

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2025 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for May

Christ Our Lord,
risen Lord,
light of the world,
to you be all praise and glory!

Shine your light on us
this Easter season
so that we may reflect brilliantly
the glory of your resurrection.

Make us a blessing
for those who suffer,
live in fear or
who are overwhelmed by life.

And let the Spirit fill our hearts
with your loving presence
so that we may become
good stewards of your Gospel
out of love for you
who, for our sakes,
lived, died and rose from the dead;
you who live and reign
with your Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Amen.



Stewards of the Easter Season

Christ is risen! Indeed, He is risen!

If you're thinking this greeting comes a little late, since Easter Sunday was April 20, think again. As Catholic Christians, we celebrate the Easter season for seven weeks, until the fires of Pentecost once again inflame our hearts on June 8.

Indeed, how could we not continue to celebrate this event that has changed everything for us?

It's easy to slip into a cultural way of thinking about our great feasts. Many people have the Christmas tree taken down at the end of New Year's Day, rather than waiting for Epiphany. Likewise, most of us have long ago put the Easter decorations away.



If Christ is truly risen – an astounding and life-altering belief – then this Easter time brings immense joy and a continuing desire to know the Risen Lord.

But the Christian steward is aware of the beauty and meaning of the seasons in the liturgical calendar.

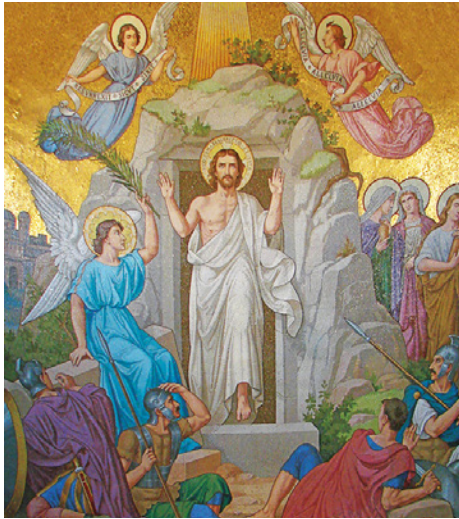
The Easter season remains a special time for recommitment to the Lord. One word for this period is "mystagogia," and those who were newly baptized at the Great Easter Vigil are especially familiar with this term. It literally means that we delve more deeply into the mystery of our faith. But exploring this mystery is not just an endeavor for new Christians. As we prepare for Pentecost, we prayerfully examine what

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the Resurrection means in our own lives.

For Christian stewards, it's a time to reevaluate how faith in the Risen Lord informs every aspect of our lives – how we labor, how we play, the way we pray, how we allocate our resources, where we spend our time, how we love, how we extend



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our compassion to others. If Christ is truly risen – an astounding and life-altering belief – then this Easter time brings immense joy and a continuing desire to know the Risen Lord.

The Scripture readings of the season are especially helpful. We hear once again the stories of the appearances of Jesus to his friends; how often they failed, initially, to recognize him in his glory. The Acts of the Apostles tell us of the struggles and the excitement of the new community of believers.

We spent forty days in the penitential season of Lent. Now, we are embarked on fifty days of joyous celebration. Let us experience this joy throughout the Easter season, so that when we celebrate Pentecost, we may truly find our hearts on fire with the Holy Spirit.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT for May



Saint Bernardine of Siena, commonly referred to as the “Apostle of Italy,” was heralded as an eloquent preacher, missionary, reformer, and economist. He was born in 1380 to a noble family in Tuscany but was orphaned early in his life. In 1400, at the height of the great plague in Italy, he volunteered to care for the sick in the city of Siena, stopping only when he himself became ill.

In 1402 he entered the Franciscan order in Siena and was ordained to the priesthood in 1404. For several years, he studied and

lived the life of a quiet contemplative. In 1417, he was sent to Milan to help out at one of the parish churches. Here, Bernardine discovered his gift of preaching. News of his exciting sermons spread rapidly, and soon he had invitations to travel and preach all over the peninsula. He brought his enthusiasm for preaching the Good News to crowds of thousands. During his ministry he was asked to be a bishop on three occasions. Each time he refused because he believed his gifts were best used as a missionary.

Bernardine left a lasting symbol to the Church when he created the symbol, “IHS,” the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. The letters were placed within an image of a blazing sun. It was a compelling visual aid to his listeners and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings.

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Bernardine was a scholar as well. He wrote a book on economics. *On Contracts and Usury* dealt with the justification of private property, the ethics of trade, the determination of value and price, the usury question and it offered a well-reasoned defense of entrepreneurship.

In 1430, he was elected vicar general of the Franciscans of the Strict Observance. During his term of office, many Franciscan monasteries that enjoyed a looser rule, changed to the strict observance to benefit from Bernardine’s charisma, wisdom and leadership. He added rigorous education programs to their daily routine and the community’s numbers grew dramatically.

St. Bernardine’s tireless commitment to spreading the Good News remained until the very end of his life. In 1444 he set out to preach in Naples. On the way he fell ill with fever. He died on the vigil of the Feast of the Ascension at age 64. His feast day is May 20.



