



# INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2021 • e-Bulletin

## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for May*

Come Holy Spirit!  
Open our eyes and ears to  
your ongoing presence  
within us and among us.

Give us the wisdom  
and compassion  
to be good stewards of  
each other as we  
work together to promote  
reconciliation, peace  
and the building of a better world.

Break through the many barriers  
that divide nations and people.

Give us the strength to  
transcend our differences.  
And help us recognize the  
meaning of Pentecost  
so that we can more  
prayerfully and joyfully  
prepare the world for  
that day when  
the Father returns his son,  
Christ Jesus, in glory.

Amen.



## Pentecost and Stewardship: Hearts on Fire for Jesus

On the weekend of May 22 and 23, we celebrate the great feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples to bring fire and flame to their hearts' commitment to Jesus. The Holy Spirit continues to place our hearts on fire to know Jesus. But do we realize it? In this time of continued uncertainty, do we sense the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives? Do we allow the Lord to inspire us to burn with a desire for greater intimacy? Good stewards make efforts to open their hearts to the Holy Spirit so that their prayer lives bring them closer to Christ.



In the mystical writings of St. Teresa of Avila, this doctor of the Church relates a beautiful story that underscores her relationship with Jesus. Teresa would often engage in conversation with the Lord, and one evening, Teresa heard Jesus ask her name, to which she replied with her religious name, saying, "I am Teresa of Jesus." Teresa was heartened to inquire of the Lord, "And who are you?" to which she heard Jesus respond, "I am Jesus of Teresa."

What beautiful intimacy Teresa felt with the Lord! It is to this intimacy, this deeply personal relationship, that each of us is called. St. Francis of Assisi, whose name our Holy Father, Pope Francis adopted, was said to have prayed simply by asking repeatedly of the Lord, "Who are you, and who am I?" It

*Continued on next page*



*Continued from previous page*

was from the depths of the answers he received, and the questions he continued to ask, that Francis drew his strength to renew Christ's church.

To exercise good stewardship of our prayer lives and to lead a life filled with contemplative moments is the call given to each Christian steward. St. Ignatius of Loyola called us to "contemplation in action," that combination of prayer in our life that inspires the good things we do each day which in return deepens our commitment to prayer. As Christian stewards, we know that our good works become hollow when they are done without a relationship with the Lord who inspires us. By the same token, a prayer life can become rote



**St. Francis of Assisi was said to have prayed simply by asking repeatedly of the Lord, "Who are you, and who am I?"**

and sterile if we leave it behind when we immerse ourselves in our daily routines. We must be committed to a balance between the good works that we do and our quest to seek a more intimate relationship with Christ Jesus.

May this Easter season and the feast of Pentecost place our hearts on fire with the desire to know Jesus even better and motivate us to live our lives in his service.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*

### St. Philip Neri

Philip Neri was born in 1515 in Florence, Italy, during a time of intensive reform and vigorous renewal in the Church. The Council of Trent convened on three occasions during his lifetime. He went to Rome in 1532 where he lived in extreme poverty, but devoted himself to visiting the sick and helping poor children.

With his engaging style, he evangelized young Florentines of the banking and merchant class. He arranged informal prayer and discussion groups. In 1548 he established an organization to provide hospitality for pilgrims to Rome and to care for shut-ins.

At the urging of his confessor, Philip at age 36 was ordained a priest. He soon earned a reputation for being an outstanding confessor and spiritual director; gifted with being able to pierce the pretenses



---

**Philip received penitents and visitors from all walks of life. Many were attracted by the warmth of his personality, his wit, unpretentiousness and cheerfulness.**

---

and illusions of others and to help them see the truth about themselves. He received penitents and visitors from all walks of life, from cardinals to the very poor. Many were attracted by the warmth of his personality, his wit, unpretentiousness and cheerfulness.

Some of Philip's followers became priests. Five of them lived together with him in community and began to share a common life under his direction. The group eventually grew and became the Congregation of the Oratory, which was approved in 1575. They are best known in England through their most famous member, Cardinal John Henry Newman. Philip and the Oratorians introduced a new style of personal spirituality for the laity, and encouraged them to give public testimony to their faith, put on theatrical productions and compose and play songs with religious themes.

Philip suffered a stroke on May 25, 1595 and died the next morning. He was canonized a saint in 1622, although many church leaders considered him a saint even in his lifetime. He was known as the "apostle of Rome" for evangelizing and reviving a spirit of faith among the city's populace. His many friends included St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis de Sales. He is the patron saint of the city of Rome. His feast day is May 26.

# Be Generous This Summer

The month of May means summer is right around the corner. There will be an urge to make up for the dark summer of 2020 with gusto. We head into a time when vacation planning is emerging, barbecues are a realistic activity, family reunions may actually be realized and trips to a favorite state park or beach may be eagerly anticipated. Christian stewards remain mindful, however, that even



during this time, the need to be generous continues, especially to our parishes and dioceses.

