

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

## CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2022 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER  
for May

Heavenly Father,

Your Son ascended in great triumph  
to sit at your right hand.

You sent your Spirit  
to watch over us, guide us  
and teach us to be better stewards  
of your abundant gifts.

May this Spirit of wisdom  
make us better stewards of our  
Easter promises.

May your Spirit increase our awareness  
of the dignity of every human life,  
and show us the way to be better  
stewards of our neighbor.

And through your Spirit,  
may we be inspired every day  
to live in accordance with the Gospel,  
and to give witness to our risen Lord.

We ask this through Jesus Christ,  
Your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
God forever and ever.

Amen.



## Stewards of the Easter Season

**Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!**

If you're thinking this greeting comes a little late, since Easter Sunday was April 17, think again. As Catholic Christians, we celebrate the Easter season for seven weeks, until the fires of Pentecost once again inflame our hearts on June 5.

Indeed, how could we not continue to celebrate this event that has changed everything for us?

It's easy to slip into a cultural way of thinking about our great feasts. Many people have the Christmas tree taken down at the end of New Year's Day, rather than waiting for Epiphany. Likewise, most of us have long ago put the Easter decorations away.



If Christ is truly risen – an astounding and life-altering belief – then this Easter time brings immense joy and a continuing desire to know the Risen Lord.

But the Christian steward is aware of the beauty and meaning of the seasons in the liturgical calendar.

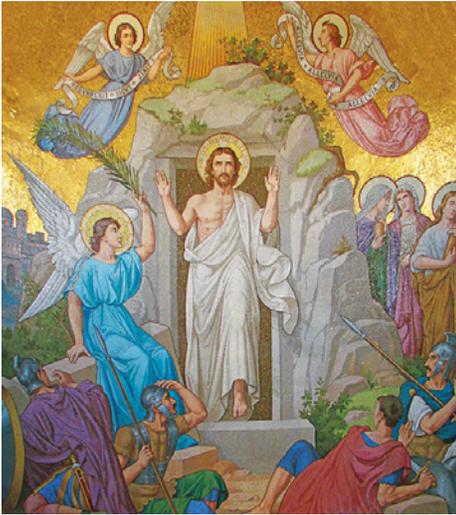
The Easter season remains a special time for recommitment to the Lord. One word for this period is "mystagogia," and those who were newly baptized at the Great Easter Vigil are especially familiar with this term. It literally means that we delve more deeply into the mystery of our faith. But exploring this mystery is not just an endeavor for new Christians. As we prepare for Pentecost, we prayerfully examine what

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the Resurrection means in our own lives.

For Christian stewards, it's a time to reevaluate how faith in the Risen Lord informs every aspect of our lives – how we labor, how we play, the way we pray, how we allocate our resources, where we spend our time, how we love, how we extend our



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compassion to others. If Christ is truly risen – an astounding and life-altering belief – then this Easter time brings immense joy and a continuing desire to know the Risen Lord.

The Scripture readings of the season are especially helpful. We hear once again the stories of the appearances of Jesus to his friends; how often they failed, initially, to recognize him in his glory. The Acts of the Apostles tell us of the struggles and the excitement of the new community of believers.

We spent forty days in the penitential season of Lent. Now, we are embarked on fifty days of joyous celebration. Let us experience this joy throughout the Easter season, so that when we celebrate Pentecost, we may truly find our hearts on fire with the Holy Spirit.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*



### Saint Luis Batiz Saenz

Saint Luis Batiz Saenz was a Mexican Catholic priest who suffered martyrdom at the beginning of the Mexican uprising against the anti-Catholic regime of Plutarco Elías Calles.

Luis was born in 1870 in San Miguel del Mezquital, Zacatecas, then in the Archdiocese of Durango. He was said to have been a devout, prayerful, young boy. At age 12 he entered a minor seminary in the archdiocese. He continued his path to the priesthood and was ordained on January 1, 1894. Soon thereafter, Father Luis gained popularity as a confessor and spiritual adviser and accepted an appointment to be the spiritual director of the seminary where he studied. He also had assignments as a parish priest and became pastor of San Pedro parish in Chalchihuites, Zacatecas.

Father Luis was a member of the Knights of Columbus Council 2367 and employed its organizational model to evangelize and call parishioners of all ages to service in the parish and the community. He also established Catholic elementary schools and technical training programs to encourage skill development among the local populace.

