

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

August 2022 • e-Bulletin

**A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER**
for August

Lord Jesus Christ,

As we begin to shift our thoughts from summer schedules to the anticipated demands of autumn, teach us to recognize you, and help us follow you amidst our busy lives.

Open the Scriptures to us... that we may know you, see you, hear you – in the voices of friends and family, in the ministries of our parish, in the proclamation of the Word, and in the Breaking of the Bread.

Teach us to be good stewards, that we may use your gifts wisely and care for all those you place in our path.

Encourage us when we are overwhelmed. Strengthen us when we are frightened. Challenge us when we are complacent.

Help us make our August transition a time of spiritual renewal, hope and action: to proclaim the Gospel in our words and in our deeds.

Amen.

Does Your Parish Have an Evangelization Plan for Young Adults?

Few issues resonate more with Catholics today than the evangelization of the young Church. How is your parish prepared to reach out to young adults and respond to their pastoral needs? This vital question will be explored at the 2022 International Catholic Stewardship Council's conference in Anaheim, California, from October 2 to 5. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), captured the importance of the young in sharing the Good News: "How beautiful it is to see that young people are 'street preachers,' joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth! ... Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope."



Yet, as Christian stewards, we are concerned about how to engage young adults, who often see the Church with cynicism and disappointment. How can we bring forth from them the enthusiasm and devotion of which Pope Francis speaks? How do we involve them and support them pastorally so that our pews – and our street corners – are filled with young adults committed to Jesus?

History shows us that young adults are inspired by Catholic leaders who step forward in social justice causes and in service to the poor. Some parishes are finding that an effective way to reach unchurched young adults is to give them the opportunity to work with young Catholics who are committed to work in service and justice projects. Relationship building is key to evangelizing young adults. There is a renewed interest in Scripture studies among young adults both inside and outside of the Church. How can a parish committed to studying Scripture in an engaging and transformative way help to demonstrate to young adults the relevance of the Gospel to modern life? At this year's ICSC conference, a host of inspirational speakers will address topics related to evangelizing young adults in your parish today. To explore these important questions, join us in October at the annual ICSC conference in Anaheim.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for August*

Saint Clare of Assisi

Clare of Assisi was a close friend of Saint Francis of Assisi and the foundress of the Poor Clares. She was born in Assisi in 1194 and at age 18 was so moved by the Lenten sermons of Francis that she renounced all of her possessions and entered a convent, much to the dissatisfaction of her family and friends, who tried very hard to dissuade her and bring her home. She was formed in the religious life at Benedictine monasteries and then accepted Francis' offer of a small house for herself and her companions adjacent to the church of San Damiano in Assisi. At age 21, she was appointed by Francis to lead the community, much against her will. She would lead the community for the next forty years and would never leave the San Damiano convent. The community would eventually include her mother and two sisters.



Clare served the sick and washed the feet of the begging nuns. She was devoted to a life of prayer and celebration of the Eucharist.

The way of life in the new community was marked by poverty and austerity, and sustained itself entirely from charitable contributions. The Poor Clares observed almost complete silence unless spoken to or in order to perform a work of charity. They went barefoot, slept on the ground and ate no meat. In later years, Clare urged her nuns to moderate their own austerities

and offer Christ "reasonable service and sacrifice seasoned with the salt of prudence." The greatest emphasis, of course, was on gospel poverty. They owned no property.

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Clare sought to imitate Francis' virtues and way of life so much so that she was sometimes called "another Francis." She played a significant role in encouraging and aiding Francis, whom she saw as a spiritual father figure. She took care of him during his final illness.

From the time Francis died in 1226 until her own death 27 years later, Clare suffered various illnesses and was often bedridden. All the while, she lived a simple but dedicated religious life, performing such menial tasks as sewing altar linens for local parishes. Twice when the town of Assisi was under attack, Clare prayed before the Blessed Sacrament and the armies were said to have ended their siege and fled.

Clare's nuns soon spread to other countries in Europe, including Spain, Italy, Germany, France and England. Today, they are also established in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. She passed away on August 11, 1253 and was canonized two years later. Her feast day is August 11.



Cultivating Good Stewardship in Farmers' Markets

Of all of summer's pleasures, few can top that early morning trip to the farmers' market. And nothing can top the farmers' market for health, nutrition, freshness and taste. This year, August 7 to 13 is National Farmers' Market Week. Let's celebrate by counting all the great reasons to grab a reusable cloth bag and head to the market.

Nutrition is high on the list. Fresh produce that makes its way from the field to the table in short order means more vitamins and minerals for your family. And of course, freshness means better taste, the tastiest produce of the year.

Farmers' markets are said to promote child health and reduce childhood obesity by increasing children's access to affordable and convenient fruits and vegetables. And farmers' markets increasingly support anti-hunger initiatives through donations of unsold food to feeding programs for those in need.

