

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

August 2020 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for Our Parish Family

Good and gracious God,

Even in the midst of these troubling times, you continue to reveal your loving presence in the communal life of our parish.

Help us to see your active presence in our parish family, a community where peace, love and fellowship will prevail. May it be truly prayerful, intensely Eucharistic, and deeply joyful.

Teach us how to be good stewards of our parish family even during these times of stress and anxiety, distance and isolation.

By the power of the Holy Spirit make our hearts humble and compassionate so that we may carry out our responsibilities to our parish family in a just and holy manner.

And through your Spirit, may we love one another as you love each of us, as sisters and brothers who gather around the Eucharistic table, an authentically holy, Catholic community, working together to hasten our Kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen



Engaging Young Adults: Does Your Parish Have an Evangelization Plan?



Few issues resonate more with Catholics today than the evangelization of young adults, the future of the Church. How is your parish prepared to reach out to young adults and respond to their pastoral needs during this time of uncertainty? This vital question will be explored at the **2020 International Catholic Stewardship Council's new Virtual Conference** being hosted from **September 28 to October 9**. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), captured the importance of the young in sharing

At this year's ICSC virtual conference, topics related to evangelizing young adults in your parish today will be offered.

the Good News: "How beautiful it is to see that young people are 'street preachers,' joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth! ... Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope."

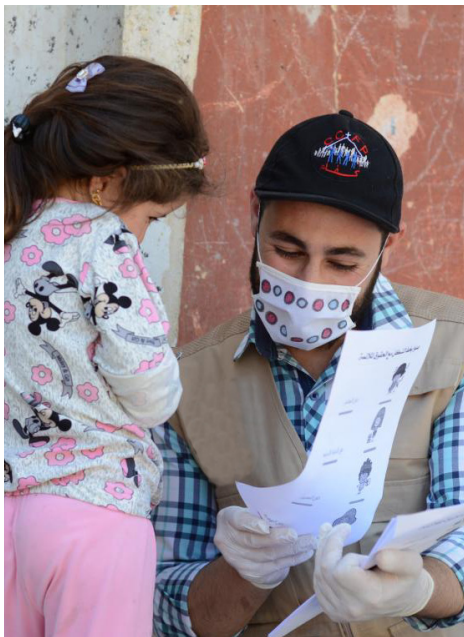
Yet, as Christian stewards, we are concerned about how to engage young adults, who often see the Church with cynicism and disappointment. How can we bring forth from them the enthusiasm and devotion of which Pope Francis speaks? How do we involve them and support them pastorally in these challenging times?

History shows us that young adults are inspired by Catholic leaders who step forward in social justice causes and in service to the poor. Some parishes

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are finding that an effective way to reach unchurched young adults is to give them the opportunity to work with young Catholics who are committed to work in service and justice projects. Relationship building is key to evangelizing young adults. There is also a renewed interest in Bible study among young adults both inside and outside of the Church. How can a parish committed to studying Scripture in an engaging



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and transformative way help to demonstrate to young adults the relevance of the Gospel to the times within which we live?

At this year's ICSC virtual conference, topics related to evangelizing young adults in your parish today will be offered. To explore these important questions, join us in the fall at the 58th annual ICSC Conference **Gone Virtual!**

THE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE 2020

September 28 - October 9



1-2 people **\$299** per person

3-4 people **\$249** per person

5+ people **\$229** per person

ENCOUNTER!

Meeting Jesus on Higher Ground

The 58th Annual Conference will feature a new and exciting virtual experience!

- More than 100 sessions spread out over 10 days
- Unlimited access to recorded sessions
- Liturgies and devotions from around the world
- Virtual Exhibit Hall
- Virtual rooms for making strategic connections
- Enhanced networking opportunities
- Concerts, tours and much, much more

Click [HERE](#) to register today!



