



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#81 - September 2017

A Best Practice: Responding to the Needs of Today

Often we talk about the necessity of having three-five year strategic plans for adult faith formation rather than just having "flashbulb" adult faith formation projects (a 4-week Scripture series here; a three week series on sacraments there, etc.).

Vision and goals allow us to have a comprehensive, integrated plan. Where are we going? What are the specific programs and processes that are planned to fit together rather than scattered programs and projects that are thought of and plopped in at the last moment.

At the same time, and this might seem contradictory, but it's not. This is a fast-changing world. We also need to be able to adapt, within our long-range plans, to changing conditions while, at the same time, not losing our focus or our vision.

"Adaptive planning," "tweaking" our integrated long-range plan is frequently a necessary step with today's fast-paced, ever-changing world, if we're going to be open and ready to meet the needs that arise, concern or surprise us.

Our long-range plan of five years – necessary as it is - can't be set in stone; conditions change. Some parishes have said:

- "Our most successful programs were in response to what was happening in 'popular, everyday' culture – the needs of the people."
- "What people need are responses/help to what is happening in their lives, our nation's life, our Church's life which, perhaps, we didn't know was going to happen when we set our long-range goals."

Today

This response of paying attention to the signs and needs of the time needs, of course, to be constant and continual. In the last few weeks (since August 11/12), we find ourselves (again) in a situation that cannot – can never – be ignored because of who we are as humans, as Catholic Christians, as Americans.

Many people, especially in parish and (arch)diocesan leadership, have looked at their preparations for on-going programs, processes, and parish/diocesan plans and asked: what does this all mean in light of the grave challenges that surround us, the questions, anxieties, worries and need-to-do-something yearnings.

As one **GEMS** reader said: "Catholic Christians need to find ways to deal with social justice issues and the anxieties and questions that hang over them from the events we are mired in. The Church - the people who are the Church - are needed now more than ever to get involved in today's questions and issues which touch (and sometimes threaten) the dignity of each and every person. No one should ever point a finger at a person of faith and ask that question, 'What did you do to create a better world, to bring about change during times of turmoil?' The answer to that question should be obvious."

One day I asked Kassie (Temple) the question that had been vexing me: 'How do you keep doing this hard, heart-wrenching work when you know you'll wake up tomorrow to problems that are as bad or worse than the ones you're dealing with today?'

I've never forgotten Kassie's answer: 'What you need to understand is this – just because something's impossible doesn't mean you shouldn't do it.'

- Parker Palmer

What are (or could be) some possible responses in our parishes and (arch)dioceses (now and for all issues of today's concerns):

- Continual pastoral staff prayer, reading and discussions
- Specific prayer for the dignity/respect of all, unity and peace at all liturgies and parish/(arch)diocesan gatherings

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- Parish Evening Prayer for respect for diversity, unity, peace
- Mediated theological reflection groups on the issues of today, beginning and ending with prayer
- Book clubs
- Movie Nights
- Infuse Catholic Social Teaching – and its challenges for human dignity, respect, unity and peace - in all adult faith formation efforts
- Encourage independent reading/study
- Include case study activities in adult formation opportunities
- Listening Circles:
<http://www.co-intelligence.org/P-listeningcircles.html>
- Round-table discussions
- Study circles
- Listening to the voices/experiences of those who are oppressed
- Question of the Week
- Newspaper Prayers
- Blessings and prayers from other cultures and traditions
- Fishbowl discussions
- Conversation circles around a focused topic related to today's challenges with the goal of a safe space for people to share their feelings, their thoughts and concerns – and why; beginning with and ending in prayer to ground the participants for action
- World Café Method Discussions:
<http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method>
- Community action groups
- Fieldtrips

- Social activities and Outreach/Service Opportunities which connect people with others from different cultures, different religions, etc.

Arguments always begin with an answer in mind.
Conversations begin with a question.