Promoting a love for the Eucharist was said to be Father Luis' first pastoral priority, however, and he spent a great deal of his time integrating the theology of the Eucharist in his religious education of children and his adult faith formation classes. He encouraged adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.

In 1926, Mexican president Plutarco Elías Calles, an atheist who was determined to eradicate Catholicism from Mexico, enacted several laws to enforce the anti-Catholic articles of the 1917 Mexican Constitution. He severely restricted the activities of the Church and especially its priests. One such law prohibited public displays of piety and devotion. Another outlawed the wearing of clerical apparel by priests outside of church buildings.

### Promoting a love for the Eucharist was said to be Father Luis' first pastoral priority.

On August 14, in the Zacatecas town of Chalchihuites, government agents arrested Father Luis on suspicion of violating the "Calles Laws," took him to an isolated spot and shot him to death along with three young men belonging to the Mexican Association of Catholic Youths. The murders were among numerous assassinations that ignited reprisals and counter reprisals. The resulting "Cristeros War" would exact a heavy toll on Mexico's priests, where approximately 4,000 of them were either executed, murdered or expelled from the country. By 1934 there were less than 350 priests in all of Mexico.

In the Jubilee year of 2000, Saint John Paul II canonized Father Luis Batiz Saenz along with 24 other Mexicans, mostly priests, who suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Mexican federal authorities during the Cristeros War.

May 25 is the feast day of Saint Luis Batiz Saenz.



60 YEARS

THE 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
*Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

Anaheim, California  
October 2-5, 2022

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Second Vatican Council | 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Catholic Stewardship Council  
30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops' pastoral letter *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

EASTER DISCOUNT! \$499



Join ICSC special guest, Most Rev. José H. Gomez, archbishop of Los Angeles and president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as he opens the 60th anniversary ICSC conference.

**CLICK HERE  
TO REGISTER  
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Offer good through  
June 5, 2022.



## Gratitude for Those Who Revealed the Paschal Mystery During Holy Week

Holy Week at most Catholic parishes is nothing short of awe-inspiring; from the Palm Sunday celebration of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem to the resurrection of our Lord from the tomb on Easter Sunday. There may be other churches and cathedrals around the world that have conducted more elaborate or extravagant Holy Week liturgies, but perhaps nowhere will one find the Paschal Mystery revealed with more loving devotion than in your own parish, especially during the sacred Triduum. Surely, we have many people to thank for giving us this extraordinary experience.

The Holy Week liturgies helped us see God's love for the world in the death and resurrection of his Son. On Holy Thursday perhaps we saw Jesus in our pastor washing feet, giving us an example of what it means to be good stewards of our sisters and brothers. Could this washing ritual inspire us to think more prayerfully about what we should be doing every day for one another since our Lord came to serve and not be served? On Good Friday we participated solemnly as the Passion story was retold according to the Gospel of John. We then revered the cross of Christ, recognizing that we are expressing only a fraction of the love he poured out for us.

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In the dark before Easter morning, with candles lit from the great Paschal candle, our hearts were also being set on fire by the work of the Holy Spirit. Bells ringing, songs of praise and sprinkling of Easter baptismal waters, all served to reveal the splendor of Easter. Perhaps the celebration of Christ's resurrection was made even more joyous by new members of the parish coming forward to make their sacramental initiation into the Church. The Easter Sunday Masses would continue the celebration of the night before. Indeed, maybe one could even have made an authentic religious pilgrimage to your parish during Holy Week.

To your pastor and other clergy, director of liturgy or worship, parish pastoral team and leaders, choir, lectors, servers and all those who gave this gift of the Paschal Mystery and made the Holy Week experience for your parish community a meaningful and substantive encounter with the risen Lord, be sure and extend a spirit-filled "Thank you!"

## Mother's Day: A Stewardship Reflection

May 8 is Mother's Day and what theme is more universal than motherhood? We Catholics prize that nurturing relationship so highly that we call our Church, "Holy Mother," and we venerate Mary, the mother of Jesus, for her pivotal role in the life of our Lord and savior.

Yet, Mother's Day can bring with it a plethora of emotion and memories. Any mother can attest to the difficulty and challenge of the task of parenting. And mothers come in all shapes and sizes. Some mothers are birth mothers, some are adoptive. Some mothers are the grandmas or aunts who raised us. Some mothers left us far too soon. Some mothers are the people we rebelled against; some mothers are the women we idolized. Most often, our mothers were probably both. It's a complex relationship, this parenting.

