



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2023 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for May*

Loving Father,

During this Easter season,
we rejoice in your son,
who has renewed us
in freedom and joy
through the mystery of his resurrection.

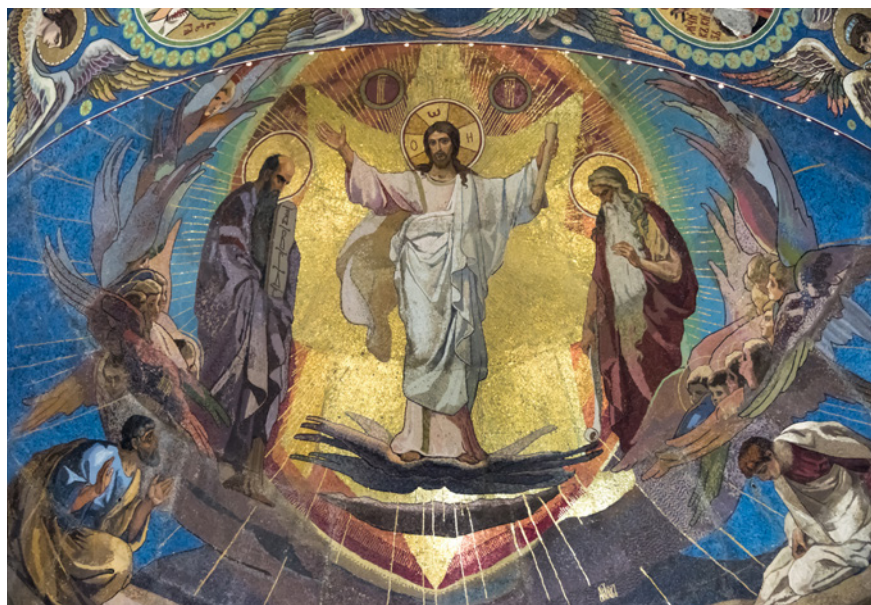
We have been called
to proclaim his Gospel;
not because we are good enough,
holy enough, or talented enough;
but because you wanted us to have
this gift and this responsibility.

Give us the courage to be faithful
to this call;
help us make every day of our lives
an experience of Easter.

And keep us ever mindful of our charge:
to love You and our neighbor;
that as stewards of your world
we are empowered by the Holy Spirit
to transform it, bring it justice and peace,
and offer it, in gratitude, back to You.

We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen



Christian Stewards: People of the Resurrection

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.

We have lived through Lent and the Paschal mysteries, all the while trying to deepen a relationship with the person of Christ.

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 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



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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 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?

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*



Saint Bede the Venerable

Saint Bede the Venerable, an English saint more popularly known as the "Venerable Bede," was born in Sunderland, England in the year 673. Educated from the age of seven, he entered the monastery of Saint Peter in Jarrow, Northumberland, England, was ordained a deacon at age 19 and ordained a priest at age 30. The monastery at Jarrow would become the center of Anglo-Saxon learning in England, and from that monastery Saint Bede, who would remain there his entire life, became the greatest

of the Anglo-Saxon scholars.

Saint Bede sought to exercise good stewardship by a balanced life of prayer, scholarship and manual labor. He rarely traveled, but attended faithfully to his monastic duties, working in the fields surrounding the monastery and being partly responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the large abbey church.

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His communal prayer life was complemented by meditation, chanting of psalms and writing prayers, prose and poems that reflected his deep faith.

Saint Bede devoted himself to the study and teaching of Sacred Scripture, and to writing Biblical commentaries based on the Biblical commentaries of the Fathers of the Church and to the lives of the saints. He also taught Latin to those who entered the monastery or came for an education.

The term "A.D." (Anno Domini, Latin for "year of the Lord") for the years of the Christian era was popularized by Saint Bede. His Ecclesiastical History of the English People, completed in 731, was widely read throughout England and Europe and became a classic. His book is still reprinted and studied.

The Venerable Bede passed away on May 26, 735. In the final weeks of his life, he completed the translation of the Gospel of John into Old English (his native tongue) by dictating to the young monk who served as his scribe. It is said that he passed away chanting the doxology "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit."

Pope Leo XIII named Saint Bede a Doctor of the Church. He is renowned as the most important historian of the Church in England and is the patron saint of scholars. His feast day is May 25.