- *Unknown*

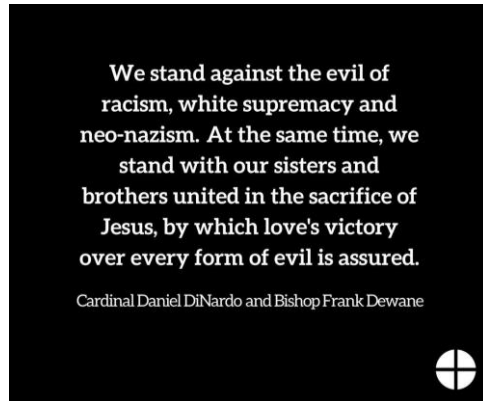
**The following resources might be of assistance
in the above possibilities –
as well as spark additional ones for parishes
and (arch)dioceses**

Statements from US bishops:

- USCCB statement: <http://www.usccb.org/news/2017/17-144.cfm>
- USCCB statement: <http://www.usccb.org/news/2017/17-143.cfm>
- Statement from Cardinal DiNardo: <https://cruknow.com/church-in-the-usa/2017/08/13/top-catholic-bishop-calls-violence-charlottesville-abhorrent-acts-hatred/>
- Article from Vatican Radio:
http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/08/16/usccb_president_deno_unces_racism_calls_for_unity_and_prayer/1331077
- Statement from Bishop McGrath:
<https://www.dsj.org/blog/statement-san-jose-bishop-patrick-j-mcgrath-recent-events-charlottesville-virginia/>
- Statement from Cardinal Tobin: <http://www.rcan.org/statement-cardinal-joseph-w-tobin-events-charlottesville-va>

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- New USCCB Committee on Racism: <http://www.usccb.org/news/2017/17-149.cfm>



Some church documents

- *Dwell in My Love: A Pastoral Letter on Racism*, Francis Cardinal George http://legacy.archchicago.org/Cardinal/pdf/DwellInMyLove_10thAnniversary.pdf
- Racial Divide: A Pastoral Letter from Bishop Braton: <http://bellevillemessenger.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/RACIAL-DIVIDE-STUDY-GUIDE.pdf>
- *Pastoral Documents on Racism and Poverty*, Archdiocese of Cincinnati: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/Pastoral-Documents-and-Articles-on-Racism-and-Poverty6.pdf>

A Few of Many Sites that Have Addressed the Tragedy in Charlottesville:

- Faith in Public Life: <http://www.faithinpubliclife.org/>

- How Will the Church Reckon with Charlottesville: <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/08/will-the-church-reckon-with-charlottesville/536718/>
- Sojourners: <https://sojo.net/> and <https://sojo.net/articles/white-supremacy-versus-gospel-charlottesville>
- Responding to Charlottesville: <https://justfaith.org/responding-to-charlottesville/>
- LCWR: <https://lcwr.org/media/lcwr-condemns-racism-all-forms>
- Over 350 Christian theologians/ethicists: <https://sojo.net/articles/more-350-christian-ethicists-release-statement-condemning-white-supremacy>
- James Martin, SJ: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=99oVfKqclGM>
- Michigan Coalition of Human Rights: <http://www.mchr.org/>
- Busted Halo: <http://bustedhalo.com/podcasts/father-dave-responds-charlottesville>
- Southern Poverty Law Center: <https://www.splcenter.org/>

When it comes to racism, there is only one side:
to stand against it.

- Cardinal Blase Cupich,
Archdiocese of Chicago

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Some Resources which Contain Ideas for Action:

- USCCB Racism Task Force: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/upload/racism-task-force-report-20161110-peace-in-our-communities.pdf>
- Be Peacemakers/Evangelizers: <http://www.themichigancatholic.org/2016/10/must-encourage-young-people-peacemakers-evangelizers/>
- 10 Ways to Fight Hate (revised edition): <https://www.splcenter.org/news/2017/08/14/splc-releases-new-edition-ten-ways-fight-hate-guide-after-charlottesville-attack>
- What Should Christians Do?: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/warrenthrockmorton/2017/08/15/churches-response-to-charlottesville/>
- A free download lesson about Catholic Social Teaching and Human Dignity: https://educationforjustice.org/free-files/Reflection_Fred_Kammer_S_J_CST_Human_Dignity.pdf
- Responding to Charlottesville: <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/whatgodwantsforyourlife/2017/08/8-things-can-response-charlottesville/#CRTH3E9H588YqI0E.01>
- What one diocese did: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/religion/sarah-whitman-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville-america-must-do-better/2334177#sthash.zyrTgdu9.gbpl>
- 198 Ways of Non-Violent Action: <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/resources/nonviolent/methods.php>
- Erase Racism: <http://www.eraseracismny.org/resource-center/teaching-tools>
- Eight Ways to Stand Up to Hate: https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/eight_ways_to_stand_up_to_hate

