



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2019 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for May

Christ Our Lord,
risen Lord,
light of the world,
to you be all praise and glory!

Shine your light on us
this Easter season
so that we may reflect brilliantly
the glory of your resurrection.

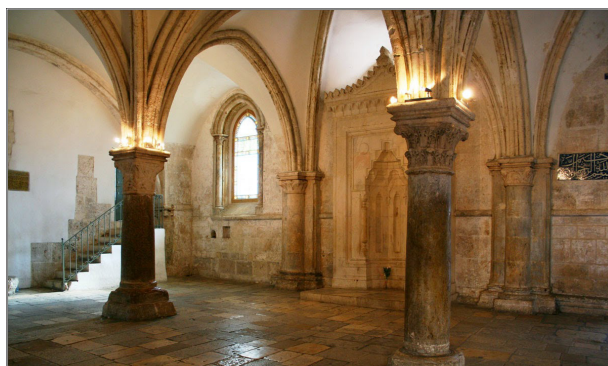
Make us a blessing
for those who suffer,
live in fear or
who are overwhelmed by life.

And let the Spirit fill our hearts
with your loving presence
so that we may become
good stewards of your Gospel
out of love for you
who, for our sakes,
lived, died and rose from the dead;
you who live and reign with your
Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

From Holy Week to Pentecost – *A Stewardship Lesson from the Upper Room*

By Mary Ann Otto, Pastoral Minister for Missionary Discipleship,
St. Mary and St. Joseph Parishes, Appleton, Wisconsin



The *Upper Room* in Scripture has always held a very sacred place in my heart. I imagine this candlelit dwelling in Jerusalem as providing a home for weary travelers and an address for those who needed to find them. I step into the room with all four Gospel writers and

they give me a glimpse into the humanness of the first disciples, the patience and love of Jesus and the power of the love between the Son and His Father.

Truthfully, as I sat among and observed the Upper Room inhabitants, I learned and continue to learn so much about Jesus and myself through the humanity and divinity found there. This place in Jerusalem is where I came to know the true meaning of friendship as Jesus shared his last supper, the Passover meal, with his followers. It is where the saying “It’s not about you” was fully demonstrated and

The Upper Room is where I witnessed our soon to be Savior wish his friends peace and place them in the care of his Father.

authentic servant leadership was modeled as he washed the feet of his friends. It is in the Upper Room where the New Covenant in Jesus became a reality and I saw that even those who profess the ultimate love could become a betrayer, a denier or a doubter. The question “Is it me?” continues to ring throughout the ages. The Upper Room is where I witnessed our soon to be Savior wish his friends peace and place them in the care of his Father. Here I perceive Jesus’ sadness as he leaves this place courageously to take on the sinfulness of his friends, me and humankind.

As dawn breaks on Easter morning, the messages in the Upper Room are magnified. I discovered the importance of being a good steward of community as a follower of Jesus and the power of huddling with fellow disciples. I understood what it might be like to experience grief, fear, surprise and joy at the same time and the importance of sharing our Jesus encounters with other followers. The crucial lesson of believing without seeing was made real in this space through Jesus’ conversation with Thomas. In the Upper Room I came to know that even with all my human failings, I can be an agent for building Christ’s Church because there is no stronger force on this earth than the power of the Holy Spirit if we pray for its guidance and gifts. I want to be that missionary disciple and steward of the Church so I shall return to this sacred place often for inspiration and encouragement. Alleluia! He is Risen!



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*



Saint Damien de Veuster

Saint Damien de Veuster is better known as Saint Damien of Molokai, “apostle to lepers.” When he was born in 1840, few people had any firsthand knowledge of leprosy, Hansen’s disease. But by the time he died at age 49, people all over the world knew about this disease because of him.

Joseph de Veuster grew up in a small village in Belgium. He joined the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and

Mary in 1859, taking the religious name Damien. When his brother, who was also a member of the congregation, was taken ill and unable to embark on his assignment in the Hawaiian Islands, Damien went in his place. He was ordained a priest there in 1864.

In 1873 Father Damien responded to the local bishop’s call for volunteers to work on Molokai, an island used in part as a leper colony. At the time there was no cure for leprosy and those who contracted the disease were shunned.