There are also great ecological reasons to shop the farmers' market. Today, food at the grocery averages about 1,500 miles to get from the

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producer to your plate. Transportation of food contributes to our carbon footprint in a huge way. Buying from the producer in your local area cuts down on transportation drastically. Moreover, these local producers play a key role in developing regional foodsheds which also benefits the environment.

Here's something else: sometimes we forget about the cycles of growth and production when we visit a supermarket in snowy February to buy an eggplant. The farmers' market restores your connection to the natural cycles in your area.

You will also be surprised by the variety of produce at the market. Maybe you'll try a vegetable you've never tasted before. And the meat and eggs you purchase are produced in environments that treat animals humanely.

And let's face it: what is more energizing than walking through your local market, meeting area farmers, greeting your neighbors, maybe picking up a locally grown bouquet of flowers or a fresh muffin and feeling like you are part of a vibrant community.

Farmers' markets are as old and as American as apple pie. And the apple in that pie is locally sourced, higher in nutrition and great for small business. Make the farmers' market a weekly summer adventure and be a steward of good food, nutrition, health and the community.

Practicing Good Stewardship in Our Parishes

We're still in the grip of a hot and sunny summer, but August brings a wake-up call. By August's end, visiting relatives have gone home, schools will be open, swimming pools will be closed, and college kids have packed up and left for the halls of academia. What's all that mean for the Christian steward? As we journey through August, parishes begin to teem with plans and new vitality.

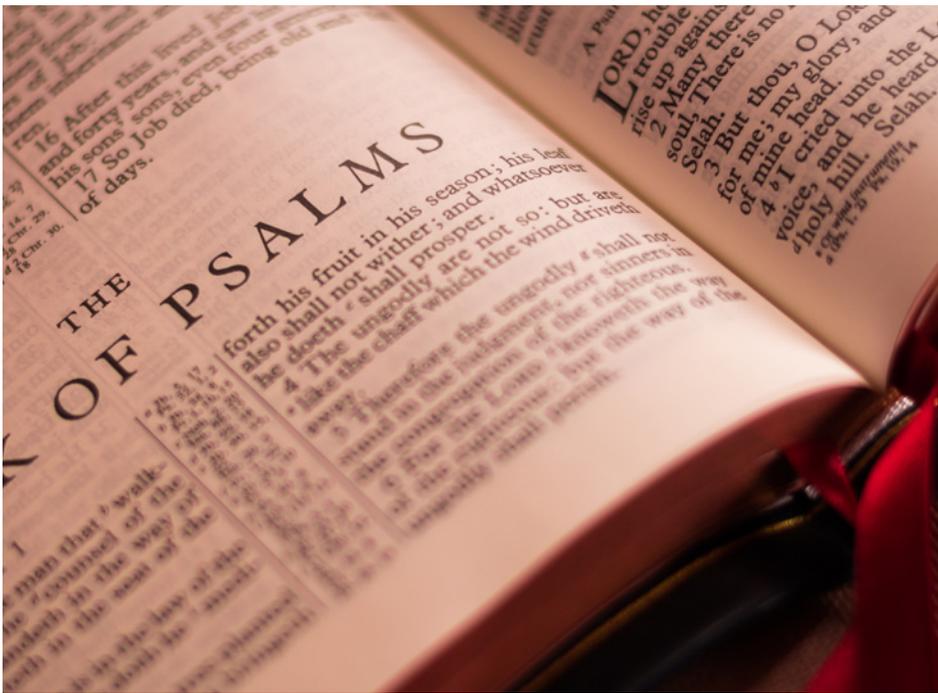


The parish is where the Church lives, and stewards are the lifeblood of a successful parish. In the parish, we find community and support, liturgy and ritual, sacrament and healing. In the parish, we find a way to give and a way to receive. On a practical level, fall is the time when parish planning gears up for the seasons ahead. Now, for a Christian steward, is the time to prayerfully consider your own involvement in the life of the parish in the coming year. How might we serve – and be served? The Christian steward knows participation in the parish is a win-win situation, feeding us as we feed others.

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Where to begin? Your parish website or office may provide a list of ministries in the parish. What calls to you? Respond to your deep desire. Maybe you're the party planner who'd love to serve on the social committee. Or perhaps you have a heart for helping the bereaved. Are you called to lector, or perhaps to take the Eucharist to the homebound? Maybe this is the year you need to soak in the fruits of adult education. Possibly you see a ministry missing and want to propose it. Perhaps, as a long time steward, you want to be part of revitalizing the stewardship efforts of your parish.

If you take a look at the schedule for ICSC's October conference, you know there are a host of sessions which address how to enliven parish stewardship. Maybe this is the year you're called to attend the conference – another win-win situation in which you learn how to welcome the stranger, bring out the best in your parishioners, and encourage discipleship all while experiencing the community and support of other conference goers. August is a perfect time to reflect on where – not "if" -- you are called. August provides time to decompress from a busy, fun summer and pray about where your own road to discipleship leads you next.



