

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2020 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for Thanksgiving*

Gracious and loving God,

As the autumn season continues its transformation and the days become shorter, the earth cooler; as we join family and friends in joy and celebration on Thanksgiving Day, we pause to give You thanks and praise for the abundant blessings You have bestowed upon us: For life and health, safety and comfort, food and nourishment.

Through your Spirit, open our hearts so that we may be even better stewards of Your many blessings. Show us how to be a blessing for the poor, sick, lonely and all who suffer. And help us nurture the gift of faith, revealed to us by your Son, Jesus Christ, our greatest gift, who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.



Transform November into a Month of Thanksgiving

Very soon Americans will celebrate the Thanksgiving holidays. Even during these uncertain times, we will have the urge to gather for sumptuous meals highlighted by turkey and pumpkin pie, traveling to and from the ancestral home, enjoying family, feasting on leftovers and perhaps even watching football.

For many of us, Thanksgiving Day is so full of activity that there is a tendency to forget what's at the heart of Thanksgiving, offering our thanks to God for the many gifts that have been bestowed upon us. Although sometimes the reason for the holiday is forgotten in our secular culture today, good stewards of their life and faith recognize that Thanksgiving should be directed primarily in God's direction.



Take part of a day and walk or hike down a woodland path. Express your gratitude for the beauty of God's autumn creation.

Because the "busyness" of Thanksgiving Day can easily distract us from slowing down to a pace more suitable to adequately expressing our gratitude to God, perhaps this November we might allow Thanksgiving to permeate our lives for more than just a day. How about the entire month? Expressing gratitude is at the heart of good stewardship. So, let's dedicate a little time each day in November to giving thanks for our blessings.

Begin with Sunday, November 1 and Monday, November 2, All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Spend a few minutes each of those days thanking God for all the people in your life who have gone before you. Then, each day thereafter, set aside a few minutes to remember all that God has given you and say "Thank you."

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Take part of a day and walk or hike down a woodland path. Express your gratitude for the beauty of God's autumn creation.

Take a minute each day to thank the people in your life who matter to you. Tell them you're thankful for them. Drop someone a note, place a short phone call or maybe a video chat is in order. Telling people you're thankful for them will enrich your life as well as theirs.

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Make a point to attend at least one Mass outside the regular weekend Masses. Going to Mass on Thanksgiving morning is an excellent way to enhance that holiday. As a community of faith, we know that giving glory to God in this way is an important aspect of our communal life of faith.

Transform the month of November into a month of Thanksgiving. If you do, you will find your celebration of Thanksgiving Day a richer and fuller experience than you could have imagined. In fact, you might just discover that your overall happiness with life improves. May this month of Thanksgiving be a time when we not only say "Thank You" to God, family and neighbor, but a time when our hearts draw us much closer to the Lord.

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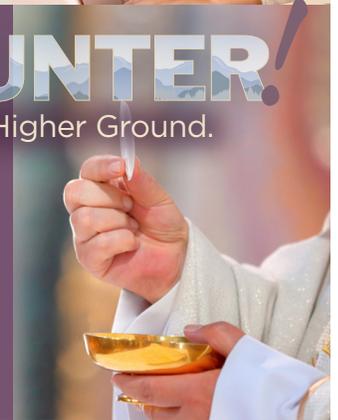
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STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*

Saint Rose Philippine Duchesne

Born in Grenoble, France, in 1769, Rose was the daughter of a prominent lawyer. She was educated in a convent school and entered religious life when she was 18 years old. She eventually became a member of the Society of the Sacred Heart, and in 1815, at age 46, was directed to establish a convent in Paris.

Sister Rose had heard a call to be a missionary since her youth. She revealed a spiritual experience she had had during a night of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday: "I spent the entire night in the New World ... carrying the Blessed Sacrament to all parts of the land ... I had all my sacrifices to offer: a mother, sisters, family, my mountain!"



At age 49, Sister Rose responded to the call. In 1818, she was sent to the United States at the request of the bishop of the Louisiana territory who was looking for a congregation of educators. She arrived in New Orleans, and traveled north to St. Louis, then to nearby St. Charles,

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Missouri. There she established in a log cabin the first convent of the Society ever built outside of France. The small community, which included a boarding school for daughters of pioneers, faced many struggles including lack of funds and very cold winters. Sister Rose also had great difficulty learning English. By 1828, however, after much prayer, work and perseverance, Sister Rose had established six schools.

