



## INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

August 2019 • e-Bulletin

### A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for August

Lord God,

As we prepare for the transitions of August; of routines becoming regular, signs of schools beginning to emerge, and traffic patterns getting heavier, help us to appreciate the sacred rhythms in our lives.

Give us the wisdom to make our hearts be still, much as the August wind is still, so that we may listen to the gentle words you speak to us.

Help us understand that you alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life.

And help us see that we are called to be good stewards of all that you have entrusted to us; tending them faithfully and responsibly so they may ultimately be returned to you with increase.

In this month of August while a measure of summer's stillness remains, speak to our hearts, guide us in your Son's ways, and through your Spirit, give us the strength to proclaim your justice and peace in our every day words and deeds.

We ask this through Christ, Our Lord.

Amen.



## Practicing Good Stewardship in Our Parishes

We're still in the grip of a hot and sunny summer, but August brings a wake-up call. By August's end, visiting relatives have gone home, schools will be open, swimming pools will be closed, and college kids have packed up and left for the halls of academia. What's all that mean for the Christian steward? As we journey through August, parishes begin to teem with plans and new vitality.



The parish is where the Church lives, and stewards are the lifeblood of a successful parish. In the parish, we find community and support, liturgy and ritual, sacrament and healing. In the parish, we find a way to give and a way to receive. On a practical level, fall is the time when parish planning

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gears up for the seasons ahead. Now, for a Christian steward, is the time to prayerfully consider your own involvement in the life of the parish in the coming year. How might we serve – and be served? The Christian steward knows participation in the parish is a win-win situation, feeding us as we feed others.

Where to begin? Your parish website or office may provide a list of ministries in the parish. What calls to you? Respond to your deep desire. Maybe you're the party planner who'd love to serve on the social

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committee. Or perhaps you have a heart for helping the bereaved. Are you called to lector, or perhaps to take the Eucharist to the homebound? Maybe this is the year you need to soak in the fruits of adult education. Possibly you see a ministry missing and want to propose it. Perhaps, as a long time steward, you want to be part of revitalizing the stewardship efforts of your parish.

If you take a look at the schedule for ICSC's October conference, you know there are a host of sessions which address how to enliven parish stewardship. Maybe this is the year you're called to attend the conference – another win-win situation in which you learn how to welcome the stranger, bring out the best in your parishioners, and encourage discipleship all while experiencing the community and support of other conference goers. August is a perfect time to reflect on where – not “if” – you are called. August provides time to decompress from a busy, fun summer and pray about where your own road to discipleship leads you next.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT for August

### Saint Augustine of Hippo, bishop and Doctor of the Church

Saint Augustine of Hippo was one of the most distinguished theologians in the history of the Church and may have exercised more influence on the shape and direction of doctrines of faith than any other theologian including Saint Thomas Aquinas.

He was born in 354 to Saint Monica, a Christian, and Patricius, a pagan until just before his death. He was registered as a catechumen but not baptized since Baptism at the time was delayed until adulthood. His formal education as a lawyer and rhetorician took place in the North African city of Carthage, a major metropolitan city of the Roman Empire. He entered into a relationship with a woman who bore him a son, and at age 22, started his own school of rhetoric and grammar. At age 29, he and his companion and their son travelled to Rome so he could further his career. He was appointed professor of rhetoric in Milan, the seat of the imperial court.



Augustine was especially devoted to the care and relief of the poor.

While in Milan, Augustine became captivated by the eloquent sermons of Saint Ambrose, and after a long interior conflict, vividly described in his *Confessions*, he was baptized at the Easter Vigil. Augustine was 33 years old.

Augustine's mother, Monica, had followed him to Rome and then to Milan while his companion, after having lived with him for fifteen years, returned to Africa. Augustine's mother died in 387 and his son passed away in 390 at age 17.

