

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

October 2019 • e-Bulletin



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER
for October

Gracious and Loving God

We give you thanks
for this time of year;
a time of transformation
that reveals the awe-inspiring
gift of your creation.

Teach us how
to be good stewards
of all the gifts
you have given us;
and show us how
we may share
those gifts generously,
especially with those
most in need
of your loving care.

Give us the strength
to be good stewards
of the Gospel,
to love others as we
love ourselves,
and to follow in your Son's
footsteps, until we
find our way home to you.

We pray this through your Son,
Jesus Christ,
Who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.

Amen

Stewards of a Missionary Church

Jesus said to his apostles, "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). The month of October is an ideal time to focus our prayers on the world and to reflect on how we might follow Christ's call to proclaim his teachings to "the whole world." The people of the world are a gift from God and this global community is a gift to be received with gratitude and held in stewardship.



**It is time to reflect on the global impact of our stewardship,
and to express our gratitude to missionaries who bear witness
to Christ in the most remote and challenging places.**

World Mission Sunday is celebrated this year on October 20 and the entire month of October offers Catholics world-wide the opportunity to renew their commitment to proclaim the Gospel and to give a greater missionary focus to parish activities. It is time to reflect on the global impact of our stewardship, and to express our gratitude to missionaries who bear witness to Christ in the most remote and challenging places.

The month of October can remind us that being witnesses to Jesus Christ is a stewardship responsibility of us all, and that in a world experiencing increasingly disturbing forms of alienation and indifference, our communion of faith can offer signs of hope and work to make the planet a home for all people.

We are "communion" because of the gift of the Eucharist. And this gift that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its

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very nature it demands to be shared with everyone. That is one reason the missionary impulse of our Church has always been a sign of vitality in its unique witness of unity around the world.

There are a number of ways you can focus on the missionary activity of the Church:

- Include petitions for the Church's missionary work in your daily prayers.
- Increase your awareness of the wider global mission of the Church.
- Discover ways to participate in specific missionary activities taking place in your parish or diocese.
- Give generously on World Mission Sunday, celebrated this year on October 20.



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The Church's work around the world is as important as the work in our own neighborhood. Let us be mindful this month that we are stewards of the Gospel, called to proclaim it to the ends of the earth, bringing hope to a world that is desperately hungry for Christ's loving presence.

Stewardship and "Screwtape" A Message for Halloween!

Imagine a stranger coming to your door, making demands accompanied by threats. Worse, he's wearing a disguise. The night is dark, the moon hidden by fall leaves still clinging to the trees. What a terrifying scenario.

But, wait! It's October 31, and the strangers are very small. They're disguised as little Batmen and ballerinas, pirates and princesses, and their demands and threats are accompanied by tiny "pleases" and "thank yous." It's Halloween, and it's actually a magical scenario.

A great deal of life is framed by our perceptions, isn't it? How we approach a situation, whether we see a threat or a promise, a trick, or perhaps a treat, depends so much on our own attitude and the honesty we bring to our lives.

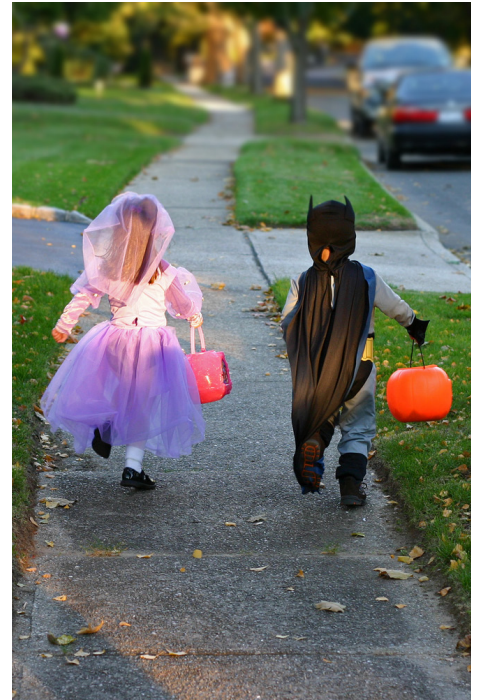
In his classic book, *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis portrays a senior devil, Screwtape, as a bureaucrat who is mentoring a young devil named Wormwood in how to be a tricky enemy of humanity. Screwtape knows that one of the best ways to seduce people to evil is to persuade them to rationalize their choices. The more dishonesty Screwtape can help us finagle into our reasoning, the more successful the devil's enterprise.

