

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

July 2021 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for July

Gracious God,

You sent your Son
to proclaim the Good News,
inspire us in faith
and show us the way
to be good stewards
of Your abundant gifts .

In this month of July
dedicated to the
Most Precious Blood
of Jesus,
grant us the wisdom
to recognize
that through his gift
of the Eucharist
there is but one cup of
covenant and communion
with Christ and each other.

Through the Eucharist,
give us the courage to
be good stewards
of Christ's presence
to others in our words
and our deeds.

And through your Spirit
teach us to live,
no longer for ourselves,
but in Christ Jesus
who lives and reigns with You
and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Amen

Stewardship: The Path to Better Discipleship in Christ



This article is Part II of a three-part series on Christian stewardship by the Most Reverend Thomas Wenski, Archbishop of Miami, excerpted from his 2019 pastoral letter "Stewardship and the Theology of the Gift." Archbishop Wenski will preside at the opening Mass of the 59th annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council, Sunday, September 12, 2021.

To be a friend of Jesus calls us to "come out of ourselves." However, this is not a burden imposed upon us. To be a Christian is far from being a burden, it is a gift — and, to follow Christ, offering him in return our own gifts of time, talent and treasure, brings us joy, a joy that gives meaning and direction to our lives.

In that sense, stewardship is not all about money. But our money — and the way we use it and how we use our time and talents — is all about stewardship. To say that we are "stewards" is to say that we are not the "owners" of our time, talent or our treasure.



No matter how one might translate it, the bishops defined a Christian steward as "one who receives God's gifts gratefully and cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, sharing them in justice and love with others, returning them with increase to the Lord."

The only things we can rightly claim as our own are our sins. Everything else we have received from others. What we have, we have received freely from our parents, our families and from those who have mentored us and afforded us so many opportunities. Ultimately, all these gifts find their origin in God who is never outdone in generosity. But God does make us "managers" or "administrators" of what is his, to act on his behalf. God in his mercy still

Continued on page 2

calls us despite our sinfulness into his vineyard to work to multiply the gifts he has given us. (cf. Matthew 25:21)

The use of the word “stewardship” became popular in Catholic circles when the bishops of the United States wrote in 1992 a pastoral letter entitled, *Stewardship: a Disciple’s Response*. The term itself is often difficult to translate. For example, in Spanish, it is translated variously as “mayordomía,” “administración” or “co-responsabilidad.” No matter how one might translate it, the bishops defined a Christian steward as “one who receives God’s gifts gratefully and cherishes and tends them in a responsible and accountable manner, sharing them in justice and love with others, returning them with increase to the Lord.”

When I was a student at Sacred Heart School in Lake Worth, Florida, where I grew up, the sisters had us write JMJ on all our papers and homework assignments. JMJ stood for Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The sisters wanted us to understand that everything we do should be a prayer — the lifting up of our minds and hearts to God — even homework, and so: JMJ, Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Likewise, stewardship is born of and sustained by prayer.

The sisters also had us write AMDG — *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* — for the Greater Glory of God. They also wanted us to give our best effort, because you don’t give God much glory unless you give your very best.

Incumbent on each one of us, then, is the need to be better disciples by growing in our personal, living relationship with Christ, and the need to be better missionaries by leading by example our fellow brothers and sisters to a new experience of holiness and abundant life in Christ.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for July*

Saint Paul’s Friends and Fellow Missionaries: Saints Prisca and Aquila

Prisca and Aquila were a prominent married couple who were missionaries, established churches and played an active role in the evangelizing ministry of Saint Paul. They are mentioned six times in four different texts of the New Testament.

Prisca and Aquila were of Jewish heritage and two of the earliest known Christian converts who lived in Rome. They were forced to leave Italy for a short time because of Emperor Claudius’ edict in the year 49 C.E., prohibiting Jews from living in Rome.

Paul visited Prisca and Aquila in Corinth and discovered they were tentmakers like himself, so he stayed with them and they worked together (Acts 18:1-3). When Paul left Corinth, Prisca and Aquila left with him but stopped at Ephesus while he traveled on to Syria.

In Ephesus the couple gave catechetical instruction to Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria (Acts 18:18-19, 24-26). They returned to Rome when the expulsion was eventually lifted and Paul sent them greetings there, referring to them with great affection: “My greetings to Prisca and Aquila,



Prisca and Aquila were of Jewish heritage and two of the earliest known Christian converts who lived in Rome.

my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks to save my life; to them, thanks not only from me, but from all the churches among the gentiles ...” (Rom.16:3-4).

