



# 56th Annual Conference

October 28-31, 2018 | Nashville, Tennessee

## INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

August 2018 • e-Bulletin



### A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for August

Lord Jesus Christ,

As we begin to shift our thoughts from summer schedules to the anticipated demands of autumn, teach us to recognize you, and help us follow you amidst our busy lives.

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 us when we are complacent.

Help us make our August transition a time of spiritual renewal, hope and action: to proclaim the Gospel in our words and in our deeds.

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 pastoral needs? This vital question will be explored at the 2018 International Catholic Stewardship Council's conference in Nashville, Tennessee, from October 28 to 31. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), captured the importance of the young in sharing the Good News: "How beautiful it is to see that young people are '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."



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?

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. 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 modern life? At this year's ICSC conference, a host of inspirational speakers will address topics related to evangelizing young adults in your parish today. To explore these important questions, join us in October at the annual ICSC conference in Nashville.



## STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for August*

### Saint Lydia of Philippi

Lydia is the first recorded person in Europe to become a follower of Jesus Christ. She was Saint Paul's first baptized convert at Philippi.

What we know of Lydia is found in the Acts of the Apostles. She was from Thyatira, an industrial center located in what is now western Turkey. She was a wealthy business woman; a manufacturer and seller of purple dyes and fabrics for which the city of Thyatira was noted. Lydia was part of a high value industry. Purple goods were luxury items, used by emperors, high government officials, and priests of the pagan religions.



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At the time of the narrative in Acts, Lydia and her household had moved to the city of Philippi, a Roman colony on the Rome-to-Asia trade route. This is where she had her first encounter with Paul on his second missionary journey about the year 50.

While visiting Philippi for the first time, Paul and his party came upon Lydia and a group of women gathered by the river that ran through the city center. He sat down and shared the gospel with them. Lydia listened intently, took the gospel message to heart, and she and her family were then baptized in the river.

Lydia insisted on providing hospitality to Paul and his companions, so they made their home with her while in Philippi. She continued to help them even after they were jailed and released.

As a successful businesswoman, her home would have been spacious enough to welcome guests and to become a place for community gatherings and liturgies.

Paul cherished the members of the Christian community at Philippi and called them his "joy and crown." Undoubtedly, Lydia's generous hospitality and leadership in the founding of this early Christian community contributed to Paul's affection.

Saint Lydia's feast day is August 3.

## Discernment for Stewards

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

Living as stewards is an on-going process of conversion. As disciples who are committed to living our lives as good stewards, we must constantly be attentive to ways we are called to give and share. This is a process of discernment, in which we take stock of the ways we have been blessed and the gifts we have been given, and then consider what and how we are called to give back, as a grateful response to God. As we noted in last month's article, we who are stewardship leaders not only discern the stewardship call in our personal lives, but also for the life of our faith community.



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Discernment is more than simply deciding something. Discernment is a process that is carried out through prayer, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom, encouragement, and challenge of other faith-filled companions. In our personal lives, we prayerfully determine how much money to give to our parish or diocese or to a Catholic



outreach organization, and we give much thought to what ministries need our time. We may talk with our spouse, good friend, or fellow parishioner as we consider what is appropriate and how we are called to sacrifice. Our discernment is a reflection of our growing relationship with Christ and a response to Christ's call to love and serve.

Discerning for our faith community is a similar process. As leaders, we acknowledge the many ways we are blessed with the selfless sharing of time and resources of our members. We consider the needs of the poor and vulnerable in our local area, country, and world and



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what is needed to sustain or grow the worship, formation, community life, and service within our parish or diocese, and we plan accordingly.

Stewardship leadership also involves a third, and key form of discernment, and it is this form of discernment we will consider in this column next month. As leaders, we must discern what our people need to hear and how they need to be formed in order to live and grow as stewards in this time and place.



## Stewardship and Missionary Discipleship: Tending Our Faith Responsibly

Saint John Paul II wrote "Life is entrusted to man as a treasure which must not be squandered, as a talent which must be used well" (*Evangelium Vitae*, 52).

Our late pontiff also wrote:

*It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be ground down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal* (Prayer Vigil, World Youth Day, August 19, 2000).

Another year of learning begins soon. Teachers everywhere will assemble students, engaging and encouraging them to discover their talents, recognize and focus on their potential, and understand more about life, faith, and the world. Likewise, "Missionary Discipleship" calls each of us to commit ourselves to learning more about our faith.

The need for ongoing formation and catechesis is not just for the young. It's vital for everyone, throughout our lives. We respond to the call to be Missionary Disciples and gratefully receive the gift of our faith and cherish it. However, before we can share our faith with others in justice and love, we must tend to it, in a responsible and accountable manner.

