

Investment Insights

The Great Convergence

May 2020

The opinions are those of the author(s) and subject to change.

After the release of the Chief Investment Office (CIO) Insights on The Great Separation, April 2020, and The Great Acceleration, May 2020, comes CIO's The Great Convergence. As we outlined within The Great Separation phases, the Workout Process—the accelerating shift in work, leisure, learning and other activities—is where diverging forces like economic shutdown and economic re-opening, market declines and advancements converge. It's also where Wall Street (the financial markets) and Main Street (the real economy) intersect.

We see five main points at the heart of The Great Convergence:

- unprecedented fiscal and monetary stimulus and support;
- negative real rates;
- a lack of growth and yield worldwide;
- multiple phases of the Workout Process; and,
- the acceleration of innovation and technology.

At this point in the convergence, the market has already begun “separating” the areas of resiliency or growth (technology, healthcare, stay-at-home businesses, take-out, etc.) from the areas most affected by the shutdown and the extended physical distancing environments (hotels, airlines and travel, salons, movie theaters, cruise lines, restaurants, etc.). In addition, this “central point” appears to have fast-tracked wide-reaching adjustments to business models, not to mention daily life changes.

As the economies begin to re-open, we expect various types of recoveries to unfold depending on the segment of the overall economy and industry groups involved. Therefore, no one particular letter shape is likely to characterize the type of recovery path that ultimately unfolds. Importantly, we see the consumer beginning to stabilize and exhibiting signs of life as public sector stimulus filters down to households and small businesses. In our opinion, the path of consumer confidence and spending should be the main driver of both the speed and density of the economic recovery.

Moreover, the market path and/or shape is most likely going to continue taking its cue from the consumer, the momentum of the re-openings, and news regarding virus treatments and vaccine related information. To this point, we expect the market recovery to experience a “square root” shape (Exhibit 5) as it continues to develop in the coming months and through 2021 prior to the New Frontier unfolding.

We present our thinking behind The Great Convergence in the following charts.

Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Incorporated (also referred to as “MLPF&S” or “Merrill”) makes available certain investment products sponsored, managed, distributed or provided by companies that are affiliates of Bank of America Corporation (“BoFA Corp.”). MLPF&S is a registered broker-dealer, registered investment adviser, Member SIPC and a wholly owned subsidiary of BoFA Corp.

Investment products:

Are Not FDIC Insured	Are Not Bank Guaranteed	May Lose Value
-----------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------

Please see back page for important disclosure information.

AUTHORED BY:

Chris Hyzy
Chief Investment Officer

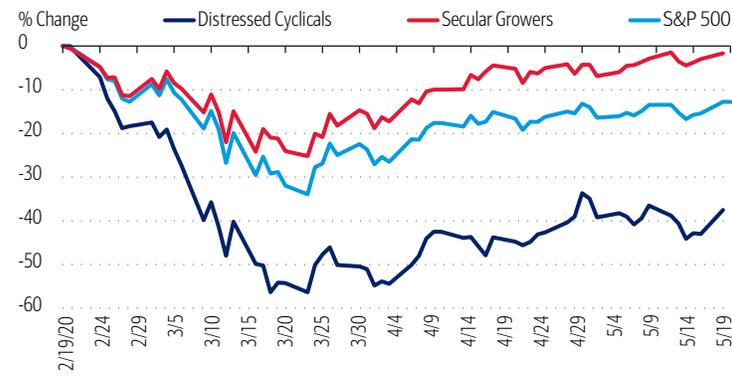
Joseph Quinlan
Managing Director and
Head of CIO Market Strategy

Marci McGregor
Managing Director and
Investment Strategist

Lauren J. Sanfilippo
Vice President and
Market Strategy Analyst

Data as of 5/25/2020 and subject to change.

Exhibit 1: Distressed Cyclicals¹ vs. Secular Growers²

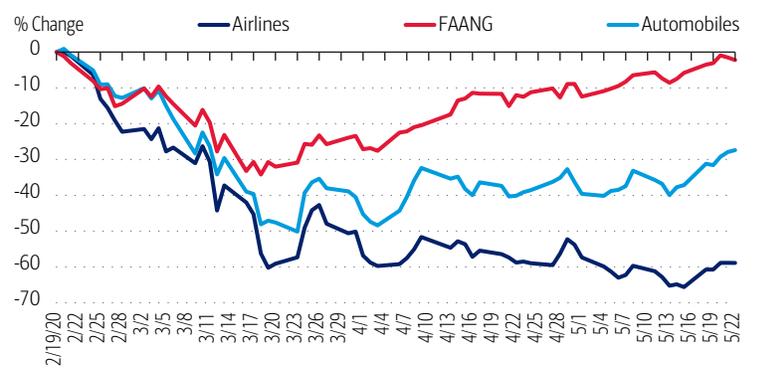


Indexed to February 19, 2020. Source: Bloomberg as of May 19, 2020. Distressed and Secular indexes listed in source 1 and 2. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Short term performance shown to illustrate more recent trend.