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It's a great book for stewardship reading, because it makes us reexamine our own perceptions of evil and good in our lives.

"I think I should stay home from Mass this morning. God knows I really need the rest." "I don't really have any talents to offer my parish in this year's ministry sign-ups." "I earned this money and it's mine. What I do with it is my business."

Screwtape would probably be very pleased with those rationalizations. They help us to "trick" ourselves into accepting a false scenario. This timeless book by C.S. Lewis helps us understand the varying methods that the devil uses to keep Christians shallow in their faith and disconnected from God. As the Apostle Peter writes in 1 Peter 5:8-9: "Be sober and vigilant. Your opponent the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him, steadfast in faith..." If you want to give yourself a "treat" for Halloween, pick up a copy of *The Screwtape Letters* and see how it relates to your own life.



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for October*



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St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, or Theresa of Lisieux

Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, or Theresa of Lisieux, is a model stewardship saint because of her simple and practical way of life. Better known as the “Little Flower,” Theresa was an extremely popular saint in the first half of the twentieth century. Born in France in 1873 to a very pious family, Marie Françoise Therese Martin became a Carmelite nun at Lisieux, France, at the age of fifteen. She dedicated her life to growing in holiness in a very simple and straightforward way. She meditated on the Sacred Scriptures as well as the writings of famous saints such as Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales and John of the Cross. She was faithful to the Carmelite Rule and the rhythm of daily life and worship in her religious community. Theresa believed that authentic holiness could be grasped by anyone. It was not just a pious ideal available only to clergy and religious.

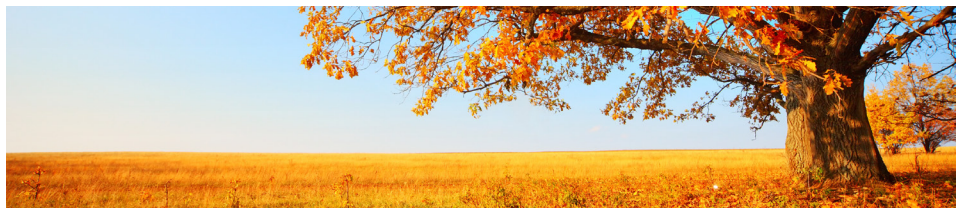
In 1895 she suffered the initial stages of tuberculosis, the disease that eventually caused her death. And in the last two years of her life she remained at Lisieux and wrote a spiritual autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, which became immensely popular and was translated into several languages after her death. She made a well-known promise to spend her life in heaven continuing to do good works on earth, “as long as there were souls to be saved.” She said she would let fall a “shower of roses” from heaven.

St. Theresa died in 1897 at the age of 24. She was canonized in 1925, an amazingly short length of time since her death. She was declared a Doctor of the Church by Saint John Paul II in 1997. Theresa of Lisieux is the patron saint of the missions, florists, aviators, and the countries France and Russia. Her feast day is October 1.

October Observances

October 7 – Month of the Holy Rosary is dedicated to one of the best known of all Catholic devotions. Catholics are encouraged to pray the rosary. It is a form of contemplative prayer which brings down God’s blessings on the faithful. It is a biblically inspired prayer which is centered on meditation of the salvific mysteries of Christ in union with Mary, who was so closely associated with her Son in his redeeming activity.

