

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

April 2025 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER
for April

Christ Our Savior,

As our Lenten journey brings us closer to Easter, we see with a deeper awareness our world's desperate need to experience the healing power of your justice and peace.

Make us sacraments of your mercy and instruments of your compassion.

Show us how to be better stewards of your people; through our families, our brothers and sisters with whom we share your Eucharist, our neighbors, and the stranger.

Show us how to carry the cross so that by dying to ourselves we may give new life to others.

And strengthen our faith, so that we may proclaim your Easter triumph more confidently, every day, in word and deed.

Amen.



Spiritual Housecleaning is Good Stewardship

Spring housecleaning used to be a solemn ritual in many families. Dedicated homemakers took down heavy winter drapes and replaced them with summer's lighter fabric. Bedding was washed and aired on backyard clotheslines, storm windows lined up against the house for a thorough wash. This time of year, our grandmothers removed and cleaned everything from cupboards and closets.

Today, with most adults working outside the home, and schedules filled to overflowing, cleaning can sometimes be more piecemeal, catch-as-catch-can.



As light streams through our windows and chases away the shadows, let the Light of Christ continue to illuminate the dark spots in your own spiritual life

Nevertheless, this season often brings out the latent spring housecleaner in all of us. Who hasn't taken notice, suddenly, of late afternoon's brilliant sunshine highlighting windows streaked with winter's grime, or spotted a previously hidden layer of dust peeking out from the beneath the stove on a sun-splashed morning? The growing light and warmth makes us instinctively want to get busy.

In a sense, that's what Lent was all about. For many of us, Ash Wednesday was deep in the heart of a cold and snow-packed winter. But as we journeyed through the season, we saw glimmers of a far-off spring, even as we dug out from the latest storm. Light returned, and Lent reminded Christian stewards of our yearning to clean the house

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of our interior lives - our souls. Gradually, we saw illuminated the cobwebs in our own hearts.

Times of silence, prayer, fasting and giving move us with gratitude into the beautiful liturgies of the Easter Triduum. Yet, sometimes a nagging feeling troubles us. Did our efforts match our Ash Wednesday resolve? Did we do “enough”?



If you're troubled by this question, take heart. After all, if you thought your Lent was perfect, you might be like the Pharisee Jesus spoke of in his parable of the “Pharisee and the Tax Collector” – smug and self-satisfied. “I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity . . .” (Luke 18:11). Instead, we come before the Lord at a glorious Easter liturgy like the tax collector “. . . be merciful to me a sinner.” The Christian steward spends a lifetime asking, “How can I do more?” As light streams through our windows and chases away the shadows, let the Light of Christ continue to illuminate the dark spots in your own spiritual life, but rejoice in the forgiving God who has conquered all darkness for us.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for April*



Saint Teresa of Los Andes

The life of Saint Teresa of Los Andes, who died three months before her 20th birthday, offers proof that a Christian steward need not live a long life in order to reflect the light of Christ on others in a profoundly meaningful way.

Juanita Fernandez Solar was born on July 13, 1900 into a devout Catholic family in Santiago, Chile, the fourth of six children. She was educated by the French nuns of

the Sacred Heart and led an active school life. She was known to have excelled at swimming and tennis and was gifted musically as well. She could sing, dance and play the piano. Juanita was also known for her vanity and hot-temper. It was said that she liked to have things her way.

At age 15, Juanita read *The Story of a Soul*, the spiritual autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux that had become a publishing phenomenon. It was to prove transforming. She had always attended daily Mass and even taught catechism classes to younger students. But after having read the words of the Little Flower, a desire to serve God began to grow. When Juanita read the biography of Saint Teresa of Avila her spiritual journey became clear as she decided to join the Carmelite community.

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In May 1919, at age 19, Juanita entered the Carmelite convent in the town of Los Andes. The convent offered the simple lifestyle Teresa desired and the joy of living in a community of women completely devoted to God. Initially, she focused her time on prayer and daily acts of sacrifice and she took the name “Teresa of Jesus.”

After becoming accustomed to the daily rhythms of a cloistered life, Teresa embarked on a letter writing ministry to offer simple reflections on the spiritual life to a large number of people needing encouragement and inspiration.

Before her first year in the convent was completed, however, Teresa contracted typhus. Diagnosed as fatal on Good Friday of 1920, she was allowed to profess her final vows in the Carmelite community “in periculo mortis” (“in danger of death”) just a few days before she died on April 12, 1920.

