



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

April 2018 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for the Easter Season

Loving Father,

Christ is risen
and with him all creation!
Light replaces darkness,
joy replaces sadness,
life replaces death.

Through the power of your Spirit,
there is no failure
his love and mercy cannot reverse,
no humiliation he cannot exchange
with blessing,
no anger he cannot dissolve,
no routine he cannot transform.
All is embraced
by the victory of your son's
cross and resurrection.

Help us always be good stewards
of Easter's light,
see Resurrection as a daily event,
and yearn for the love of Christ
as intensely
as he yearns for our love.

We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Easter – A Joyful Season for Missionary Disciples

For those who exercise good stewardship of their Catholic faith, this April is the happiest, most joyful of months for it ushers in the great Easter season – a season of profound hope and joy. During the Easter season, which extends 50 days, from the Easter Vigil Mass of Saturday evening, March 31 to the Vigil Mass of Pentecost Sunday, on Saturday evening, May 19, Christian stewards are exhorted to celebrate and be joyful, for our Savior is with us.



“Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Matt. 5:16).

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis revealed that the best way to live out the joy of Easter is to become a genuine family of faith, an “evangelizing Church that comes out of herself.” He urged Catholics around the world to contemplate the mind of Jesus Christ and what it means to be the “light of Christ.” From there, Francis believed a spirituality of missionary discipleship could be cultivated that would “help the Church get out of herself” and reach out to those who live in darkness.

At the Easter Vigil, all the great symbols are there: darkness, light, fire, water. The Vigil begins in darkness; not a darkness to be ignored, but a darkness in which we realize where we would be without the light of Christ, a darkness that reveals much about our world, our own sinfulness, the darkness that sometimes envelopes our own lives and even shrouds our own hearts. But then, the great fire of the Vigil is lit, a fire which consumes



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the darkness, and the procession into the church reminds us of the light and strength provided by the community of the faithful and the saving light of Christ. Indeed, Saint Paul maintains that we are stewards of this great light. We remember the waters of baptism during the Vigil as we renew our baptismal vows. The Vigil also brings into our community those newly baptized who proceed joyfully with us into April.



Indeed, April is the most
glorious of months.
Christ is risen! Alleluia!

As missionary disciples who exercise stewardship of Jesus' teachings, come into the glory of this April, join with those apostles whose hearts were on fire, and contemplate the words of the risen Lord: "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matt. 5:16). For missionary disciples, this charge should be enough to bring hope and joy. Indeed, April is the most glorious of months. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for April*



Saint Fidelis Sigmaringen

Given the name Mark Rey at his birth in 1577, our stewardship saint for April grew up in Sigmaringen, a town located in present-day Germany. He was the son of the town's affluent burgomeister (mayor) and studied law and philosophy at the renowned University of Freiburg. As a student, Mark made prayer a priority in his daily life. He also spent time visiting the sick. He embraced a humble, chaste and simple lifestyle.

He earned a doctorate in canon and civil law, became a prominent lawyer and soon gained a reputation for representing those who had no money to pay. Mark was affectionately nicknamed "the poor man's lawyer." He was known to be extraordinarily generous, and committed himself to working with the poor.

Dismayed by the greed and corruption he found among his counterparts in the legal profession and in the courts of law, Mark abandoned his law practice and entered the Capuchin religious community. He took the name Fidelis, which is Latin meaning "faithful." He studied for the priesthood and after ordination, celebrated his first Mass in 1612 on the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi (October 4).

After his ordination, Father Fidelis was assigned to preaching and hearing confessions. It was reported that a large number of converts were accepted into the Church because of his zealous evangelizing efforts. He was devoted to Saint Francis of Assisi and revealed that devotion in his pastoral care of the poor and sick. During a severe epidemic in a city in which his friary was located, he cared for and cured many.

In 1621 Father Fidelis was sent to begin missionary work in Switzerland, a territory that had experienced much bloodshed as a result of growing tensions among a number of religious movements of the expanding Reformed traditions. All of these movements were violently opposed to the Catholic faith at the time.