There were about eight hundred lepers on the island when Father Damien arrived and the number continued to grow. Living conditions were so terrible that Damien referred to the place as a “living cemetery.” He

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visited the lepers in their huts and brought them the sacraments. He also made efforts to improve the roads, harbor, and water supply and to expand the hospital. His multiple responsibilities were said to have included those of a pastor, physician, counselor, builder, sheriff, and undertaker. In one of his letters home, he wrote: “I make myself a leper with the lepers, to bring all to Jesus Christ.”

Father Damien returned to Honolulu to beg for money, clothing and medicine and as news of his ministry spread, donations began to pour in from all over the world. But in 1885, he himself contracted leprosy and was forbidden to leave the island. Volunteers and visitors stopped coming.

When Father Damien spent a week in a Honolulu hospital, his ministry gained even more recognition. He was visited by the king and the prime minister, and money and offers of prayers continued to pour in from Europe and the United States. As his condition worsened, Damien accepted it as God’s will and described himself as the “happiest missionary in the world.” He died on April 15, 1889. When Hawaii became a state in 1959, it selected Damien as one of its two representatives in the Statuary Hall at the United States Capitol. Damien was canonized in 2009.

Important Notice for all ICSC Parish Members!

ICSC 2019 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 2019.

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: catholicstewardship.com/stewardship-awards/



Stewardship of Others: Our Life as Servant Leaders

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

During the Easter season we immerse ourselves in the wonder of Jesus' resurrection and the story of the early Church through our Sunday liturgies. Each year, I look forward to hearing from the Acts of the Apostles during this season. I am inspired by the faith and courage of the apostles and those who came to believe in Jesus Christ as a result of their witness and stewardship of their community of faith. I am also encouraged when reading the story of the development of the early communities of believers – not only did they face immense challenges from the Roman and Jewish authorities, they were often challenged from within, as they figured out what it meant to be Christians in community with one another.

In his book on the gift of administration, Reverend Donald Senior, biblical scholar and former president of Catholic Theological Union, writes of the ways leadership emerged in the early Church. He writes:



The inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities of compassion, integrity, and selfless service in the carrying out of his mission are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla and Aquila. The fundamental responsibility of New Testament leaders is to foster the common good of the community – and here, too, the example of Jesus is paramount. Jesus the healer and teacher was committed to the

restoration and well-being of God's people. So, too, the charismatic leadership of Paul and the more administrative type of leadership exercised by Peter, Barnabas, Phoebe, and Priscilla and Aquila and many others were directed to building up the Body of Christ.

Father Senior goes on to summarize this form of leadership, modeled by Jesus himself, as "servant leadership" (*The Gift of Administration: New Testament Foundations for the Vocation of Administrative Service*, Liturgical Press, 2016).

As we hear the story of the early Church this Easter season, let us reflect on our stewardship of others in our family of faith, our role as servant leaders: How do we continue the mission of Jesus with compassion, integrity and selfless service? How do we build up the Body of Christ as a community of disciples and stewards?

Stewardship: Giving and Receiving

By Rev. Joseph D. Creedon, Pastor Emeritus, Christ the King Parish, Providence, Rhode Island



Many ingredients of the spirituality of stewardship are counterintuitive. None more so than this: "Stewardship is based on the need of the giver to give more than on the need of the receiver to receive." Most of us have been conditioned to be need-based givers. If someone has a need they should present their case and, if we agree with both the cause and the need, then we think about giving. Need-based giving is unfortunately the bedrock of most, if not all, church-related giving of "time, talent and treasure." It takes a while to unlearn our conditioning to be needed.

Henri Nouwen, one of my favorite spiritual authors, said, "If I can only give and not receive, then the only honest thing to do is question why I give." There has to be a balance between giving and receiving. To give is to be in control; to receive is to be vulnerable. How many times have you learned from a friend that he or she needed help but did not ask for it? How many times have you been offended because that friend did not ask for help? How many times have you needed help but did not ask for it?

