



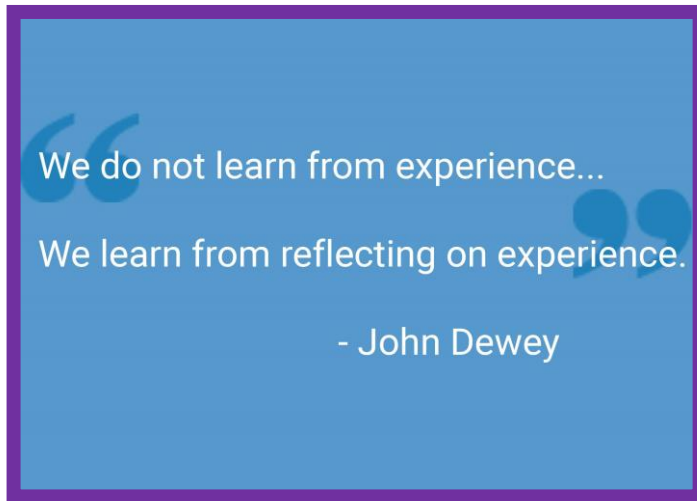
GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#147 - August 1, 2021

A Best Practice: Reflecting on Experience

The following quote is crucial for all we do:



It is certainly pertinent for our growth and transformation as a Catholic disciple. Think, for instance, about the many outreach and service experiences that people in your parish/(arch)diocese participate in. The deepened growth and conversion comes when they have time to reflect on what they learned, how they've changed, and what they will do/who they will be in the future.

The same thing is vitally true about where we find ourselves today: as we move from the strict confines of the Covid-times to a new world. (It's not the same world we left.)

The Covid-times were certainly challenging, depressing, prohibiting, confining, worrisome and filled with many losses and sufferings. At the same time, many found new truths, expanded gifts, deepened awareness, blessings of strength and peace.

We have been through a great deal. One of the most important things about this time is that we take time to reflect, to look back, to realize what

we've learned and to make conscious decisions about who we want to be and what we want to do as we go forward.

Winston Churchill said: "Never let a good crisis go to waste." We're in an in-between time right now. Many people call it a liminal space; we're standing/living in between two worlds: what was and we don't know what will be.

This space has the potential for something new. We won't discover that, though, if we don't take time to listen to ourselves – and others – about what is really going on and to consciously plan for the future.

As people re-gather (in all areas of their lives), we, as adult faith formation leaders, in our hospitality need to provide times and spaces for them to reflect on their Covid times – individually, with their spouses, with their families, in small groups.

The following are questions that might be posed:

- in small faith-sharing groups
- via the parish bulletin, website and e-newsletters
- during prayer at any parish gathering

- ✚ What have been your greatest blessings? Your greatest challenges?
- ✚ What have you learned?
- ✚ 5 years from now, what will you remember about this time?
- ✚ What do you want to remember?
- ✚ How will your life be different when this is over?
- ✚ What you would like as the new normal in your daily life?
- ✚ What are some new daily practices you would like to incorporate in your life, your spiritual life as a part of a new normal?

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

- ✚ What in this present moment do you find so difficult? Why is that particularly important to you?
- ✚ What did you miss the most? What about that is so valuable to you?
- ✚ What are you grateful for you even amidst this challenging time?
- ✚ What do you want to try to do that is different or what opportunity might this present for something new?
- ✚ What connections do you find yourself grateful for? Who makes you feel grounded and connected to God?
- ✚ God gifted us with limitless creativity and imagination. Even in this time of separation and isolation, what was one way you maintained meaningful connection to others - whether directly, through technology, or intentional focus and attention?

The following are adapted from suggestions on the blog, [Journal Prompts For A Pandemic](#):

- In what ways is your life different now?
- Who are the people you missed the most?
- Do you think the pandemic had any positive impacts on your mental health? If so, what?
- Do you think the pandemic had any negative impacts on your mental health? If so, what?
- What are five things you never realized you were grateful for before?
- Has/will your behavior and activities change(d) since the pandemic?
- What have you learned about yourself?
- During the pandemic, what were your greatest fears and anxieties? How did you manage them?
- What are some of the positive impacts the pandemic has had on the world?