What are some ways we could tend to our faith? Here are a few ideas from some of our ICSC members:

- Join, or lead, a parish Bible study group.
- Start a book club reading religious books about saints, liturgy and Catholic practices.
- Subscribe to or download an app for a daily devotional with reflection and commentary.
- Participate in a diocesan faith-formation course.
- Check a nearby seminary for courses available to laity.
- Read religious pamphlets and the diocesan newspaper or magazine.
- Look for Catholic educational resources online or on DVD.
- Search for and read online the documents and summaries from the Second Vatican Council.
- Talk to your pastor, parish life director, or pastoral associate.
- Pray every day, often.

As regards to prayer, it would be a good idea to set aside time routinely for complete silence in order to listen for God's still, small voice, like Elijah waiting in the cave. He too was humbly and patiently waiting to improve himself and society. The Lord called Elijah with a whisper, sending him on a mission to Damascus (1 Kings 19:12-16).

We, too, are summoned to fulfill a role only we can play using the gift of faith entrusted to us. What is God pressing on your heart to do with your faith? How will you respond?





# 56<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 28-31, 2018 | Nashville, Tennessee

## Becoming Missionary Disciples: Stewards of the Gospel

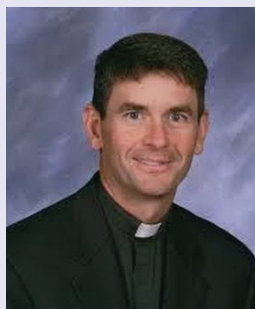
Responding to the urgent call of Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the United States Catholic bishops, the 56th annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is dedicated to the themes of stewardship, evangelization and missionary discipleship.

The 2018 ICSC conference, a gathering of Catholic stewardship leaders from around the world, and with over 100 Catholic leaders presenting, has added a number of evangelization formation sessions for pastoral leaders to be even better equipped to proclaim the Good News.

Some of the conference sessions are specifically designed to prepare us for Missionary Discipleship:

- Evangelizing to Youth and Young Adults
- Using Social Media to Evangelize
- Maximizing Parish Communications for Missionary Discipleship
- Missionary Families: How They Evangelize
- Making Evangelization and Stewardship Effective in Your Parish
- Stewardship Through the Lens of Evangelization and Disciple-Making
- How the Practice of Stewardship Leads to Evangelization

### Four notable Catholic evangelizers you will not want to miss:



Rev. John Riccardo is pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Church in Plymouth, Michigan and host of the Ave Maria Radio Program "Christ is the Answer."



Julianne Stanz is Director of New Evangelization in the Diocese of Green Bay and consultant to the USCCB Committee on Catechesis and Evangelization.



Tony Brandt and Chris Stewart are co-founders of Casting Nets Ministries, a nonprofit lay apostolate dedicated to the challenge of the New Evangelization.



**REGISTER TODAY** by calling 800-352-3452, or by visiting our website at [catholicstewardship.com/events/icsc-annual-conference/](http://catholicstewardship.com/events/icsc-annual-conference/)

*Of course, all of us are called to mature in our work as evangelizers. We want to have better training, a deepening love and a clearer witness to the Gospel. In this sense, we ought to let others be constantly evangelizing us.*

– Pope Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), 121)



# Stewardship in the Gospel of Luke

By Rev. Joseph Creedon (Part 4 in a series)

In last month's reflection, we examined the biblical notion of stewardship in Leviticus and in the earliest New Testament writings. The concept of stewardship continued to evolve in the New Testament as is evident in the Gospel parables concerning good and bad stewards. (*The New American Bible* uses the word "manager" whereas *The New Jerusalem Bible* uses the word "steward." For that reason I will be quoting from *The New Jerusalem Bible*.) In Luke 16:1-8, we have the familiar story of the "crafty steward." A few lines from that Gospel should refresh your memory. Jesus was using parables to teach his disciples. He said, "There was a rich man and he had a steward who was denounced to him for being wasteful with his property. He called for the man and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Draw up an account of your stewardship because you are not to be my steward any longer.'" From there the parable tells

how that steward decides to feather his nest so that folks would take care of him when he is fired. He is called clever and crafty but we should never forget that his problems began because he failed to remember that he was entrusted with the master's property. Both before and after he was caught, his sin was the same – he allowed himself to be deluded into thinking and acting as if the master's property were his own. He forgot that he was to manage what the master had entrusted to him.