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

61st Annual Conference

EUCHARISTIC *Stewardship*

Responding with Grateful Hearts

October 1-4, 2023 | Orlando, Florida



Sessions designed specifically for clergy include:

- Stewardship and the Eucharistic Revival
- Clergy to Clergy: Testimonies from Pastors Who Embrace and Promote Stewardship
- How Practical Stewardship Speaks to Young Adults
- Bringing Parishioners Back to the Pews
- Social Media as Key to Evangelizing
- Enhancing Generosity in the Offertory Collection
- How Stewardship Can Transform Your Parish
- Spanish-Language Sessions on Stewardship and Evangelization

Reflections and Homilies on Stewardship from These Special Guests:



Most Reverend Andrew Cozzens
Bishop of Crookston, Minnesota
Chairman of the Board, National Eucharistic Congress



Most Reverend John Noonan
Bishop of Orlando, Florida



Most Reverend James Golka
Bishop of Colorado Springs, Colorado



Most Reverend Gregory Parkes
Bishop of St. Petersburg, Florida



Most Reverend Donald Hying
Bishop of Madison, Wisconsin



Most Reverend Donald Hanchon
Bishop emeritus of Detroit, Michigan

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Stewardship and the Annual Spring Cleaning



When spring rain lets up, and May brings long hours of brilliant sunshine, something stirs within: the desire to tackle that dust we suddenly notice in places we seldom look. And those windows smeared with winter's muck? And that disorganized closet? There's a reason our grandmothers called it "spring housecleaning." The season brings an almost physical desire to get out the mop.

Surprisingly, for the Christian steward, this can actually be a spiritual impulse. There's something intrinsically renewing and revitalizing about cleaning. Everything done with a prayerful heart can lead us closer to God, and cleaning, often a solitary and contemplative task, can definitely include prayer. You might plan to begin your cleaning with prayer, and play music that lifts your spirit as you work.

Start with a closet. Open your heart to what it tells you about how blessed you are materially. But observe the consumerism a closet can reveal. As you examine each item of apparel, remember and thank God for the graces of the occasion: a wedding, a graduation, a vacation. Enjoy "shopping" in your own closet for items you've forgotten about. Pare down what you no longer need

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or what you feel called to share. Wash, mend, iron and select a place where your items may find a good home. Many cities have refugee closets, and many nonprofits have thrift stores which support them. St. Vincent de Paul shops serve the poor with inexpensive used items. Pray for those with whom you are about to share.

Resolve to put your newly reorganized items to work for you and not rush out to buy more.

And those windows? Does anything lift the spirit like a clean window after a long winter? As you polish those panes of glass, pray about where your own inner life could use a cleaning. Perhaps you don't make it to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as often as you'd like. Use your quiet window cleaning time to examine the graces and challenges of your life. Thank God for the many blessings and be honest about failings.

And that ubiquitous dust? It promises to return, afflicts the rich and the poor. It's a sign of our universal connection to the earth and the environment, a reminder of our own mortality. Even the dust we clean can be lifted up to God with a thank you from a steward's grateful heart.

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, chief advancement officer of the National Eucharistic Congress, published by Our Sunday Visitor. Cande will be a session presenter and speak about the Church's Eucharistic Revival at the 2023 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

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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?



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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.



ICSC 2023 Stewardship Conference to Focus on Eucharist and Stewardship

This year the International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is focusing its efforts to emphasize the relationship between the Eucharist and Stewardship, and how the Eucharist informs stewardship through evangelization, engagement and missionary discipleship.

Three specific areas will be dedicated to these themes:

- How the Eucharist informs Stewardship and Evangelization
- Enhancing Parish Communication and Engagement
- Growing and Sustaining Parish Stewardship

The plenary speakers and session presenters will offer reflections, ideas and resources to allow parishes to more robustly serve their mission.

Even before the pandemic, parish leaders understood that pastoral structures that served their mission well in the past needed to be renewed and aligned with current pastoral demands. Issues arising in the aftermath of 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 conference is scheduled for October 1-4, 2023 at the Hyatt Regency Orlando Hotel in Orlando, Florida.

Pentecost: A Stewardship Feast to Celebrate



A challenge for the Christian steward is accepting, and even rejoicing in, the fact that our commitment to faith is often a counter-cultural one. Perhaps this is nowhere more striking than in the quick cultural “end” of the Easter season, and our own belief that Easter is leading us through May to the great feast of Pentecost on May 28.