¹ **Distressed Cyclicals index**—Airlines, Hotels / Cruiselines, Hotel / Restaurant, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), Casinos / Gaming, Oil & Gas Exploration & Production, Autos, Dept. stores, Retail REITs, Apparel, Diversified banks, Regional banks, Consumer Finance.
² **Secular Growers index**—Internet Retail, System software, Application software, Video games, Semis, Specialty REITs, Interactive media, Biotech, Pharma, Life sciences, Medical devices, Comm Equipment.

- Secular growers have handily outperformed distressed cyclicals or the broader index prior to COVID-19, during the recent selloff, and now the rebound.
- Distressed cyclicals bounced off their March 23 bottom and have had a choppy recovery since. Moving into the consolidation phase, distressed cyclicals need to play catch up to give the market more breadth.

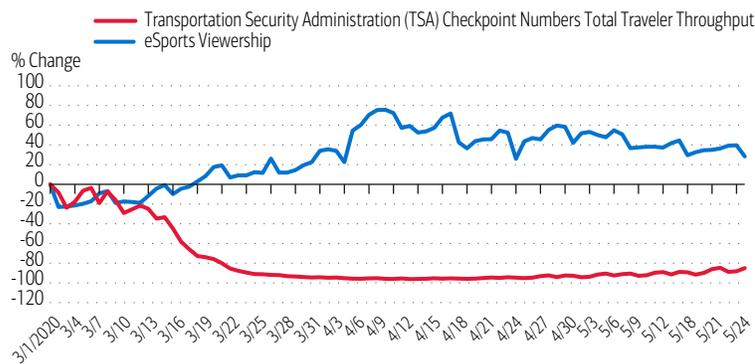
Exhibit 2: The Physical vs. Virtual World: Facebook, Apple, Amazon, Netflix, Google (FAANG) vs Airlines vs. Automobiles



Indexed to February 19, 2020. S&P 500 Airlines Industry Index. S&P 500 Automobile Industry Index. Source: Bloomberg. Data as of May 22, 2020. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Short term performance shown to illustrate more recent trend.

- While the technology leaders within the FAANG cohort have almost fully recovered to their February 19 market top, the airline industry (-59%) and automobiles (-27%) are well off their highs.
- We expect challenged sectors such as the airline and automobile industries to experience differing degrees of recovery from the pandemic shock as state economies begin to re-open.

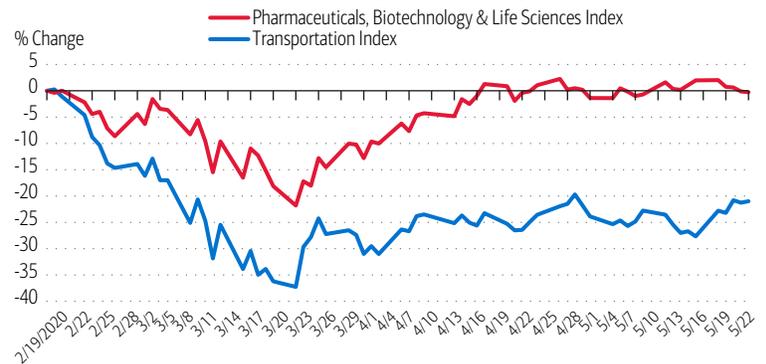
Exhibit 3: Staying In: Airport Passengers vs. eSports



Indexed to March 1, 2020. eSports line tracks the average concurrent Amazon Twitch viewership daily. TSA line tracks the number of U.S. passengers screened daily. Sources: TSA, Twitch. Data as of May 25, 2020.

