

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

June 2022 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for June

Dear Lord,

Your presence at the Eucharistic Table is truly the source and summit of our faith.

And in the breaking of the bread your presence is meant to impel us to reach beyond our immediate gathering and unify us with the larger gathering of our sisters and brothers around the globe.

If we can recognize you in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, we must also be able to recognize you among those who hunger and suffer in the world.

But if our faith in your presence under the appearance of bread and wine does not translate into action, we are still unbelievers.

Deepen our faith, make us good stewards of your Eucharistic presence and help us to bear fruit in the lives of those we encounter, especially those most in need of your love and compassion.

Amen.



From Easter to Pentecost: A Stewardship Question



For those immersed in the secular world, Easter is long over. The pastel bunnies, the chocolate eggs, the color-splashed jelly beans which appeared in the marketplace so temptingly just as Christians were beginning the fasting of Lent, have long been swept from the store shelves to be replaced in anticipation of the next marketable holiday. For the Christian steward, how backward this all seems. Yes, we believe that the Paschal mystery and the life-changing events of Easter are not over. They are not an end but a triumphal beginning, and they have altered us in a quite radical way.

The mystery and miracle of Easter challenge us to live as different people, as people of the Resurrection. What does this mean? For those new Catholics who participated in the Rite

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of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), a period of mystagogy helps to understand this mystery. Indeed, this ancient Greek word actually means “to lead through the mysteries.” During mystagogia, many parishes introduce their new members to service in a quite practical way. Here are the ministries of the parish; here are the charities we support; here are the needs of our community and our congregation. How do you choose to live out your faith in the Resurrection in a quite tangible and

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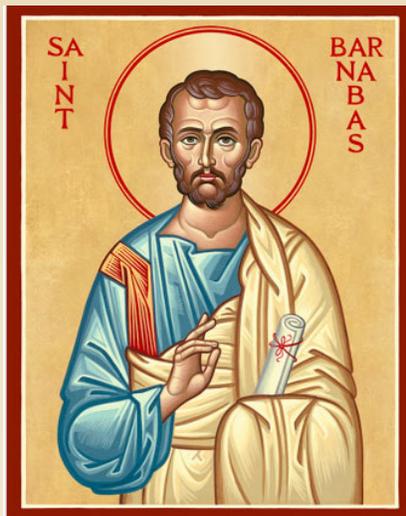
real way? How do your gifts fit into our needs? Essentially, however, this is a question that the Easter season calls forth in all Christian stewards not just our newest members.

We have lived through Lent and the Paschal mysteries, all the while trying to deepen a relationship with the person of Christ. It's as simple, yet as amazing and complex as that. The deeper the relationship grows, the more we become rooted in it,



the more this relationship with Christ comes to dominate our lives. We no longer compartmentalize Jesus, we hold him at our center. And the mysteries lead us to the fundamental question at the heart of all Christian stewardship, the question that Easter compels us to ask: How do I steward my resources – my time, my money, my abilities and gifts, my very life – so that they are in service to the Kingdom of God? It's not a part-time question. It's not a seasonal question that's swept off the shelf periodically. It's the basic question which the Easter season demands of us: Jesus, how do you want me to serve you? From Easter to Pentecost, this is an important stewardship question.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT for June | Saint Barnabas



Barnabas comes as close as anyone outside the twelve apostles to being considered an apostle. He is memorialized, in part, for his amazing evangelizing ministry. He was a Jew from Cyprus named Joseph but the apostles affectionately nicknamed him "Barnabas," which means "son of encouragement." When he became a follower of Jesus he sold some of his property and donated the proceeds to the apostles (Acts 4:36-37).

Most of what we know about Barnabas is found in the *Acts of the Apostles*. He befriends Saul (Paul), brings him to the apostles and a very suspicious

Jewish community in Jerusalem, and describes for them how on the road Paul had seen the Lord and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus (Acts 9:27).

When a Christian community begins to form in Antioch, Syria, Barnabas is sent as the official emissary of the church of Jerusalem to catechize its members. Barnabas and Paul taught there for a year, after which they took collections back to Jerusalem. Later Barnabas and Paul, now seen as charismatic leaders, are sent by the Antioch community to preach to the Gentiles where they enjoyed such enormous success that the people even wanted to offer sacrifice to them as gods.

