



GREAT ENDEAVORS MINED & SHARED

from an International Adult Faith Formation Best Practices Study

#149 - September 2021

A Best Practice: Healing Memorials

Our **GEMS #125** issue we looked at three endeavors to remember and commemorate the many losses of life we have suffered throughout the pandemic.

Much has been written about the anguish of grief at this time; many individuals, families and friends have struggled to find different ways to live in and through the death of a loved one in these times.

At the same time, in a time such as this, we are experiencing collective grief (whether we realize it or not). Collective grief happens when a community, society, village, or nation all experience extreme change or loss. Sarah Sloat reminds us:

“Collective grief is experiencing grief in the context of knowing many others are experiencing that grief as well. It’s experiencing grief even if you didn’t lose a loved one. It’s experiencing grief along with, or in honor of, people who have lost a loved one.”

<https://www.inverse.com/mind-body/grief-coronavirus-collective-mourning>

As we live with our own losses during this time, as we walk with our parishioners who are grieving, are there also things we can do as (arch)dioceses and/or as parishes to grieve together, to remember the lives of the many who have died-

- in our families
- our parishes
- our cities our country
- the world?

This issue summarizes two endeavors.

- How might you do something similar?
- How might you tweak these ideas to meet the needs of your communities?

When St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Community in Westwood, Los Angeles reopened in the spring of 2021, the church contained a display of butterflies over the baptismal font commemorating each parishioner, friend or relative who had died since the church closed in the spring of 2020.



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Under the direction of a collaborative team and talented artists, the city of Detroit created a large-scale, participatory public art installation that recognizes the depth of loss during the COVID-19 pandemic. A collaboration between the City of Detroit Office of Arts, Culture and Entrepreneurship, Cranbrook Art Museum and the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, it offers support and healing for all residents of southeastern Michigan who experienced all forms of loss, including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, occupational and environmental.

The Healing Memorial Installation is a floor-to-ceiling installation at the TCF Center in Downtown Detroit. It is made with hundreds of handmade fabric pouches - each one containing a written dedication, blessing, keepsake, commemoration, prayer, or message in honor of a life lost in southeastern Michigan.



Sr. Nancyann Turner, OP, who made fourteen pouches to commemorate the fourteen Adrian Dominican Sisters who died from Covid, shares:

“Each one has a little letter to that particular sister, a blessing or a thank you inside it. I found it a very soothing and prayerful experience even though I lamented the loss of life. The prayer and remembrance of each sister brought comfort and solace.”

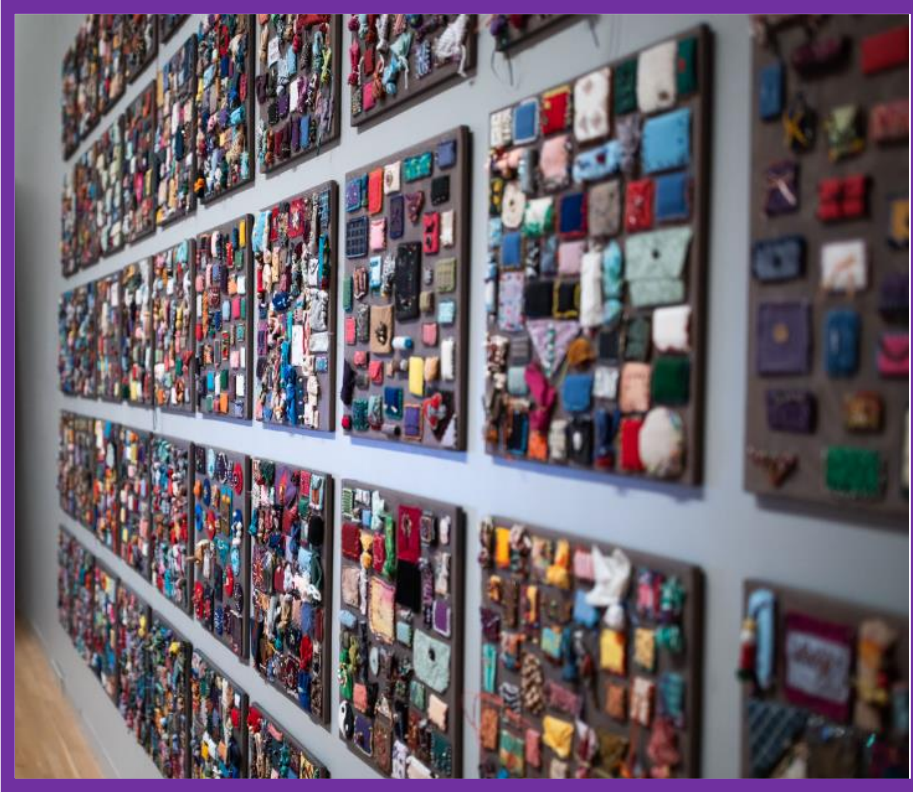
For more ideas on remembering and regathering:

- [Practical Resources for Tending to Grief](#)
- [Teepees in Montana honor tribal members lost to COVID-19](#)

More information about this healing memorial can be found at: <https://detroitriverfront.org/thehealingwall>.

The following video with artist Sonya Clark gives directions on how to make a memorial pouch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJxqtURv_Wg

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

GEMS Wonderings

As you read about these endeavors,

- How have you/how might you do something similar?
- How have you/how might you tweak these ideas to meet the needs of your communities?

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>