- The number of U.S. travelers passing through TSA security checkpoints has decreased considerably since March 1 (close to an 85% decline) as demand for air travel has declined amid the COVID-19 spread. On March 1, 2020 nearly 2.3 million travelers passed through TSA. By May 25, 2020, that number was down to 340,769—a decline of 85%, according to the TSA.
- Meanwhile, Amazon's Twitch streaming platform hit an all-time high in viewership for eSports tournaments and gaming-related streaming amid the pandemic quarantine from March through May 15.

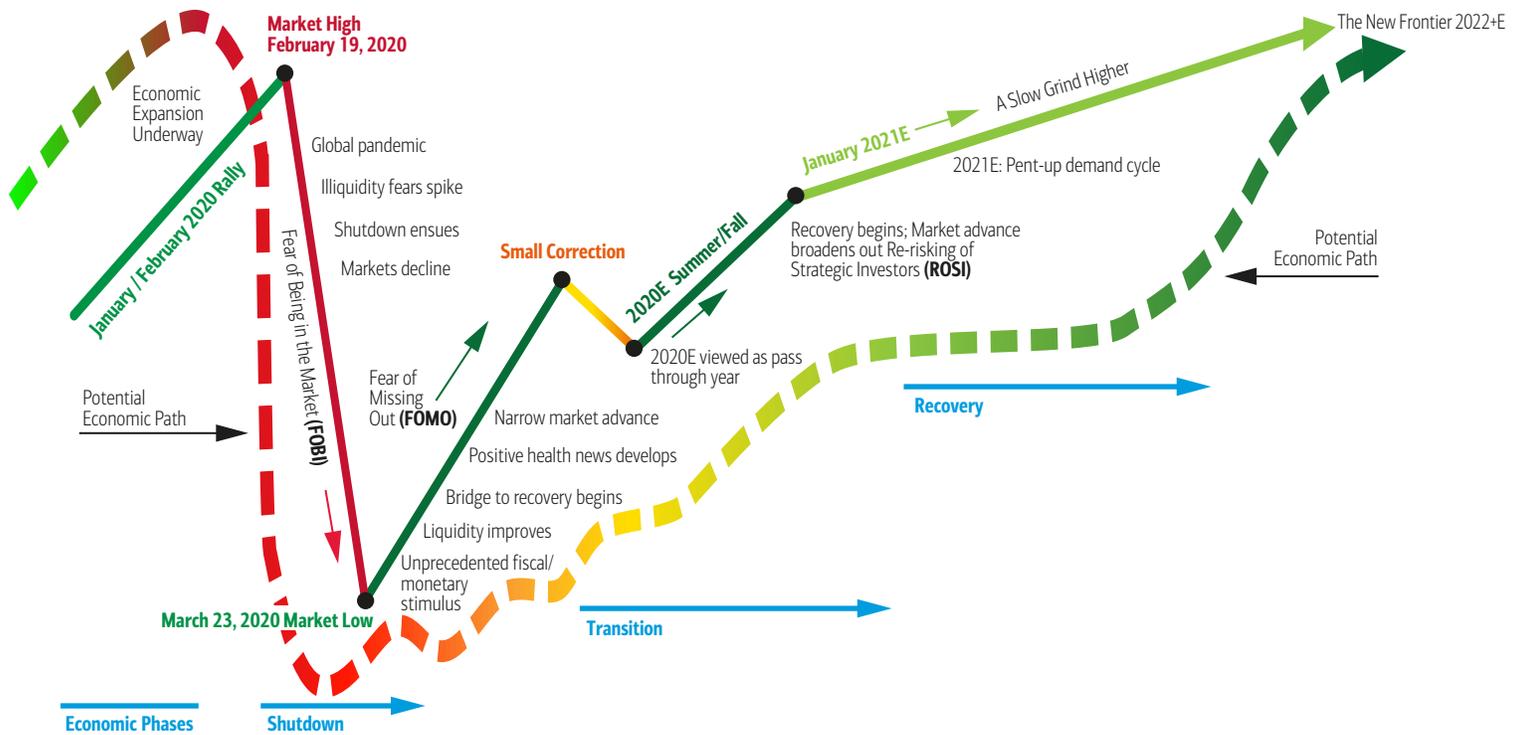
Exhibit 4: Science Gets Us Back: Biotechnology vs. Transportation Industries



Indexed to February 19, 2020. S&P 500 Technology Hardware & Equipment Index. S&P 500 Transportation Industry Index. Source: Bloomberg. Data as of May 22, 2020. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Short term performance shown to illustrate more recent trend.