True sharing can only happen if it is reciprocal. If we enjoy giving then we should be willing to receive as well. Only a small percentage of us will ever be able to enjoy receiving but that should be our goal. It is good to give a friend a listening ear; it is better if there are times when we are the speaker and allow our friend to be the listener. It is good when we carve spaces in our schedules to be present to a neighbor; it is better if there are times when we are willing to ask our neighbor to carve out time for us. One of the mysteries of our Christian faith is that it is not based on either/or but both/and. It is not giving or receiving that should be the mark of our stewardship but giving and receiving.



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL 57th Annual ICSC Conference

October 6-9 | Sheraton Grand Hotel | Chicago, Illinois

Stewards of the Church



NETWORK

The ICSC annual conference is widely recognized as the most valuable opportunity for those involved in Christian stewardship to connect with others who share their commitment to teaching stewardship as a way of life. Many say meeting others with similar experiences is the main reason they attend the ICSC conference!



LEARN

The ICSC annual conference is filled with sessions and forums that provide practical information you can take home and use immediately. You will be exposed not only to topics that offer fundamentals but also new ideas, innovations and strategies!



GROW

The ICSC annual conference is a great opportunity to get away from your busy schedule to pray, reflect on your own life of faith, listen to inspiring reflections and participate in invigorating liturgies!



The newly renovated Sheraton Grand Chicago Hotel will offer a well-appointed and comfortable experience for the 57th ICSC conference. This convention hotel is set in the heart of the downtown district, along the Chicago Riverwalk near Navy Pier and the Magnificent Mile. ICSC has reserved intuitively designed rooms which boast city, river and lake views. ICSC conference registrants may [CLICK HERE](#) to book their rooms through the ICSC conference planner, Plaza Meetings. For questions about the hotel contact Plaza Meetings directly at 518-785-3392.

REGISTER TODAY!

ICSC Member Easter Registration Discount **\$529**

visit www.catholicstewardship.com

Stewards of the Easter Season

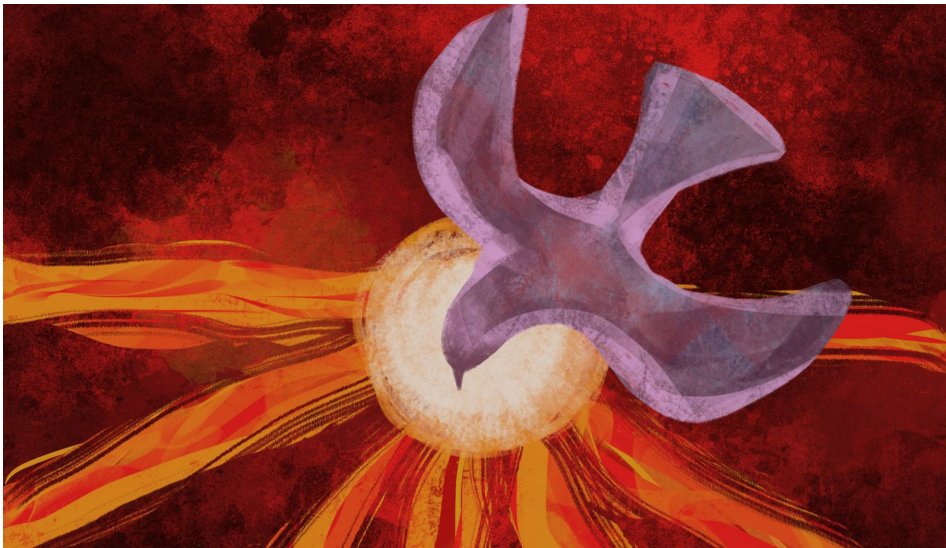
Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

If you're thinking this greeting comes a little late, since Easter Sunday was April 21, think again. As Catholic Christians, we celebrate the Easter season for seven weeks, until the fires of Pentecost once again inflame our hearts on June 9.

Indeed, how could we not continue to celebrate this event that has changed everything for us?

It's easy to slip into a cultural way of thinking about our great feasts. Many people have the Christmas tree taken down at the end of New Year's Day, rather than waiting for Epiphany. Likewise, most of us have long ago put the Easter decorations away.

But the Christian steward is aware of the beauty and meaning of the seasons in the liturgical calendar.



We spent forty days in the penitential season of Lent. Now, we are embarked on fifty days of joyous celebration.

