



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

July 2024 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for July

Good and Gracious God,

We thank You for this gift of summer;
of being able to pause, relax
and enjoy the abundant gifts
You have given us.

At this time of year,
our thoughts may turn to vacations
and outings. We may experience
seashores, mountains or lakesides.
We may enjoy fishing, swimming and barbecues.

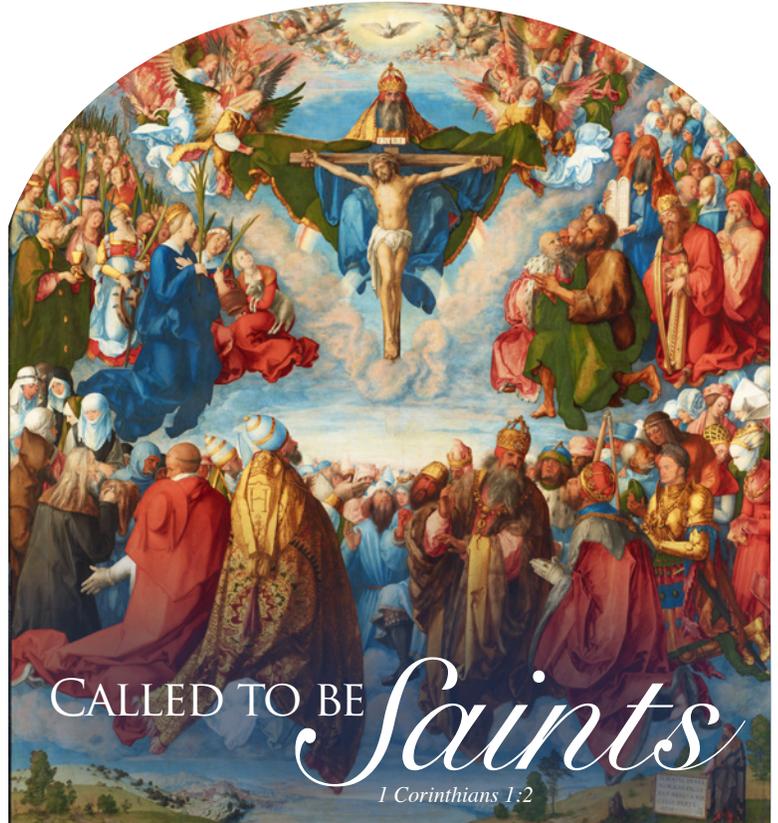
But whatever our summer opportunities,
we realize they are ultimately gifts from You
and these gifts, Lord,
are ultimately meant to be shared.

Show us the joys of generosity,
keep us mindful of others and open our hearts
to our parish, neighborhood and world. They
need the generous spirit of good stewards.

As we enjoy the leisure that summer brings,
we thank You for Your many gifts,
and ask that You make us a gift to others as well.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen



The 62nd Annual ICSC Conference

Stewardship means saying “Yes” to God in our homes, parishes, communities and beyond. We are called to share the gifts we have been given to bring about the kingdom of God. We are called to holiness. And as Saint Paul reminded the early Christian community at Corinth, we are **“Called to be Saints.”** The theme for this year’s ICSC conference is Called to be Saints, which was an expression used by Saint Paul in his first letter to that Christian community at Corinth. This expression, **Called to be Saints**, reminds us to be good stewards of our life of faith in Christ Jesus. The 2024 ICSC Stewardship Conference offers its members and other attendees a chance to gather and reflect on stewardship in the Catholic Church and how it is an integral part of our faith.

This year, ICSC adopts as its conference image the classical painting **Adoration of the Holy Trinity** by Albrecht Dürer, ca. 1511. The painting gives us the opportunity to see a dazzling vision of the kingdom of heaven from two perspectives. We see

Continued on page 2



The spiritual energy generated at the annual ICSC conference is always inspiring!

both heaven and earth which keeps us mindful that though we live on this earth, we are as Saint Paul describes in his letter to the Corinthians, counted among the saints in heaven through our Baptism and profession of faith in our Triune God.

Internationally recognized as the most valuable conference for those involved in Christian stewardship, the annual ICSC conference is a gathering of scores of Catholic stewards living and teaching Christian stewardship in the Catholic tradition. It offers nearly 90 program sessions to inform and inspire attendees through the sharing of innovative ideas, networking with peers, and providing best practices and proven strategies for inviting others in parishes and dioceses alike to become good stewards of their life in Christ.