Teresa was canonized by Saint John Paul II in 1993. She is a popular saint in Chile, where her shrine is visited by some 100,000 pilgrims each year. She is sometimes referred to as the “little saint” of America in imitation of the Little Flower. She is the first Chilean to be canonized.



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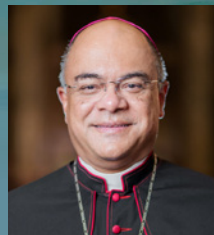
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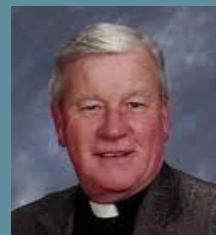
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Put Your Prayer into Action through Almsgiving

As our Lenten journey brings us closer to Easter, let's be mindful of those ancient and time-tested exercises that help us renew our lives and bring us closer to God. The traditional practices include: prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

gets the least attention among the three Lenten practices. Almsgiving can actually be viewed as "fasting" from our income and material possessions. It also brings us closer to Christ Jesus because it translates our prayers into

If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith, by itself, if it has no works, is dead (2:15-17).

Almsgiving is about showing our love through sharing rather than hoarding what we have and Lent is perhaps one of the best times of the year to prayerfully discern how best we can act with generosity toward others. We might even try creating an Almsgiving Plan to help us prayerfully discern how best to organize our giving. Take some quiet moments to prayerfully reflect on what you have to share and write down a giving plan that includes your parish, diocese, and charities that could use your financial support.

Easter is almost upon us. Let us act now to integrate almsgiving into our life of faith. By putting our prayer into action in this way, we begin to "cast off" the old self within us and put on Christ in order to arrive at Easter renewed and able to say, with St. Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me."



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Lent, of course, is a privileged period for prayer and many spiritual writers have encouraged us to see fasting and almsgiving as essential elements of our prayer lives. St Augustine wrote that fasting and almsgiving are "the two wings of prayer" and that almsgiving is actually putting our prayer into action.

Of course, much attention is paid to prayer and fasting. But almsgiving

acts of love for each other and for those less fortunate.

The New Testament reveals how the early Christians embraced the practice of almsgiving. For Saint Luke, almsgiving was essential to the practice of good stewardship. St. James exhorts Christians to care for the needs of their brothers or sisters, to put their faith into action with alms to those in need:

Lack of Water Remains a Global Crisis: A Question of Stewardship



On Saturday, March 22, World Water Day was celebrated to raise awareness of the global water crisis. In 2021, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, made a plea for people the world over to be more responsible in the protection and use of water, as clean water is denied to an estimated 2.2 billion people around the world. The pontiff reminded us that water should not be considered a commodity to be bought and sold, but a valuable gift in which everyone should have access as a fundamental human right.

The pontiff observed that “without water, there would have been no life, no urban centers, no agriculture, forestry or livestock,” and yet the world and its people have not exercised good stewardship over this fundamental and essential gift to the planet. “Wasting it, disregarding it or contaminating it has been a mistake that continues to

be repeated even today,” he said. The Holy Father asked how in our age of technological advances, “access to safe, drinkable water is not within everyone’s reach.”

Referencing his apostolic letter, *Laudato si*, Pope Francis reminded us that “access to safe drinkable

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water is a basic and universal human right, a condition for the exercise of other human rights.” He went on to say that water is a gift to which all human beings, without exception, have the right to have adequate access, so that they can lead a dignified life. Thus, “Our world has a grave social debt towards the

poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.”

Pope Francis concluded his message by calling for urgent action to end the global water crisis: “Let us make haste, therefore, to give drink to the thirsty. Let us correct our lifestyles so that we do not waste or pollute. Let us become protagonists of that goodness that led St. Francis of Assisi to describe water as a sister ‘who is very humble, and precious and chaste!’”

Water is a gift that connects every aspect of life. Access to safe water and sanitation can quickly turn problems into potential, contributing to improved health for women, children, and families around the world. What is vital is how we respect and value this gift. Here are a few ways we can expand our consciousness about the value of water.

Keep yourself informed on the global clean water crisis.

Once we become aware of water access issues around the globe, we will better appreciate the need to take action to ensure we aren’t

misusing the gift of water that we consume. Challenging and changing our water habits is an easy way to notice the impact we are having on water consumption.