When Sister Rose was 72, a school for children of the Potawatomi tribe was opened at Sugar Creek, Kansas. Though many thought Rose too sick to go, the Jesuit head of the mission insisted: "She must come; she may not be able to do much work, but she will assure success to the mission by praying for us. Her very presence will draw down all manner of heavenly favors on the work." Her long hours of prayer impelled the tribal leaders to name her, "Woman-Who-Prays-Always."

Sister Rose was with the Potawatomi tribe only one year, however, as her health could not sustain the rigors of village life. In July 1842, she returned to St. Charles where she would spend the last ten years of her life. She died on November 18, 1852, at the age of 83. She was canonized in 1988 by Saint John Paul II. Her feast day is November 18.



Stewardship Builds Communities of Faith

By Rev. Yaw Acheampong, pastor, Our Lady of Peace Parish, Toronto, Ontario

(Part II of a two-part excerpt from an article written for The Catholic Register, a publication of the Archdiocese of Toronto)

In 2018, as part of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan, Cardinal Thomas Collins, archbishop of Toronto, instituted a stewardship pilot project to help promote Christian stewardship as a way of life in our parishes. From the spring of 2018, eight parishes, including Our Lady

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of Peace, participated in the project. The pilot project helped us examine the many different ways to engage parishioners to share their God-given gifts of time, talent and treasure in their parish communities.

A team guided us to examine and to reflect on stewardship as "an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives." We recognized that even though our parishes already

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have ministers serving in various ministries, the word “stewardship” was misunderstood and a few parishioners do everything.

So, how do we inspire our parishioners to participate in fruitful stewardship? The project has given us some insight into what are considered to be best practices. These include ideas for stewardship in liturgy, spiritual formation and social activities, practices that have helped renew the spirit of stewardship in several parishes in other dioceses.

We also learned about the effective communication methods suitable to our parishes to help with our parishioners’ understanding of stewardship. We recognized that although our parishes may be different from each other because of the location or the backgrounds of the parishioners, activities like the celebration of Installation and Recognition ceremonies for ministers, Ministry Fair and creating an atmosphere of hospitality such as coffee Sundays have helped transform parishes into stewardship parishes.



At Our Lady of Peace, last October during our first Stewardship Week, we had lay witness talks that invited parishioners to reflect on their call to use their God-given gifts to live out their baptismal promises as faithful stewards.

This year’s celebration of Stewardship Sunday comes at a time of uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but it can be an opportunity to reflect on how best to adapt our stewardship practices to meet the unique challenges of our current situation. It calls us to be creative and proactive in engaging our ministers who may not be in active ministry and also to attract more parishioners to become faithful stewards.

In his Pastoral Letter on Stewardship in 2018, Cardinal Collins wrote: “Stewardship is so deeply rooted in the foundational themes of the Gospel that it involves a permanent and continuous re-orientation of our approach to discipleship, and so provides a stable base for the life of faith in our communities.”

In fact, the life of faith in our communities is reflected on the blossoming of the fruits of the Archdiocesan Stewardship Project, the fruits being expressed during this COVID-19 pandemic. Since the lockdown, some ministers have been working behind the scenes to help run the parishes and to serve those in need in our communities. As the pilot project is extended to more parishes, it is our hope that more parishioners become involved in igniting the fire of stewardship in our parishes.

The reality of this COVID-19 pandemic is that despite the reduced attendance at Mass and reduced spiritual and social activities in our parishes, parishes will always be in need of ministers. Our celebration of Stewardship Sunday reminds us that when we strive to embrace stewardship, we transform our parish communities into vibrant places of Christian living where we serve to make the love of Christ real and present.

(Editor’s note: Stewardship Sunday was celebrated in the Archdiocese of Toronto on September 20, 2020).



Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving

The Thanksgiving holiday is an excellent time to rediscover the psalms of praise and thanksgiving.