Saint Alphonsus Liguori, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Alphonsus Liguori was the founder of the Redemptorists (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer) and one of the greatest moral theologians in the history of the Church. Born into a Neapolitan noble family in 1696, he studied and practiced law successfully until, after losing an important

case through his own fault and seeing it as a sign of God's will, he decided to enter the priesthood. He studied theology and was ordained in 1726. Soon thereafter he established a reputation as an effective preacher and understanding confessor in and near Naples.

Alphonsus organized parish missions and urged his priests to be simple in the pulpit and compassionate in the confessional.

In 1732, Alphonsus founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer for priests dedicated to preaching the Gospel, especially to the rural poor in the kingdom of Naples. Alphonsus continued to preach and hear confessions with great success throughout the kingdom, especially in villages and hamlets, until 1752 when his health failed. He was especially gentle with the scrupulous, those with an unhealthy sense of anxiety and guilt, because he himself suffered from scrupulosity.

Alphonsus published the first of three dozen theological and devotional works in 1745, the most important of which was his *Moral Theology*, revised and reprinted nine times during his life. In this work he created new moral principles, and his pastoral approach was always one of simplicity and kindness. He also published devotional writings, especially about the Blessed Virgin Mary. His *Glories of Mary* (1750) influenced Marian piety well into the nineteenth century.

After at first refusing the appointment, in 1762 Alphonsus was ordained bishop of Sant'Agatha dei Goti, a diocese located between Benevento and Capua, Italy. He organized parish missions and urged his priests to be simple in the pulpit and compassionate in the confessional. He was especially critical of priests who celebrated Mass too quickly. When a famine broke out in the winter of 1763, he sold everything he had, including his carriage and mules and his episcopal ring, to buy food for the starving. The Holy See gave him permission to dip into the assets of the diocese for relief work.

Alphonsus suffered an attack of rheumatic fever in 1767 that almost killed him and left him with an incurably bent neck. He eventually resigned his position in 1775 because of poor health. He lived another twelve years in poor mental and physical health. He died during the night of July 31/August 1, 1787, within two months of his ninety-first birthday. Alphonsus Liguori was beatified in 1816, and made patron saint of confessors and moral theologians in 1950. His feast day is August 1.

Stewardship of Prayer for Kids

One of the biggest questions parents have right now is what kind of routine their children will have as they contemplate a new school year during COVID-19. One thing is for sure, however, autumn brings back a routine, a sense of order and a discipline that summer lacks. Christian stewards can take advantage of this "new routine" to integrate prayer more deeply into their children's lives.



**Evaluate your morning routine.
That short morning "journey"
can be a great time for a shared
morning prayer.**

As August begins, it is natural to begin thinking about scaling back the bedtime hour and wringing the most out of the last weeks of freedom before autumn, however we determine what the beginning of the school year will look like. Make a plan now to take advantage of this "new" school year and incorporate aspects of prayer and a heightened awareness of God into your children's

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new schedule. For example, evaluate your morning routine. That short morning “journey” can be a great time for a shared morning prayer. Even a walk together can be a time to pause and ask God to bless our day.

Perhaps your summer of eating sporadically will be replaced by more established mealtimes. Take advantage of these moments you have with your children to begin a new blessing at the evening meal. Along with thanksgiving for the food, each member of the family could relate one person for whom they were particularly grateful during the day.



The habit of prayer, ingrained in a schedule, can be a habit retained for a lifetime.

Maybe there was a particular event that occurred during the day for which your children were thankful. At bedtime, each child could be called upon to recall with a parent the best part of that child's day, and also what was the most challenging part of the day. Then, reflect briefly on how God was present through those events. Not only is this a beautiful way to help your child be conscious of the presence of God, it's a great way to learn more about your child's experiences. By allowing the stewardship of your own prayer life to unfold for your children, you reveal to them that a sense of prayerfulness permeates your day, that life has more meaning and purpose when reflected upon, and that the habit of prayer, ingrained in a schedule, can be a habit retained for a lifetime.



Finding Community in Our Parish During COVID-19

One of the many things the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us is that people yearn for community. What better way to search for community than in our own parish? As baptized Christians we are called to be stewards of our parish family and August may be a good time to reflect on that call: to discern what we might offer our parish this year, and what we hope to get from our parish.

