



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

June 2024 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for June

Dear Heavenly Father,

As we dedicate this month of June to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we ask you to grant to us compassionate hearts; hearts rich with your love, embraced by your compassion.

Grant us generous hearts: hearts that never count the cost; hearts that seek to serve and not be served.

Grant us hearts that love peace: hearts that promote truth and justice, transform hatred and anger, and seek unity and reconciliation.

Grant us hearts of a steward: hearts that are filled with gratitude, eager to share, and long to give back to you.

Grant us hearts filled with your Spirit: hearts open to conversion, filled with hope, and on fire with your Word.

We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen



“Stewards of the Gospel” Celebrate the Body and Blood of Christ

On Sunday June 2, we celebrate the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, or *Corpus Christi*, to celebrate the gift of the Eucharist. Of course, the best way to celebrate it is to live it, to put the Eucharist into action. None of us can be a mere spectator to the Eucharist, for this offering to God of bread and wine is really our offering to him of ourselves, of our lives and of the whole world. Jesus taught us this connectedness when he enjoined us to go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel (see Mark 16:15).



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The Eucharist invites us to be “stewards of the gospel;” to follow in Jesus’ footsteps and to love others just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us. This is the meaning behind the language of blood sacrifice of which we will hear proclaimed in the weekend’s readings. Blood is fundamentally life. The commitment to share in a common life, the covenant between God and Israel, was endorsed in blood, lots of it. Sacrifice was, and is necessary.

But how does the celebration of the Eucharist relate concretely to our ordinary day-to-day lives? At one level, the practice of going to Mass affirms our belief that there is something extraordinary in our ordinary, daily lives. We take time to acknowledge to ourselves, our families and our communities that we are engaged in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

More deeply, however, is that the Eucharist transforms us. It provides a center of our being and a driving force that impels us to go out and “be” Christ to a broken world. We are nourished and strengthened in a profound way in

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order to build up the Body of Christ and carry out Jesus' command to be missionary disciples. As Saint Paul maintained, the Eucharist calls us to be saints.

The theme for the 62nd annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council, to be held in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 15 to 18, is Called to be Saints. This conference will give us a wonderful opportunity to learn more about putting the Eucharist into action and to become "doers" of God's Word through discipleship, as individual Catholics, and as local Catholic communities of faith.



The Eucharist invites us to be "stewards of the gospel;" to follow in Jesus' footsteps and to love others just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ reminds us that we are each called to serve, uniquely equipped with gifts of the Holy Spirit, and sent forth to carry the good news of the gospel to all we meet wherever we go. And we are never alone in this journey of faith. Christ is with us in a real and most personal way.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for June*



María Guadalupe García Zavala

María Guadalupe García Zavala was born in 1878 in Zapopan, Jalisco, Mexico. As a child she made frequent visits to the Basilica of Our Lady of Zapopan, located next to her father's religious goods shop. Her acquaintances said Maria treated everyone with equal respect and kindness.

At age 23, Maria was engaged to be married, but broke it off because of a growing sense that the Lord was calling her to life in religious community and of service to the sick and the poor. When she confided this change of heart to her spiritual director, he revealed his own desire to

establish a religious community to work with those who were hospitalized. He invited María to join him.

The new congregation, which officially began in 1901, was known as the "Handmaids of St. Margaret Mary (Alacoque) and the Poor." María worked as a nurse in the hospital. Compassion and care for the physical and spiritual well-being of the sick were the primary concerns. María worked tirelessly.

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Sister María was soon named head of the quickly-growing community of sisters. She taught the community, mostly by her example, the importance of living the Gospel's spirit of poverty. This included living a life of humility and exhibiting joy and a loving demeanor each day to each person they encountered.

At times, Mother María and others in the community would take to the streets begging in order to collect money for the hospital. The sisters also worked in parishes to assist the priests and to serve as catechists.

From 1911 until 1936, the Catholic Church in Mexico underwent severe persecution. Mother María put her own life at risk to help the clergy of Guadalajara, and even the archbishop, go into hiding in the community's hospital. The humble and generous treatment she extended even to their persecutors when they needed food or medical care did not go unnoticed. It was not long before they, too, began defending the hospital run by the sisters.

During her lifetime, 11 foundations were established in Mexico. Today, the religious community has 22 foundations and is active in Mexico, Peru, Iceland, Greece and Italy.