An Ancient Psalmist Calls us to Gratitude

The Book of Psalms is Israel's hymnbook. Historically, the psalms are so closely linked to King David that many believe some of them were written by him. They provide prayers for every aspect of the life of the Israelites, and today they reveal a spiritual wisdom that can draw the Christian steward into a deeper intimacy with God, especially through the fundamental notion of gratitude.

So what does God want from us? The psalmist urges us to "offer to God a sacrifice of Thanksgiving."

Psalm 50 provides an insightful look at gratitude. The psalmist felt so strongly about the call to thankfulness to the Lord that he even chose to speak with the Lord's voice, assuring the people that God did not need their burnt offerings: *"I shall take no young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine. The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine."* No, God tells the people, everything is already God's, so your cattle and birds and young bulls need not be offered to their Creator.

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Keeping in mind that all we have is from God, and remains God's, Christian stewards awake each morning to say with humility, "Thank you." The ancient psalmist's words make sense to a modern Christian, because the God who gave us free will does not possess our thankfulness until we freely give it. And we're asked for more than a perfunctory show of gratitude. The God who already possesses cattle on a thousand hills and every bird of the mountain is calling us to a deep sense of conversion, a sense that we stand before the God who has gifted us with everything we possess.



TEN REASONS Your Parish Should Attend the 60th Annual ICSC Conference

1. Discover how to enhance the commitment to discipleship in your parish
2. Learn how to enrich your parish's life of faith
3. Explore the spiritual fundamentals of Christian stewardship
4. Understand how to obtain the financial and human resources you need to run your parish
5. Find what works from dedicated and flourishing stewardship parishes
6. Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment
7. Be exposed to the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world
8. Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies
9. Enjoy the hospitality of dedicated stewards from around the globe
10. Increase your parish's knowledge of stewardship no matter where it is on its pilgrim journey



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60

YEARS

THE 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Anaheim, California | October 2-5, 2022



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- Enhancing the Vitality of your Catholic School Mission Advancement Efforts
- Growing the Relationship and Support Between Parishioners and Your Catholic School
- Vital Steps to Prepare Your School for a Capital Campaign
- Practicing Good Stewardship to Ensure a Solid Foundation for Your School Fundraising
- Best Practices from Higher Ed Development Professionals



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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 6/7, 2022

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus concludes his teaching about those who are "faithful and prudent stewards" with that classic stewardship teaching: "Much will be required of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." Christian stewards recognize that God is the ultimate source of their gifts, talents, resources and aptitudes, and that God wants them to use these varied gifts in his service. This week might be a good time to reflect on our God-given gifts. Are we using those gifts to serve the Lord? If Christ came back to us unexpectedly tomorrow would we be able to give a full accounting of how we have exercised stewardship over these gifts?

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 13/14, 2022

In today's second reading, we hear the author of the letter to the Hebrews liken the daily life of the Christian steward to a race, a long-distance race perhaps, certainly not a sprint; requiring endurance and a single-minded focus on Jesus at the finish line. Good stewards are firmly committed to running the race, to live the Christian life to the fullest, to keep their eyes focused on Jesus. They don't grow weary. They don't lose heart. They know there is immense joy waiting for them at the finish line. Are you fully committed to living each day for Christ? Are you running the race, or are you simply jogging? Just walking? Sitting? Going backwards? Going nowhere? Some of us may want to reflect on what we can do to run the race with even more conviction. Others may want to reflect on how to simply enter the race and start running.

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 20/21, 2022

The Gospel reading today starts with a question: "Lord, will only a few people be saved?" Jesus offers only a simple reply: Strive to enter through the narrow gate. Many will try to enter and will not be able. Good stewards know there is only one, narrow gate. Not everything will fit. This narrow gate has no room for our accomplishments. No room for our money. No room for our possessions. No room for anything else but those who've been good stewards of the Gospel. We can't custom build our own gates either. There is only one, narrow gate that happens to be open for a time, but for how long? What is our plan of action to get through that gate?

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 27/28, 2022

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenged the social structure of the Pharisees and teaches his hosts and their guests some profound lessons in humility. Pharisees maintained deep social divisions between who they considered "holy" and "unholy," rich and poor, honored and despised. They didn't invite someone to a banquet or dinner who couldn't reciprocate. And the lowly, the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind had no capacity to reciprocate.

Good stewards realize that if they embrace a humility that allows them to be generous to those who cannot repay them, they give evidence of having the kind of heart that will enjoy the Lord's intimate friendship. This week let's reflect on our attitude towards those who cannot repay our generosity. What is the extent of our hospitality toward others? Are we generous with those who cannot repay us?