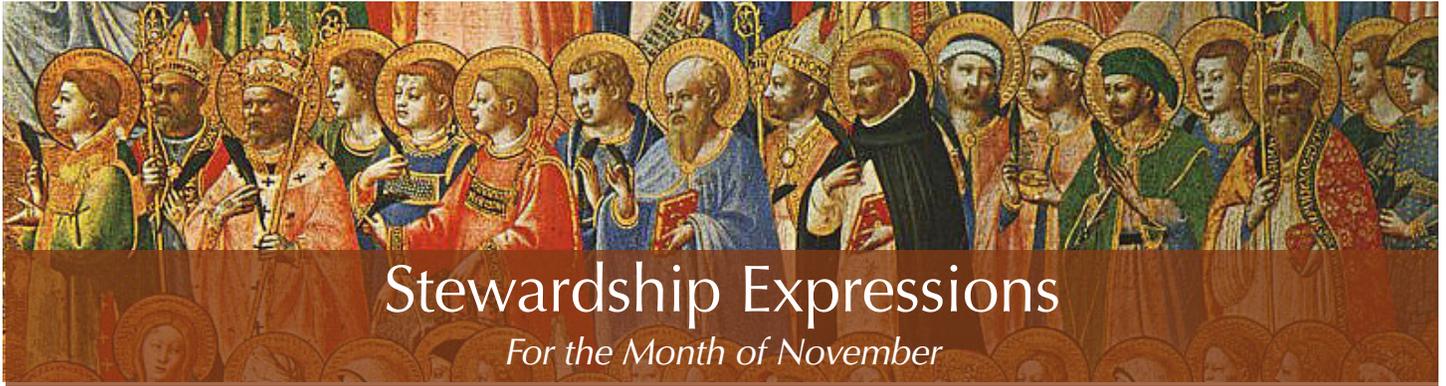
When you find a quiet moment, sit and relax with your Bible. Think of a time when awe and gratitude overwhelmed you. Maybe it was a sunrise, or children playing in a park, an inspirational hymn at Mass, a family gathering, or a walk in the woods. Remember how you appreciated that special moment. Then, open your Bible to one of the psalms of thanksgiving and recite it to yourself. Take Psalm 118 for instance:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Listen to the words. Close your eyes. Let the psalm speak to you.

Other psalms of praise and thanksgiving you might consider include Psalms 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 117, 145, and 147.

Whatever psalm you choose for that quiet moment, thank God for that special time of awe as well as all the good things in your life, and praise God for his glorious deeds.



Stewardship Expressions

For the Month of November

A fresh opportunity to integrate stewardship practice into life – at home, work, school, on-the-road, with friends and neighbors ... everywhere. Let us strive to rethink, recommit and rededicate our daily living with focus and determination to reflect caring discipleship and service throughout the year.

SELECTED DAILY OBSERVANCES

November 1 | Solemnity of All Saints is a principal feast of the Church that honors all the saints both publicly celebrated in the Church's history as well as the multitude of saints whose names are known only to God. In order to honor the memory to these unnamed saints, and to recall their example, the Church dedicates this special feast day so that all living Christians would celebrate the lives and witness of those "who have died and gone before us into the presence of the Lord."

November 2 | Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) encourages the offering of prayers and celebration of Mass for all those who have departed this life. In the early days of the Church, the names of the faithful departed were posted in Church so that the community would remember them in prayer. Remember your loved ones in prayer today.

November 19 | The Great American Smokeout encourages smokers to use this date to make a plan to quit smoking. The American Cancer Society's web site offers insights and on the best ways to quit this deadly habit for good.

November 26 | Thanksgiving Day is a uniquely special holiday for most Americans, where we celebrate family unity. Good stewards approach this holiday with a deep sense of prayer, gratitude and joy. They are reminded that their lives and daily activities are

a constant act of thanksgiving, all of which give glory to God, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist.

November 29 | The First Sunday of Advent begins the season of Advent. Through it, we prepare ourselves to await the coming of God himself, in the person of Jesus Christ, who became a human being to bring humanity back into communion with the Triune God.

WEEKLY OBSERVANCE

November 9 - 13 | World Kindness Week Saint Paul wrote that Christian love is kind (1 Cor. 13:1). So it stands to reason that kindness toward others should be extended every single day, especially during this time of COVID-19. The World Kindness Movement has selected one week in November to encourage people worldwide to weave a kinder approach into daily life. The purpose of World Kindness Week is to urge people to look beyond themselves, beyond the boundaries of their country, culture, race, and religion; and realize they are citizens of the world. The week culminates into World Kindness Day, November 13.

