

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

September 2017 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for September

Lord Jesus Christ,

As we begin to shift from
summer schedules
to autumn demands,
teach us to recognize you,
and help us follow you
amidst our busy life.

Open the Scriptures to us...
that we may know you, see you,
hear you –
in the voices of friends and family,
in the ministries of our parish,
in the proclamation of the Word,
and in the Breaking of the Bread.

Teach us to be good stewards,
that we may use your gifts wisely
and care for all those you place
in our path.

Encourage us, when we are
overwhelmed.
Strengthen us, when we are frightened.
Challenge our complacency.

Help us make this new season a time
of spiritual renewal,
hope,
and action to proclaim the Gospel
in our words and in our deeds.

For the kingdom and the power
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

Does Your Parish Have an Evangelization Plan for Young Adults?



Few issues resonate more with Catholics today than the evangelization of the young Church. How is your parish prepared to reach out to young adults and respond to their needs? This vital question will be explored at the 2017 International Catholic Stewardship Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from September 17 to 20. Pope Francis, in his much-heralded pastoral letter, *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)*, captured the importance of young people as... “‘street preachers,’ joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth!... Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope.”

**History shows us that young adults are inspired by
Catholic leaders who step forward in social justice causes
and in service to the poor.**

Yet, as Christian stewards, we are concerned about how to engage young adults, who often see the Church with cynicism and disappointment. How can we bring forth from them the enthusiasm and devotion of which Pope Francis speaks? How do we involve them and support them pastorally so that our pews- and our street corners- are filled with young adults committed to Jesus Christ?

At this year's ICSC conference, Mr. Darryl Dzedzic, Steward for Youth and Young Adult Ministry at Saint Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Altamonte Springs, Florida, will round out a group of inspirational speakers when he speaks on evangelizing to young adults in our parishes today.

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How do we involve them and support them pastorally so that our pews- and our street corners- are filled with young adults committed to Jesus Christ?

History shows us that young adults are inspired by Catholic leaders who step forward in social justice causes and in service to the poor. Some parishes are finding that an effective way to reach unchurched young adults is to give them the opportunity to work with young Catholics who are committed to work in service and justice projects. Relationship building is key to evangelizing young adults. There is a renewed interest in Scripture studies among young adults both inside and outside of the Church as well. How can a parish committed to studying Scripture in an engaging and transformative way help to demonstrate to young adults the relevance of the Gospel to their lives?

To explore these important topics, join us in September at the 55th annual ICSC Conference in Atlanta.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for September*

St. Thomas of Villanova

The life of St. Thomas of Villanova was characterized by the love of learning, a desire for church renewal and service to the poor and disadvantaged. He was born in 1486, the son of a miller and raised in the village of Villanueva de los Infantes, Castile, Spain. He studied at the famous University of Alcala where he received his master's and doctorate degrees, and in 1512 at the age of 26 he became a professor of philosophy at the university. He was a popular lecturer and was praised by his students and colleagues for always being friendly and helpful.

After four years Thomas left the university and joined the Augustinian friars. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1520. He assumed several leadership positions in the community, and when elected provincial of Andalusia and Castile, he sent the first Augustinian missionaries to the New World where they helped evangelize what is now modern Mexico and, from there, the Philippines. He was eventually appointed archbishop of Valencia in 1544.



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Thomas' episcopal ministry was marked by personal austerity, devotion to the care of orphans, the sick, and the poor. He came to be known as the "father of the poor." He established social programs, a soup kitchen in the bishop's palace, and for the homeless a place to sleep. He was also called the "Almsgiver" because of the many people who came up to his door every day for a meal and a little money. He insisted that the material resources of the church be shared with those in the greatest need and he challenged church leaders to serve the least powerful.

It has been said that Thomas' scholarship and stewardship of the poor were motivated by a desire to practice the teachings of the Beatitudes. He believed that all learning should be inspired by a genuine desire to know God and that learning ought to lead a person to make a difference in the community and in the world. He taught that the image of God is in every human being and that love and wisdom are discovered in the service of others.