- Human Diversity: <http://nordic.businessinsider.com/this-danish-video-celebrating-human-diversity-has-gone-viral-at-a-very-critical-moment-2017-2>
- Talking Back to Hate Speech: <http://billmoyers.com/story/talking-back-hate-speech-explained/>
- The Forgiveness Project: <http://theforgivenessproject.com/> and <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/arno-michaels-usa/>

Hurt people hurt people.
That's how pain patterns get passed on,
generation after generation after generation.
Break the chain today.
Meet anger with sympathy,
contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness.
Greet grimaces with smiles.
Forgive and forget without finding fault.
Love is the weapon of the future.

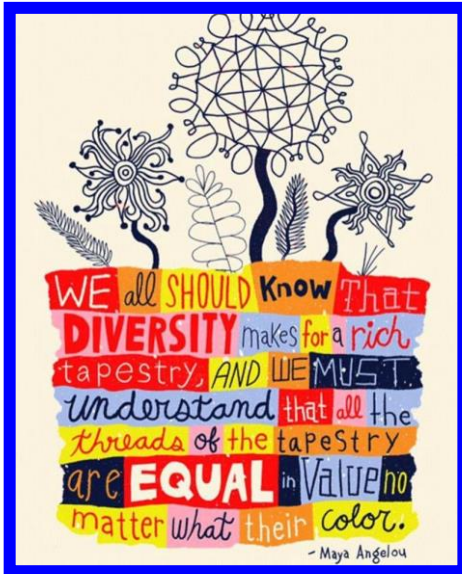
- Yehuda Berg

Some Books that Might be Used in Book Clubs (especially to help in understanding the other's perspective):

- *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us Apart* by Bill Bishop
- *Small Great Things* by Jody Picoult (soon to be a major motion picture)
- *The Warmth of Other Suns* by I. Wilkerson
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by M. Alexander
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson

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- *Racial Justice and the Catholic Church* by Bryan N. Massingale
- *A Colony in a Nation* by Chris Hayes



Movies and Videos

- Theology and Racial Justice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14Qy8dn0hRU>
- Spirituality and Racial Justice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6V-EzW7HoRo>
- A Force More Powerful: <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/films/index.php>
- Catholic Social Teaching and Racism: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=osI-73hwPVg>

Prayer and Music Suggestions

- Prayer: <https://www.coc.org/efj/prayer-after-charlottesville>
- God Against Racism And Violence: <https://godspace-msa.com/2017/08/14/meditation-monday-god-against-racism-and-violence/>
- Reflection: <http://fiveminutesonmonday.com/carrying-christ-2/>
- Prayer for a Torn Nation: <https://sojo.net/articles/prayer-torn-nation>
- The Examen for social media: <https://thejesuitpost.org/2017/02/examen-clicking-liking-and-posting-for-the-greater-glory/#.WKmwKiloAM8.facebook>
- Making a Difference: http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2013/12/a-legacy-of-mandela.html
- *Praying for Justice: A Lectionary of Christian Concern*: <https://www.amazon.com/Praying-Justice-Lectionary-Christian-Concern/dp/1594980381>
- Prayer Resources: <http://csjorange.org/ministries/justice-center/resources/>
- God, help us: <http://concordpastor.blogspot.com/2017/08/pause-for-prayer-friday-818.html>
- The Prayer of St. Francis in your Neighborhood: <https://godspace-msa.com/2017/08/24/the-prayer-of-saint-francis-in-your-neighborhood/>
- We Will Not Yield: <http://tobendlight.com/2017/08/we-will-not-yield/>
- Spiritual Exercise: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/08/16/charlottesville-and-trump-spiritual-exercise-overwhelmed-and-exhausted>

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- Kindness:
http://sethgodin.typepad.com/seths_blog/2014/06/treating-people-with-kindness.html
- GIA is offering these editions for free download and use through November 1, songs that speak to these troubled times:
 - Diverse in Culture, Nation, Race
 - If You Believe and I Believe
 - In Christ There Is No East or West