During the month of May, we honor and remember not just our own moms, but Mary, the Mother of God. We see her as the great symbol of motherhood and as our role model. Let us ask Mary's intercession, so that in our endeavors to be good stewards and to raise good stewards, to nurture in the faith those entrusted to us, she might come to our assistance and guide us with her motherly understanding. And on Mother's Day, we ask Mary to bless all mothers, especially our own.





# Sharing the Lord's Work Through Your Diocesan Appeal

Many diocesan annual appeals are now in full swing, and it is important to remember that our generosity toward the ministries of our local bishop offer us a special opportunity to answer the Lord's call in ways we could never think of doing on our own. Responding to our bishops' requests for supporting these diocesan ministries renews our personal commitment to more fully participate as good stewards in Christ's mission for the Church. We are, indeed, the Body of Christ, and through our support of diocesan-funded ministries, programs and services, we are able to impact the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in our diocese and beyond day-by-day.

Selected areas where your gifts may be at work in your own diocesan community:

## **PRIESTLY VOCATIONS**

- Vocation discernment retreats
- Financial support for seminarians
- Vocations literature and prayer cards

## **CLERGY**

- Convocation for Priests and Permanent Deacons
- Pastoral Care of Priests
- Pastoral Care of Permanent Deacons
- Ongoing education for clergy

## **STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION**

- Parish stewardship commissions and committees
- Parish stewardship formation
- Stewardship communications
- Stewardship resources

## **EVANGELIZATION, CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS**

- Catechetical Programming and Formation
- Catholic Schools
- Evangelization
  - Men's Ministry
  - Women's Ministry
- Hispanic Ministries
- Health, Athletics, Physical Education and Safety



- Marriage and Family Life
- Natural Family Planning programs
- Pro-Life activities
- RCIA
- Youth Ministries
- Young Adults and Campus Ministries

## **PARISH AND SPECIAL PASTORAL SERVICES**

- Christian Service and Health Care Ministries
  - Ministry to the Hearing Impaired
  - Disabilities Concerns
  - Hospital Chaplaincy Programs
  - Ministry to the Sick and Caregivers
  - Parish Nurse Program
- Ecumenical / Interfaith programs
- Pastoral Planning & Leadership Services
  - Lay leadership training
  - Parish clustering, merging, and closing transitions
  - Parish Pastoral Councils and



- Commissions
- Parish planning
- Worship
  - Formation for Choirs, cantors, and choir directors
  - Liturgical ministers
  - Liturgical consultation for church buildings/renovations
  - Liturgical resources and research
- Music Ministries
- Rite of Election



YEARS

# THE 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

## *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*

*It's Our Anniversary!* by Mary Ann Otto, Minister of Missionary Discipleship,  
St. Mary Parish, Appleton, Wisconsin

Happy Anniversary! It's a simple phrase that seems to be spoken so easily yet is so jam packed with meaning, memories and milestones. Truly, it is only if we pause for a moment that we can actually capture the full impact of this expression.

When we reflect upon an anniversary of any kind, we realize they can be notorious for reminding us of who and what came before us, of our struggles and successes as well as our dreams and visions. Maybe even more importantly, how all of it has shaped our identity; who we are in this moment in time.

As we say "yes" to attending the ICSC Stewardship Conference in Anaheim October 2-5, 2022, we realize there have been generations who courageously answered the call of the Spirit to give their time and share their gifts. Consider that for a moment. They brought us to this Stewardship Conference in this moment in time.

**In light of this, we say:**

### **Happy 60th Anniversary, Second Vatican Council!**

We are grateful for all those who gathered at the Vatican in 1962 to engage in spirited conversations about our Church's future. We will come to the 2022 ICSC Conference fully living out so many benefits of Vatican II but especially with emphasis on the call of the laity. Though we may take it for granted 60 years later, we are lay leaders in our Church called to promote Stewardship as a way of life because of this Spirit-filled, epic event. The voices of Vatican II continue to invite through the decades.

### **Happy 30th Anniversary, USCCB Pastoral Letter – Stewardship: A Disciple's Response!**

For those of us who have used this document, we recognize the ongoing truth and power in so many teachings but especially in the description of what a steward does with the blessings given. Paraphrased, it states, a steward receives gratefully, nurtures responsibly, shares generously, and returns abundantly to God. Our bishops were right on time in giving us a tool to guide which would shape generations.

