

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

June 2020 • e-Bulletin

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for June

Lord Jesus Christ,
In a time of anxiety, fear
and oppression
you came to bring peace and offer
reconciliation.
You sent your Spirit to bring
strength to those who believed
in you.
You revealed your Father as the Father
of all people;
a Father who cares for every single
individual
and embraces them with love
and mercy.
It is that love and mercy, made manifest
by your cross,
that shines your light on us all, creates
new life,
offers a new way of living, and brings a
Gospel message
that is a sign of hope.
Give us the courage to live your
Gospel fully
even in the midst of uncertainty,
to share your word vibrantly even if it
leads to scorn,
and to respond to others generously
even when we feel like holding back.
Show us the way to live as good
stewards
of your presence among us, and in
doing so,
may we shine your light on a
darkened world.
Amen.



Celebrating the Body and Blood of Christ as “Stewards of the Gospel”



On Sunday June 14, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or Corpus Christi, to celebrate the gift of the Eucharist. Of course, now that we are beginning to return to the physical Eucharistic table in our parishes and celebrate the sacrament in person, we can more readily recall that the best way to celebrate the Eucharist is to live it, to put the Eucharist into action. None of us can be a mere spectator to the Eucharist, for this offering to God of bread and wine is really our offering to him of ourselves, of our lives and of the whole world. Jesus taught us this connectedness when he enjoined us to go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel (see Mark 16:15).

Nourished by the gift
of the Eucharist, we are
never alone in this
journey of faith.



The Eucharist invites us to be “stewards of the gospel;” to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and to love others just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. This is the meaning behind the language of blood sacrifice of which we will hear proclaimed in the weekend’s readings. Blood is fundamentally life. The commitment to share in a common life, the covenant between God and Israel, was endorsed in blood, lots of it. Sacrifice was, and is necessary.

But how does the celebration of the Eucharist relate concretely to our ordinary day-to-day lives? At one level, our physical return to the Eucharistic table affirms our belief that there is something extraordinary in our ordinary, daily lives. We take time to acknowledge to ourselves, our families and our communities with whom we have been separated that we are engaged in an extraordinary relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

More deeply, however, is that the Eucharist transforms us. It provides a center of our being and a driving force that impels us to go out and “be” Christ to a broken world. We are nourished and strengthened in a profound way in order to build up the Body of Christ and carry out Jesus’ command to be missionary disciples.

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The theme for the 58th annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council, to be held, both virtually, and in Anaheim, California, if permissible, September 27 to 30, is Encounter! This conference will give us a wonderful opportunity to learn more about encountering the risen Christ in our lives, putting his gift of the Eucharist into action and to become “doers” of God’s Word as individual Catholics, and as local Catholic communities of faith.



The Eucharist invites us to be “stewards of the gospel;” to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and to love others just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ reminds us that even through these uncertain times, we are each called to serve and to carry the good news of the gospel to everyone we encounter. Nourished by the gift of the Eucharist, we are never alone in this journey of faith. Christ is with us always in a real and most personal way.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT for June



Great Stewards of the Church: Saints Peter and Paul

This month we highlight two of the great stewards of our faith, Saints Peter and Paul, commemorated on June 29. The two apostles are celebrated together as the founders of the early Church of Rome.

St. Peter held a preeminent status among Jesus’ disciples. He was very close to Jesus and is the apostle Jesus designated as the “rock” upon which his Church would be built. Even St. Paul acknowledged St. Peter as the pillar of the Church in Jerusalem. The Gospel of St. Luke

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describes Jesus commissioning St. Peter as the head of the disciples. In the first of his letters contained in the New Testament, St. Peter penned the stewardship reflection placed so prominently in the United States Bishops’ pastoral letter on Christian stewardship: “As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Pt. 4:10).

Thinkers throughout the ages acknowledge St. Paul as a genius and his success as a missionary was unmatched. He was a highly educated Jew and interpreted his conversion experience on the road to Damascus as Christ’s personal call to preach the Good News to the Gentiles. He established Christian communities around the eastern Mediterranean, is noted for three great missionary journeys and wrote letters to various communities. St. Paul believed that exercising good stewardship over the gift of the Risen Christ was fundamental to eternal life.

How Saints Peter and Paul actually exercised stewardship over the Church in Rome is lost to history, but our faith tradition affirms that they jointly founded the Church of Rome, exercised a special authority over it and established its apostolic succession; a succession of bishops and popes that continues to this day.

Understanding Stewardship in a Complex World



Whether we are still observing stay-at-home orders or slowly emerging from our quarantine and getting back to Mass in those places where permissible, we know that our Catholic faith is a communal faith, not meant to be lived in isolation. Our prayer and spirituality serve as a springboard to a life of Christian charity and service to others in some form or fashion.

In Saint John's Gospel, Jesus alludes to the lives of action his disciples will lead. He speaks to God about his followers: "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15). As a communion of Christian stewards, we live our Catholic faith in a challenging world. We see overwhelming problems

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and social ills, and we're bombarded from so many sides to take action. We are sometimes hit by "compassion fatigue," and often the issues are complex and our response unsure.

There are a host of Catholic agencies that can help us better understand Catholic social teaching and how we apply that teaching to the complexity of world issues that surround us. Catholic Relief Services and Jesuit Refugee Services, to name just two, deal with international issues with a focus on faith, and Catholic Charities USA focuses on domestic issues. But are you aware that our United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) addresses many issues on the domestic and international front, through its educational resources as well as its activities? Many times, news reports focus on the Church's position on one or two issues. But in reality, the bishops are very active and outspoken on a wide range of social concerns, and by joining with them as people of faith we can create a united front that promotes positive change and enhances the common good.