Be mindful of the ways you use water

While we shouldn’t give up drinking water each day, consider the small ways you waste water on

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a daily basis and then cut back. For example, turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth. Watch the water you consume while washing or rinsing utensils, glassware or pots and pans.

Reduce the amount of water used while taking a shower

A 10-minute shower uses at least 25 gallons of water. Try to reduce your shower time by a few minutes. One source recommends keeping your shower time down to two songs.

Repair leaks in your house

One environmental researcher suggested that a typical household loses thousands of gallons of water each year due to ordinary leaks in faucets, pipes and garden hoses. Take time to make needed repairs. You'll save water and money along the way.



Reduce water consumption in home appliances.

Dishwashers and washing machines use a lot of water. Consider making sure those washers are full before doing a load of laundry or dishes.

Include nonprofits that provide clean water in your charitable giving

There are a number of widely known nonprofit organizations that have made it their mission to address this global clean water crisis. Check out these nonprofits and prayerfully consider adding them to your list of charitable beneficiaries.



20 Stewardship Ideas for the Month of April

1. Participate in the three liturgies of the Easter Triduum at your parish.
2. Write a note of encouragement and prayer to someone entering the Church.
3. Make a blood donation.
4. Join or start a Bible study group.
5. Keep the Sabbath holy. Make a pledge not to work on Sunday.
6. Plan an outing with your family.
7. Re-examine your commitment to the parish's offertory collection.
8. Introduce yourself to a fellow parishioner with whom you are unfamiliar.
9. Celebrate Earth Day 2025 by prayer and commitment to curb pollution.
10. Help a neighbor who is physically unable to clean their yard.
11. Invite someone to attend Easter Mass or another weekend liturgy with you.
12. Don't text when you drive.
13. Reduce your stress by getting outside and getting some exercise.
14. Make contact with a relative you haven't seen in a long time.
15. Take time to pray each day.
16. Treat your family or loved one to a day at the museum.
17. Volunteer to participate in a community cleanup effort.
18. Make a gift to your diocesan annual appeal.
19. Plant flowers, shrubs or trees in a park or other location.
20. Donate gently used clothing.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fifth Sunday of Lent **Weekend of April 5/6, 2025**

Strong words come from Saint Paul in today's second reading. He reveals in no uncertain terms that life in Christ is our goal. Everything else, he maintains, is "rubbish." Junk. Trash. Garbage. Is that true? Is everything else "rubbish" compared to deepening our relationship with the Lord? What about putting recreational activities ahead of attending Mass? Or preferring uninterrupted hours playing the latest video games or watching TV to spending time in a bible study group, choir practice or serving in a soup kitchen? Or keeping late hours at work over sharing the gospel with friends and neighbors? To what extent do we exercise stewardship over our relationship with Christ?

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord **Weekend of April 12/13, 2025**

In the prelude to today's great Passion Narrative, Saint Paul reminds us that we find our hope in the "emptiness" and "humility" of Christ Jesus; a life that led to the cross, but through the cross, to glory and exaltation. The way is not easy. Good stewards know that it requires a willingness to lay aside all rights of personal privilege; emptying ourselves in the service of others; embracing values different from the values of the world. It requires an understanding that to be "in Christ" means to be a servant because Christ came into the world, not as Lord but as servant. What crosses are we willing to carry? What worldly values we are willing to forego in order to share Christ's glory?

The Holy Night of the Easter Vigil **April 19, 2025**

Alive in Christ! That's what we are. Among the many readings of Easter, Saint Paul reflects on this "newness of life" in his letter to the Romans. The Christian life is a resurrected life. It is new life, one of truth, inner joy and genuine fulfillment. God has transformed our lives for all eternity, and that transformation is what it means to be a Christian. Do you know the resurrected life? Have you genuinely experienced it? Good stewards have; and in their commitment to the Lord, they know what it means to be alive in Christ. It is time to rejoice. He is risen! Alleluia!

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) **Weekend of April 26/27, 2025**

In today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear it proclaimed that many "signs and wonders" were performed in public by Christ's followers, a demonstration that produced two results. First, the people of Jerusalem outside the Christian community were awed by what the disciples were performing. And in the midst of all this amazement, many were being converted. Good stewards know of the evangelizing power emanating from their daily acts of love, compassion, kindness and generosity. They believe that if they stay focused on Christ each day, every act has the power to transform a broken world. What "signs and wonders" will we perform today?