So it is with an "Anniversary Spirit," we invite you to attend the 2022 ICSC Conference! Let's come together in gratitude for those who came before and pray together that the Spirit will bless us with what we need to be the stewardship leaders in our day! Happy Anniversary!

### **Happy 60th Anniversary, International Catholic Stewardship Council!**

There is no doubt that following Vatican II, hearts were full and people were inspired to gather, pray, dream and act upon many issues in our Church. How blessed are we that God placed on the hearts of the builders of the ICSC sixty years ago the importance of stewardship as a spirituality and call to holiness! Our organization focuses on formation, practical application and relationships and continues to look for ways to bring the stewardship message to new generations in an ever changing world. We are grateful for all those who once stood where we stand now.

# A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

## **Third Sunday of Easter**

**Weekend of April 30/ May 1, 2022**

This weekend's Gospel reading from John enjoys a number of themes not least of which has to do with hearing Christ's call to live differently but returning to our "comfort zones." Even after seeing the risen Lord and receiving his blessing and missionary charge, his disciples go back to what they were doing before Jesus first called them. Instead of continuing Jesus' ministry, they return to the life they knew. When faced with the choice between embarking on a new way of life or staying where life is familiar and comfortable, they chose the latter. Good stewards know that Christ has called them to open their hearts and live in a different way. How often do we retreat from the Lord's call so that we may remain with what is comfortable and familiar?

## **Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**Weekend of May 7/8, 2022**

Jesus, the "Good Shepherd," makes a promise in today's Gospel to those who hear his voice and follow him. He promises them eternal life. Amidst all the other voices that clamor for attention in their daily lives, the voices that make demands, give advice, seek to persuade or like to gossip, Good stewards listen for the Good Shepherd's voice. The other voices are legion and we do not always recognize how contrary they are to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Good stewards know that it takes a compassionate heart, a habit of prayer, a hunger for the Eucharist and a love of neighbor for them to truly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. What might we do in our daily lives to prepare us to more authentically hear the voice of the Good Shepherd?

## **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**Weekend of May 14/15, 2022**

In today's Gospel Jesus makes a bold and clear statement to his disciples. "I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We are called to love others as a sign of our discipleship in Jesus Christ. That includes even those "others" we might prefer to forget. We are so often tempted to draw lines between those who we will love and those who we consider not worthy of our love. This week take time to reflect on Jesus' love command. How often do we heed Jesus' love command? What change in our lives must take place in order for us to obey this command?

## **Sixth Sunday of Easter**

**Weekend of May 21/22, 2022**

In today's Gospel we witness the last evening Jesus spends with his disciples before his death. He has already made it clear that his followers will show their love for him by serving others. To live that kind of love, they will need the active presence of God in their midst. Jesus tells his disciples that he and his Father will come and make their home with them. He also tells them that the Holy Spirit will be among them to teach them and remind them of all that Jesus had taught. Good stewards recognize that God is in their midst and that the Holy Spirit is guiding them. How often do we acknowledge God's presence in our lives? How often do we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us?

## **Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord**

**May 26 or Weekend of May 28/29 2022**

Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, a feast which, in part, celebrates the confidence he placed in his close followers to continue his ministry. In the Gospel reading Jesus reminds his followers of the purpose of his mission, and commissions them to continue his work by proclaiming his word and by living courageously that which they preached. He also promises them the Holy Spirit who he said would strengthen them for the task ahead. As stewards of Jesus' life and ministry, a good question for us to reflect on this week might be this: Has Christ's confidence in the quality of our own witness been well placed?

## **Seventh Sunday of Easter**

**Weekend of May 28/ 29 2022**

*(For those dioceses that celebrate the Ascension of the Lord on Thursday, May 26 and the Seventh Sunday of Easter this weekend)*

In today's first reading we hear the story of Saint Stephen, proclaiming God's word in the "public square" and suffering martyrdom by being stoned to death. At the scene were those who supported Stephen, those who became jealous and angry, and those who simply stood by and did nothing. Sometimes it seems like those who exercise good stewardship of the Gospel embark on a terribly lonely journey, with a destination that looks rather ominous. It certainly was for Stephen. But he lived and died with an incredible faith. Do we mock those who proclaim God's word? Do we turn a blind eye to those suffering persecution today? Or do we have the courage to preach the Gospel with our lives?