Paul then added: “...and my greeting to the church at their house” (Rom.16:4), a reminder that Christians in the New Testament era gathered for the Eucharistic celebration in private homes and not in separate church buildings.

At some point, the couple left Rome again and moved to Ephesus. When Paul wrote from there to the church at Corinth in the year 57, he included “many greetings” from Prisca and Aquila and from the church that met at their house (1 Cor. 16:19). Paul’s inclusion of them in his greetings implies that Prisca and Aquila were also involved in the establishment of that church along with Paul. And when Paul wrote to Timothy from prison, he sent Prisca and Aquila his greetings as well (2 Tim. 4:19).

The Roman Martyrology states that Prisca and Aquila died in Asia Minor, but some church historians believe the tradition that the couple were martyred in Rome, in part, because of the existence of the Church of St. Prisca on Aventine Hill, the southernmost of Rome’s seven hills. The church is believed by many archeologists to be the site of the house of Prisca and Aquila.

Their feast day is July 8.

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

59th Annual Conference

September 12-15, 2021 | Hyatt Regency Orlando | Florida

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THESE SPECIAL GUESTS...

*and more than 80 sessions to help us in our parishes,
foundations and dioceses!*



Sunday Plenary Speaker
Cardinal John Dew, D.D.
*Archbishop of Wellington,
New Zealand*



Tuesday Plenary Speaker
Laura Fanucci
*Author and award-winning columnist for
Catholic News Service, writer of nationally
syndicated monthly series, "Faith at Home."*



Sunday Presider and Homilist
Most Reverend Thomas Wenski
Archbishop of Miami, Florida



Wednesday "Sending Forth" Presenters
Tony Brandt and Christ Stewart
*Co-founders of the inspiring Catholic evangelization
ministry – Casting Nets*



Monday Plenary Speaker
Rev. Michael Renninger
*Renowned Homilist, Pastor
St. Mary's Catholic Church,
Richmond, Virginia*

Take advantage of the
SUPER EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT! | \$549

This special rate ends on June 30.

Click
HERE to
register

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

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

RESTORE
our **JOY**

Psalm 51:14



catholicstewardship.com | register@catholicstewardship.org



Involving Young People in Sacred Liturgy is Good Stewardship

Has your teen recently celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? Are you trying to persuade your college age young adult to go to Mass? Now that we are slowly returning to the Eucharistic celebration, isn't it time to get them more deeply involved in the Mass? It is no secret that one of the best ways for a young person to nurture a greater love for the Eucharist is by a more active participation in the liturgy.

Pastoral leaders have sought for many years to encourage greater participation by young people in the Mass and a national dialogue has recently been renewed on how to get teenagers more involved in the Church's celebration of the Eucharist.

Involvement by young people can include a number of liturgical activities, for example:

- Ushers
- Ministers of Hospitality
- Lectors/Readers
- Altar servers
- Cantors
- Musicians
- Choir members
- Leaders for Children's Liturgy of the Word

As good stewards of the faith life of teenagers and young adults, let's identify their gifts and invite them to a fuller participation at the table of the Lord. Get them involved. Make them feel as though they are welcome as mature, responsible stewards of the life of the parish family. They will be enriched by the experience, and so will the faith community.

Pastoral Leadership

This is the second 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 pastor concluded, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord." The people replied, "Thanks be to God."

The end of each Mass is a new beginning. As the people of God, we are welcomed at the beginning of each Mass to "come and see" (John 1:39 and John 1:46) as *disciples*,



Many people would
love to join a parish full
of joyful, lively enthusiasm
for Christ.

members and stewards. By the end of the liturgy, we are beckoned to "go and tell" (Matt 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 14:23) as *apostles*, leaders and evangelists.

The dismissal at the end of each Mass is a call to stewardship, evangelization and leadership. We are sent forth to love, serve

Continued from page 4

and evangelize the world. It is an invitation to live like disciples (who are “called forth”) and to lead like apostles (who are “sent forth”).

Many people would love to join a parish full of joyful, lively enthusiasm for Christ. Social neuroscience demonstrates that human beings long for a sense of *purpose* and *connectivity*. We want to know we are making a difference on something that matters. And we want to be connected to people who are making that difference.