Even after disagreements caused Paul and Barnabas to part ways for a time, Paul continued to use Barnabas as an example of apostolic behavior (1 Cor. 9:6).

Barnabas and Paul would attend the assembly in Jerusalem that settled the question of circumcision for Gentile converts (Acts 15; Gal. 2:1-10). Barnabas supported the Gentile Christians who did not see why they should have to be circumcised and observe Jewish dietary laws. The council decided in their favor. When Paul stood up to Peter for not eating with Gentiles for fear of his Jewish friends, he wrote that "even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy" (see Galatians 2:1-13). And even after disagreements caused Paul and Barnabas to part ways for a time, Paul continued to use Barnabas as an example of apostolic behavior (1 Cor. 9:6).

Barnabas is the patron saint of Cyprus. It was there that he established its first Christian community. It was also there, in the Greco-Roman city of Salamis that, according to tradition, he was stoned to death around the year 60. His remains were taken to Constantinople, where a church was built in his honor.

Saint Barnabas is heralded as having a single-minded devotion to Jesus Christ. In Acts 11:24, it is written that he was a man "filled with the Holy Spirit and faith" whose ministry insured that "large numbers were added to the Lord."

Jesus is the Treasure We Seek

by Leisa Anslinger

Stewardship leaders know that forming people to share their many gifts includes stewardship of financial and material resources. Treasure. We cannot run away from this dimension of the stewardship way of life, and in fact, it is a necessary component of comprehensive stewardship formation. The U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, captures this poignantly: "But a person can say no to Christ. Consider the wealthy and good young man who approaches Jesus asking how to lead an even better life. Sell your goods, Jesus tells him; give to the poor, and follow me. 'When the young man heard this statement, he went away sad, for he had many possessions' (Mt 19:22).



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Teaching people to be good stewards of their money and possessions is a great gift to them and to our faith communities. When our people develop the ability to separate wants from needs, to see money as a blessing, and to understand that their giving is an expression of their faith and trust in God, they benefit, as does the parish and diocese. Of course, many immediately equate the word "stewardship" with requests for financial giving. Here, we draw on the wisdom of the pastoral letter. Immediately following the reference to attachment to possessions, we are asked to reflect again on Christ's call: "Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ leads naturally to the practice of stewardship. These linked realities, discipleship and stewardship, then make up the fabric of a Christian life in which each day is lived in an intimate, personal relationship with the Lord" (Stewardship, p. 14).

Stewardship as a spiritual way of life is, in this regard, very incarnational. We recognize that our temporal lives, including the ways in which we use money and possessions, is an expression of our spiritual life. It is not uncommon for people to say, "Father always talks about money." We know this is not precisely true. Father does sometimes talk about money, because Jesus did! Jesus talked about money because he knew that the ways in which people steward their treasure is, in fact, a barometer of their spiritual lives. It is a sign of what they treasure. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," (Luke 12:34). Jesus is the treasure we seek, and stewardship forms our hearts in this search.



Wanted: Positive Male Role Models

Father's Day reminds us that fathers are a tremendous source of love, strength and protection for a child. Notwithstanding the faithful and heroic efforts of single moms bringing up children in today's society, children still need to be around Christian men who are positive role models; men who are actively involved in their life of faith, possess spiritual passion, and are faithful fathers and husbands. Undoubtedly, parishes need more men to be involved in the spiritual development of young people.

Males bring a unique contribution that cannot be successfully substituted by females. Only men can serve as male role models and communicate the model of God as a loving father to children.

In today's society, for a number of reasons, many children grow up in single-parent homes, nurtured by their mothers. The parish or school may be the only place where these children have an opportunity to interact with men who model the loving, caring, and nurturing values of Christian manhood. Children can benefit from having a positive and responsible male role model in their lives.

It is said of young males that they are naturally more attentive to men when being taught good manners

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and respect for others. Men are generally better able to get young males unhooked from video games and involved in athletic competitions and outdoor activities so they can experience a wider world, and do things that are physically demanding; thus realizing a host of virtues. Adolescent males appear to develop emotional literacy, social skills, and Christian values more readily from men. And the presence of a Christian man helps reduce the possibility of a young male becoming disaffected, socially isolated, and more prone to embracing at-risk behaviors.