St. Thomas of Villanova died of heart disease on September 8, 1555. He was beatified in 1618 and canonized in 1658. Villanova University, just outside Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, is one of a number of universities around the world named after him.



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL 2017 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

REGISTER TODAY! Visit www.catholicstewardship.com

The 2017 ICSC Annual Conference, September 17-20, in Atlanta, Georgia, offers something for everyone whether you are a priest, deacon, religious, parish life administrator, stewardship and evangelization coordinator or committee member, foundation staff or board member, parish business manager, youth minister, ministry leader, principal or school advancement professional, or a faithful parishioner feeling called to do more. A sample of the conference's many sessions includes:



- Engaging Young Adults
- Helping Your Catholic School Find Resources to Advance its Mission
- Re-animating the Latino Community
- How to Get Participation of Parishioners Beyond Sunday
- Ministering to Families through Stewardship
- Clergy-to-Clergy Sessions for Priests
- Understanding Why Hospitality is Essential at Masses
- Helping Parishioners Become More Generous
- Evangelizing through Digital Communications
- Making New Disciples Through Stewardship Formation
- Numerous how-to workshops in Spanish
- Exclusive sessions for diocesan staff working with stewardship, development and Catholic foundations
- And many, many more...



How does stewardship equip us to go forth in the world to proclaim and live the joy of the Gospel?

Join us September 17-20 as we unite as good stewards to share our gifts in the spirit of missionary disciples!



More details and online registration available at www.catholicstewardship.com or call 1.800.352.3452, or e-mail us at register@catholicstewardship.org.

The International Catholic Stewardship Council has named a landmark hotel, the Hyatt Regency Atlanta, as the headquarters hotel for the 2017 annual conference. The hotel is blocks away from the city's major attractions including the College Football Hall of Fame, the World of Coca-Cola, Georgia Aquarium, Center for Civil and Human Rights, Georgia World Congress Center, and the Georgia Dome.

Make your hotel reservations online
<https://www.plazameetings.com/icsc/>



Stewardship: Step Back and See the Whole Picture

by Leisa Anslinger, author and co-founder of Catholic Strengths and Engagement Community (CSEC).

Many years ago, I participated in a one-week course for those who teach others through reflections on the Sunday readings. Many of the participants were clergy who were honing their skills in homiletics. A few of us were responsible for the RCIA and adult faith formation, and a few were seminarians and men who were in formation for religious orders. The course included a requirement (some truly embraced this as an opportunity, and others, a step that had to be taken) that each person would present a reflection to a small group. The reflection was videotaped and group members critiqued each other's work, with the guidance of an experienced coach. I distinctly recall being in awe of a young man who was a Jesuit scholastic. In his reflection on the Holy Trinity, he reminded us that it isn't enough to see the individual parts of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. "You have to step back and see the whole picture," he told us.



I recalled this experience as I was reading *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* today. Following the reflection on the parable of the talents, the U.S. bishops turn to "the steward's reward":

Giving up means receiving more, including more responsibility as a steward; among the consequences of living this way will be persecution; and even though discipleship and stewardship set the necessary terms of Christian life in this world, they have their ultimate reward in another life (SDR, 20).

In other words, you have to step back and see the whole picture. We can sometimes lose perspective by getting too close to the elements of our lives. We may feel a strong sense of responsibility, or we might be experiencing a time of particular challenge. We may be committed to living as a disciple of Jesus, and, like many who have gone before us, we may be shunned or persecuted as a result. The whole picture is of a life lived with the present and the eternal in view. We grow to see that stewardship is a way of following Jesus, who lived and died for others, and who leads us into eternal life with God.