Click the following link to download choir editions. Thank you to the composers who have graciously partnered with GIA to grant permission. (<https://giamusic.com/store/music-for-troubled-times>)

- The song, “A Language of the Heart” by Kathy Sherman, CSJ
<http://ministryofthearts.org/download-mp3-files-language-of-the-heart-cd/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CCiRALcHTbQ>
- We Are Called: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hwlfxsx3O8>
- Christ, Be Our Light:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JhQ0_XMUtvQ
- We Will Rise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrEs-7XnqHY>
- Man in the Mirror:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PivWY9wn5ps>
- Heal the World: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWf-eARnf6U>
- Goodness is Stronger than Evil:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSALq_ZnOQM and
<https://godspace-msa.com/2012/04/26/goodness-is-stronger-than-evil-by-desmond-tutu/>



Resources for families and children/youth which might also be adapted for adults

- Understanding Racism:
<http://www.smp.org/product/E6008/Understanding-Racism/>
- Creating Justice: Catholic Social Teaching for Today's World:
<http://www.smp.org/product/E6007/Creating-Justice/>
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Resources for Classrooms:
<https://www.common sense.org/education/top-picks/diversity-equity-and-inclusivity-resources-for-classrooms?utm>
- Resources For Educators To Use In The Wake Of Charlottesville:
<http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/08/14/543390148/resources-for-educators-to-use-the-wake-of-charlottesville?utm>
- Our Solidarity Experience: Taken from Ave Maria Press' Creating Justice eLearning course, this experience introduces young peoples' hearts and minds to the Catholic social teaching theme of solidarity, in 3 thoughtful lessons. This course is completely free.
http://elearning.smp.org/courses/solidarity/?utm_source=SF&utm

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- Prayer Service: <http://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/12864/?utm>
- Reverse Poem Video: <http://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/12860/?utm>
- Promoting Peace PowerPoint: <http://www.smp.org/resourcecenter/resource/6418/?utm>
- Raising an Advocate: <http://www.mamademics.thinkific.com/> and <https://www.facebook.com/raisinganadvocate/>
- Share with all Schools: <http://momastery.com/blog/2014/01/30/share-schools/>
- Raising Race Conscious Children: <https://www.facebook.com/raceconscious/>
- How to Talk about Race: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/the-march-continues/the-five-essential-practices-for-teaching-the-civil-0>
- Let's Talk!: <https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/publications/lets-talk>
- Teaching Tolerance: <https://www.tolerance.org/>
- Diversity Chain: <https://www.slideshare.net/krystalwellmann/diversity-chain>
- Resources for Educators: <http://www.ipj-ppi.org/Educators.htm>
- Act Justly: <https://www.amazon.com/Act-Justly-Introducing-Catholic-Activities/dp/1585952222>
- Cultural Bridges: <https://www.amazon.com/Teaching-responsibility-learning-cultural-bridges/dp/0536598428>

- Teaching Kids to Care: <http://www.twentythirdpublications.com/tekitocaniac.html>
- Activity Village: <https://www.activityvillage.co.uk/>
- Peace First: <http://www2.peacefirst.org/>

Organizations/sites that might be consulted for ongoing reflections/resources:

- Pax Christi: <https://paxchristiusa.org/about/>
- Education for Justice: <https://educationforjustice.org>
- Network: <https://networklobby.org/>
- JustFaith Ministries: <https://justfaith.org/>
- The Institute for Peace and Justice: <http://www.ipj-ppi.org/>
- Bishop Gumbleton: <http://www.bishopgumbleton.com>
- National Black Catholic Congress: <https://www.nbccongress.org/congress-xii.html>
- Center for Study of Race and Democracy: <https://www.facebook.com/CSRDatASU/>
- Center for FaithJustice: <http://www.faithjustice.org/>
- Mexican American Catholic College: <http://www.maccsa.org/about.php>
- The Carter Center: <https://www.cartercenter.org/>
- Albert Einstein Institution: <http://www.aeinstein.org/>
- Peace X Peace: <http://www.peacexpeace.org/>

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- The Peace Alliance: <http://peacealliance.org/>

To build bridges you must climb down
the bank –
get your feet wet and hands dirty;
it's not enough just to shout
at those on the other side.