Of course, much of the above can be said for the importance of men in the lives of young women as well. But men can offer a unique Christian



witness to young women in a culture that is so focused on young females as sex objects. It is important for girls to experience positive male role models; Christian men who see young women as children of God and are interested in what they say, think and feel as they grow in their spiritual lives.

Young people need both male and female role models. But adult males are fewer to be found. Let Father's Day remind us to find ways to connect with fathers and invite other positive male role models into the faith formation of our young people. Let's encourage men to get more involved in the parish as mentors, tutors, catechists and other ministries. Let's help young people see first-hand how Christian men follow Jesus Christ and live as his disciples in today's world.

Hospitality at Mass: A Key to Good Stewardship



For many individuals and families alike, summer means travel. And summer travel may mean new visitors to our parish for weekend liturgies. How we greet and provide hospitality for our guests says a lot about our practice of good stewardship.

Providing hospitality to strangers is a hallmark of Christian stewardship. In the Gospel of Matthew good stewards were commended for their hospitality: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35). Saint Benedict directed his followers to receive guests and travelers as if they were Christ. Extending hospitality is especially important when it comes to welcoming visitors who may be attending Mass at our parish for the first time.

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There is a lot of anecdotal evidence suggesting that the ability of a first-time visitor to have a meaningful experience of Christ in the liturgy is directly impacted by the warmth of the welcome extended by the local worshipping community. When people say hello, the worship experience is enhanced. A warm welcome is part of evangelization, work necessary in a church's mission to help people discover or renew their faith in Christ.

How do we treat the unknown person who walks by us in church, or who sits next to us at Mass? Do we ignore them? Talk around them? Look at them and say nothing? Do we take the initiative to greet them, smile, extend a warm handshake?

Remember, we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Our actions and reactions toward visitors at Mass communicate who we are and who we represent. Let us take time to welcome visitors to our parish this summer. Welcoming gestures, however small, will not only have a positive impact on visitors, they will make us more hospitable ambassadors of Christ.



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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Pentecost Sunday Weekend of June 4/5, 2022

In today's first reading we encounter the Holy Spirit who at Pentecost came rushing in over Jesus' followers like a powerful wind. It must have been a frightening experience for them. But their great acts of prophetic witness began when the Spirit drew them out of their "comfort zones." Jesus said the Holy Spirit, like the wind, blows where it will; into the lives of good stewards, empowering them to perform wondrous acts of healing, reconciliation and evangelization; encouraging them to proclaim the Gospel with boldness and confidence. All of that is a little beyond the comfort zone where most of us live our lives. This week, reflect on how the Holy Spirit may be calling you out of your personal comfort zone.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Weekend of June 11/12, 2022

In today's Gospel Jesus talks about life with his Father and the Spirit. He tells his disciples that what belongs to the Father belongs to him, and that the Spirit will take from what is his and give it to them. Jesus helps us understand that the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit is one of perfect sharing and loving generosity. This shared life is the foundation for what we now understand as part of living life in the Trinity. The abundant generosity of those who are good stewards of the gifts entrusted to them give us a glimpse into the love of the Triune God. Does the extent of our generosity give others a glimpse of God's life within us?

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Weekend of June 18/19, 2022

From the rich Eucharistic themes to be drawn from today's second reading, one stewardship theme stands out: The Eucharist is Christ's gift to us. Good stewards are grateful for this gift and realize that no matter their station in life, they are welcome to come to the table and receive the body and blood of Christ. If Jesus could break bread with his betrayer, Judas, his denier, Peter, and the other ten who deserted him, then he will welcome us. Do we truly appreciate what a tremendous gift it is to approach the Lord's table? Do we realize that the Holy Spirit means to transform us by the gift of Christ's body and blood?

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 25/26, 2022

Today's Gospel reveals to us the beginning of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. We will journey with Jesus for many Sundays to come, and along the way he will teach us about the demands of discipleship. His instructions may seem harsh and unreasonable to our ears. His response to legitimate requests to postpone the journey reminds us that there are always justifiable excuses to defer the journey or put off the responsibilities of discipleship. Other important matters compete for our attention. Some of us must make heart-wrenching choices, but there is urgency about Jesus' mission to bring forth God's kingdom. His demand is that we proclaim the Kingdom of God now. Is this our first priority, or do we have other priorities?