Mother María died on June 24, 1963, at the age of 85. Her feast day is June 24.

Ten Commandments for Welcoming Visitors at Mass

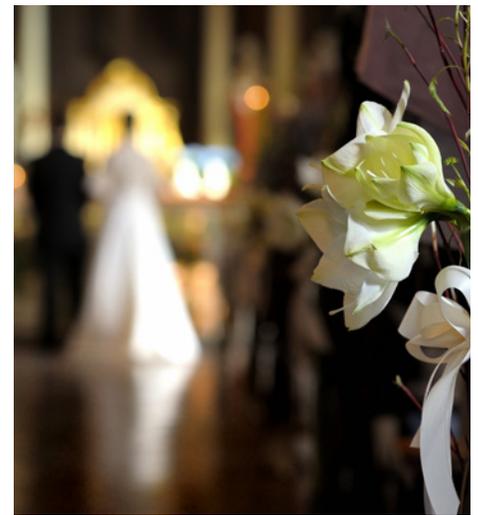


Welcoming newcomers to your parish is not just the job of the pastoral staff, ushers, ministers of hospitality or greeters. It is everyone's responsibility. Here are ten things you can do to provide better hospitality in your parish.

1. Cultivate the virtue of hospitality at Mass. Many Mass attendees tend to gather into little cliques and ignore those

who are not members of their particular clique. They are not really inhospitable, just heedless of the need for hospitality. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass.

- 2. Come early, leave late.** Instead of rushing to Mass to be there on time, and then rushing out at its conclusion, make time to come a little early and linger just a bit later. Make room **in your busy life to greet and spend time with others at Mass.**
- 3. Go in peace to greet someone!** Seek out someone you've not met before. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them to your parish home, God's house.
- 4. Welcome everyone.** Not only do visitors need your warm welcome, regular Mass attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake and be enthusiastic about your parish. You are greeting others in the name of Christ.
- 5. Help newcomers connect.** While you are getting to know visitors, introduce them to other parishioners as the opportunity presents itself. Feel free to invite visitors to sit next to you.
- 6. Say goodbye with genuine warmth.** After Mass, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Introduce them to the pastor if the opportunity arises.
- 7. Avoid parish business.** Avoid conducting parish business with others immediately before or after Mass. Focus on visitors.
- 8. Give visitors information about the parish.** Ensure that a visitor has a bulletin and other information about the parish before they leave. If there is a social gathering after Mass, invite them.
- 9. Be part of a greeting ministry team.** Parishes are always in need of greeters to serve regularly, and provide ongoing formation to new greeters. Help out, be a greeter. If your parish doesn't have greeters, now is a good time to start!
- 10. Greet those who already minister in the area of hospitality.** It isn't necessary to neglect the people who are already ministers of hospitality in order to make visitors feel at home. A simple wave and a smile go a long way.



Stewardship of Christian Marriage

Traditionally, June is the month for weddings. Like so much about marriage these days, that's changing as other months gain in popularity. Nevertheless, it's nice to pause during the beautiful month of June and celebrate the blessings and gifts of Christian marriage.

The good steward knows that there must be a stewardship of marriage. The commitment must be nurtured.

Sure, it's easy to point to the challenges to marriage today: the discouraging divorce rate, the incredible busyness of family life, the high percentage of children born out of wedlock, the large numbers who live together without the commitment of matrimony, the economic challenges facing families.

But despite the trials of marriage, it's good to remember that for the Christian steward, nothing beats a great marriage as a vehicle for love and grace and growth. What makes marriage wonderful?

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A good Christian marriage, a wise pundit once said, should be like a fire around which others gather to warm themselves. Partners in a sacramental marriage feed and nurture each

other's spirituality, and as a team reach out to a world in need of their example. A Christian marriage is an oasis in a world of impermanence. It's a home and a refuge, a place where spouses and their children grow in faith and wisdom and grace. A good marriage is a place where two people can feel comfortable with each other through the shifting sands of time. It's a safe abode where aging is accepted and nurtured. It's the porch light that awaits your arrival back home, the smile that greets you at the end of a weary day. A good Christian marriage is the workshop of forgiveness, the laboratory of fidelity.