TEN REASONS

Your Parish Should Attend the 55th Annual ICSC Conference

1. Discover how to enhance the commitment to discipleship in your parish
2. Learn how to enrich your parish's life of faith
3. Explore the spiritual fundamentals of Christian stewardship
4. Understand how to obtain the financial and human resources you need to run your parish
5. Find what works from dedicated and flourishing stewardship parishes
6. Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment
7. Be exposed to the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world
8. Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies
9. Enjoy the hospitality of dedicated stewards from around the globe
10. Increase your parish's knowledge of stewardship no matter where it is on its pilgrim journey

September: A Recommitment to Stewardship



Some things which will draw you closer to your faith community during September:

- Visit, or better yet help with, the ministry fair. Spend time with people you may not have seen due to summer travels, and “meet and greet” any newcomers you spot.
- Make sure you go to your parish school’s Back to School night if you have kids enrolled, or visit your child’s faith formation class and introduce yourself to the teacher.
- Consider a new ministry this year. Think of something that will reinvigorate you, provide the greatest service, bring out your best talents, and help you to meet more of your fellow parishioners.

Summer’s end brings with it nostalgia for carefree days, long nights, lazy weekend afternoons, reunions with families, and summer road trips.

But in our parishes, autumn brings a burst of new life that makes September feel almost like spring.

Why? For the Christian steward, fall brings a renewed sense of commitment. Literally, many of us make our commitment of time and resources to our parish during September or soon after. Stewardship and ministry fairs bring a sense of excitement to parish weekends, witness talks remind us of the good work to be done, renewed calls for sign-ups for Eucharistic Adoration are issued, and kids are everywhere – in our Catholic schools and in our faith formation programs – filling us with hope and enthusiasm for our young Church.



- Maybe a new pastor or associate pastor has arrived over the summer. Now’s the time to introduce yourself and issue a dinner invitation.
- Find out what adult faith formation classes or presentations are offered for the fall, and commit to at least one.
- Take inventory of your financial giving. Did you sometimes neglect the parish offertory during the summer months? Find out if your parish has online giving, or automatic withdrawal, so that your year-round stewardship helps provide the parish with a stable income.
- Make Sunday Mass your top weekend priority, ahead of sports, school activities, or other temptations.

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This is the time when we reexamine and reconfirm our stewardship. If you found yourself away from your parish this summer – either through neglect or through travel and visits to other parishes – now is the time to get reacquainted. Our parish is our primary faith community, where we built relationships based on our shared values and sacramental life, and September is a wonderful way to come “home” to that community.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 2/3, 2017

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his disciples, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me." At the end of the reading Jesus suggests there is great hope in the cross. Today's followers of Christ recognize they are stewards of his entire legacy, including his cross and that through their mutual sacrifices God's glory is revealed. They don't live their lives in Christ only when it is convenient for them. They make a decision to take up their cross and carry it, no matter what the cost is to themselves. Reflect this week on the cross you bear in order to reveal God's glory. How do you embrace that cross? How, at times, do you shirk that cross when it is not convenient?

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 9/10, 2017

In today's second reading Saint Paul enjoins us to be indebted to no one. Debt creates the kind of pressure that impedes our relationship with Jesus Christ. But there is one debt we will always owe and never be able to pay off fully: The debt of showing love to others. We will never reach the place where we can say, "Now I love others as much as I ought, and that's enough." No matter how much we've grown in faith we will always be required to grow in love. Good stewards realize that God does not call them just to love those who are easy to love, but to love the unloved and the hard-to-love people in this world as well. This week, remind yourself: "I am put here as an ambassador of God's love."

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 16/17, 2017

Today's Gospel reading continues Jesus' instructions on being good stewards of others – the direction that if we love Jesus Christ, we must forgive an individual 77 times. The reading compels us to consider one of the most difficult practices of Christian discipleship. Forgiveness is the way of Jesus, the way of the cross. Vengeance, bitterness and hatred seem so much easier and certainly more desirable. Forgiveness is a hard road to travel, but it is the only road that leads to life in Christ. Consider this week who you need to forgive.

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 23/24, 2017

From an early age, we tend to distort the concept of "fairness": "I am good. I deserve good things. I am not receiving good things. Something must be wrong. Who's going to fix it?" We also know the age-old expression: "Who ever said life was fair?" Jesus knew this expression when he offered his parable in today's Gospel reading. Christian stewards acknowledge, with humility, that they receive good things from the Lord in abundance; even if these gifts are not the ones they think they need when they need them. Consider which servants you identify with most in the Gospel reading, the ones who demand "fairness", or that final servant who, seemingly, deserves the least.