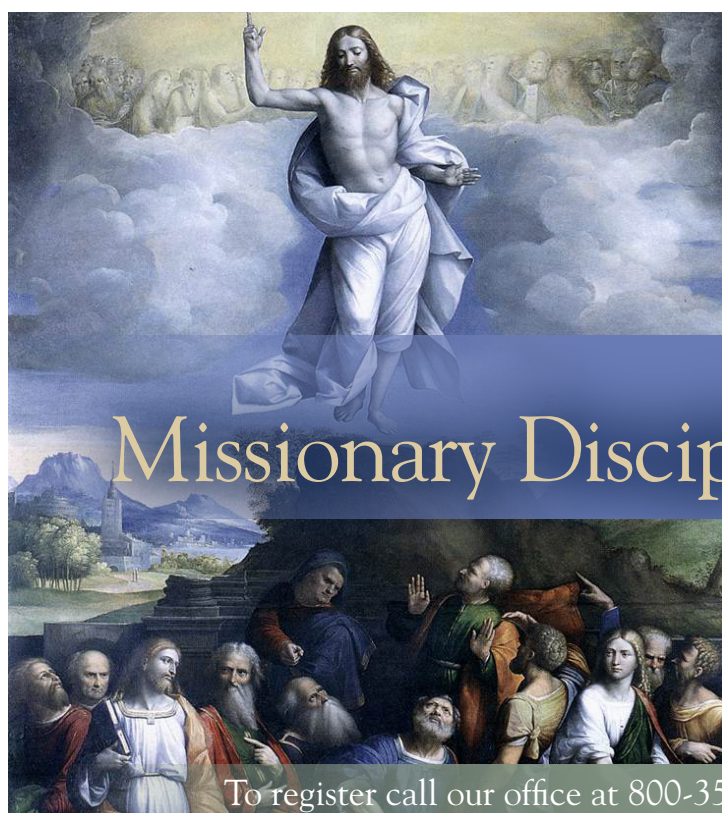
Earlier in Luke we have another example of stewardship and accountability. In Luke 12:35-48, Jesus uses the image of servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding and the need to always be ready for that return. As this parable continues, Peter asks for a clarification and Jesus continues his teaching on stewardship with this question, "Who, then, is the wise and trustworthy steward whom the master will place over his household



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to give them at the proper time their allowance of food" (12:42)?

This lesson on being held accountable for our stewardship of all God's gifts ends with a very sobering line. Jesus said: "When someone is given a great deal, a great deal will be demanded of that person..." (12:48).



## JOIN US...

October 28-31, 2018

Gaylord Opryland Hotel | Nashville, Tennessee

For the 56<sup>th</sup> Annual ICSC Conference

### Missionary Disciples: Stewards of the Gospel

Special Summer Member Discount

**\$529 per person**  
through July 31, 2018

To register call our office at 800-352-3452 or visit us at [catholicstewardship.com](http://catholicstewardship.com)





## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 4-5, 2018**

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus proclaiming that he is "the bread of life." He then offers an invitation to come to him. For us, the invitation is to live the Eucharistic life in Christ. What does it mean for our parish family to live together in the Eucharist? What does it mean for us to share the Eucharist together, to participate in the "bread of life" together? Does it mean we love each other, support our community of faith, work together? Do we carry each other's burdens? Celebrate our joys? What are the practical implications of being good stewards of our Eucharistic life together?

### **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 11-12, 2018**

The Letter to the Ephesians urges us to be mindful that part of our life together in the Eucharist means being kind to one another, compassionate and forgiving, just as Christ has forgiven us. What can we do this week to show our kindness, compassion and forgiving attitude toward others in our family of faith? How can we be even better stewards of our faith community as, what St. Paul refers to as "Imitators of God?"

### **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 18-19, 2018**

Jesus announces that he is the "living bread." And we understand that the Eucharist is the center of our life in faith: in our families, parish, local church and throughout the world. We are the stewards of Christ's life in the Eucharist. We are called to put the Eucharist into action. How do we do that? St. Paul enjoins us to be always grateful, to worship, to try to understand the will of the Lord and to watch carefully how we live. What are some of the ways we can put the Eucharist into action this week?

### **Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 25-26, 2018**

In today's Gospel, we hear that a number of Jesus' followers left him because his message was too difficult for them to accept. In essence, they did not believe in him. He then asked the Twelve if they wished to leave as well. Peter responds by making a profound profession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Twelve made a choice and stood by their choice, remaining loyal to their commitment to Jesus. A good question for our reflection might be this: Are we satisfied with the stewardship we exercise over our baptismal commitment? Are we just "along for the ride?" Are we keeping Christ in front of us as we make decisions about our daily activities, our relationships, our parish, issues in the workplace, issues such as peace and justice? What is the quality of our stewardship?