The Christmas spirit has always inspired us to share our material blessings with others. Cold weather also brings out our desire to make sure others are sheltered from winter storms. But often, food and clothing pantry shelves are not quite so full in the summer, even though people are still hungry and need clothing. Even in pre-pandemic times, social service agencies scrambled to fill their rosters with

volunteers during the summer. Parish outreach ministries have suffered this past year and need financial contributions to continue during the summer weeks.

Christian stewards are well aware of summer needs, as well as being aware of their own need to give throughout the year. For Christian stewards, the spirituality of gratitude to God is part of their everyday

---

**This summer, let us be mindful of our parishes, diocesan ministries and other charities that are in need of our support.**

---

lives and motivates their generosity.

Let's not forget our parishes when we make our summer plans. Let's make sure to increase our gifts to make up for the past year. Also, many diocesan appeals take place in the spring and summer. Giving to the diocesan annual appeal is an excellent way to support the ministries of the local church that no single parish could undertake by itself.

This summer may offer a chance to renew our quest for fun and relaxation in a way that the pandemic, the economy and closures would not allow last summer. Let us be mindful of our parishes, diocesan ministries and other charities that are in need of our support. A plan to continue our generous habits this summer can serve as a great blessing to those in need and serve as an authentic witness to the renewal of our Baptismal promises at Easter.

## Pastoral Leadership

*This is the first in a series of articles by Dr. Dan R. Ebener on leading stewardship and evangelization in the Catholic Church. They are based on his book, **Pastoral Leadership: How to Lead in a Catholic Parish**, published by Paulist Press and the Villanova University Center for Church Management. Dr. Ebener teaches at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa.*

The purpose of every Catholic parish is to form disciples of Jesus. To fulfill that mission, we need change. We need more joyful evangelization, more generous stewardship, more gracious hospitality, more genuine faith formation, more conscious participation in the liturgy, more courageous social action, and more loving outreach.

In most places, the Church is over-managed and under-led. To turn this around, we need clergy who are free to lead more and manage less. We need lay people to step up to manage more of the day-to-day operations so the clergy can be clergy and fulfill their pastoral ministries.

When the clergy step back, the lay people are more likely to step up. Pastors can be pastors. Deacons can

be deacons. The clergy can focus on ministry and not so much on administration. They can be more pastoral and less managerial. It's time for lay people to take more responsibility for the business side of parish life.

We also need lay people to lead. The beautiful thing about servant leadership – which is “leading like Jesus” – is that we can practice it with or without authority. Leading with authority is a challenge because of the temptation to rely excessively on the use of one's perceived authority. Leading without authority is a challenge because it relies on those in authority to provide the opportunity, support and feedback that makes leadership happen.

The purpose of this series is to improve the way we lead and manage so that we can become better disciples who draw closer to Jesus Christ. If the Church is to address its challenges, it will need more authentic leadership coming from multiple directions. We are all called to lead in the Church at some point and in some manner. The question is whether we can hear and heed that call.



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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



ICSC

RESTORE

*our*

# JOY

Psalms 51:14

## Join us in Orlando\*

September 12-15, 2021  
Hyatt Regency Orlando

*The Dream of Elijah*  
Philippe de Champaigne  
oil on canvas, 1655  
Musée de Tessenay, Le Mans, France

\*All Covid Safety  
Protocols Observed

SPECIAL  
Easter Discount!

## \$499

**CLICK HERE**  
**to register today!**

## Let's Share our Common Reality and Vision for the Future of our Church!

### Timely Conference Tracks Include:

- Stewardship: Now More Important Than Ever
- Enhancing Communications and Engagement After Covid
- Growing and Sustaining Parish Stewardship
- Transforming Catholic Philanthropy in the World of Covid
- Summit for Parish Administrators and Business Managers
- Clergy Forum



# ICSC 2021 Stewardship Conference to Focus on Evangelization and Engagement



In response to requests from parish and diocesan leaders from across the United States, the International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is focusing its efforts to emphasize evangelization, engagement and sustainable stewardship in its much anticipated 2021 conference.

Three specific formation tracks will be dedicated to these themes:

- Stewardship, Engagement and Evangelization
- Enhancing Parish Communication and Engagement After COVID
- Growing and Sustaining Parish Stewardship

The sessions and presenters within these tracks will offer resources to allow parishes to more robustly serve their mission while proactively responding to historic challenges that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even before the pandemic, parish leaders have understood that pastoral structures that served their mission well in the past needed to be renewed and aligned with current pastoral demands. Issues surrounding the pandemic have challenged parish leaders to think differently. The ICSC conference will provide resources for those who realize that the time is now to respond in faith to a new reality and to better equip parish communities for mission.