St. Benedict, trusting that God was always ready to forgive, said "Always, we begin again." That could be the motto of marriage. I'm here to stay. We start again now. We begin again, and again and again, through difficult times and happy ones, through sickness and health, prosperity and poverty.

The Church, understanding the challenges faced by those who embrace this sacrament, offers many days of reflection, retreats, and Marriage Encounters to help strengthen marriage and keep it sustainable. The good steward knows that there must be a stewardship of marriage. The commitment must be nurtured. Take time during June to do something special with your spouse. Devote time and energy exclusively to the relationship, whether it's a weekend retreat, a romantic getaway, or a special, relaxed evening out. During June, begin again.



Twenty Simple Stewardship Ideas for the Month of June

- Join or start a summer bible study group.
- Plan an outing with your family.
- Introduce yourself to a fellow parishioner with whom you are unfamiliar.
- Help a neighbor who is physically unable clean their yard.
- Invite someone to attend a weekend liturgy with you.
- Make a blood donation.
- Show genuine hospitality to visitors at your church.
- Don't text when you drive.
- Reduce your stress by getting outside and getting some exercise.
- Drive courteously.
- Make contact with a relative you haven't seen in a long time.
- Take time to pray each day.
- Treat your family or loved one to a day at the museum.
- Volunteer to participate in a community cleanup effort.
- Make a gift to your diocesan annual appeal.
- Plant flowers, shrubs or trees in a park or other location.
- Collect stuffed animals from friends and neighbors, write messages to tie or clip onto the animals and give them to a local police department to use in comforting children.
- Don't drive while impaired by alcohol.
- Donate gently used clothing.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Weekend of June 1/2, 2024

Today's Gospel gives St. Mark's account of Jesus gathering his disciples for a last supper, revealing to them a new covenant established through his own sacrificial blood. Every time we participate in the Eucharist, we make a pledge to renew and deepen our participation in Christ's covenant in practical ways. For the steward, that means making daily, personal sacrifices to strengthen this covenant relationship such as deepening our relationship with the Lord in prayer, supporting our parish, and giving comfort to the poor. Now is a good time to reflect on what we can do to strengthen our covenant with the Lord and our community in practical ways.

Tenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 8/9, 2024

In today's second reading Saint Paul argues that a community's journey of faith culminates in the thanksgiving expressed in the Eucharistic meal, when the bread is broken, the cup of salvation is lifted up and the covenant with Christ is affirmed. In fact, he maintains that the entire community's "inner nature" is constantly being renewed in hope through this thanksgiving meal. Good stewards understand that the weekly celebration of the Eucharist is a communal gesture by which the gathered community reveals its faith and hope in the risen Lord. Moreover, that it is a profound communal act of faith that Christ is present and active in the world at this moment. Given that understanding, what responsibilities do we take on to lift up the faith of our community? What part do we play in giving it hope.

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 15/16, 2024

In today's Gospel, Jesus compares the beginning of God's kingdom to a mustard seed. This tiny seed, which fits in the palm of a hand, can grow to fifteen feet with

sprawling branches! Like the mustard seed, the Christian community had a tiny, seemingly insignificant beginning. The church, which began with about 120 followers, added three thousand people on Pentecost Day following the descent of the Holy Spirit. Since then, the number of Christ's disciples has grown incalculably and continues to grow throughout the world. Good stewards go about God's business of "planting seeds" among all those whom they encounter. What will we do this week to add to God's kingdom?

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 22/23, 2024

In today's Gospel reading we hear Jesus commanding the wind and sea to be at peace, to be still. The Gospel scene depicting Jesus and his disciples on a boat seems appropriate for the summer. It is a season to contemplate nature and to find God in the wonders of His creation. It is also a time to contemplate, as stewards of the Lord's abundant gifts, all of creation as God's gift and that ultimately it is God who has control over the world and not us.

Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of June 29/June 30, 2024

In today's second reading, St. Paul offers the community at Corinth a spirituality of giving. He urges them to give and maintains that through their generosity, they will in turn be given in return much spiritual abundance. They will receive from those who are the beneficiaries of their own giving; a reciprocal gift that amounts to an equality of giving, made possible through the generous mediation of Christ himself. This is an excellent reading for reflecting on the spirituality of giving. This week, take time to reflect on the ways you might discover a deeper joy in Jesus Christ because of your own generosity toward others.