As Christian disciples it is unlikely that we can keep our lives Christ-centered without community. Our commitment to attend Sunday Mass at the parish isn't enough. We need more and our parish needs more from us.

We may be surprised at new opportunities for service that have sprung up in our parish. Perhaps, as Pope Francis has suggested, you could find out what your parish's social justice group is doing. Is there an activity in which you can participate? Find out about the social outreach your parish does on behalf of the poor. Of course, it will be more challenging to offer assistance with the social distancing and isolation rules in place, but when the opportunity presents itself, do not hesitate to jump in and serve.

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Maybe there is another parish activity you have long contemplated, one that calls to you, something that you feel passionate about that could use your skills and talents. Maybe the parish has a book club that interests you or a prayer group that would foster spiritual growth. What you will find is not just a chance to serve or grow, but a deepening friendship with people who share your faith and walk on a spiritual journey which demands companionship. What you find in parish involvement is community.

A faith community is deeper than just the folks who are social distancing at work or the friends that meet for a virtual happy hour. A faith community asks more of us and gives us much more. Perhaps there is a small faith community within the parish that strengthens you. It goes to reason that such a group strengthens the parish, and certainly strengthens the Body of Christ. Now is the time to take a fresh look at what your parish offers this fall, and find a creative way to offer yourself to your parish and at the same time find a community that embraces you and nurtures your faith.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 1/2, 2020

In today's Gospel we find an equation the disciples of Jesus couldn't solve: Five loaves and two fish divided by 5,000-plus people. They failed to recognize Jesus in the equation; that whatever they had to offer, Jesus could take it and bless it and satisfy the hunger of the crowd with it. Good stewards recognize that the Lord can work miracles with the gifts they offer to a hungry and broken world. How often are we willing to offer our gifts in faith, even during disquieting times, even as insignificant as we think they are, and count on the Lord to do the rest? How often do we count Christ into the equation?

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 8/9, 2020

Today's Gospel reveals what miraculous things can happen when one embraces a single-minded faith in Jesus Christ. Peter gets out of a wind-tossed boat when the Lord calls him. His faith is tested by his obedience to Jesus who is calling him out onto the water. In the midst of the waves and the wind, Peter gets out of the boat and walks toward Jesus. Good stewards heed Christ's call to them. Sometimes that call directs them to take on seemingly impossible challenges. This week, reflect on how the Lord could be calling you out of the safety of your own "boat" to take on the impossible.

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 15/16, 2020

In today's first reading, the Lord speaks through the prophet Isaiah during a time of political upheaval and moral decline. The prophet had warned of God's judgment against people for the feelings of self-importance they found in their possessions, and condemned them for

various forms of economic injustice such as exploiting the poor and immigrants. Good stewards know that Isaiah's message is as compelling today as it was in the time of the kingdom of Judah: Do the right thing. Offer justice and compassion toward others. Be honest in all your dealings. And remember to observe the day of the Lord.

Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 22/23, 2020

Saint Paul reminds us in today's second reading that the ultimate origin of everything is God. Since everything comes from God, we are God's own. We can never put God in our debt. There is absolutely no negotiating with God. Every breath we take is a gift. Every good deed we perform is grace.

Good stewards realize they are created and called to make the beauty, greatness, compassion and justice of God and his gifts known throughout the world. The stewardship question for us is whether we are willing to embrace this call, acknowledge our dependence on God and give our lives over to him completely for this purpose.

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 29/30, 2020

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus brings up the topic of the cross to his followers. They would not realize the cross was part of God's plan and was to be their legacy until after the Resurrection. Today's followers of Christ recognize they are stewards of his entire legacy, including his cross; that through their mutual sacrifices God's glory is revealed. They don't live their lives in Christ only when it is convenient for them. They make a decision to take up their cross and carry it, no matter what the cost. In the midst of the uncertain times we live in, what crosses do we bear in order to reveal God's glory?