October 6 – Respect Life Sunday kicks off a month-long celebration of human life by our family of faith in the United States. Respect Life Month proclaims the immeasurable value of every person from conception to natural death. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops assists parishes, schools



and other Catholic ministries with helpful resources. The theme is “Every Life: Cherished, Chosen, Sent” and highlights the call to build a culture of life as missionary disciples.

October 16 – World Food Day reminds us that in a world of plenty, millions go to bed hungry each night. This day seeks to increase awareness, understanding and informed year-round action to alleviate hunger. To find out more, consult Catholic Relief Services (www.crs.org), the official overseas arm of the United States

Conference of Catholic Bishops, and contribute to a food pantry near you.

October 20 – World Mission Sunday, organized by the Propagation of the Faith, is a day set aside for Catholics worldwide to recommit to the Church’s missionary activity through prayer and giving. As described by Saint John Paul II, it is “an important day in the life of the Church because it teaches how to give: as an offering made to God, in the Eucharistic celebration, for all the missions of the world.”

Conference, Retreat, Relationships-There is Still Time

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

It is difficult to believe that in just a few days we open the 57th annual ICSC Conference in Chicago. As we continue with our work in our parish, diocese or other ministries, there is a growing awareness that we will be stepping out of our daily routines soon and heading toward the “windy city.”

In some ways, it is like preparing to take a brief respite from what might be our own “normal” life while stepping into a world that is filled with the energy of an International Conference. Experts provide pertinent workshops covering everything from the spirituality of stewardship to best practices in enhancing parish ministries, to encouraging financial generosity at the parish, school and diocesan level.

The opportunity to visit the exhibitor area and explore the latest in materials and technology is a gift. To have a one-on one, face to face, question and answer session with companies who specialize in problem solving and enhancing parish and diocesan life is exceptional. We come to the conference with our list of needs ready to explore all the possibilities and return to our parishes and diocese with ideas and solutions to put on the table for consideration.

In the whirlwind of this conference environment however, we also find the beauty of a retreat atmosphere. Remembering that this is all for God’s Glory, the beautiful Masses, prayer services, as well as opportunities for Adoration and praying the Rosary affirm our motivation for



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attending and allow us to worship and rest in the company of other believers.

Perhaps one of the most understated yet grace-filled benefits that I consider as I prepare to put my ministerial calendar in order for my absence and bring up my suitcase is in the area of relationship building. The opportunity to establish new friendships and to be reunited with known colleagues in Christ is worth the effort of attending. We know that the Holy Spirit is able to encourage, support and inspire our ministerial efforts through our relationship with others. I think our brothers and sisters of the early Church would concur.

The ICSC Conference is the complete package: Conference, Retreat, Relationships. Step out of your world for three days and experience it all. There is still time.



Being Good Stewards of Our Food



In the story of the feeding of the 5,000, when the crowds had their fill, Jesus said to his disciples, “Gather the fragments left over, so that nothing will be wasted” (John 6: 12). How much of the food we consumed last week actually ended up in the garbage? If you cleaned out your refrigerator, how much old food, takeout containers, and spoiled and rotten food did you throw out? As Christian stewards, we are painfully aware that it’s not just industry that wastes food. Estimates reveal that we consumers throw out the most food.

The United Nations maintains that 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted annually. It is not a new problem and

our habits are getting worse. One-third of the food that is produced for human consumption is lost or wasted.

Studies reveal that those who suffer from hunger in the United States could be fed with all of the food that is wasted and thrown into the garbage. In 2013, Pope Francis said: “Once our grandparents were very careful not to throw away any leftover food. Consumerism has led us to become used to an excess and daily waste of food. . . Throwing away food is like stealing from the table of the poor and the hungry.”

