



# INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

April 2021 • e-Bulletin

## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for April*

Oh Blessed Lord!  
Oh Risen Lord!

We look through the crosses  
we have carried this past year  
and give you thanks  
for the awe-inspiring hope  
that Easter brings.

We give you thanks  
for calling us your friends  
and allowing us to share  
in the sacrifice of your  
of your body and blood,  
which is poured out for many.

Oh merciful Lord,  
redeemer and teacher,  
by the power of the Holy Spirit  
give us the patience and insight  
to listen to you during this time  
of continued uncertainty.

Give us the wisdom to find creative ways  
to put the Eucharist into action;  
and give us the courage to bring  
your Easter message of hope  
to a world that desperately needs your love.

To you be glory and honor  
forever and ever.

Amen



## Gratitude and Hope: Stewardship of the Easter Experience

Exercising Christian stewardship has been demanding the last several months as the COVID-19 pandemic turned our world upside down. We were challenged in our ability to be present to others and express gratefulness for the abundance of God's gifts. Yet, with Easter, there is a restored sense of gratitude and hope. Easter blessings!



We can be grateful for the myriad acts of kindness and immense generosity we witnessed. Kindness, as Saint Paul suggested, gives us hope in the resilience of the human spirit. Embracing hope allows us to emulate the kindness of those who are a light in these dark times.

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Let us remember with gratitude our experience of  
the cross of Jesus Christ, and the power of that cross to  
transform our daily lives.

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Let us be grateful for God's loving presence in our struggle to overcome any anxieties we may have felt about our basic needs being met. Let us be agents of hope for those who continue to suffer and fear they will not be able to sustain themselves or their families.

Let us be grateful for all those who cared for us, made our lives a little more bearable and served us in so many ways whether they were healthcare professionals; provided for our basic needs including safety, environmental and maintenance services; were part of the supply and

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distribution chains; all those who continued to go to work at the risk of their own lives. May God keep them safe and may we find creative ways to lift them up.

May we be grateful for those who used their gifts to discover, create and distribute the vaccines needed to give us hope during this pandemic. May God continue to inspire us to find safe ways to eradicate this disease.

Let us pray in gratitude for our parish communities that continue to keep us close to the Lord and each other, even if only virtually. May we bring hope and Christ's love to those who are isolated or feel alienated from our worshipping communities.



Embracing hope allows us to emulate the kindness of those who are a light in these dark times.

Let us be grateful for the rediscovery of simple things during this time of uncertainty: for quiet, sacred spaces, better conversations with loved ones or new habits that brought balance to our lives. May we all find hope in virtues we find in nature, good books, art and music or prayer.

Let us remember with gratitude our experience of the cross of Jesus Christ, and the power of that cross to transform our daily lives. Good stewards recognize the hope Christ brings through the gift of his cross. Stewards profess the cross is their only hope. As we begin the Easter season, let us look back with gratitude and forward with hope. May we continue to experience the joy of new life in the risen Lord. Alleluia! He is risen!

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT for April

### Saint Catherine of Siena, Doctor of the Church



Saint Catherine of Siena, whose feast day is April 29, was the first layperson, and alongside Saint Teresa of Avila, one of the first two women named a Doctor of the Church. She was born Caterina di Giacomo di Benincasa in Siena in 1347, the twenty-fourth of 25 children. She decided early on not to be married, and after several years of prayer and fasting, began

an active life of service. She started by nursing the sick at a local hospital. Notable during that time was her aid to victims of the 1374 pandemic.

As a young woman, Catherine believed she had a call to preach the Gospel. She organized a group of people to accompany her on mission trips where she urged her audiences to seek a deeper conversion to Christ in their lives through prayer and repentance. She became so extraordinarily successful that she had to recruit priests to serve as confessors to these large gatherings.

A devoted advocate of the Church, Catherine publicly promoted the offices of papacy, bishop and the clergy as Christ's ambassadors, but she was also a sever critic of the abuses she saw among many members of the clergy and church hierarchy. She believed they should embrace poverty and assume a more humble spirit instead of "living in worldly luxury and ambitiousness and pretentious vanity." "In fact," she maintained, "many laypersons put them to shame by their good and holy lives."

Catherine, though, knew that there could be no lasting reform of the Church without strong papal leadership. In 1376 she met with Pope Gregory XI in Avignon, France, where the papacy had been banished since 1309, and urged him to return to Rome. In one letter, she insisted that he must be "courageous" and not a "coward." Catherine's letter strengthened the pope's resolve and he returned to Rome in 1377.

After Gregory's death the following year and the election of Pope Urban VI, the Great Schism ensued. For the next 39 years, there would be at least two and sometimes three claimants to the papacy. Catherine sent frequent letters to Urban in the hope of moderating his severity towards his opponents. She also wrote to various other church authorities, encouraging them to recognize Urban as the legitimate successor to the Chair of Saint Peter.

