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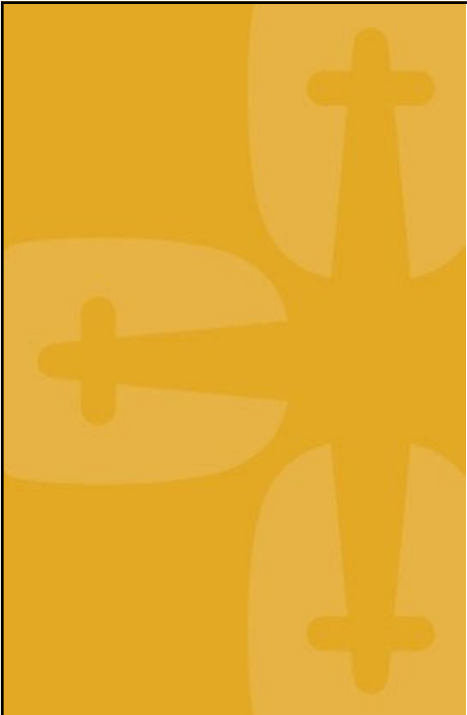
**CHA**  
Catholic Health Association  
of the United States  
*A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care*

# Planning as a Spiritual Discipline

**SOAR (SAVE OUR AGING RELIGIOUS)**

May 22, 2023

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Fr. Charles Bouchard, OP, S.T.D.  
Senior Director, Theology and  
Sponsorship

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## Is God a planner?

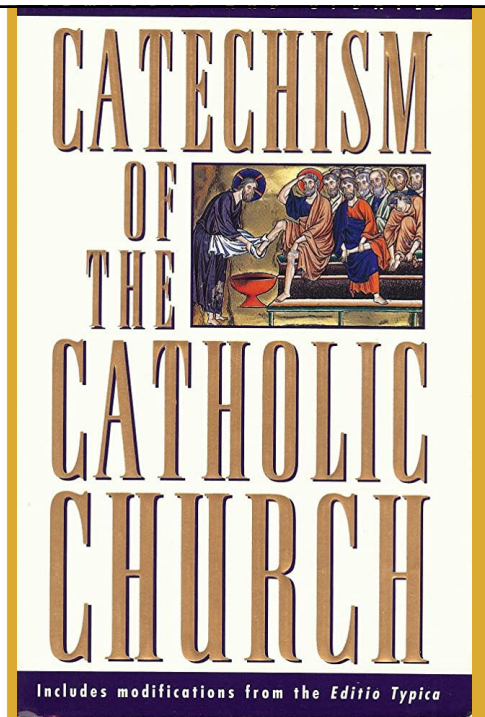
*“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”* (Jeremiah 29:11).



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## God's plan

- Known through Revelation
- The Bible and tradition
- “Natural Law” – what we know of God's plan through reason
  - Human Experience
  - Science



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## Should we plan, too?

“*Come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit*”— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For tyou are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. *Instead, you ought to say, u“If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”* (James 4:13-15)



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## Biblical Planning

“What King, if going against an army does not plan...”

(Luke 14)

“Who sets out to build a tower...”

(Luke 14:28-30)

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## Paul to the Ephesians

Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, *making the most of every opportunity*, because the days are evil.

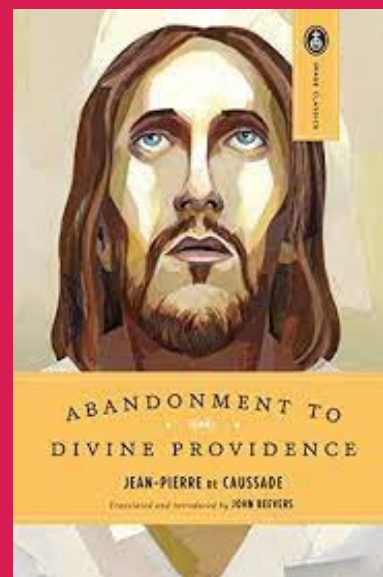
Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is... (5:15-16)



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## Planning and Providence

- God's plan is "providence"
- God assures some things, but leaves others to us
- *We participate in providence*
  - *Subsidiarity (what voices are heard?)*
  - *Justice*
  - *Prudence*



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Representation of the Virtue of Prudence (from tomb of Francis, Duke of Brittany, Cathedral of Nantes, France).

## The Virtue of Prudence

Knowing-what-ought-to-be done: *What is the end (the future)?*

-Reflection on the past

-Knowing the present

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*Imagination:* “apprehend a thing not as it is, but as it is not”

*Tradition:* “The strangest form of democracy, the only kind in which the dead get a vote.”

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“Articulate fruits of discernment in a way that is publicly accessible and able to be acted upon”...(Bill Cahoy)

## *Planning as Discernment*

- Prayer
- Intuition
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit (“intuitive promptings”)

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Planning for the good of all aims at the *common good*, which is, by analogy planning for the *Reign of God*.

## *Kinds of Planning (discernment)*

Personal  
Organizational  
*Eschatological*

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# Planning for Charism

**Abandon charism** (“that’s what they did in the past”)

**Embrace charism** as a substitute for Catholic identity

Charism as a “**happy memory**”

**Rediscover and re-integrate charism**

(cf Joe Driscoll, “Laser Focus on Charism to Thrive,” *Health Progress* Jan-Feb 2020 (<https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/current-issue>))

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## ***Prophetic Aspect of Planning***

Seeing what the Spirit wants us to do now, in this time and in this place



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*Why  
planning  
fails*

- Selective use of data
- Willful blindness
- Sentimentality
- Inertia (“wait for the next leadership team”)
- Lack of buy-in (subsidiarity)
- Waiting too long