His writings, preaching and pastoral ministry converted many in Switzerland to Catholicism. But many others, enraged by his missionary work, threatened his life. On April 24, 1622, while traveling on the road between preaching missions, Father Fidelis was attacked by a group of armed men, beaten and hacked to death. He was 44 years old. Fidelis once wrote: "It is because of faith that we exchange the present for the future." He was canonized in 1746 and his feast day is April 24.



MISSIONARY DISCIPLES:

Stewards of the Gospel



56th Annual Conference

October 28-31 | Nashville, Tennessee

JOIN US

If you are looking for...

- Proven methods for communicating with multiple cultures
- Practical take-aways to form missionary disciples
- Stewardship and evangelization techniques
- Opportunities for peer-to-peer mentoring
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Special Lenten/Easter Member Discount | **\$499 per person**

Proposed Parish Sessions for 56th Annual ICSC Conference

Introduction to Christian Stewardship

The Spirituality of Stewardship

Keeping Stewardship Alive in the Parish

Stewardship of Time and Talent: Why and How

Stewardship of Treasure

Roles and Responsibilities of a Parish Stewardship Committee

Best Practices of Lay Witness Presentations

Stewardship as a Way of Life

SPANISH-How the Spirituality of Stewardship Carried Us Through Crisis

Intro to Christian Stewardship Forum - Panel Q&A

Stewardship: Beyond the Basics

Keeping Refreshed, Renewed and Focused on the Mission

Everyday Leaders Practicing Everyday Stewardship

SPANISH-Keeping Stewardship Alive in the Parish

Archbishop Murphy Award Recipient Parish Presentation

Enhancing Your Stewardship of Treasure Process

The Challenges and Rewards of Bilingual Communication

The Joy of Gift: How Stewardship Helps Us Find Purpose

Stewardship and Our Vocation Clergy-to-Clergy Panel

Stewardship Beyond the Basics Forum - Panel Q&A

The Evangelizing Parish

Growing Young: Evangelizing Young Stewards

Stewardship of the Mind and Heart for Pastoral Leadership

Maximizing Parish Communications for Missionary Discipleship

You Can Count on Me! Stewardship and Evangelization

SPANISH-Evangelizing Youth and Young Adults

Making Stewardship a Spirituality for an Entire Parish of Missionary Disciples

Stewardship and Evangelization: Two Sides of the Same Coin

Stewardship and the Family: Practical Ways Parishes Can Nourish Stewardship

The Evangelizing Parish Forum - Panel Q&A

Parish Business Managers and Administrators

Planning for the Mission: Transforming Your Parish

Insuring Accountability and Transparency in the Parish

How Parish Administrators Can Successfully Steward Parish Mergers

Mastering the Art of Human Resources (Especially When It Is Not Your Skill Set)

Successful Parish Marketing and Communication Techniques

SPANISH-Stewardship and Evangelization for Parish Business Managers

Mission and Money: Partners in Creating a Great Parish

Inspiring Growth and Change with Sustained Parish Stewardship Practices

Parish Business Managers and Administrators Forum - Panel Q&A

Catholic School Advancement

Strategic Planning for Catholic Schools

Best Practices in Tuition Management and Leveraging Scholarship Assistance

School Marketing via Social Media

Providing Access to Hispanic Families: The Segura Educational Initiative

Engaging Stakeholders in Your School Community

Best Practices in Enrollment Management

Cultivating Major Gifts

Best Practices in Board Development

Catholic School Advancement Forum - Panel Q&A

Strategic Partners Track – Parish

Stewardship Through the Lens of Evangelization and Disciple-Making

How to Realize Your Potential in Your Parish's Next Capital Campaign

Findings From the 2017 Churchgoer Giving Study

The Innovative Spirit in Mission Driven Churches

Discerning People for Discipleship

Do Something About Your Mediocre e-Giving Results!

Think You Know Your Church Donors? Think Again!

