



# *Fanning the Flame*

## A Diocesan Wide 125th Anniversary Journey of Faith

### *The Catholic Diocese of Belleville, Illinois*



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Dear Pastors, Deacons, Parish Life Coordinators, and Parish Council Members,

Our diocesan 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary is just a short time away. It is a time to reflect on the past with gratitude for the generosity and faith of those who passed the faith on to us, as well as a time to look with greater understanding and humility over wrongs that have taken place. However, it is especially a time to look forward with renewed faith in the person and promise of Jesus Christ. Motivated by love for those we hold dear, for our neighbor, and for the weak and marginalized, it is a time for us to be ever ready to give a reason for the hope that is within us and to extend the invitation to others through acts of charity, works of justice, and the message of the Good News.

It has been our committed effort to provide *Fanning the Flame* as a resource for the journey forward. One of the strengths of the initiative is that it is built on the contributions of men and women, ordained and lay people, from throughout our own diocese, working with the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (USCCA), itself an adaptation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for use in our own culture. Together this speaks to the need that while there is indeed content to our faith, the effectiveness of its transmission is increased with personal connections. It must be recognized as relevant, as well as reliable and accessible, in order to help bring about conversion and lives of holiness.

**The most pressing task that needs to take place in a parish to make *Fanning the Flame* available to the community - in whatever ways best fit them - is to get the text in the homes of the people.** Now is the time to implement a plan for a parish wide encouragement to purchase the *USCCA*. Following are some ideas as you move forward in your promotion.

First of all, because the ways people may engage are diverse and may not yet be defined locally, we suggest that, in principle, you encourage everyone to plan on being a part of this renewal opportunity in honor of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary at whatever level will fit for them... which could be as minimal as reading the weekly nugget in the parish bulletin (assuming you are planning ahead to carve out such a space!) or reading the short reflections in *The Messenger*. They will, however, benefit by being prepared with the *USCCA* as a resource to go deeper, as well (and importantly) using it as a reference for other times when questions arise beyond *Fanning the Flame*.

**Why would they want to do this? This week's readings invite an opportunity for you to give a reason.**

At first glance, and certainly in application, the gospel reading is about action, not about learning the law. After all, the commandments may be summed up in just two commandments, and they both center on love. Of course our daily experiences and societal understanding make clear that how people love is determined by... well, that changes with the breeze. Instead, our love for one another is meant to be bound up with what is good for the other, subordinate to the cost to us. We are called to authentic, sacrificial love.

However, to know the good for the other we must know what is true about who/whose we are and how we can best live up to the fullness of our dignity, and theirs as well. We learn this, and are empowered to live it, not by listening to the popular culture, but by learning and embracing the faith that has been entrusted to us and which draws us into an intimate relationship with our God through Jesus Christ. Knowing the content of our

faith, not just issues surrounding our faith, will strengthen our ongoing conversion to follow those two commandments.

This is reinforced with the second reading as it relates receiving of the word with being imitators of the Lord, with joy from the Holy Spirit, and a change of life – lives so changed that they in turn are models and bearers of the word to others. The first reading effectively puts into action the fruit of following the other two, connecting to needs that are mirrored in our own time, and challenging us to live out the gospel we have learned and embraced with heart, soul and mind.

### ***Exactly what are you asking them to do?***

Right now, simply get a copy of the USCCA (aware that there will be opportunities to engage with others during the year ahead), and anything else your parish might also be inviting them to do ... if you have small groups planned, are inviting new ones to form, are planning on periodic “Ask the Father” Q&A sessions... ***(Maybe you haven’t had a chance to consider such ideas yet because of other demands)*** **That is OK!** This is a flexible and year long program; the details can continue to be worked out. Now is the time to help people be aware and equipped! At the very least they will have the option of engaging with the larger community of the diocese virtually.

**Step one** was to let them know now (for example in the context of homily remarks like those above or in a similar pulpit announcement) that you are going to ask them to make this investment in the next few weeks. You might also tell them you will follow up in the bulletin next week with information about this resource.

For this **second step**, I would recommend that you go to the introduction of the **USCCA**. Based on it, you could include the following in your bulletin (10/30) as an announcement or your weekly letter (if that is something you include):

*The United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, is the local adaptation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and is presented in a very accessible and user friendly format, rather than reference format. At its heart is the celebration of the Christian mysteries, especially the Eucharist and the life of prayer with readers being called to witness Christ, the Church and God’s Kingdom of salvation, love, justice, mercy, and peace in the world. This is the resource that will provide a framework for a diocesan wide journey of faith and spiritual renewal in observance of our 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, beginning in January 2012.