During a visit to the African port city of Hippo in 391, Augustine was recognized and acclaimed by the local Christian community and was practically compelled to accept ordination. In 395 he became their bishop and remained bishop of Hippo for the rest of his life, preaching, writing, administering the sacraments and engaging in a broad range of other pastoral activities. He was especially devoted to the care and relief of the poor. He presided over synods and councils, and adjudicated civil as well as ecclesiastical cases.

A prolific writer, Saint Augustine produced a number of major works. They include not only the *Confessions*, arguably one of the greatest books in Western literature, but also his sermons on the Gospels, Epistles, and Psalms, the *De Trinitate* (“On the Trinity”), and the *De Civitate Dei* (“On the City of God”). His writings were especially influential in the development of the doctrines of creation, grace, the sacraments and the Church. On Christian stewardship, he insisted: “Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the rest is needed by others.”

Augustine died on August 29, 430. He is one of the four original Western Doctors of the Church along with Saints Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory the Great.



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

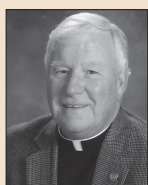
# 57<sup>th</sup> Annual ICSC Conference

October 6-9, 2019 | Sheraton Grand Hotel | Chicago, Illinois

Missionary disciples understand that stewardship is a way of life.

Stewardship helps missionary disciples recognize that both the ordinary experiences of daily living and the most profound moments of their lives are gifts from God to be cherished and shared with others. And that is what stewardship and evangelization are about, sharing our lives and our gifts with others, especially sharing the gift of the Gospel of Jesus Christ by our words and our deeds.

Meet these dynamic stewardship presenters and listen to their experience of parish ministry, their lives of faith and their encounters with grace.



**Stewardship:  
A Life-Giving Spirituality**  
**Rev. Joe Creedon**  
*Pastor Emeritus*  
Christ the King Parish  
Kingston, Rhode Island



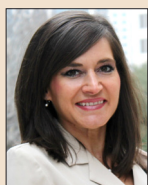
**Forming Stewards in the Parish:  
The Spiritual and the Practical**  
**Rev. John J. Piderit, SJ**  
*Vicar for Administration/  
Moderator of the Curia*



**In All Seasons: The Liturgical Year as  
a Stewardship Formation Framework**  
**Leisa Anslinger**  
*Associate Department Director  
for Pastoral Life*  
Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio



**Florian Romero**  
*Director of Stewardship*  
Archdiocese of San Francisco,  
California



**Stepping into Stewardship One  
Disciple at a Time**  
**Schuyler Kleinpeter**  
*Stewardship and  
Advancement Director*  
St. Pius X Catholic Church  
Lafayette, Louisiana



**Jesus on Money: Six Lessons  
We Have Learned in Parish Life**  
**Rev. Michael White**  
*Pastor*



**Tom Corcoran**  
*Associate to the Pastor*  
Church of the Nativity/Rebuilt Parish  
Timonium, Maryland

**And that's just the beginning ...** ICSC has an amazing lineup of diocesan leaders, Catholic foundation executives, school advancement professionals and experienced church professionals and ministerial visionaries at the ICSC 57th annual conference, making it the event to receive hands-on learning and prophetic insights. Go to the ICSC website at [www.catholicstewardship.com](http://www.catholicstewardship.com) for more ICSC conference news in the coming weeks.



**REGISTER NOW** to join the ICSC family in Chicago, October 6 - 9, 2019

# Stewardship: Source of Deepening Spirituality

Excerpted from an article by Daniel Conway, recipient of a 2019 award from the Catholic Press Association

God never stops giving! If we truly seek a deeper relationship with God, our response is to praise God for this great treasure and to demonstrate our gratitude by taking care of, and sharing, God's wonderful gifts every day.

I began thinking about stewardship in the early 1990s and had the great privilege of learning about stewardship from the late Seattle Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy, who at that time was chairman of the United States bishops' ad hoc committee on stewardship and the principal architect of the bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*.



