Discussion Questions
Spring Formation Day 2017
Building a Credible Community
Speaker: Bishop Caggiano

Watch the video presentations by Bishop Frank J. Caggiano
- Morning presentation
- Afternoon presentation

Morning Presentation
1. Bishop Caggiano opened his talk by bringing us “back to the basics” of our faith so that we might “rediscover the power of the Good News” of Jesus Christ. He noted that we are called to be the face, hands and heart of God as Pope Francis calls us to evangelization through “missionary discipleship.” What are some tangible ways that our parish may be the “face hand and heart of God” for people in our community? What does missionary discipleship mean to us?

2. He notes that the challenge of our age are the qualities of encounter with each other – especially for parish and church leaders. What is the quality of our encounter with the people in our parish? What are some ways we might focus on the quality of our encounters as leaders?

3. Bishop Caggiano said that there are two simple adages he adheres to: 1) Keep life simple and 2) Never forget the basics. Are there areas in our parish that are over-complicated to parishioners or visitors?

4. Bishop Caggiano made the powerful statement that an “encounter with Jesus Christ is transformative – it will rearrange your life.” Love is at the very heart of a real and transformative encounter with Jesus Christ. How have we, as parish leaders, encountered Jesus Christ in our lives? Has that encounter changed us?

5. Using the Road to Emmaus, as an overarching story, the bishop notes to building clocks to building a credible community: 1) scripture and 2) the Holy Eucharist. How effective are the scripture programs and offerings in your parish? Are they drawing adults in? In your parish, how much time is spent preparing for and celebrating the Liturgy? How much time is spent preparing the Homily? How do you define full and active participation in the Mass? Do we have the courage to rediscover the power of Spiritual Communion?

6. Bishop Caggiano talks about how his mother taught him to love. By love he means “I will your good.” Love is active and present and real. In our parish communities:
   - Do we will each others’ good?
   - Are we honest?
   - Can we speak our minds? Can parishioners speak their minds freely and honestly?
• Are we able to celebrate the achievements of others without jealousy?
• Do we truly love the diversity in our parish as a strength – do we love our differences?

7. Bishop Caggiano says there are some cautions in building a credible community.

   a. We are not talking about creating more programs. We need to invite every human heart to truly encounter Jesus Christ. He says that “every heart breaks differently and every heart heals differently.” How do we, in our parishes, communities and families, invite others to encounter Christ?

   b. We do not create the encounter, we foster in. In other words, we are not in control, rather Christ is. Do we make room to listen to and follow Christ’s lead in our parish? In order to foster encounter, we ourselves must know and love Christ. Do we?

   c. Bishop Caggiano notes that INDIFFERENCE is a major challenge in our culture today. Not only do people not care, they don’t even care if they care. What are some ways to counter this indifference? Can you name everyone with whom you worship? Do they know you by name? Will they miss you when you’re not there? Do you know the sufferings of the people in your parish?

   d. He also argues we are facing a new time where is there is a reemergence of “Phariseeism.” The Holy Father’s teachings are sometimes questioned today. Pope Francis is talking about mercy in its right place in traditional Catholic doctrine, not mercy instead of the teachings of the Church. In a truly credible community, Bishop Caggiano notes, “mercy and truth kiss.” How do we teach the truth of our faith and offer the mercy of Christ in our parish?

8. The bishop says that we are at a paradigmatic time of shifting in the Church. The 3 phases he outlined are:

   1) The Missionary Church
   2) Institutionalized Church
   3) The new phase is a return to the Missionary Church – we are all called to be Saint Francis: to rebuild the Church.

   What are some ways your parish can take up the mission to rebuild Christ’s church?

**Afternoon Presentation**

1. Bishop Caggiano states that a main realization we must acknowledge in our efforts to establish a Credible Community of Faith is that it is about building a proper foundation before we create “programs.” His advice is a call to look in the
dark shadows of our society, to find the broken-hearted. *How does our parish minister to the broken-hearted?*

2. In discussing our roles as leaders, Bishop Caggiano pointed out the attributes of both Moses and Mary as leaders and that we should come to know and model ourselves after their understandings of leadership and techniques. Their attributes included:

- Moses was an ordinary person, not extraordinary as a human being. He was also a “killer” with a past. God still chose him.
- Moses was willing to receive what God was willing to give… which meant not just an encounter, but a relationship.
- Mary trusted Jesus completely. Her last words in scripture reveal the completeness of that trust: “Do whatever He tells you.”

*What are some ways your parish leaders might model Moses and Mary?*

3. Our vocations as leaders are also to become saints. But, leadership is not exercised alone. We all need someone who will never deny… and will always forgive us.Moses needed his companion in the desert of Sinai, his spiritual desert. *Do we also have a spiritual companion through our deserts and trials?*

4. Collaboration is also mandatory in leadership. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and ask Him to lead us to where we are to go. And everyone should be given a voice in our collaborations. *How do we collaborate as a parish staff? Do we collaborate effectively with parish leadership and volunteers?*

    Are we willing to get on our “hands and knees” to serve others… or do we only give to others, from our surplus, the things they need?

    Are you willing to lead, even though “we” may never see the results of our labors and sacrifices?

5. Bishop Caggiano notes that our parishes are called to be “Schools of Christian Discipleship.” *What does this mean to you?*

6. Finally, Bishop Caggiano asks: *If we do not have the confidence to do this… who will?* We must all be trusting, be confident of God’s ability to help us. In a Credible Community of Faith, mercy and truth meet every day. We are called to be missionaries in our world.