The **third step** is to have a separate bulletin announcement, informing them of how/when they can order their books through the parish ([you will order direct through the USCCB](#) ). Maybe you will choose to use signup sheets. It might be easiest to have simple order forms in the pews that can be filled out. For your convenience here are some adaptable forms -: [a. Adult Catechism - Full Sheet Order Form](#); [b. Adult Catechism - Half Sheet Order Form](#); [c. Adult Catechism - Post Card Order Form](#) .

You will no doubt want to highlight that because of *Fanning the Flame*, the USCCB has given us a deep discount on this very popular catechism. To cover your cost you might set a price of \$15.00. As few as 5 copies in an order will cover postage when you use the discount code **DB1212**.

**\*\*If possible you are encouraged to invite an additional donation to be sent to our office for the exclusive purpose of providing a *USCCA* to someone without access: a Catholic man or woman in prison who is attending Mass and trying to grow spiritually or someone at an outreach program such as a soup kitchen or shelter where a volunteer will facilitate *Fanning the Flame!*\*\***

### **Additional, simple, time sensitive ideas**

---Here is an additional **bulletin announcement** for your upcoming parish wide **USCCA** promotion weekends of November 6 and 13 (How is that for an idea?!). The announcement can build up enthusiasm and familiarity

with the *USCCA* and *Fanning the Flame*: (If interested, for your websites, [here is the hyperlink](#) to the page referenced below with the video links – it is masked by the provider of our website URL.)

To get to know more about *Fanning the Flame*, a diocesan wide initiative for spiritual renewal in honor of our 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, visit the website [www.ftfdiobelle.org](http://www.ftfdiobelle.org). From there you can also follow links to view videos familiarizing you with the *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* (look on the left under Study Resources).

---Now would be a great time to order affordable business size **prayer/information cards** for distribution/pews/information tables leading up to and throughout 2012. They can be viewed from the [Parish Resource webpage](#). (250/\$29; 1000/\$36; 2000/\$47; 4000/\$65 – Contact Mary Fournie, 235-9601x1462 or [mfournie@diobelle.org](mailto:mfournie@diobelle.org) now to have them when people are placing book orders.)

---Begin planning now to use *Fanning the Flame* to reach those you only tend to see at Christmas and Easter. Have bulletin space set aside inviting them to join in this journey of faith. We will support you in this by having an updated brochure available that you may print locally. We will also have nice 9x4 oversized **bookmarks** with a calendar similar to the “[2012 Year at a Glance](#)” on one side, and on the other side *Fanning the Flame* information and prayers. These will be printed in mass quantity in order to keep the cost to a minimum. The cost to you will be \$.04 per card plus the cost to ship to your address, unless arrangements are made for pickup. **We recommend ordering very generously as the card will be relevant all year long.** (If our total order is large enough we may be able to reduce the cost to \$.03 per card.) Please place your order with Mary (see above) by November 15.

---Thinking ahead, you might also want to plan now to provide a next opportunity for placing a parish order for the *USCCA* in January to include those who decide at the last minute to follow along. This is actually something you might plan to do at intervals (perhaps the next time taking place during Lent...).

### **Parting thoughts**

There are several dozen people working in the background in various ways to create *Fanning the Flame*. They are all very appreciated, from the members of the Core Team, the Chapter Guides, those making videos of the chapter faith stories for the website and making audio clips of the study guides. Inspired by their generosity, I would like to make a personal contribution of the new, and highly recommended, *Catholicism DVD Series by Father Robert Barron as a drawing prize* for parishes promoting/engaging in *Fanning the Flame*. The ways to have entries in the drawing will be included in the next monthly mailing, but one way will include placing an order for the small prayer cards. Give Mary a call. Order for a cluster, and you will each have your first entry included!

In addition to thanking those who are creating *Fanning the Flame*, the Core Team is very thankful to those of you in parish leadership helping to make this opportunity available to your parishioners. Thank you also to the support staff and volunteers who care for the details around this initiative, and all the other work in the life of the parish, working smoothly.

Thank you again. Please don't hesitate to call/email with questions or ideas.

With prayers that these upcoming months will be a time of renewed openness to spiritual renewal and outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our diocese,

*Laurie Edwards*

*Fanning the Flame* Core Team, Chair