

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2018 • e-Bulletin

A THANKSGIVING BLESSING

Good and gracious God,

As we gather together this Thanksgiving, we pause from the normal routines of our daily lives to give thanks and praise for the abundant blessings you have bestowed upon us. You have entrusted us with the wonders of your creation and given us the freedoms and opportunities to creatively collaborate in your divine plan.

Bless all of us who gather here in your name. Give us the grace to be good stewards of your bounty, the courage to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed; and the wisdom to claim nothing for ourselves, but return all to You with increase.

Bless this food we are about to share and all those who brought it to our table. Bless our loved ones, family and friends who are not with us this day; and on those who travel, that they may reach their destinations safely.

And in a special way, bless those who are less fortunate than we are today. Grant that we who are filled with Your abundance never close our hearts to those most in need of Your mercy, particularly the hungry, the homeless and the poor.

We ask this through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.

November: A Month to Focus on Gratitude



November brings raking leaves, mid-term exams, plenty of football, and the beginning of our Christmas plans. But for those in the U.S., November's highlight is that great national holiday, Thanksgiving. It's wonderful to have a day to call attention to the need for gratitude, but this holiday also reminds the Christian steward that every day should include thanksgiving because gratitude is essential to discipleship. Feeling a deep appreciation for the giftedness of our lives can't be confined to one holiday when we spend a few minutes around a laden table remembering our many blessings. Neither can gratitude become a rote response.

The mere daily act of focusing on our blessings makes us more mindful, more present to God's mystery and gifts, and more aware of the needs of others around us.

Gratitude is good for our spiritual lives in so many ways. It reminds us of our neediness before the Lord, without whom we have nothing. The mere daily act of focusing on our blessings makes us more mindful, more present to God's mystery and gifts, and more aware of the needs of others around us. Gratitude is best achieved by daily, focused attention. So perhaps a good exercise for November would be to write down, each day, some things for which





we are truly grateful. Your list will no doubt include people – a teacher who inspired you, a coach who believed in you, an aunt who made you feel special, an employer who mentored you. Your notes might include simple things – the aroma of freshly ground coffee, a lunch invitation that brightened your day, a phone call that brought a smile. Focus on things you sometimes take for granted – the warm

Feeling a deep appreciation for the giftedness of our lives can't be confined to one holiday when we spend a few minutes around a laden table remembering our many blessings.

home in which you live, the sunshine that peeked through a cloudy day, the bright redness of a leaf on the lawn, the faithful presence of your spouse.

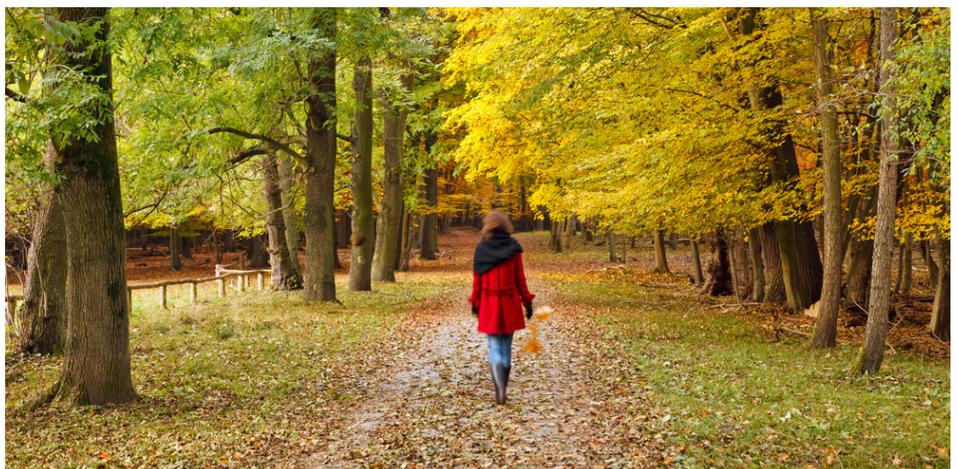
And during this month of thanks, remember to give thanks to the risen Lord:

Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him (Colossians 3:15-17).