- Leonard Sweet

Various Reflections, especially for pastoral staffs

- USCCB resource: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/racism/>
- Catholic Response: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/08/16/editors-catholics-must-combat-racism-and-bigotry-every-turn>
- The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb: <https://www.amazon.com/Wolf-Shall-Dwell-Lamb/dp/082724231X>
- A Wake-Up Call for the Catholic Church: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/wake-call-catholic-church>
- What Your Church Can Do After Charlottesville: <https://sojo.net/articles/what-your-church-can-do-after-charlottesville-5-steps-forward>
- Resources for Leading Among Tragedy and Crisis: <https://www.faithandleadership.com/resources-leading-amid-tragedy-and-crisis?utm>
- Articles from Fr. Bryan Massingale: <http://www.uscatholic.org/authors/father-bryan-massingale>
- Where Does It Hurt?: <https://onbeing.org/programs/ruby-sales-where-does-it-hurt-aug2017/>
- African American Catholic Spirituality: <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201403/ray-east-african-american-catholic-spirituality-28592>
- Catholics and Race: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/catholics-conversation-race>
- Non-Racism is Not Enough: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/08/16/white-christians-non-racism-not-enough>
- What I Saw in Charlottesville: <https://godspace-msa.com/2017/08/17/what-i-saw-in-charlottesville-by-brian-mclaren/>
- Catholic Social Teaching and Racism: <http://www.loyno.edu/jsri/sites/loyno.edu.jsri/files/CSTandRacism-Fall2009jsq.pdf>
- Jewish Fear: <https://jewishschool.com/2017/08/80150/jewish-fear-love-solidarity-in-the-wake-of-charlottesville/>
- Catholic Social Teaching on Racism: From Examination of Conscience to Examination of Culture: <https://centerforfaithjustice.wordpress.com/2012/03/27/catholic-social-teaching-on-racism-from-examination-of-conscience-to-examination-of-culture/>
- From a white person to white people: We're complicit: <http://www.uscatholic.org/articles/201708/white-person-white-people-were-complicit-31110?utm>

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- When Christians Love Political Power More than People: <https://sojo.net/articles/when-christians-love-political-power-more-people>
- Panelists Discuss Racism and How to Combat It <http://www.vindy.com/news/2017/jun/13/panelists-at-town-hall-event-address-rac/>
- Antisemitism: <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2017/06/29/skin-in-the-game-how-antisemitism-animates-white-nationalism/#sthash.kOuHxKey.h3yBwHq7.dpbs>
- On being Black and Catholic in the United States: <https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/02/27/on-being-black-and-catholic-in-the-united-states/>
- Mourning in America: <https://breadhere.wordpress.com/2017/08/14/mourning-in-america/>
- Truth and Lies: <http://www.npr.org/programs/ted-radio-hour/533783169/truth-and-lies>
- A Sermon for Charlottesville: <http://www.mbird.com/2017/08/jesus-comes-aboard-the-ship-of-fools-a-sermon-for-charlottesville/>
- Why Catholics are Called to Radical Hospitality: <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2017/08/24/why-catholics-are-called-radical-hospitality-these-political-times?utm>
- The Wrong Question: <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/8310/how-can-christians-support-donald-trump-is-the-wrong-question?utm>

Some Resources which Would Be Helpful for All Necessary – and Sometimes Challenging – Conversations

- Civil Conversations Project: <http://www.civilconversationsproject.org/>
- Difficult Conversations: <http://aprilfiet.com/my-thoughts/difficult-conversations>



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Some Resources to Assist in Critical Thinking

- Critical Thinking Skills: <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/critical-thinking-skills-cheatsheet-infographic>
- Critical Thinking: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/learn/critical-thinking.html>

GEMS Wonderings

- What have you done? What might you do?
- How do we listen to the experiences of the people? To the happenings of the day? How do connect our experiences with Gospel challenges?
- What other topics/real life issues might need attention in adult faith formation in your parish?



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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
- *The Seasons of Adult Faith Formation website*
<http://www.lifelongfaith.com/2015-adult-faith-formation-symposium.html>