Although a prodigious producer of letters, Catherine dictated her thoughts to others because she did not learn to write until near the end of her life. During the years 1377 to 1378, Catherine dictated *The Dialogue*, her reflections on the spiritual life. Many spiritual writers insist that this major work of mystical theology stands beside other great spiritual classics such as those of two other Doctors of the Church, Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross.

Pope Urban invited Catherine to Rome in 1380 to help lend support to his papacy, but on the way she suffered a stroke. She died on April 29, 1380. She was 33 years old.



# Lack of Water Remains a Global Crisis: A Question of Stewardship



On Sunday, March 21, World Water Day was celebrated to raise awareness of the global water crisis. In his Sunday remarks, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, made a plea for people the world over to be more responsible in the protection and use of water, as clean water is denied to an estimated 2.2 billion people around the world. The pontiff reminded us that water should not be considered a commodity to be bought and sold, but a valuable gift in which everyone should have access as a fundamental human right.

The pontiff observed that “without water, there would have been no life, no urban centers, no agriculture, forestry or livestock,” and yet the world and its people have not exercised good stewardship over this fundamental and essential gift to the planet. “Wasting it, disregarding it or contaminating it has been a mistake that continues to

be repeated even today,” he said. The Holy Father asked how in our age of technological advances, “access to safe, drinkable water is not within everyone’s reach.”

Referencing his apostolic letter, *Laudato si*, Pope Francis reminded us that “access to safe drinkable

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water is a basic and universal human right, a condition for the exercise of other human rights.” He went on to say that water is a gift to which all human beings, without exception, have the right to have adequate access, so that they can lead a dignified life. Thus, “Our world has a grave social debt towards the

poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

Pope Francis concluded his message by calling for urgent action to end the global water crisis: “Let us make haste, therefore, to give drink to the thirsty. Let us correct our lifestyles so that we do not waste or pollute. Let us become protagonists of that goodness that led St. Francis of Assisi to describe water as a sister ‘who is very humble, and precious and chaste!’”

Water is a gift that connects every aspect of life. Access to safe water and sanitation can quickly turn problems into potential, contributing to improved health for women, children, and families around the world. What is vital is how we respect and value this gift. Here are a few ways we can expand our consciousness about the value of water.

## **Keep yourself informed on the global clean water crisis.**

Once we become aware of water access issues around the globe, we will better appreciate the need to take action to ensure we aren’t

misusing the gift of water that we consume. Challenging and changing our water habits is an easy way to notice the impact we are having on water consumption.

## **Be mindful of the ways you use water**

While we shouldn’t give up drinking water each day, consider

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the small ways you waste water on a daily basis and then cut back. For example, turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth. Watch the water you consume while washing or rinsing utensils, glassware or pots and pans.

### **Reduce the amount of water used while taking a shower**

A 10-minute shower uses at least 25 gallons of water. Try to reduce your shower time by a few minutes. One source recommends keeping your shower time down to two songs.

### **Repair leaks in your house**

One environmental researcher suggested that a typical household loses thousands of gallons of water each year due to ordinary leaks in faucets, pipes and garden hoses. Take time to make needed repairs. You'll save water and money along the way.



### **Reduce water consumption in home appliances.**

Dishwashers and washing machines use a lot of water. Consider making sure those washers are full before doing a load of laundry or dishes.

### **Include nonprofits that provide clean water in your charitable giving**

There are a number of widely known nonprofit organizations that have made it their mission to address this global clean water crisis. Check out these nonprofits and prayerfully consider adding them to your list of charitable beneficiaries.



## **Stewardship and Solidarity in a Time of Pandemic**

*Part II of a Two-part series by Daniel Conway*

Pope Francis has repeatedly connected the stewardship of creation (care for our common home) with the solidarity that must exist between all members of the human family, each created in the image and likeness of God. Shortly after the pandemic caused the closure of public facilities including churches, schools, restaurants, sporting events and other social gatherings, Pope Francis stood alone in the vast emptiness of St. Peter's Square, in the pouring rain, and prayed for that "blessed common belonging" which makes us all sisters and brothers.

Practicing global solidarity is essential if we are ever to achieve peace, justice and the common good of all. Loving our neighbor has global dimensions—especially in a "shrinking world." As Pope Paul VI taught, if we want peace we must work for justice. And as Pope St. John Paul II added, there can be no peace without forgiveness—especially of ancient, deeply held hurts and grievances. Our love for all our sisters and brothers demands that we promote peace in a world saturated with violence and conflict.

Global solidarity also challenges us to recognize that we are stewards of all God's creation. Care for the earth is not optional or incidental to our Catholic faith; it is a fundamental responsibility given to our first parents, and all of us, at the moment God breathed life into us and charged us with the mission of exercising responsible stewardship over all His gifts.

As Pope Francis writes in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, "If every human being possesses an inalienable dignity, if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbor was born in my country or elsewhere (#125).

Solidarity and stewardship are important to Christian life at all times. But in this time of pandemic, they are essential to both the spiritual and physical well-being of all God's people.