Be a Good Steward of Thanksgiving Day

Your Thanksgiving Day can be more than just enjoying a great meal and turning on the television to search for the traditional parades and football games. How about expressing your stewardship of this day in a more meaningful way? Here are some suggestions for making Thanksgiving an opportunity for expressing our gratitude to the Lord in creative ways:

- **Go to Mass and count your blessings.** Start the day off on a positive note and celebrate the Eucharist. In your prayer reflect on five things you are most grateful for in your life. Then reflect on how you can be an even better steward of these gifts.
- **Write “I’m thankful for you” cards** and give them out or e-mail them on Thanksgiving (or mail them beforehand).
- **Share your Thanksgiving meal** with someone who is alone this Thanksgiving. Look for someone, such as a neighbor, co-worker, fellow parishioner, college student or armed services personnel who may be separated from family and ask them to join in your Thanksgiving dinner.
- **Practice ecumenism!** Many parishes make Thanksgiving an opportune time to join in ecumenical services with other Christian worshipping communities, or inter-faith activities and programs with non-Christian centers of worship. Find one nearby and experience something new and enriching.
- **Visit the sick.** Check with hospitals, assisted living facilities or nursing homes in the area to see if there are volunteer opportunities to visit with patients or residents on that day.
- **Help someone if you can.** Extend your generosity and blessings beyond your own family. Be part of an adopt-a-family effort, help distribute food baskets, or bring canned foods or clothing to St. Vincent de Paul centers.
- **Volunteer your time** at a soup kitchen to help prepare and serve Thanksgiving dinners to others.
- **Take a walk.** Find a place to enjoy God’s gift of creation. Head out the door for a refreshing walk. Invite family, friends or others to share the experience too.
- **Most important!** Take advantage of the Thanksgiving holidays to focus on what you’re grateful for and the things you appreciate about yourself and others. It is an ideal time to remember and to celebrate the many blessings in our lives.



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*

For a time Albert was the pope's personal theologian, and in 1260 was appointed bishop of Regensburg, Germany, against his will. He remained for only three years before returning his time and energy to teaching and writing in Cologne.



Saint Albert the Great

Saint Albert the Great was a 13th-century German Dominican priest, considered one of the most extraordinary men of his age alongside Peter Lombard, Roger Bacon and Saint Thomas Aquinas. His stewardship of the intellectual life, his students and our life of faith is profound.

Born in 1200, near Ulm, Albert was the eldest son of a powerful and wealthy German family. He was educated in the liberal arts at the University of Padua, Italy, and against his family's wishes, joined the Dominican Order in 1223.

He earned his doctorate at the University of Paris and taught theology with much success in a number of medieval German universities, including Cologne.

For a time Albert was the pope's personal theologian, and in 1260 was appointed bishop of Regensburg, Germany, against his will. He remained for only three years before returning his time and energy to teaching and writing in Cologne. He enhanced his reputation for humility by refusing to ride horses. Instead, he walked back and forth across his huge diocese, keeping with the rules of the Dominican order.

Albert's influence on scholars is substantial. His fame is due in part to being the forerunner, spiritual guide and teacher of Saint Thomas Aquinas. But he also composed an encyclopedia containing treatises on almost every branch of learning known at the time. His work fills thirty-eight volumes and covers subjects ranging from astronomy and chemistry to geography and philosophy. His knowledge of science was considerable, and for the age remarkably accurate. He also displayed an insight into nature and a knowledge of theology that surprised his contemporaries, who named him "Magnus" ("the Great") to recognize his genius. Albert even inspired a mystical school of theology among fellow Dominicans such as Meister Eckhart.

Albert participated in the Second Council of Lyons, France, in 1274, the fourteenth of the Catholic Church's 21 great councils (Vatican II was the twenty-first). On his way to the council, he was shocked to learn of Aquinas' death at age 49, and he publicly defended his former student against attacks on the Catholicity of his writings.

After suffering from what is now thought to be Alzheimer's disease, Albert died in Cologne on November 15, 1280. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1931, one of only 33 individuals bestowed that honor. His tomb is in the crypt of the Dominican church in Cologne, and his relics are in the Cologne Cathedral. His feast day is November 15.