The Church needs spiritual revitalization of the heart and minds of our people. A deeper sense of lay engagement and conscious participation.

If the purpose of the parish is to form disciples, we need leaders who can breathe new life into our parishes. Such leadership can emerge from anyone, anywhere. The Church needs leadership because we need “adaptive change”, that which cannot happen with an easy fix.

What kind of adaptive change? Spiritual revitalization of the heart and minds of our people. A deeper sense of lay engagement and conscious participation. Joyful celebrations of the liturgy. A warmer sense of hospitality. A burning passion to share the mission of Jesus. A clearer vision of the Kingdom of God. Dialogue about what matters most.

These are challenges in search of leadership. Challenges seek leaders. Leaders seek challenges. The Church needs servant leaders to take up these challenges.



Stewardship and Leisure Time

The number of travelers on the highways and in airports is a hopeful sign that those nightmarish months, filled with anxiety and stress, are over. Some business analysts suggest that Americans may have a tendency to want to “catch up” with the work they have not been able to accomplish these past 14-16 months. Those in the mental health fields argue, however, for extended periods of rest and relaxation, especially now in the summer months. They argue for longer respites from work and even trips that take us away from cell phone coverage, internet and Zoom meetings.

Maybe we are not in a position to take much time off, but all of us can resonate with the need to really “get away” from work or the daily grind or the constant demands of social media. Even the Gospels suggest that good stewardship of our bodies, minds and souls obliges us to get away on a regular basis (see Luke 5:16).

As Christian stewards, we aren’t just encouraged but obligated to consider how we approach our stewardship of leisure time. Stewards are aware of their need to be busy doing God’s work, but often forget that down time is equally important to spiritual growth. Leisure time, whether it’s our evenings, our weekends, or our vacation, provides spiritual, physical, mental and emotional recharging. Leisure is necessary for human wholeness. Leisure reconnects us to the wider mysteries of our world and our God. It helps us daydream, imagine, pray. It refreshes our spirit.

Today, connectivity has become almost an obsession. People check their emails, their messages and calls with alarming repetitiveness. Accidents, both pedestrian and automobile, happen because people can’t put down their phones. Employers expect their workers to be available for evening emails. The lines between work and free time increasingly blur, as do the lines between solitude and always being present “online.” We can’t imagine putting aside screens for a two-week vacation. But we must give ourselves time to renew and recharge, not just two weeks of the year, but each day and each week.

July offers an opportunity to reconnect with the rhythms of God and nature. We need to take time off from screens and phones, and practice giving undivided attention to the things before us. When we pray, we commit time and silence. When we enjoy time with our friends and family, we practice being totally present. When we sit on the patio or at the beach, we give ourselves wholly to the wind or the waves. Be a good steward of your body, mind and soul. Don’t overschedule your time off. Listen to the quiet whisper of God encouraging you to relax.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 3/4, 2021

Today's Gospel reveals Jesus being amazed that the people in his hometown of Nazareth do not accept his teaching and ministry; he is amazed at their lack of faith (Mk 6:6). Good stewards recognize and participate in Christ's teaching, reconciling and healing presence in their community. Are we good stewards of our family of faith? Do we value and support the ministries that take place in Christ's name? Are we attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our parish and encourage those who work to enhance our life of faith?

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 10/11, 2021

In his Letter to the Ephesians, Saint Paul teaches that God, the Father, has established a divine plan to bring all of creation to Christ and that He has blessed us with an abundance of divine gifts to help implement that plan. Christian stewards know what their gifts are and remain committed to using them in the service of the Lord. Do we know what our gifts are? Do we believe that God has given us these gifts? Are we committed to using our gifts to serve the Lord?

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 17/18, 2021

The Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that Christ is creating a new world order: one that brings about relationships based on love, peace, reconciliation, hope and unity. As a Eucharistic community, we are stewards of Christ's new creation. How are we promoting peace and reconciliation? How are we showing love for our neighbors? What are we doing to encourage unity and understanding among those with whom we gather around the Lord's Table each week?

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 24/25, 2021

The story of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes is a familiar one, and has many lessons, not least of which is how our willingness to share who we are and what we have. Exercising good stewardship serves to release God's power and bountifulness on the world and its people. Do we realize that there is enough for all if we are willing to share? Are we aware that God is at work when we share our time, our money and our other resources in His name?