

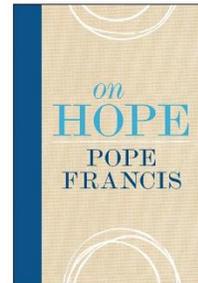


Department of
Evangelization & Catechesis

Growing Disciples – Wednesday Wrap
Glorifying God – Growing in Faith
Living our Catholic Faith in the World
August 8, 2018 Edition

Welcome Back Reflection “On Hope”:

The beginning of a new catechetical year is built on hope. Sure there are challenges: a few more catechists are needed, potential sponsors for RCIA haven't come forward, some new blood is needed to help with youth ministry and adult faith formation. But for the most part, everything is also refreshed. Time away has brought some fresh perspective from parents, those who volunteer, and you. Please excuse the Star Wars imagery but it is similar the joy experienced at the end of Star Wars episode 4 “*A New Hope*” (the original movie released in the late 1970s.) All the darkness has been removed and there is a feeling that everything is right again in the universe. However, the following movie was Star Wars episode 5 “*The Empire Strikes Back*.” Before we know it the hope that fills the air of our days today will be challenged in various ways. How do we keep our peace and sustain that hope?



Pope Francis has shared a set of reflections on the topic of Hope adapted from a series of General Audience addresses he gave in late 2016 and early 2017. I strongly encourage you to purchase a copy. The publisher is Loyola Press and a picture of the cover is presented above.

Those of you who attended that Fall CLADD Kick-Off heard from me by video about the darkness I have been experiencing since July 16. A bone in my foot that had a small crack in it had become infected with a very serious and strong infection bug. I was hospitalized from July 16 through July 24. Surgery was performed on July 18 to remove the infection. However, it may have penetrated some of my bone so I am on IV antibiotics twice daily. Before this I was extremely active: helping my step-daughter and her new family for two weeks after the birth of her second child, hiking in Yellowstone, a visit to my other step-daughter and her family in Florida, attending the NCCL Conference and a week in Washington D.C. for work. Not only was I physically ill, my spiritually was at an all-time low.

Jane brought me some books that I had picked up at the NCCL Conference, one of which was “On Hope” by Pope Francis. I was reluctant to even open up the cover because I was really angry with God for giving me freedom and then having it dashed away again. But then I read this paragraph from Pope Francis, “Hope opens new horizons, making us capable of dreaming, what is not even imaginable. This hope invites us to enter into the darkness of an uncertain future and to walk through and into the light. It is beautiful, the virtue of hope; it gives us strength to walk in life” (*On Hope*; p.24, Pope Francis).

My prayer for each of you is that in the midst of any dark clouds that may come your way this catechetical year, you find the strength to abandon yourself to God's grace so that each of you experience a lasting and sustaining hope. Welcome back.

In-service opportunities for your catechists:



Each year the Department of Evangelization & Catechesis offers in-service and retreat opportunities to help you with catechist formation. These in-service programs have no fee associated with them because it is part of your Annual Diocesan Appeal. However, the one stipulation for this fall is that it be held in an area that is wheel-chair accessible.

The options to choose from include:

- “Too Much Content and So Little Time” – a formation session focused on using the time available wisely and taking advantage of as much discipleship formation as possible.
- “Bringing _____ Into the Classroom” – a formation session that guides your catechists through a series of questions leading to self-discovery of practices that lend themselves to better formation sessions.
- “Spirituality of the Catechist Retreat” – Catechists get the opportunity to reflect on passages from the Holy Scriptures that are pertinent to their vocation as catechists. They will pray and discern how to deepen their relationship with Christ and be a more effective catechist.
- “Visio Divina Retreat for Advent and Lent” – spend a morning, afternoon, or evening praying with and through art and Scripture to break open some of the most powerful moments in Jesus’ ministry and what that means to the retreat participants.

I can also work with you and your pastor and/or leadership team to develop a specialized workshop or retreat for your parish community. Contact [John](#) with questions or to schedule an in-service or retreat for your parish this year.

Fanning the Flame Retreat – Excellent for Confirmation Candidates – September 8:

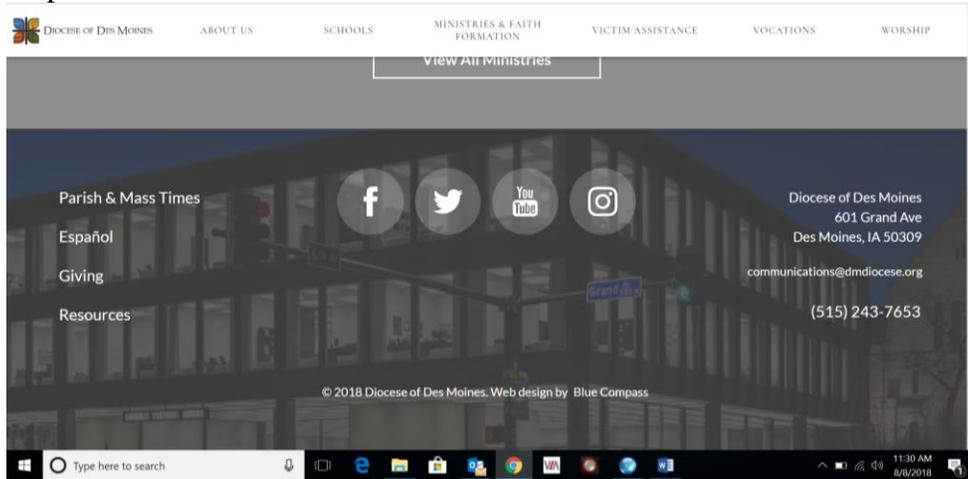
Fanning the Flame is a day long retreat dedicated to the discernment of spiritual gifts. The dual formation track retreat is great for youth preparing for Confirmation as well as their parents, sponsors and chaperones.



The special feature about this retreat is that one track is dedicated for the youth and a second track is dedicated to parents, sponsors and chaperones. The retreat is held at the Saint Thomas More Center in Panora from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm. The registration fee is \$40.00 per youth and \$20.00 per adult. Contact [Justin](#) with questions. [Registration](#) is now open.

Diocese of Des Moines New Website is Launched:

On August 7 the new Diocesan website was launched. The old clunky one has been sent to the digital dumpster. Over the remaining days of this month we will clean up our files and have an easy to use area for resourcing your needs. The resourcing for the pages is meant for the people in the pew to access information. Your area is at the bottom of the home page and titled resources. A picture is below:



The resources button will take you to the page I have included below. This is where you will find resources for you and your volunteers. One new change this year is registration for CLADD sessions will be through the new website rather than contacting the host catechetical leader. With each flyer and e-mail notice you will receive a link for registration.



“Let the Church always be
a place of Mercy
AND Hope,
where everyone is welcomed
Loved and Forgiven.”
Pope Francis