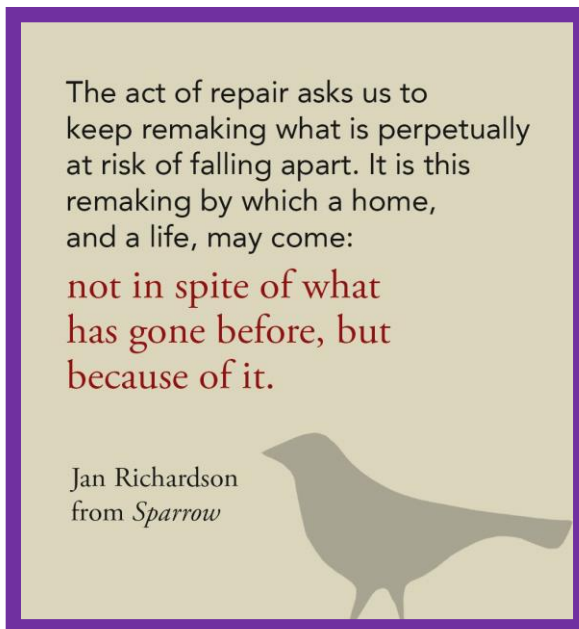
- What are some of the negative impacts the pandemic has had on the world?
- Are there any ways in which you have helped your neighbors and society? What are other ways in which you could help now?
- What self-care techniques did you begin during the pandemic? Which ones will you carry into the future?
- Did you start any new hobbies?
- Were there some hobbies you would have liked to try but didn't? Will you start them now?
- Which of your friends or family struggled the most during the pandemic? How did you help these friends or family members? What do they need now?
- What do you anticipate missing about sheltering-in (if anything)?
- What have been your biggest anxieties about things opening back up?
- What have you learned about yourself in these last few months that was unexpected or meaningful to you?
- What have you learned about the country you live in, and how has that learning shaped how you want to show up as a citizen?
- What was one story of your sheltering-in - a small moment that really broke/touched/ buoyed your heart that you never want to forget?

These questions are adapted from some of the many questions from [20 Questions About Life Post-COVID-19](#):

- What have we learned?
- What changes will be permanent?

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

- What will go back to the way it was pre-COVID?
- Are you someone that hoards supplies, or did you shop for aging neighbors and share your supplies even when there is a risk that you might run out?
- Are you pivoting or spinning in place?



The following questions – and many more – can be found at <https://daveursillo.com/prompts-for-self-quarantine/>

- ✓ Describe the last “normal” feeling day that you remember. What happened? What do you miss?
- ✓ What do you want to be able to say when you’re asked someday, “What did you do when all of that was happening?”

- ✓ What moments do you want to remember about this time when you
- ✓ look back at it someday?
- ✓ What “bored” you, hollowed you out, emptied you, or left you vacant and unfulfilled?
- ✓ What filled you? What makes you feel whole?

Christine Sine suggested these questions:

<https://godspacelight.com/2020/04/27/meditation-monday-the-great-pause-or-a-complete-reset/>

- What of this period of isolation do you want to maintain – in your life, in your community, in your work situation, in your church?
- What of your old life has this reset encouraged you to let go of?
- What steps could you take now to reset your life in a new direction where love of God and love for neighbor holds centre stage?

Sr. Lorraine Reaume, OP posed these questions for women in the Dominican Novitiate:

- ❖ Is there a practice you are being invited to do to be healthy and grounded?
- ❖ Is there a way of prayer that might speak to you more at this time?
- ❖ Do you have any new insights into yourself?
- ❖ Can you name a blessing(s) that you personally have experienced?

GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

- ❖ What attitude or stance is the Spirit calling you to in these days?
- ❖ As this goes on, what does God suggest will help you to stay well in mind, spirit and body? Do one of these today.

Brooke Anderson posed daily quarantine questions which are still pertinent today

(<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/six-daily-questions-to-ask-yourself-in-quarantine>):

- What am I grateful for today?
- Who am I checking in on or connecting with today?
- What expectations or “normal” am I letting go of today?

- How am I getting outside today?
- How am I moving my body today?
- What beauty am I either creating, cultivating or inviting in today?

Vision Christian Media asked (<https://vision.org.au/>):

After 3 days isolation inside a fish,
Jonah came out with a mission and changed a city.

After 40 days isolation on a mountain,
Moses came out with 10 commandments and changed a nation.

After 40 days isolation in the wilderness,
Jesus came out in power and changed everything.

What are you coming out of isolation with?
What needs to change?

Some other resources you might find helpful:

- [Reflection questions for leaders navigating Covid19](#)
- [Reflections in a Time of Quarantine](#)

- [Student Journaling during Coronavirus](#)
- [The coronavirus has transformed all of our lives. When it's over, here's what I hope we remember.](#)

- [Building emotional strength and resilience: 21 questions to ask yourself and others](#)
- [COVID-19 Crisis: A Good Time for Questions](#)

- [What is God doing here?](#)



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>