Cultivating Hearts and Empowering Generosity

Spanish-Speaking Forum - Panel Q & A

To register call our office at 800-352-3452 or visit us at catholicstewardship.com



Be a Good Steward of the Environment – Stop Plastic Pollution

In his ground-breaking encyclical *Laudato Si* ("Praise be to You"), Pope Francis urged humankind to exercise better stewardship of the earth. Subtitled "On Care of Our Common Home," the pontiff's letter called for a radical "ecological conversion" on the part of people the world over, and especially disciples of Jesus Christ, to honor and save our earth from degradation. One way we can be better stewards of the earth is to fight plastic pollution.

Cheap, capable of being made into any conceivable shape, strong and durable, plastic is the wonder product of the modern world. However, the victim of this technological success appears to be much of life on earth. Almost 80% of the plastic produced since the 1950s has been thrown away, either into landfill sites or into the general environment.

Ending plastic pollution is the focus of Earth Day 2018, the annual event celebrated on April 22 world-wide to raise awareness of ecological dangers and demonstrate support for protection of the global environment.

Items like plastic packaging, bags and bottles are thrown away every day, and end up in trash sites as well as in forests, creeks, rivers, seas, and oceans around the world. While some of these items are recycled, the growth of plastic consumption and its improper disposal currently outpace efforts to recycle and produce post-consumer plastic materials.

But plastic is more than just litter. A petroleum product, plastic is non-biodegradable. And in reality, most plastic does not ever disappear, but becomes long-lasting "plastic dust". When items like plastic bags break down, they readily soak up (and release) toxins that then contaminate soil and water, as well as harming animals that ingest plastic fragments. The increasing presence of plastic in our oceans poisons and ensnares marine life. Check your refrigerator. How much stuff in there is stored in plastic? Hazardous chemicals, some of which can disrupt human hormones, leach from some plastics that are used for food and beverage storage.

Plastic is the basic material of a consumer world. Without it we wouldn't enjoy the same standard of living or convenience. But if we take the Holy Father's urgent pleas seriously, we should take seriously the issue of plastic contaminating and damaging our environment. For Christian stewards, it is a moral responsibility to confront this pollution. And become better stewards of the earth.



Suggestions for Stopping Plastic Pollution

A springtime walk on a lovely April day brings you into contact with the ubiquitous presence of plastic in our lives. From the crushed soda bottle lying at the side of the road to the plastic bags floating through the air like kites, plastic pollution is everywhere. It is not possible to be plastic free. But there are steps we can take to reduce consumption of plastic. Earth Day 2018 asks us to consider the Five Rs: Reduce, Refuse, Reuse, Recycle and Remove plastic in our everyday lives.

Here are a few suggestions you can incorporate into your life immediately:

- Keep reusable canvas bags in your car for shopping trips and commit to refusing plastic shopping and grocery bags.
- Many stores have containers to recycle plastic bags, even newspaper wraps. Utilize them.
- Carry a small set of simple utensils and a reusable straw so that you never have to use throwaway plastic utensils.
- Encourage your school or college to look into utensils made with biodegradable components. Many Catholic schools have gone this route.
- Store left-overs in reusable containers.
- When shopping for gifts or toys, watch for excessive, wasteful plastic packaging.
- Many cities are considering levying a fee for using plastic bags at stores. Urge your local government to consider this proposal to encourage reusable bags. Ireland reduced its plastic bag use by 95% almost overnight by placing a tax on plastic bags!
- Visit www.earthday.org for more ideas and inspiration!

**Important Notice for
all ICSC Parish Members!**

ICSC 2018 Parish Stewardship Award Information

Has your parish developed
stewardship materials that
would help others?

Did your committee work hard
on resources you are proud of?

*Please consider applying for
one or more ICSC Parish
Awards in 2018.*

Parishes at all stages of the
stewardship journey are
encouraged to apply!

Entries will be judged by
members of the ICSC Parish
Stewardship Education and
Services Committee.

***Application Deadline is
June 30.***

All applicants will be contacted
by July 31.