Stewardship describes a Christian steward as "one who receives God's gifts gratefully, cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, and returns them with increase to the Lord" (SDR, p. 9). Because God never stops giving, a

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**All God's gifts are good. They are meant to be used responsibly and shared generously with others.**

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Christian steward is constantly being invited, and challenged, to receive, cherish, share and return-with-increase the fruits of God's abundant generosity. This is why stewardship is a lifelong responsibility. As long as God keeps giving, we are called to be open and responsive to all his gifts, both spiritual and material.

Stewardship is a source of deepening spirituality because it challenges us to let go of any false notions that we are somehow in control of our lives, our skills and our talents, or our material possessions. We are not the authors of our own existence. We are not the owners of our spiritual and material gifts. We are stewards (caretakers or custodians) of what belongs exclusively and entirely to God.

God has given us the gift of life and the gift of intelligence. We are responsible for taking care of ourselves and developing our minds and growing in wisdom and understanding. We have been given the skills and abilities that allow us to earn a living, care for those we love, and contribute to the common good by our work and by our service to others in the Church and in our community. These gifts of time and talent make it possible for us to acquire the material possessions that we need and enjoy. All God's gifts are good. They are meant to be used responsibly and shared generously with others.

Stewardship helps us develop what Archbishop Murphy called a *lifestyle of sharing*. When we respond to God's goodness by growing in gratitude, responsibility and generosity, we can experience the difference stewardship makes in our daily lives. As the archbishop said, stewardship invites us to reflect on what is most basic and fundamental in our lives—and to respond from the heart. *Stewardship is not a program. It is a way of life.*

Stewardship helps us recognize that the ordinary experiences of daily living are gifts from God to be cherished and shared with others. Since God never stops giving, our opportunities to respond from the heart are truly endless. That's why Archbishop Murphy believed that stewardship is a way of life—and a lifelong source of grace and deepening spirituality.



## Stewarding Our Families

### When "Back to School" means "Back to the Family Dinner Table"

August brings us face to face with one of life's realities: summer vacation has to end. Children may groan and parents may breathe a sigh of relief, but one thing is certain. The beginning of school brings a return to routine, and this translates into less eating on the run and more scheduled meals around the family dinner table. It's not always possible for the whole family to eat together, but making it a priority at least some nights of the week can pay big dividends for the Christian steward trying to raise a family of faith. Here are a few dinner table tips:

- Everyone should know certain nights are family dinner nights. Look closely at everyone's schedule, make a plan, and then hold family nights sacred.
- Whether frozen pizza or prime rib, set the table nicely and sit down. Maybe light a dinner candle or pull out the cloth napkins now and then. Pick up a special dessert once in a while.
- Parents and kids often hit the dinner hour fatigued. Make an effort to relax. Start off with a smile and laughter, even when you'd rather hit the couch.
- If you haven't already, begin the family custom of praying before meals in a spontaneous way. What was I most thankful for today?

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Where did I see a situation that calls for prayer? Let everyone take a brief turn. It may lead to a great conversation after the “amen.”

- Resist scolding or criticizing a child at dinner. Never demand to know why the math paper wasn't turned in, or why the kid will not get out of bed on time. Save it for a private discussion later. Allow the dinner table to be a place of welcome and support.
- Share the ups and downs of your own day. Listen respectfully to their exploits and complaints.
- As you review the day's events, don't forget God. Just as you are interested in what your children are reading in literature class or library hour, express an interest in what's being taught in religion class or in weekly faith formation.
- Set the rule that everyone remains seated until all are finished. Then the meal is complete.



- But the work's not done. Divide the duties of setting the table, clearing, washing dishes, even cooking so that everyone has a role to play and the work goes quickly.
- Bring back the custom of an “after dinner” prayer, brief and blessed.