- Travel through any means and movement of goods and people had largely ground to halt owing to state shutdowns and social distancing. In late April, shipping volumes appear to have bottomed as the industrial economy re-started, according to BofA Global Research's current Transport Survey.
- Conversely, in our opinion, science, and specifically the pharmaceutical and life sciences industries are what gets us back into a phased-in re-opening and helps keep the re-opening smoother. We believe we are already seeing signs of market recovery.

Exhibit 5: Shaping up: A “Square Root” Type Recovery Shape.

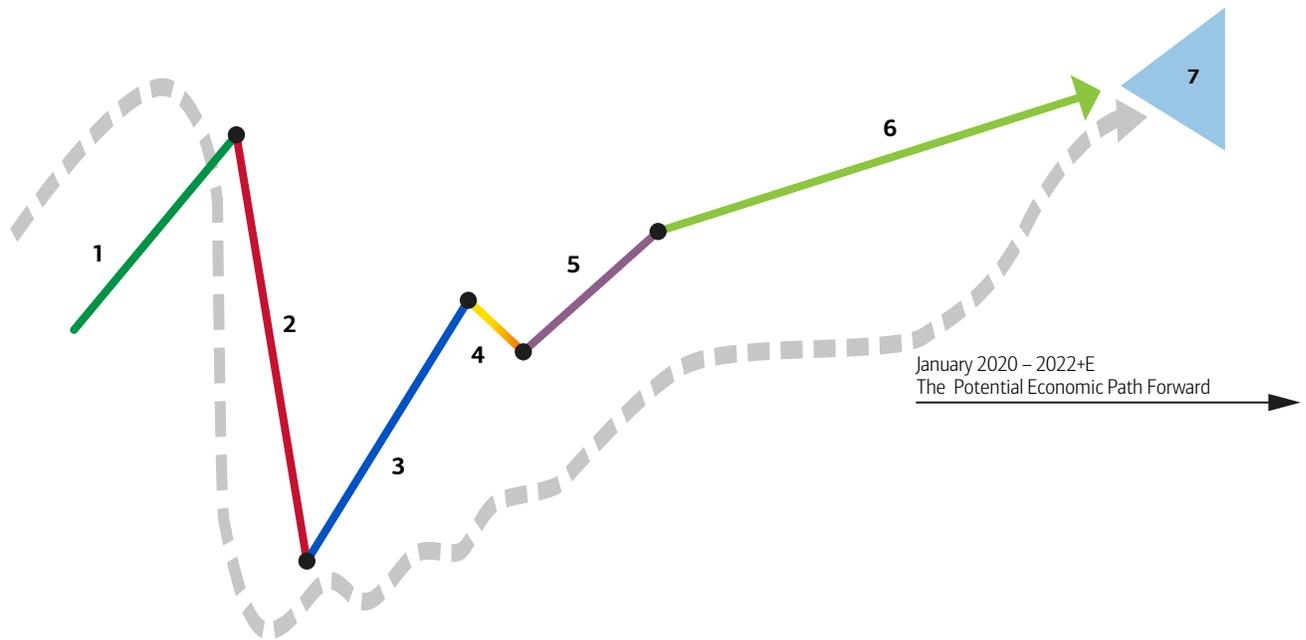


CIO's Phases of the Workout Process



E=Estimate. Source: Chief Investment Office as of May 21, 2020. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. For illustrative purposes only. CIO views are subject to change.

Exhibit 6: Potential Investment Implications for the “Square Root.”



Jan/Feb 2020

1

- Megacaps
- Utilities / Technology
- Brent Crude Oil
- Copper
- Growth
- Flight to Quality

Feb/Mar 2020

2

- U.S. Dollar
- Gold
- Quality, Defensives
- Communication Services / Technology
- Long-term Treasuries

Spring – Fall 2020 E

3

- Factor Reversal
- Low Quality, Weaker Fundamentals
- Investment-Grade Corporates
- Agency Mortgage-backed-security (MBS)
- High Yield Bonds

4

- Quality, Growth, Yield
- Home Improvement/ Do-It-Yourself industries
- U.S. large cap
- Environmental, Social & Corporate Governance factors
- Treasuries
- Short-term Corporates and Municipals

5

- Pharmaceuticals
- Communication Services
- Technology Leaders
- High Yield / Loans

2021 E

6

- Reshoring technology/ pharmaceutical supply chains
- Industrials
- U.S. large cap Technology
- Return to high-quality Corporates/ Municipals

2022 E

7

- Long-term structural opportunity-themes are accelerated
- Residential Real Estate Cycle
- Weaker U.S. Dollar
- New equity culture driven by demographics
- Return to high-quality Corporates/Municipals

CORE PORTFOLIO FUNDAMENTALS

- Maintain a high-equity overweight relative to fixed income
- Use periods of high negative volatility to rebalance and re-risk portfolios
- Within equity allocation, have a solid mix of growth and value with emphasis on U.S.
- Maintain diversification across and within asset classes
- Outside of core asset allocation, consider multiple satellite* exposure to long-term themes and trends

Source: Chief Investment Office as of May 2020. E=Estimate. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** For illustrative purposes only.