See the conference announcement page on the inside of this eBulletin to register for its 62nd annual conference from September 15-18 at the Hyatt Regency New Orleans. **We invite you to join us in New Orleans to celebrate with others Called to Be Saints!**

STEWARDSHIP SAINT for July



Saint Martha – One of Jesus' Closest Friends

Just before Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, his close friends, Martha, her sister, Mary, and brother, Lazarus, entertained him at their home in Bethany (John 12:1-8). Martha "served," while Mary anointed his feet. It is in the simple statement, "Martha served," that we recognize Martha for her witness to stewardship. She isn't a prolific evangelist, she doesn't work miracles. She simply serves Jesus.

Jesus may have been a frequent visitor to Martha's home and perhaps this is one of the reasons the Gospel of John reveals to us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus" (11:5). This unique statement in the Gospel informs us of the special relationship Jesus had with Martha and her siblings. And, as another one of Jesus' visits to Martha's home affirms, Martha continues to be concerned that Jesus be served. Like any good steward, hospitality was very important to Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

It is in the simple statement, "Martha served," that we recognize Martha for her witness to stewardship.

What is most revealing about Martha is on the occasion of the death of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). She takes an active role, going out to meet Jesus to let him know what happened to her brother while Mary stays at home. Jesus assures her that Lazarus will be raised from dead.

With courage and conviction, Martha confesses her deep faith in Jesus Christ: "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." And then Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." When he asked Martha if she believed this, she replied: "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world" (John 11:24-27).

The feast of Saint Martha, a witness to service who confessed her faith in Jesus, is July 29. She is the patron saint of homemakers, cooks, domestic workers, waiters and waitresses, and hotel employees.



Why should YOU attend the 62ND ANNUAL ICSC CONFERENCE?

- 1 | Enhance your knowledge of stewardship no matter how far your parish has traveled on the stewardship journey.
- 2 | Learn from some of the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world.
- 3 | Discern new techniques for increasing the financial resources you need to sustain your parish.
- 4 | Uncover proven approaches to enrich your parish's life of faith.
- 5 | Discover how to build up the commitment to discipleship in your parish.
- 6 | Experience the hospitality and joy of dedicated stewards from around the globe.
- 7 | Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies.
- 8 | Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment.
- 9 | Compare notes with experienced and flourishing stewardship parishes.
- 10 | Immerse yourself in the spirituality and fundamentals of Christian stewardship in the Catholic tradition.



REGISTER TODAY!



Fifteen Random Stewardship Ideas for the Month of July

1. Invite a single friend over for a meal.
2. Turn off your digital world for one hour, and spend that hour devoted to someone you love.
3. Attend an extra Mass on a weekday this month.
4. Abstain from something you like – meat, a latte, a cold drink – on Fridays and save the money for a charity.
5. Take your rosary with you for an early morning walk.
6. Recycle more.
7. Think of a charity which is amply blessed at Christmas. Remember it with a gift mid-year.
8. Each day, say a prayer for those who suffer in one of the world's trouble spots.
9. Surprise an old friend with a phone call.



10. Buy or pick a flower for someone without a "reason".
11. Take your family to a farmer's market if in season.
12. Stop for a moment during your busy day, relax and reflect on God's gifts to you that day.
13. If you hear a great homily, tell the homilist.
14. Splurge on some produce and buy enough to share with someone in need.
15. On occasion, try turning the memorized recitation of prayer before meals into a spontaneous prayer of thanks, using your own words.

Be Good Stewards of Your Family This Summer

July is the heart of summer, and summer is an exciting and challenging time for stewardship of the family.

Everything turns a little upside down for the family in summer. Kids out of school, grandparents visiting, teens with a first job, road trips and those big family reunions: Sometimes it seems summer dashes by in a flurry of wet bathing suits and backyard barbecues. How does the Christian steward make summer a special time for "the domestic church" of family?



Be truly present. On one occasion, when Pope Francis addressed a homily to families, one word he used often was "simplicity."

Relax!... No, really!... Relax! ... Slow down! The world often spins around us and we are caught up in work, social media, activity. Gift yourself and your family with time this summer. Be truly present. On one occasion, when Pope Francis addressed a homily to families, one word he used often was "simplicity." Make time for family meals, but

Continued from page 4

make them simple and nutritious. “We need simplicity to pray as a family,” the Holy Father said. Let each family member take a turn praying a simple grace at family meals. Linger over good food and good conversation. Make family your focus. Listen to your children. Take time for a night out with your spouse. Make a commitment to fun and presence.



The Holy Father also asked families, “How do we keep our faith as a family?” We don’t keep it for ourselves, he said, “as a personal treasure like a bank account.” No, we share it. We witness it. How can we witness faith during the summer months? “Christian families are missionary families,” Pope Francis said. Summer is a good time to plan a field trip to a shelter or a food bank. Call ahead and ask what you can bring and how your family can help. Many agencies plan summer picnics and presentations by refugees during the season. Let your kids experience this diversity. Attend a vacation bible school or help with one. Invite a priest from your parish, or perhaps a lonely neighbor, to dinner. Spread your family joy.