OTHER NOVEMBER OBSERVANCES

National Native American Heritage Month

Long before North America was populated by those from across the Atlantic, indigenous Americans flourished with vibrant cultures and

were the original stewards of the land. From generation to generation, they handed down invaluable cultural knowledge and rich traditions which continue to thrive in Native American communities across our country. During National Native American Heritage Month, we can celebrate the lives of Native Americans and learn about their traditions and virtues that honored the sacredness of family, community, and respect for the environment.

Child Safety and Protection Month

This month is used by child-care workers, doctors and teachers to remind parents to review the safety plans for their children. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, nearly 300 children under four years old die every month in the U.S. because of accidents – most of which can be prevented. Parents are urged to use this month as a reminder to check out everything from the home, toys and apparel, to internet safety education.

National Family Caregivers Month

More than 65 million individuals in the U.S. exercise stewardship over the healthcare of family members. No one else is in a better position to ensure continuity of care for family members than family caregivers. They are the most knowledgeable when it comes to their care recipients' medicines, treatment regimen, diet and exercise routine. Since 1994, this has been a month to thank, support, educate and empower family caregivers.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

All Saints Day

Weekend of October 31/November 1, 2020

In today's Gospel, Jesus teaches his followers about "blessedness," a word not used much in American culture. The Beatitudes Jesus evokes in this Gospel reading are not promises of happiness, but promises of a new life with God; blessedness is key to a new way of living through the human experiences of mourning, meekness, peacemaking, persecution, and poverty of spirit. For Christian stewards, "blessedness" does not depend on wealth or health or status. Rather, Christian stewards recognize that blessedness is God's gift. In the kingdom of God, life is not governed by honor and fame, but by the promise of abundant life. Embracing a poverty of spirit and meekness reveal God's abundant life "breaking into" our world. Reflect on the Beatitudes this week. How might they help us improve our relationship with the Lord?

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Weekend of November 7/8, 2020

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five of them were prudent. The foolish did not prepare for the wait, they brought no extra oil to keep their flames burning bright. The prudent bridesmaids brought extra oil, just in case the wait was longer than they had expected. And the wait was long. Some of those who were supposed to be waiting were not prepared for the wait, with disastrous consequences. Good stewards heed Jesus' warning: Be prepared to wait for the Lord's return. Is your faith strong enough to endure the wait? Will the "flames" of passion for the Lord endure? What are you doing to keep your passion for the Lord from burning out?

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

November 14/15, 2020

In today's Gospel, Jesus delivers the parable of the talents; using the example of money rather than abilities or skills. It's

a story about investments, risks and returns. Stewards understand that God has given them an abundance of spiritual gifts. They know God doesn't want them to simply receive these blessings and bury them in fear, but to multiply them; to use these gifts to serve Him and others; to spread Christ's Good News; to go and make disciples of others. Good stewards invest what God has given them in the service of others and are prepared to render an account when the Lord returns. Reflect this week on how you are returning your own God-given gifts back to God with increase.

Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

November 21/22, 2020

In today's Gospel, Saint Matthew offers a compelling vision of the end-time, when the people of all the nations are brought before the Lord to give an account of their lives and actions. Interestingly, the sheep, the righteous ones, are rewarded for having acted with love and compassion without having recognized the face of Christ in others. Good stewards recognize those in need of their care as gifts from God. They know that they are the instruments of Christ's active, loving presence in the world. How will we treat others this week: our family members, neighbors, customers or strangers? What accounting will we make to the Lord for their care?

First Sunday of Advent

November 28/29, 2020

The season of Advent is upon us, and in today's Gospel Jesus delivers a simple message through the pen of Saint Mark: "Be watchful! Be alert!" Christian stewards understand what Jesus meant when he said, "It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task." Good stewards realize that to each one a task is assigned by God. They have been set in a particular place and station in life, and have been gifted with unique relationships. How do we respond to the tasks or cultivate our relationships in a way that keeps us alert for the return of Christ?