Additional information, list of
awards and entry forms are
available on the ICSC website,
[http://catholicstewardship.com/
stewardship-awards/](http://catholicstewardship.com/stewardship-awards/)



Sharing the Responsibilities of Ministry is Good Stewardship

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

Recently, I was invited to offer a morning of reflection for a gathering of youth ministry leaders. The topic I was given was “self-care for people of ministry.” I must admit, my first thought was, “Me? Talk about self-care? You’ve got to be kidding!” Like many, perhaps most, people of ministry, I often feel over-extended, pressed for time, and just a bit stressed. Still, I reasoned that the people who had invited me had their reasons for doing so. As I reflected on this further, I realized that I did have something to contribute, from the perspective of stewardship.

**We do not need to do it all on our own. In fact,
we must not do it all on our own.**

I remember many years ago, my college roommate had a poster that read, “Too blessed to be stressed.” This could be our stewardship mantra. When we are overextended, feel pressure to complete multiple tasks at once, or are challenged by the daily circumstances of life and ministry, we remind ourselves that all is blessing. All is gift! All we are and have is entrusted to us by God and we are called to steward it well. Self-care in ministry is not always about doing or giving less. In fact, many stewards would say exactly the opposite, that growing as a steward has resulted in more giving, service, and sharing. What changes is the sense of purpose in living as disciples, and the self-awareness of our particular talents, skills and resources, all of which we are called to steward.

We will be less likely to overextend when we are conscious that we are to be responsible stewards and that we are to lead others to responsible stewardship. Every person is created in God’s image and is entrusted with gifts and blessings. We do not need to do it all on our own. In fact, we must not do it all on our own. Leading others to embrace the call to live as disciples and grow as good stewards requires us to invite people to contribute their unique gifts and talents, their time and attention, their service, caring, and sharing for the sake of others. Serving together, we make Christ’s presence known and in doing so, give glory to God.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Easter Sunday, April 1, 2018

Jesus Christ has risen today! For those good stewards of their faith who die with Jesus, they rise with Christ their savior every day. They are an Easter people. Our Savior is active, alive, and transforming us and our communities of faith, even the world, at this very moment. Easter is a time of joy, a time of celebration. To have faith in the risen Lord is also to believe that we are disciples who bear witness to Christ in a broken and troubled world. To be good stewards of this faith obliges us to be living witnesses to Christ's peace at home and in public. Jesus cannot be found buried in some long forgotten time, in some far away land. He is risen. He lives within each one of us. Alleluia!

Second Sunday of Easter, Weekend of April 7/8, 2018

When the risen Christ encounters his disciples in the locked room he adds a new Beatitude to the ones we've heard proclaimed before: "Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed." Stewards of the mysteries of God's love do not need proof of the risen Christ. They know it because their lives have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit who has breathed new life into them and through the Sacrament of the Eucharist which strengthens and sustains them. As stewards of this great gift it is appropriate to reflect on how we in turn add new life into our parish communities.

Third Sunday of Easter, Weekend of April 14/15, 2018

An underlying lesson from all three readings this weekend is that the Risen Christ has wiped away our sins, not only

for individuals, but throughout the world and its history. The terrible power of sin has now been reversed and our coming to perfection through the love of God is part of the Easter experience. As stewards of God's love we are called to participate in Christ's redemptive activity. The stewardship questions for us are many: How do we resist injustice at home or in the workplace? How do we confront violence in our language and attitudes? How do we bring Christ to others?

Fourth Sunday of Easter, Weekend of April 21/22, 2018

In today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus referring to himself as "the good shepherd." His sheep know him, trust him, listen to him and follow him; having faith that no harm will come to them as long as they stay close to him. We reaffirmed our faith in Christ when we renewed our baptismal promises at Easter. As stewards of our relationship with Jesus Christ, are we, like the sheep, willing to listen to Jesus, trust him, follow him no matter the cost to our comfort?

Fifth Sunday of Easter, Weekend of April 28/29, 2018

Jesus offers a quintessential stewardship statement in today's Gospel reading: "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." Jesus Christ offers us the fullness of eternal life. Do our lives reveal that this is what we want? Do we believe that by hearing the Word of the Lord and responding we not only produce "good fruit," but abide in the very life of God?