The Easter season remains a special time for recommitment to the Lord. One word for this period is "mystagogia," and those who were newly baptized at the Great Easter Vigil are especially familiar with this term. It literally means that we delve more deeply into the mystery of our faith. But exploring this mystery is not just an endeavor for new Christians. As we prepare for Pentecost, we prayerfully examine what the Resurrection means in our own lives.

For Christian stewards, it's a time to reevaluate how faith in the Risen Lord informs every aspect of our lives – how we labor, how we play, the way we pray, how we allocate our resources, where we spend our time, how we love, how we extend our compassion to others. If Christ is truly risen – an astounding and life-altering belief – then this Easter time brings immense joy and a continuing desire to know the Risen Lord.

The Scripture readings of the season are especially helpful. We hear once again the stories of the appearances of Jesus to his friends; how often they failed, initially, to recognize him in his glory. The Acts of the Apostles tell us of the struggles and the excitement of the new community of believers.

We spent forty days in the penitential season of Lent. Now, we are embarked on fifty days of joyous celebration. Let us experience this joy throughout the Easter season, so that when we celebrate Pentecost, we may truly find our hearts on fire with the Holy Spirit.

20 Stewardship Ideas for the Month of May



- Join or start a summer bible study group.
- Plan an outing with your family.
- Introduce yourself to a fellow parishioner with whom you are unfamiliar.
- Pray for peace on Memorial Day.
- Help a neighbor who is physically unable to clean their yard.
- Invite someone to attend a weekend liturgy with you.
- Make a blood donation.
- Show genuine hospitality to visitors at your church.
- Don't text when you drive.
- Reduce your stress by getting outside and getting some exercise.
- Drive courteously.
- Make contact with a relative you haven't seen in a long time.
- Take time to pray each day.
- Treat your family or loved one to a day at the museum.
- Volunteer to participate in a community cleanup effort.
- Make a gift to your diocesan annual appeal.
- Plant flowers, shrubs or trees in a park or other location.
- Collect stuffed animals from friends and neighbors, write messages to tie or clip onto the animals and give them to a local police department to use in comforting children.
- Don't drive while impaired by alcohol.
- Donate gently used clothing.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Third Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 4/5, 2019**

This weekend's Gospel reading from John enjoys a number of themes not least of which has to do with hearing Christ's call to live differently but returning to our "comfort zones." Even after seeing the risen Lord and receiving his blessing and missionary charge, his disciples go back to what they were doing before Jesus first called them. Instead of continuing Jesus' ministry, they return to the life they knew. When faced with the choice between embarking on a new way of life or staying where life is familiar and comfortable, they chose the latter. Good stewards know that Christ has called them to open their hearts and live in a different way. How often do we retreat from the Lord's call so that we may remain with what is comfortable and familiar?

Fourth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 11/12, 2019**

Jesus, the "Good Shepherd," makes a promise in today's Gospel to those who hear his voice and follow him. He promises them eternal life. Amidst all the other voices that clamor for attention in their daily lives, the voices that make demands, give advice, seek to persuade or like to gossip, Good stewards listen for the Good Shepherd's voice. The other voices are legion and we do not always recognize how contrary they are to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Good stewards know that it takes a compassionate heart, a habit of prayer, a hunger for the Eucharist and a love of neighbor for them to truly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. What might we do in our daily lives to prepare us to more authentically hear the voice of the Good Shepherd?

Fifth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 18/19, 2019**

In today's Gospel Jesus makes a bold and clear statement to his disciples. "I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We are called to love others as a sign of our discipleship in Jesus Christ. That includes even those "others" we might prefer to forget. We are so often tempted to draw lines between those who we will love and those who we consider not worthy of our love. This week take time to reflect on Jesus' love command. How often do we heed Jesus' love command? What change in our lives must take place in order for us to obey this command?

Sixth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 25/26, 2019**

In today's Gospel we witness the last evening Jesus spends with his disciples before his death. He has already made it clear that his followers will show their love for him by serving others. To live that kind of love, they will need the active presence of God in their midst. Jesus tells his disciples that he and his Father will come and make their home with them. He also tells them that the Holy Spirit will be among them to teach them and remind them of all that Jesus had taught. Good stewards recognize that God is in their midst and that the Holy Spirit is guiding them. How often do we acknowledge God's presence in our lives? How often do we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us?