Food waste is also expensive. The United States Department of Agriculture concluded that Americans are throwing out \$165 billion worth of food each year. To fully understand just how much money that is, if you compare it to the U.S. Federal Budget, this is a relatively close comparison to what the federal government spent on education, homeland security, agriculture, commerce, and energy in one year.

Food waste is harmful to the environment as well. When food sits in landfills, it emits methane, which is 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas. As the impact of climate change continues to get more severe, reducing the amount of food that is wasted is one way to reduce our carbon footprint.

There are many simple ways to reduce the amount of food we throw away. Perhaps the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of the environment, could give us a new start. Let us use October 4 as the beginning of a new trend towards reducing food waste and drawing the attention of others to this problem as well.



Estimates reveal that we consumers throw out the most food.

While our massive food waste habits are a problem, there are simple solutions. Tips to reduce food waste include:

- Serving smaller portions and buying less food are two easy ways to reduce food waste.
- Plan your meals for the week before you go shopping and buy only the things needed for those meals.
- Shop in your refrigerator first! Cook or eat what you already have at home before buying more.
- Include quantities on your shopping list noting how many meals you’ll make with each item to avoid overbuying.
- Prepare perishable foods soon after shopping. It will be easier to whip up meals or snacks later in the week, saving time, effort, and money.
- Find out how to store fruits and vegetables so they stay fresh longer inside or outside your refrigerator.
- Produce past its prime may still be fine for cooking. Think soups, casseroles, stir fries, sauces, baked goods, pancakes or smoothies.
- If you have leftovers from any of your meals, plan an “eat the leftovers” night each week.
- At restaurants, order only what you can finish by asking about portion sizes and be aware of side dishes included with entrees. Take home the leftovers and keep them for or to make your next meal.
- Put your food waste in a compost bin. It will help reduce methane emissions from landfills, enriches your soil and reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 5/6, 2019

From today's second reading, we are made to realize, like Timothy, that Christ's call to follow him is meant for us all. Good stewards realize they have everything necessary to live for Christ. "Stir up the fire that is already burning inside you." Another way to express this thought in the vocabulary of stewardship is: "Use your gifts now! Serve the Lord now! Get involved now! God put the fire inside you but you have to stir up the flame! Let it burn!" Everyone can give witness to Christ's presence in the world, and most of us can do more than one thing for the Lord. How exactly do you "stir into flame" God's unique gifts you hold within you?

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 12/13, 2019

In today's Gospel, we hear of the ten men afflicted with leprosy, and the one who glorifies God for being healed. It is a dramatic scene of gratitude. But in order for the miracle to happen in the first place, these men had to start walking in faith before their diseased conditions change one tiny bit. Good stewards of their faith realize that they cannot wait until their problems are over to start walking in faith. They praise God even in the darkest of nights, and in the worst of circumstances. Do we walk in faith, offering the Lord our gratitude even when we are in difficult circumstances?

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 19/20, 2019

If we want to know what Jesus' parable is about in today's Gospel, it seems that we don't need to work too hard because Saint Luke tell us right at the beginning: "Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart." This parable has often been used to bring comfort to us about our prayer life. But could there be a more challenging message for those who take stewardship seriously? Widows were the poorest and most vulnerable of people in Jesus' time. Oppressive legal and economic structures were the norm. Jesus embraced with great compassion the poor and the marginalized. Could it be that we are also encouraged to pray persistently for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable as we hear their cry for justice? And that we must not lose heart that we can effect change in their lives?

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 26/27, 2019

There is an interesting twist we find in today's gospel when we hear Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple. The Pharisee is "praying to himself." It doesn't mean he was praying silently. It seems to mean something a lot more troubling, that he is praying to himself; that God is not his prayer's intended audience. The words of the Pharisee are very much centered on himself: he makes claims about his character. He highlights his own admirable activities. Good stewards of their prayer lives know that a prayer of praise and thanksgiving should focus on the goodness of God. Do your prayers of thanksgiving always stay focused on God's unfathomable, immeasurable goodness and generosity?