The summer readers in your family might benefit from finding Catholic periodicals or books on heroes of our faith. Visit new parishes during the summer. If you are on a road trip, never miss Sunday Mass and take advantage of a side trip to a shrine or an historic Catholic church. Most of all, relax and enjoy. Pope Francis says, “The family which experiences the joy of faith communicates it naturally.”



Exercising Good Stewardship in the Month of July

A quick check of July’s holiday calendar reveals this month to be one that celebrates national hot dog day (July 17), national ice cream day (July 21) and national paperback book day (July 30). These and other quaint holidays all serve to underscore the fact that the month of July is probably ground zero for those “lazy, hazy, crazy” days of summer. If June finds us finishing off the graduation parties, August brings back-to-school sales. But July? July is swimming, picnicking, the lake or beach, and vacation. July brings Fourth of July parades and highways and airports jammed with travelers. How does one exercise the virtues of Christian stewardship during this noisy, boisterous, sun-filled month?

Remember to begin each day with a grateful heart and a resolve to be a good steward of God’s abundant gifts.

Hospitality is a big part of July, and essential to exercising Christian stewardship. July brings the easy, informal backyard kind of hospitality. Consider sharing a cook-out with neighbors you’ve been hoping to know better, the parish priest you normally see only on Sunday, or the family member who may be lonely this summer. Organize a block party. Invite the people next door over for a quiet evening on the patio.

Even though July has a “time off” feel to it, make sure you don’t extend that feeling to weekend Mass. If you travel, it’s now easy to locate a Catholic Church and find Mass times. It is also enlightening to experience sacred liturgy in a new environment at a different locale. If you’re staying home, July might be the time to visit a neighboring parish. Just remember that your home parish needs your financial support all during the summer months.

If July finds you able to engage in more leisurely reading in a lounge chair, hammock or on a beach towel, be a good steward of your spiritual life and supplement your summer reading list with a spiritual classic. And with the morning sun up early, perhaps become a contemplative by making a dawn prayer walk a healthy and spiritually nourishing habit during July.

Many charities host “runs” during the summer. But even if you’re not up to a 5K, they’re a good reminder that local charities need our support during July as they do every month. Consider offering one free afternoon to a food bank or shelter, especially if you can involve your children or grandchildren.

Let us also remain mindful that gratitude is fundamental to the Christian life and there is much to be grateful for during the warm, sunny days of July. Remember to begin each day with a grateful heart and a resolve to be a good steward of God’s abundant gifts.



Invitation to Catholic School Advancement Professionals!

THE 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 15-18, 2024 | New Orleans, Louisiana

Topics you won't want to miss!

- How Stewardship Influences a Culture of Philanthropy in Your School
- Maximizing Major Gift Fundraising in a Catholic School Environment
- 10 Tips for Boosting Your School's Fundraising Efforts
- How to Conduct Highly Effective Capital Campaigns for Catholic Schools
- Establishing and Implementing a Strategic School Advancement Plan
- Using Data to Create Marketing Strategies for Students and Donors



**\$549 SUPER EARLY
BIRD DISCOUNT!**

REGISTER TODAY!

Offer good through June 30



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 6/7, 2024

Today's Gospel reveals Jesus being amazed that the people in his hometown of Nazareth do not accept his teaching and ministry; he is amazed at their lack of faith (Mk6:6). Good stewards recognize and participate in Christ's teaching, reconciling and healing presence in their community. Are we good stewards of our family of faith? Do we value and support the ministries that take place in Christ's name? Are we attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our parish and encourage those who work to enhance our life of faith?

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 13/14, 2024

The Letter to the Ephesians relates to us that God, the Father, has established a divine plan to bring all of creation to Christ and that He has blessed us with the divine gifts to help implement that plan. Christian stewards know what their gifts are and remain committed to using them in the service of the Lord. Do we know what our gifts are? Do we believe that God has given us these gifts? Are we committed to using our gifts to serve the Lord?

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 20/21, 2024

The Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that Christ is creating a new world order: one that brings about relationships based on love, peace, reconciliation, hope and unity. As a Eucharistic community, we are stewards of Christ's new creation. How are we promoting peace and reconciliation? How are we showing love for our neighbors? What are we doing to encourage unity and understanding among those with whom we gather around the Lord's Table each week?

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend July 27/28, 2024

The story of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes is a familiar one, and has many lessons, not least of which is how our willingness to share who we are and what we have - exercising good stewardship - releases God's power and bountifulness on the world and its people. Do we realize that there is enough for all if we are willing to share? Are we aware that God is at work when we share our time, money and our other resources in His name?