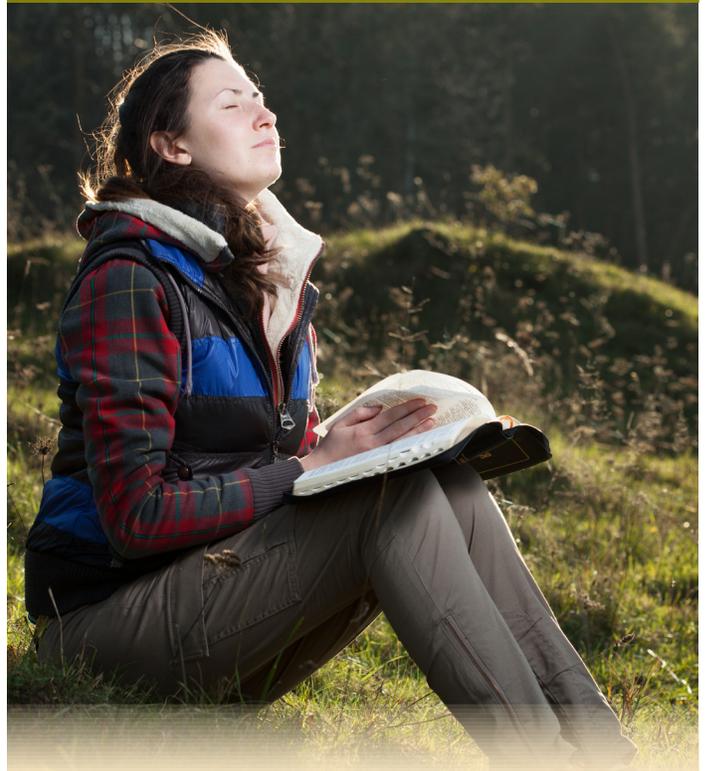
Teamwork Advances Stewardship More Effectively

by Leisa Anslinger, Associate Department Director for Pastoral Life, Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Many of us gathered in Nashville for our annual ICSC conference in late October. It is always encouraging and inspiring to be with so many dedicated stewardship leaders, clergy, staff members and parishioner ministers who share their commitment to fostering stewardship as a way of life. This year, I was particularly struck by the many people who spoke of being part of a team, how the more effective their team is, the more deeply the message of stewardship will be communicated in their parish. How do we form such effective, collaborative teams? From a strengths-based leadership perspective, there are a few key steps to follow:

1. Have a clear vision and purpose for what the team is about, and share the vision as servant leaders. As stewardship leaders, can we clearly articulate what we hope to accomplish together?
2. Begin forming the team and interacting together with talent. Invite each member of the team to discover his or her talents. While there are many assessments that can be used for this purpose, I still believe StrengthsFinder is the best, due to the research that is behind the inventory and the way most people recognize their talent themes already operating in their lives. Many at this year's conference spoke of the impact of knowing and offering their talents as good stewards, and how beneficial this has been in all aspects of their lives.
3. Draw on the talents of each member of the group as you carry out your responsibilities. While none of us has the opportunity to use our talents all of the time, we are more likely to serve well and less likely to burn out if we are given opportunities to use and build partnerships through our talents. None of us can or should do everything; when we agree to tasks that are a good fit for our talents, everyone benefits.
4. Make a plan, stick to it as much as is prudent and possible, and adapt as necessary. This seems self-evident, but much of what I heard in conversation with people at the conference pointed to the difficulties of developing and implementing a plan. The plan provides a framework for our ministry and keeps us on track in the midst of our day-to-day lives within the parish and beyond it. Identify what needs to be accomplished, in what period of time, by whom. Remember to look to talents and complementary partnerships as you assign responsibilities.
5. Pray often! Pray together! Thank God for the many gifts each of you has been given. Ask for the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit as you serve, giving glory to God who is the giver of all good gifts, and know you are in very good hands!

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING



The Thanksgiving holiday is an excellent time to rediscover the psalms of praise and thanksgiving. When you find a quiet moment, sit and relax with your bible. Think of a time when awe and gratitude overwhelmed you. Maybe it was a sunrise, or children playing in a park, an inspirational hymn at Mass, a family gathering, or a walk in the woods. Remember how you appreciated that special moment. Then, open your bible to one of the psalms of thanksgiving and recite it to yourself, like Psalm 118 for instance:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Listen to the words. Close your eyes. Let the psalm speak to you.

Other psalms of praise and thanksgiving you might consider include psalms 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 117, 145, and 147.