## The Feast of the Assumption: *Celebrating Our First Christian Steward*

On August 15 we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption; the day we recall Our Blessed Mother being assumed into heaven and crowned queen. In the Gospel reading on this day we hear proclaimed once again the Canticle of Mary, recorded in the Gospel of Luke (1:46-55). It is the Virgin Mary's song of joy in response to her cousin Elizabeth's greeting (Luke 1: 41-45), and summarizes Mary's deep faith and trust in God.



This joyous song is also known as the Magnificat, from the opening line of scripture's Latin translation which means “My soul magnifies the Lord” (“Magnificat anima mea Dominum”). The Magnificat is a beautiful stewardship prayer used by the Church every day since the fifth century. It is a hymn at Evening Prayer in the Liturgy of the Hours.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches us that the *Magnificat*:

*... is the song both of the Mother of God and of the Church; the song of the Daughter of Zion and of the new People of God; the song of thanksgiving for the fullness of graces poured out in the economy of salvation and the song of the “poor” whose hope is met by the fulfillment... (#2619).*

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Among the many stewardship themes in this reading, the prayer helps us realize that God's stewardship plan turns the world's values upside down. God comes to the aid of the poor and lowly, to the detriment of the rich and powerful. And for those who entrust their lives to the Lord, they are filled with good things. As a young woman, humble and poor, Mary becomes an interpreter of God's plan of salvation, she reveals to us the fundamentals of good stewardship, and she becomes a prophetic witness to social justice for all future generations who “will call me blessed” (Luke 1: 48). Mary was the first disciple, the first Christian steward of God's plan.

Take a few moments and pray this stewardship prayer. Consider its implications for your life. How do you magnify the Lord? How do you make God “bigger” in your day-to-day world? How do you bring God's compassion to the poor?



## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 3/4, 2019**

In today's Gospel, Jesus offers a warning to those who pursue leisure and pleasure as their goal in life without concern for the poor and less fortunate. He tells the parable of the wealthy landowner who, upon yielding an exceptionally profitable harvest one year, determines that he will live the rest of his days in relaxation; to eat, drink and be merry. God calls the miser a "fool" and lets him know that his greed and self-indulgence will not bring him the security he seeks.

Good stewards acknowledge that the money and possessions entrusted to them are to be used to further the mission of Jesus Christ. This week let us reflect on our own daily consumption habits. Do we spend money on articles that make us better ambassadors of Christ? Does our personal lifestyle bring "good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18)?

### **Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 10/11, 2019**

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus concludes his teaching about those who are "faithful and prudent stewards" with that classic stewardship teaching: "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." Christian stewards recognize that God is the ultimate source of their gifts, talents, resources and aptitudes, and that God wants them to use these varied gifts in his service. This week might be a good time to reflect on our God-given gifts. Are we using those gifts to serve the Lord? If Christ came back to us unexpectedly tomorrow would we be able to give a full accounting of how we have exercised stewardship over these gifts?

### **Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 17/18, 2019**

In today's second reading, we hear the author of the letter to the Hebrews liken the daily life of the Christian steward to a race, a long-distance race perhaps, certainly not a sprint; requiring endurance and a single-minded focus on Jesus at the finish line. Good stewards are firmly committed to running the race, to live the Christian life to the fullest, to keep their eyes focused on Jesus. They don't grow weary. They don't lose heart. They know there is immense joy waiting for them at the finish line. Are you fully committed to living each day for Christ? Are you running the race, or are you simply jogging? Just walking? Sitting? Going backwards? Going nowhere? Some of us may want to reflect on what we can do to run the race with even more conviction. Others may want to reflect on how to simply enter the race and start running.

### **Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 24/25, 2019**

The Gospel reading today starts with a question: "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" Jesus offers only a simple reply: Strive to enter through the narrow gate. Many will try to enter and will not be able. Good stewards know there is only one, narrow gate. Not everything will fit. This narrow gate has no room for our accomplishments. No room for our money. No room for our possessions. No room for anything else but those who've been good stewards of the Gospel. We can't custom build our own gates either. There is only one, narrow gate that happens to be open for a time, but for how long? What is our plan of action to get through that gate?