Through its teachings and programs, the USCCB addresses issues such as human trafficking, hunger among our nation's poor, the human suffering brought on by Syria's civil war, employment, health care, the environment, education and capital punishment.

Visiting www.usccb.org can bring you up to date on a wide range of issues and show you how you can help address them by applying the teachings of our Catholic faith. Together as a communion of faith we can make a difference as we live in this world as Christ directed even in these disquieting times.

INVITATION
for all ICSC
Parish Members!

ICSC 2020 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 2020

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.**

Additional information, list of awards and entry forms will be available on the ICSC website, <http://catholicstewardship.com/stewardship-awards/>



Dear ICSC members, colleagues and friends,

More than ever, this is a year when parish, diocesan and Catholic foundation leaders are searching for answers to their most pressing challenges. The ICSC board of directors believes that it is the innovation, creativity and energy found in ICSC conferences that will help us meet those challenges. That is why, with the greatest prudence and care, the ICSC board continues to look forward to hosting its 58th annual conference in Anaheim from September 27 to 30.

Conferences matter. And it is important that we prevail over these challenges, in part, by stepping away from our desks so that we can clear our minds, reflect on what we are doing, learn from experts, and connect with each other. Moreover, we are stronger when we network with our counterparts and together discover new solutions to the complex problems facing us in this time of uncertainty.

If the orders and directives of the State of California and Orange County allow ICSC to host its Anaheim conference, we look forward to reverting to the traditional Sunday afternoon to Wednesday morning conference schedule. But the health and safety of all ICSC conference attendees, presenters, strategic partners, exhibitors and staff are the number one priority for ICSC. Therefore, we are closely monitoring updates from the State of California on a daily basis and planning for every eventuality.

An exciting new virtual conference experience is now part of this planning as we want to make this virtual dimension available for many more people to benefit from this year's conference. The virtual component will allow us to "pivot" to a full virtual conference if necessary.

However you experience the 58th annual ICSC conference, whether in person or virtually, we want to ensure that you get the opportunity to connect, share, and find solutions to your most pressing questions. We appreciate all that you are doing to support our church in these disquieting times and we want to provide you with an exceptional conference experience. Should you have any questions, please contact us at icsc@catholicstewardship.org or call us at 800-352-3452. More detailed information about this year's conference will be coming soon.

Stay safe and may God bless you with much abundance for your service to our family of faith

In Christ,



Michael Murphy, Executive Director

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

ENCOUNTER!

Meeting Jesus on Higher Ground.



Member Rate!
\$499

2020

The Sermon on the Mount
Fra Angelico, fresco, c.1436,
Florence, Italy

58th Annual Conference

September 27-30 | Anaheim, California

Introducing a new virtual conference experience

\$299*

*Group rates available

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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Weekend of June 6/7, 2020

In today's second reading we hear of Saint Paul's final appeal to the Christian community at Corinth to live in peace and harmony with one another as well as to give one another encouragement. God made that unity possible, as Paul would have it, through "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." Good stewards who share Christ's life belong to each other, just as God in the three persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy unity. We are an intimate part of God's divine bond, God's "family." Saint Paul maintains that we ought to act that way. In the Church there is the bond of family, yet there is plenty of room for variety. Christian stewards use their uniquely varied gifts to live a Trinitarian faith, in unity, promoting Christ's peace and justice. How do we promote unity among our fellow believers? What encouragement do we give others?

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Weekend of June 13/14, 2020

Among the compelling Eucharistic themes proclaimed in today's readings is the notion of "participation" as found in Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians, or in other words, putting the Eucharist into action. Good stewards are part of a Eucharistic family that loves, welcomes and serves. An important part of living as a steward comes about in the many ways we can participate in the life of the Church. No matter how much time we have to give, no matter what our skills or interests, no matter what our level of commitment, there is a way to participate as a good steward to enrich our lives and the lives of others to build up the Body of Christ. During this time when people are anxious and fearful, what are we doing to welcome others, and to love and be of service to them.

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 20/21, 2020

In today's gospel reading Jesus tells his followers to have no fear. The claim that whatever is covered up will be uncovered and secrets made known arises from the power of the gospel, in which the disciples participate through the means of their mission. Their simplicity, vulnerability, and dependence on God demonstrate the reality of God's presence and character in the face of the world's claims to possess real power. Even though proclaiming the gospel will bring suffering, the gospel must be proclaimed "in the light" and "on the housetops" (Mt 10:27), for the gospel proclaimed and lived is the most powerful tool at the disciples' disposal against fear. Reflect this week on how you might use the Bible to confront whatever fears you may have and how your proclamation of the gospel can calm the fears of others.

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 27/28, 2020

In today's gospel reading the Twelve hear Jesus speak these words: "whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me." This is the first time Matthew mentions the word "cross" in his gospel, and it is not in direct reference to Jesus' crucifixion but as a prerequisite to following him. Good stewards recognize that the call to discipleship requires them to "take up the cross" and align their goals in life and their fate with that of Jesus, that is, with suffering, opposition, resistance and even death. Reflect this week on the crosses you need to take up daily in order to comprehend the way of Jesus Christ.