**This year's in-person conference is scheduled for September 12-15, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando in Orlando, Florida.**

## To Love as Jesus Loves: An Easter Reflection

*Excerpted from the 2021 book, **The Heart of the Mission: Simple Ways to Bring People to Jesus** by Cande de Leon, executive director for the Office of Mission Advancement, Diocese of Phoenix, published by Our Sunday Visitor. Cande will be a session presenter in the Stewardship, Engagement and Evangelization track at the 2021 ICSC Conference in Orlando, Florida.*

Jesus has given each baptized Catholic a mission: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). Our mission is to live this calling every day of our lives.

People are at the heart of the mission of the Church. Strengthening relationships, boldly growing engagement and connecting people to the mission are simple ways to bring people to Jesus. It is not complicated – we just need to bring people to Jesus.

God is always drawing closer to us, so we can rest assured that he is the one doing the hard work – not us! In order to bring people to Jesus, we must start with loving and caring for people one at a time. It has to come from a genuine desire to love and show people that they matter. After all, why would anyone listen to the Good News from us, if we haven't shown them God's love?

If we are all God's children, then we have a responsibility to help each other. We are meant to live in relationship, and to be the living presence of God in the world – to show his love to the people around us. This means treating people like family, not transactions. It's easy to do this with the people we enjoy being around. It's a lot harder to put into practice when we are talking about a coworker or acquaintance who drives us crazy. But like it or not, we are all called to this. For me this is a revolutionary idea: I am not better than anyone else. The world tries to separate us all the time by putting us into categories of race, gender or socioeconomic status. Those don't really matter.

We are all children of God. It is important for all of us to try to see the people in front of us and love them like Jesus does. I invite you to join me in that, to strive each day to see people as your brothers and sisters and to treat them accordingly.

**People are at the heart of the mission of the Church. Strengthening relationships, boldly growing engagement and connecting people to the mission are simple ways to bring people to Jesus.**





## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **Fifth Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 1/2, 2021**

In today's Gospel reading on "the vine and the branches," Jesus offers a quintessential stewardship statement: "Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing." The theme of this reading is "fruitfulness." We hear the expression "bear fruit" five times. And "bearing fruit" is not something that the branches can do by themselves. They are extensions of the vine, Jesus, and are pruned by the gardener, God the Father, who wants them to be fruitful and to be drawn into the unity of the Father and Son. Good stewards recognize that God's love, presence, gardening and pruning are gifts. Do our lives reflect a capacity to be fruitful? Do we believe that by hearing the Word of the Lord and responding, we not only produce "good fruit," but abide in the very life of God?

### **Sixth Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 8/9, 2021**

In today's Gospel, Jesus commands his disciples, whom he calls "friends," to love one another as he loves them. Jesus uses the word "love" as a verb or a noun nine times. He also employs the word "command" or "commandment" five times. His command to love one another is explicit. Those who understand the depth of Christ's love for us have reason to be joyful. We are called to be stewards of this loving friendship; to love one another as Jesus loves us. Do we give serious attention to what this love requires of us? What is the price of this friendship with the Lord? Are we willing to pay this price to keep Christ's friendship?

### **The Ascension of the Lord Thursday, May 13 or Weekend of May 15/16, 2021**

Before he ascended into heaven, Jesus instructed his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all of creation. In the first reading, after Jesus' ascent, the angels ask his disciples "Why do you stand here staring at the skies?" The angels want them to look around themselves and be assured that

Christ is working through them. The Ascension does not memorialize Christ leaving us. But instead, Christ working through us, his mystical body, his church. As stewards of this legacy, we too are called to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ in our words and actions; in how we live and how we treat others. Are we sharing the life of Christ with others in our day-to-day lives? In what ways do we see ourselves proclaiming the Gospel? In what ways can we do better?

### **Pentecost Sunday Weekend of May 22/23, 2021**

Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, the birth of the Church and the beginning of its mission in the world. Pentecost Sunday reminds us that our lives are filled with the Holy Spirit and that God has accomplished creative things in us through this gift. We have been entrusted with this great gift of the Holy Spirit. This great gift empowers us to be bold proclaimers of the Gospel in word and deed. It urges us to speak truth to power. It encourages us to use words and exhortations and even arguments that are meant to heal, show care and compassion and to reconcile. Now is a good time to ask: Are we being good stewards of this gift of the Holy Spirit? What creative things have we done to glorify God's accomplishments in us?

### **Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Weekend of May 29/30, 2021**

In today's Gospel and in the reading from the letter of St. Paul we hear of the gift of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In our devotional life we make the sign of the cross and recite the "Glory Be" as an expression of our faith as a Trinitarian people. But what does it mean for Christian stewards to accept in a practical way the experience of God in this three-fold gift? Is it not a call to share our own life in community, with compassion and love, and to work for healing, justice, peace and unity? Is it not an invitation to invite others into fellowship with us in the unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?