*Core-satellite investing is a method of portfolio construction designed to minimize costs, tax liability, and volatility while providing an opportunity to outperform the broad stock market as a whole. When assessing your portfolio in light of our current guidance, consider the tactical positioning around asset allocation in reference to your own individual risk tolerance, time horizon, objectives and liquidity needs. Certain investments may not be appropriate, given your specific circumstances and investment plan. CIO views are subject to change.

Exhibit 7: 7s Are Considered Wild at the Point of Convergence

MACRO

The 7 “Cs”

1. Consumer Spending Activity
2. Corporate Profits and Balance Sheet Activity
3. Central Bank Activity
4. COVID-19 Treatment, Testing, Tracking Data
5. China/U.S. relationship
6. Credit Spreads
7. Coordination of Global Policy

7 Potential Implications of Convergence “The Square Root” Type of Shape Develops

1. Global pandemic leads to beginning of market drop
2. Shutdown and liquidity lead to FOBI. Markets may decline
3. Unprecedented stimulus leads to stabilization
4. FOMI develops- narrow, sharp advance
5. Economic re-opening broadens market rally as consumer stabilizes
6. Economic recovery prospects extends rally and ROSI ensues
7. Pent-up demand cycle leads to slow grind higher

Unprecedented
Fiscal/Monetary
Stimulus and
Support

•
Negative Real
Interest Rates

•
Lack Of Growth
and Yield

•
The Great
Separation
(CIO’s 5 Phases Of
the Workout Process)

•
The Great
Acceleration
(Themes & Trends)

MICRO

7 Reasons as to why we think the markets are at these levels

1. The speed of the advance could create a catch-up phase (FOBI to FOMO)
2. U.S. Large Cap indices appear to be built on growth
3. Lack of yield around the world
4. U.S. economy breaking away from the rest of world
5. Investors view 2020 as a “pass-through year”
6. Investors are educated to buy the dips; ROSI takes over
7. Unprecedented fiscal/monetary stimulus for longer

7 Portfolio Considerations Through The Great Convergence

1. Add to diversified strategic equity exposure relative to fixed income on weakness
2. Favor U.S. relative to the rest of their world
3. Prefer U.S. Large caps relative to small caps
4. Favor Quality, Growth, and Yield factors across equities
5. Favor Healthcare, Technology, Communication Services, and Consumer Discretionary sectors
6. Prefer investment-grade bonds in fixed income relative to high yield
7. Elevated volatility may lead to more frequent portfolio assessments, re-balancing and/or considerations of dollar-cost averaging

Source: Chief Investment Office. as of May 21, 2020. CIO publications Investment Insights, “The Great Separation” as of April 2020; “The Great Acceleration” as of May 2020. When assessing your portfolio in light of our current guidance, consider the tactical positioning around asset allocation in reference to your own individual risk tolerance, time horizon, objectives and liquidity needs. Certain investments may not be appropriate, given your specific circumstances and investment plan. CIO views are subject to change.

Index Definitions

S&P 500 Index: Stock market index that measures the performance of 500 large companies listed on stock exchanges in the United States.

MSCI World Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology and Life Sciences Index is composed of large and mid cap stocks across 23 Developed Markets countries.

Transport index (TI) is derived from the maximum dose equivalent rate at one meter from the surface of a package containing radioactive material.

Important Disclosures

This material does not take into account a client's particular investment objectives, financial situations, or needs and is not intended as a recommendation, offer, or solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security or investment strategy. Merrill offers a broad range of brokerage, investment advisory (including financial planning) and other services. There are important differences between brokerage and investment advisory services, including the type of advice and assistance provided, the fees charged, and the rights and obligations of the parties. It is important to understand the differences, particularly when determining which service or services to select. For more information about these services and their differences, speak with your Merrill Lynch Wealth Management Advisor.