# His Eminence Cardinal John Dew Introduces Intentional Stewardship

disciples" of Jesus Christ on a daily basis, in the home, neighborhood, parish, marketplace and public square. An evening session follows in which the leaders from the parishes and schools work with summaries gathered

many ways. The onus is on us to recognize what God is doing in our lives by making good use of the gifts he has given us."

"Stewardship breakfasts" were also introduced to allow people to

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**Stewardship is for everyone as we have all been gifted by God in so many ways.**

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"Intentional Stewardship" is a movement Cardinal John Dew, archbishop of Wellington, New Zealand, introduced to the archdiocese ten years ago. As he describes it, "stewardship is about intentionally embracing the future with hope and deciding upon a practical, intentional way of putting the Gospel into action." Cardinal Dew will deliver the keynote address at the **59th annual ICSC stewardship conference to be held in Florida from September 12 to 15, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando Hotel.**

Until the pandemic necessitated a pause, archdiocesan stewardship days were held in all the parishes of the Archdiocese of Wellington. A parish "Stewardship Day" has on its agenda a presentation on the United States bishops' stewardship pastoral offered by Cardinal Dew, as well as his own spiritual reflections on stewardship.

As Cardinal Dew has remarked, "At its heart, stewardship is a recognition that all we have and all we are is a gift from God. It is a way of looking at the world through the eyes of a disciple of Christ, recognizing that 'I am a gift from God' and being generous with all God has given me – abilities, experiences, possessions and knowledge. Stewardship challenges us to use our gifts for God and for others."

After Cardinal Dew's reflections, parishioners take part in three different group discussions in which they explore what it means to exercise Christian stewardship as "intentional

from the parishioners' conversations to create specific pastoral goals for the parish and its schools.

"We are called to be intentional disciples of Jesus Christ," Cardinal Dew maintains, "and we live that out by sharing our gifts with each other. Stewardship challenges us to recognize our gifts and use them for the building up of the Kingdom. Stewardship is for everyone as we have all been gifted by God in so

gather on an ongoing basis, hear a reflection from Cardinal Dew and discuss how stewardship informed the life of missionary discipleship in their own lives. These quarterly events had proven to be very popular for spiritual reflection, catechesis and community building. It is hoped that these breakfasts, along with stewardship days, will resume once safety and health concerns occasioned by the pandemic are adequately addressed.



RESTORE *our* JOY

Psalm 51:14



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

# 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

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# RESTORE *our* JOY

Psalm 51:14

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## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **The Resurrection of the Lord – Easter Vigil** **April 3, 2021**

In tonight's reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, we are reminded that we are alive in Christ. And it is not merely once a year that we remember what Jesus did to give us this new life, forgiveness and peace. Every day good stewards remember their baptism. They remember that they are united with Jesus in his death; that daily they drown the old sinful nature, and that daily they rise to their new life in Christ. Let us be mindful every day, especially when we are troubled by life or tempted by sin, that our lives are no longer about us, but about Christ's active, loving presence within us. That is our baptism. Alleluia! He is risen!

### **Easter Sunday** **April 4, 2021**

The tomb is empty! Jesus Christ has risen today! Our Savior is active, alive, and transforming us and our communities of faith, even the world, at this very moment. Easter is a time of joy, a time of celebration. To have faith in the risen Lord is also to believe that we are disciples who bear witness to Christ in a broken and troubled world. To be good stewards of this faith obliges us to be living witnesses to Christ's peace at home and in public. Jesus cannot be found buried. He is risen. Alleluia!

### **Second Sunday of Easter** **Weekend of April 10/11, 2021**

When the risen Christ encounters his disciples in the locked room he adds a new Beatitude to the ones we've heard proclaimed before: Blessed are those who have

not seen and have believed. Stewards of the mysteries of God's love do not need proof of the risen Christ. They know it because their lives have been transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit who has breathed new life into them. As stewards of this great gift it is appropriate to reflect on how we in turn add new life into our parish communities.

### **Third Sunday of Easter** **Weekend of April 17 / 18 2021**

An underlying lesson from all three readings this weekend is that the Risen Christ has wiped away our sins, not only for individuals, but throughout the world and its history. The terrible power of sin has now been reversed and our coming to perfection through the love of God is part of the Easter experience. As stewards of God's love we are called to participate in Christ's redemptive activity. The steward questions for us are many: How do we resist injustice at home or in the workplace? How do we confront violence in our language and attitudes? How do we bring Christ to others?

### **Fourth Sunday of Easter** **Weekend of April 24 / 25 2021**

In today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus referring to himself as "the good shepherd." His sheep know him, trust him, listen to him and follow him; having faith that no harm will come to them as long as they stay close to him. We reaffirmed our faith in Christ when we renewed our baptismal promises at Easter. As stewards of our relationship with Jesus Christ, are we, like the sheep, willing to listen to Jesus, follow him, trust him?