We see this discordance in many Christian celebrations adapted by the popular, commercial culture. While we are still enjoying the season of Christmas and looking forward to Epiphany, most American homes have taken the Christmas tree to the recycling center and moved on to thoughts of Valentine’s Day. During the sacrificial early days of Lent, there’s something jarring – yes, just wrong – about all those pastel Easter eggs and bunnies appearing in stores. And all that chocolate!

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So, as Christian stewards, we feel no surprise that as we break our Easter fast and begin our meditation on the Resurrection, we find that the stores have tucked those chocolate bunnies away on discount shelves, and we’re off to the next commercially competitive venture. And as the great feast of Pentecost beckons us, we realize that the society around us gives this occasion hardly a passing nod. Apparently, there’s no money to be made from Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit came among the

apostles and imbued in them the courage to be true followers of Christ. Courage, strength, faith, the Spirit – these are hard to market in the public square, aren’t they? The willingness to live and ultimately to die as martyrs for Christ, as the apostles did, these are things that are hard to package in bright paper. They don’t fit well in the greeting card aisle.

Perhaps during these days of May when we as Catholic stewards continue to celebrate the season of Easter and look forward to Pentecost, we might examine our own willingness to step outside the culture in our celebration of great Christian feast days. Keep the reminders of the Resurrection around you. Let your family prayer reflect the marvels of the season. Help your children to be aware of the liturgical calendar. Explain to them the meaning of the changing colors of the priests’ vestments. Dress up in red for Pentecost Sunday. But most importantly, educate yourself and your family on how powerful it is to understand and celebrate the great markers and mysteries of our shared faith experience.

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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Weekend of May 6/7, 2023

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we see how the first community of Christians gathered together to discern and resolve how to care for each others' needs. As good stewards of the sisters and brothers who gathered around the Eucharistic table, the community of faith selected those among them who were to ensure that no one was neglected. How do we resolve to serve the needs of our parish family? How do we ensure that those who might be perceived to be the least of our brothers and sisters are not left alone and neglected?

Sixth Sunday of Easter

Weekend of May 13/14, 2023

Philip understood very well Jesus' words: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." We learn of Philip's devotion to prayer, evangelizing and healing in the region of Samaria; made up of communities that would not be very receptive to the followers of Jesus. Philip is a model steward, living his discipleship day by day in the Lord without being obstructed by feelings of what cost his actions might entail. Good stewards summon the courage to proclaim the Lord and to serve Him by ministering to others. As an Easter people, eager to rejoice in the Lord, it is important to reflect on how we are living out our own commitment to discipleship.

(If the Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension is celebrated by your Diocese today, Thursday, May 18, or if it is celebrated the weekend of May 20/21)

In today's Gospel Jesus charges his followers to "make disciples of all nations." What exactly is going on here? What is this Great Commission anyway? Good stewards know they are directed to share what they exercise stewardship over: their life of faith in Christ Jesus. They know Jesus didn't direct them to go to church and to

keep quiet about it; or to go out into the neighborhood, workplace or marketplace and just be nice. Christ's Good News is meant to be shared. Many people in our communities don't know about Jesus Christ. Does that bother us? Do we care? Do we realize we are supposed to do something about it?

(If the Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension is celebrated by your Diocese on Thursday, May 18, 2023)

Seventh Sunday of Easter

Weekend of May 20/21, 2023

In today's second reading, we hear it proclaimed that we are blessed if we share in the sufferings of Christ. What then does it mean to "share in His sufferings" in this context? Most of us do not live in a part of the world where we could be killed for being a follower of Jesus. But we could face or "suffer" mockery, ridicule and disapproval from others. Far too often, and for various reasons, those who profess faith in Christ act as though they are ashamed of him. But to act ashamed is the same as a denial. Stewards of the Good News are never ashamed to reveal their love for the Lord. How do you reveal to others that you are a follower of Christ each day?

Pentecost Sunday

May 28, 2023

Mass during the Day

This weekend we celebrate the feast of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit among the believers of the early Church. Saint Paul reminds us of the special power the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us and how that power gives us the potential to live extraordinary lives of faith. Good stewards recognize this power and use their gifts, through God's channel of grace, to transform their lives and the lives of others, and thus hasten God's Kingdom. Good stewards know that it is through the Holy Spirit that they can proclaim: "Jesus is Lord." Do we believe that Jesus is Our Lord? If so, how do we show it?