This material was prepared by the Chief Investment Office (CIO) and is not a publication of BofA Global Research. The views expressed are those of the CIO only and are subject to change. This information should not be construed as investment advice. It is presented for information purposes only and is not intended to be either a specific offer by any Merrill or Bank of America entity to sell or provide, or a specific invitation for a consumer to apply for, any particular retail financial product or service that may be available.

Global Wealth & Investment Management (GWIM) is a division of Bank of America Corporation. The Chief Investment Office, which provides investment strategies, due diligence, portfolio construction guidance and wealth management solutions for GWIM clients, is part of the Investment Solutions Group (ISG) of GWIM.

Bank of America, Merrill, their affiliates and advisors do not provide legal, tax or accounting advice. Clients should consult their legal and/or tax advisors before making any financial decisions.

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Asset allocation, diversification, dollar cost averaging and rebalancing do not ensure a profit or protect against loss in declining markets.

Keep in mind that dollar cost averaging cannot guarantee a profit or prevent a loss in declining markets. Since such an investment plan involves continual investment in securities regardless of fluctuating price levels, you should consider your willingness to continue purchasing during periods of high or low price levels.

Impact investing and/or Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) managers may take into consideration factors beyond traditional financial information to select securities, which could result in relative investment performance deviating from other strategies or broad market benchmarks, depending on whether such sectors or investments are in or out of favor in the market. Further, ESG strategies may rely on certain values based criteria to eliminate exposures found in similar strategies or broad market benchmarks, which could also result in relative investment performance deviating.

Investments have varying degrees of risk. Some of the risks involved with equity securities include the possibility that the value of the stocks may fluctuate in response to events specific to the companies or markets, as well as economic, political or social events in the U.S. or abroad. Bonds are subject to interest rate, inflation and credit risks. Municipal securities can be significantly affected by political changes as well as uncertainties in the municipal market related to taxation, legislative changes, or the rights of municipal security holders. Income from investing in municipal bonds is generally exempt from federal and state taxes for residents of the issuing state. Small cap companies pose special risks, including possible illiquidity and greater price volatility than funds consisting of larger, more established companies. Bonds are subject to interest rate, inflation and credit risks. While the interest income is tax-exempt, any capital gains distributed are taxable to the investor. Income for some investors may be subject to the Federal Alternative Minimum Tax. Investments in high-yield bonds (sometimes referred to as "junk bonds") offer the potential for high current income and attractive total return, but involves certain risks. Changes in economic conditions or other circumstances may adversely affect a junk bond issuer's ability to make principal and interest payments. Treasury bills are less volatile than longer-term fixed income securities and are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest by the U.S. government. Mortgage-backed securities are subject to credit risk and the risk that the mortgages will be prepaid, so that portfolio management may be faced with replenishing the portfolio in a possibly disadvantageous interest rate environment. Investments in foreign securities (including ADRs) involve special risks, including foreign currency risk and the possibility of substantial volatility due to adverse political, economic or other developments. Treasury bills are less volatile than longer-term fixed income securities and are guaranteed as to timely payment of principal and interest by the U.S. government. These risks are magnified for investments made in emerging markets. Investments in a certain industry or sector may pose additional risk due to lack of diversification and sector concentration. Investing in fixed-income securities may involve certain risks, including the credit quality of individual issuers, possible prepayments, market or economic developments and yields and share price fluctuations due to changes in interest rates. When interest rates go up, bond prices typically drop, and vice versa. Investments in real estate securities can be subject to fluctuations in the value of the underlying properties, the effect of economic conditions on real estate values, changes in interest rates, and risk related to renting properties, such as rental defaults. There are special risks associated with an investment in commodities, including market price fluctuations, regulatory changes, interest rate changes, credit risk, economic changes and the impact of adverse political or financial factors. Investments in a certain industry or sector may pose additional risk due to lack of diversification and sector concentration.

The economic and market forecasts presented are for informational purposes as of the date of this report. Economic or financial forecasts are inherently limited and should not be relied on as indicators of future investment performance.

Investing directly in Master Limited Partnerships (MLP's), foreign equities, commodities or other investment strategies discussed here, may not be available to, or appropriate for, Merrill Edge clients. However, these investments may exist as part of an underlying investment strategy within exchange-traded funds (ETF's) and mutual funds, which are available to Merrill Edge clients.

© 2020 Bank of America Corporation. All rights reserved.