastoral care, Sunday school, small groups and financial giving will return to normal or whether there will be a ‘new normal.’ The order of thinking reveals the hidden habit of “attractational” thinking. Church leaders habitually start “inward” and work “outward.” It seems logical to seniors and

boomers. Get your house in order and then welcome the guests. However, younger generations, marginal publics, and singles and starters will consider this as institutional self-centeredness. They don’t care if the house is messy. They want you to bring your sacredness outside.

In order to anticipate post-COVID-19 realities, we should start with what will emerge in the community context and not the church context. Community needs and evolving spiritual yearnings of the public will dictate adaptive ministries, and not membership habits or preferences. The churches that survive and thrive in the new world will be those that consider outreach first.” (<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/10304/positive-trends-social-realities-and-the-future-of-the-post-covid-19-church>)

Some of the sometimes simple, but always significant outreach by parishes during these last few months:

- As many parishes, at Holy Spirit Catholic Community in Naperville, IL several women took on a ministry of designing, sewing, and providing hundreds of masks to adults and children in the community. The masks are available whenever someone comes to the parish or Mass. Quite a number of them were supplied to the homeless.



- At St. Louis Parish, Pincrest, FL, parishioners participated (as always) in the Bread for the World Offering of Letters. This year they wrote

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

4000 letters to Congress regarding global nutrition and those experiencing hunger in the United States, especially because of COVID. (<https://www.bread.org/2020-offering-letters>)

How to Help Answering our Call to Service while Sheltering-in-Place

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our community, the needs of local organizations that serve the poor and vulnerable are growing rapidly.

To find out how you can assist efforts to feed, clothe, house, and otherwise support those in need across the city (and around the world) through volunteer opportunities, in-kind donations, and financial contributions, take a look at our **How to Help Guide**. This document is being updated regularly, so check back often!



Virtual Ministry of Care:

Thank you to the more than 55 volunteers who have signed up to participate in our Virtual Ministry of Care. Outreach via phone, email, and personal letters to our community members is ongoing. If you would like to assist in this effort or if you know of anyone in the parish community who



- Holy Spirit Catholic Community in Naperville, IL recounts more of their efforts. Even before COVID, the parish provided three meals for approximately two hundred homeless individuals and families every other month. During COVID the parish began to make known to parishioners the increasing need for food and the unique ways in which it could be prepared and distributed.

They had a dessert drive in which hundreds of cookies and desserts



- The e-newsletter from St. Clement Parish, Chicago continually reminded parishioners of ways to serve.

were baked and taken to the shelter. They created menus and people signed up and provided portions of the meal. The food was cooked ahead, transported and dropped at the door when they weren't able to be on-site.



The parish had several monetary drives to provide food for the residents when they were relocated to alternative sites due to several being diagnosed with COVID.

The parish received a generous donation of approximately 100 hams and 100 pounds of bacon. In addition to the shelter, they found a Catholic school that was attempting to provide food for their families, most who were low income.

The parish and catechetical staff had transformed the building for a Lenten family activity; they were ready to host several hundred people when they received word that a shelter in place order had been put in place. The staff quickly moved to donate the food which was already purchased for the RE families to feed people in local shelters.

- The website of the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi in Raleigh, NC recognizes: "This time of COVID-19 has left us wondering how to care for each other, how to be a people of care, mercy, justice, and peace."

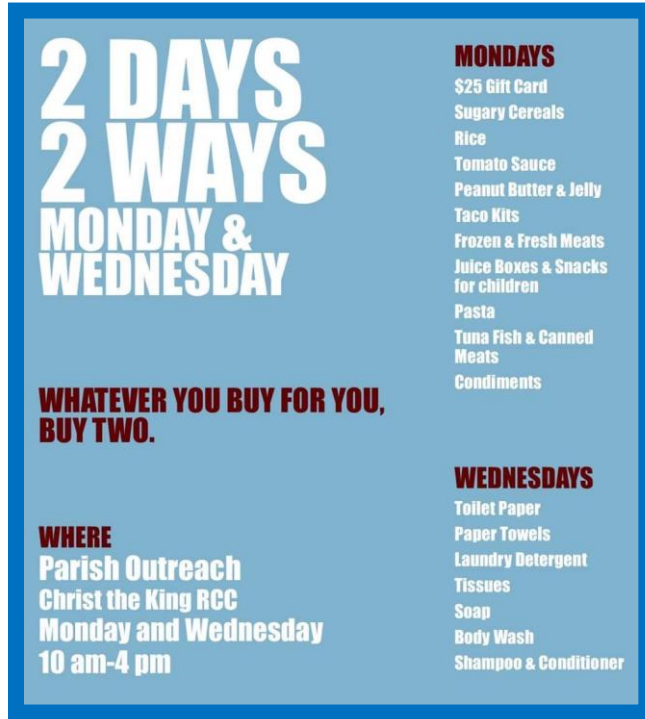
The site then gives multiple ideas –

- For those who would like to offer care within their faith community
- For those who would like to offer care to people in the community

(<https://www.stfrancisraleigh.org/offer-or-receive-help/>)

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

- Christ the King Parish in Commack, NY invites their parishioners to participate in 2 Days – 2 Ways. (<https://ctkrcc.org/parish-outreach>)



**2 DAYS
2 WAYS
MONDAY &
WEDNESDAY**

**WHATEVER YOU BUY FOR YOU,
BUY TWO.**

WHERE
Parish Outreach
Christ the King RCC
Monday and Wednesday
10 am-4 pm

MONDAYS
\$25 Gift Card
Sugary Cereals
Rice
Tomato Sauce
Peanut Butter & Jelly
Taco Kits
Frozen & Fresh Meats
Juice Boxes & Snacks
for children
Pasta
Tuna Fish & Canned
Meats
Condiments

WEDNESDAYS
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Laundry Detergent
Tissues
Soap
Body Wash
Shampoo & Conditioner

- There is also a plethora of things that parishes have done to reach out to and care for the older adults in their midst. A separate issue of **GEMS** (coming soon) will explore some of them.

A few (of the many) suggestions for giving and caring during these pandemic times:

- [Ways to Give Back during the pandemic](#)
- [Outreach during COVID-19](#)
- [100 charitable ways](#) Atlantans can help during the COVID-19 pandemic (many would be applicable/tweaked for all of us)

- [How to volunteer remotely](#)
- [Catholic groups step up to help most vulnerable during coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [12 Unique Ways to Love Your Neighbor During COVID-19](#)
- [13 ways to pass the time and give back during the coronavirus pandemic](#)
- [How to Support Kids, Seniors, and Vulnerable Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [50 good things that have happened during the pandemic](#)
- [34 simple ways to help others during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [12 Crazy Cool Church Outreach Ideas from Churches Just Like Yours](#)



Janet Schaeffler, OP
www.janetschaeffler.com
jschaeffler@adriandominicans.org

Past issues of **GEMS** are archived at www.janetschaeffler.com

Additional ideas for Adult Faith Formation Planning and Best Practices can be found in:

- *Deepening Faith: Adult Faith Formation in the Parish*
<https://www.litpress.org/Products/4652/Deepening-Faith>
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation*
http://www.lifelongfaith.com/store/p25/The_Seasons_of_Adult_Faith_Formation.html and <http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>