Whatever psalm you choose for that quiet moment, thank God for that special time of awe as well as all the good things in your life, and praise God for his glorious deeds.

Good Stewardship Includes Saying “Thank You!”

Of all of our national holidays, my favorite is Thanksgiving. For the week of the holiday, it feels as though every person is focused on gratitude. From giving thanks for our family and friends, our parish communities, and beyond, for just a moment, it seems all is about good stewardship. We recognize the gifts which are entrusted to us, and we call to our minds and hearts the bounty that surrounds us, even in moments of job scarcity, economic insecurity, or loss of a loved one or of a relationship. Thanksgiving invites us to “say aloud” the ways in which we are blessed, and to give thanks for them.

How might we give thanks this month for the many blessings in our parish and local communities that result from the good stewardship of parishioners?

As stewardship leaders, this month may be one in which to acknowledge with appreciation all that is accomplished through the stewardship of parishioners. One of the elements of building more engaged communities of disciples and stewards is recognizing the ways in which parishioners contribute to the parish. It isn't so much about the recognition (we do not serve in order to be recognized), but about acknowledging that every sharing of time, every giving of talent and strength, every gift of financial or material resource, makes a difference. And surely if the gift is of value, we will acknowledge the giver and thank him or her.



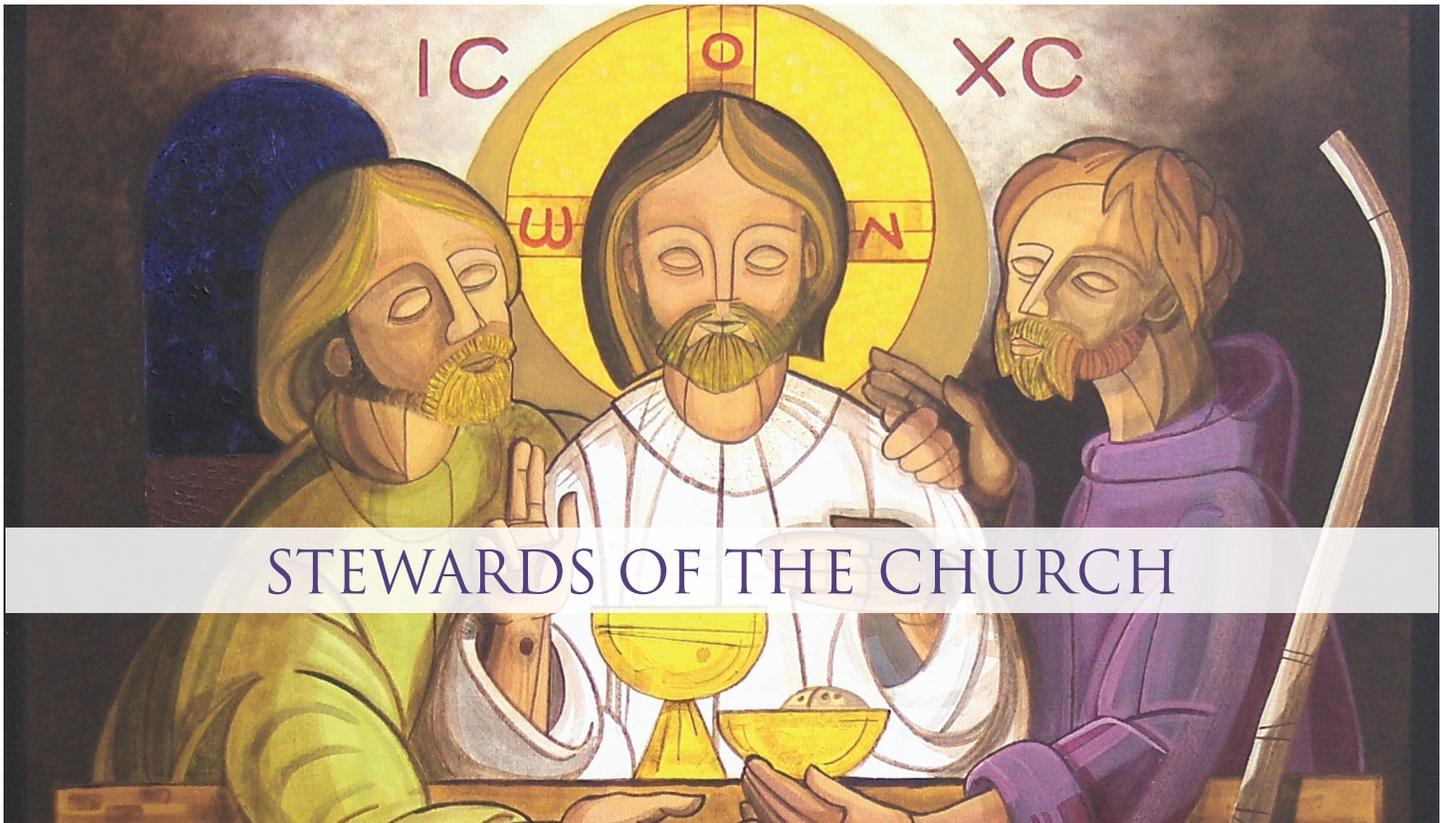
How might we give thanks this month for the many blessings in our parish and local communities that result from the good stewardship of parishioners? Here are a few ideas:

Hold a gratitude reception for all who serve in any capacity in the parish. It can be a potluck — perhaps invite people to share an appetizer or dessert and the recipe for their contribution to the feast. Send a personalized thank you note from the pastor, pastoral council, staff, or ministry coordinators. Acknowledge the many ways in which your parish would not be the same without the selfless sharing of time, talent and treasure by inviting all who serve to stand and be recognized at the end of Mass. Invite someone who has received service from parishioners to share a brief witness before or at the end of Mass, or ask a person of ministry to witness to the impact of parish stewardship on recipients of service or sharing.

Through such practices, we who lead others to embrace stewardship as a way of life may help people to grow as good stewards by our “thank you!”



O
give thanks
to the Lord
for he is good;
for his love
endures
forever
(Psalm 107:1).



JOIN US IN CHICAGO...

*for the International Catholic Stewardship Council's
57th Annual Conference!*

October 6-9, 2019

Thanksgiving Discount!

Register now for \$399. Offer good until November 30, 2018.





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT for November

For the weekend of November 3/4, 2018 Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

In today's Gospel Jesus said: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." It was not meant to be a suggestion or an option. He didn't say when it fits into our day or suits our time schedule, or after we've completed our various recreations. It is a requirement for Christians; to exercise good stewardship over the neighbors entrusted to us by God. It is a requirement often ignored when we put up barriers of anger, fear, or intolerance for a neighbor. How can we look beyond our own personal difficulties to see what we can do to love the person who lives next door, works next to us, or who sits next to us in the church pew?

For the weekend of November 10/11, 2018 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus points out to his disciples the poor widow who has just dropped two simple copper coins into the temple treasury. He then delivers a teaching on stewardship. Despite her poverty, the poor widow in today's Gospel does not refuse God her generosity. Out of her desperately impoverished life she contributes to an earthly institution to give God glory and praise. It is not the monetary value of the gift that was important, but the love, trust and gratitude expressed through the gift. The Gospel asks us similarly compelling stewardship questions: What do we value? In what or whom do we place our trust? How do our own contributions to our community of faith reflect our generosity toward God?

For the weekend of November 17/18, 2018 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

How would you spend your day if you knew it was the last day you would spend on earth? Undoubtedly, it would not be a normal day. The point of today's Gospel reading is that the end-time is always imminent. The good steward remains prayerfully alert, ready to give an accounting; and living each day in the awareness of the coming judgment and salvation. How do we exercise stewardship over our daily lives? Are we prepared to give an accounting? How will we allow Christ to work in and through us to prepare for the reconciliation of the heavens and the earth?

For the weekend of November 24/25, 2018 Solemnity of Christ the King

The exchange between Jesus and Pilate in today's Gospel is, arguably, the most important exchange in all of literature. Pilate asks Jesus: "What have you done?" Jesus replies that he testifies to the truth. In the second reading we are reminded of the essence of that truth: Christ, ruler of all, loves us, liberates us from the bonds of sin, makes us into new kingdom. As we approach the Advent season, this week would be a good time to reflect on the question: What have we done in our daily lives, in our actions, words, private prayer, and in our interaction with others, to testify that Jesus is Lord?