63rd Annual Stewardship Conference
Chicago, Illinois | September 21-24, 2025

STEWARDSHIP:

A JOURNEY OF HOPE



Selected Stewardship Themes Specifically Designed for Parishes:

- Essential Stewardship Skills for Parish Leaders
- Enhancing Parish Engagement by Using Relationship-Building Principles
- Parish Communication Practices that Inspire an Active and Engaged Community
- Devout and Committed Young Adults: What We Can Learn from Them about Stewardship
- Parish Stewardship Fundamentals: What is Working and What is Not
- Key Elements for Enhancing the Parish Offertory Collection
- Overcoming Challenges to Stewardship in the Spanish-speaking Catholic Community

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Offer good through June 8, 2025

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Reflections on Stewardship from These Special Guests:



Lindsay Sartorio
*St. Pius X
Catholic Church,
Greensboro, North
Carolina*



Chris Kozlowski
*Disciples Unleashed
Family of Parishes
Archdiocese of
Detroit*



Sharon Ehrenkranz
*St. Laurence
Catholic Church,
Sugar Land, Texas*



Steve Homiack
*Archdiocese of
Seattle*



Leisa Anslinger
*Archdiocese of
Cincinnati
Recipient of the
2022 ICSC Christian
Stewardship Award*



Carlos Proano
*Diocese of
San Jose*



Gratitude for Those Who Revealed the Paschal Mystery During Holy Week

Holy Week at most Catholic parishes is nothing short of awe-inspiring; from the Palm Sunday celebration of Jesus' entrance into Jerusalem to the resurrection of our Lord from the tomb on Easter Sunday. There may be other churches and cathedrals around the world that have conducted more elaborate or extravagant Holy Week liturgies, but perhaps nowhere will one find the Paschal Mystery revealed with more loving devotion than in your own parish, especially during the sacred Triduum. Surely, we have many people to thank for giving us this extraordinary experience.

The Holy Week liturgies helped us see God's love for the world in the death and resurrection of his Son. On Holy Thursday perhaps we saw Jesus in our pastor washing feet, giving us an example of what it means to be good stewards of our sisters and brothers. Could this washing ritual inspire us to think more prayerfully about what we should be doing every day for one another since our Lord came to serve and not be served? On Good Friday we participated solemnly as the Passion story was retold according to the Gospel of John. We then revered the cross of Christ, recognizing that we are expressing only a fraction of the love he poured out for us.

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In the dark before Easter morning, with candles lit from the great Paschal candle, our hearts were also being set on fire by the work of the Holy Spirit. Bells ringing, songs of praise and sprinkling of Easter baptismal waters, all served to reveal the splendor of Easter. Perhaps the celebration of Christ's resurrection was made even more joyous by new members of the parish coming forward to make their sacramental initiation into the Church. The Easter Sunday Masses would continue the celebration of the night before. Indeed, maybe one could even have made an authentic religious pilgrimage to your parish during Holy Week.

To your pastor and other clergy, director of liturgy or worship, parish pastoral team and leaders, choir, lectors, servers and all those who gave this gift of the Paschal Mystery and made the Holy Week experience for your parish community a meaningful and substantive encounter with the risen Lord, be sure and extend a spirit-filled "Thank you!"

20 Stewardship Ideas for the Month of May



- 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.
- Pray for peace on Memorial Day.
- Help a neighbor who is physically unable to 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.

Mother's Day: A Stewardship Reflection

May 11 is Mother's Day and what theme is more universal than motherhood? We Catholics prize that nurturing relationship so highly that we call our Church, "Holy Mother," and we venerate Mary, the mother of Jesus, for her pivotal role in the life of our Lord and savior.

Yet, Mother's Day can bring with it a plethora of emotion and memories. Any mother can attest to the difficulty and challenge of the task of parenting. And mothers come in all shapes and sizes. Some mothers are birth mothers, some are adoptive. Some mothers are the grandmas or aunts who raised us. Some mothers left us far too soon. Some mothers are the people we rebelled against; some mothers are the women we idolized. Most often, our mothers were probably both. It's a complex relationship, this parenting.

During the month of May, we honor and remember not just our own moms, but Mary, the Mother of God. We see her as the great symbol of motherhood and as our role model. Let us ask Mary's intercession, so that in our endeavors to be good stewards and to raise good stewards, to nurture in the faith those entrusted to us, she might come to our assistance and guide us with her motherly understanding. And on Mother's Day, we ask Mary to bless all mothers, especially our own.



Stewardship: Living Our Vocations

by Leisa Anslinger, Recipient of the 2022 ICSC Christian Stewardship Award

I have always found this excerpt from the U.S. bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* particularly powerful: "Jesus' call is urgent. He does not tell people to follow him at some time in the future but here and now — at this moment, in these circumstances. There can be no delay" (SDR, p. 14). As stewardship leaders, we must constantly ask ourselves these questions: What is our particular moment of life personally and in our faith community? What circumstances must we take into consideration as we call one another to live and grow as stewards?



Stewardship provides so much that our young people need! Forming people to live their vocations as disciples who live as stewards is a gift beyond what most of us can ask or imagine.

In the first chapter of the bishops' letter, they help us to recognize that embracing stewardship is about living out our particular vocations. We discern Christ's call for us in the context of the community of believers; we respond to the urgent call of Christ. This is why it is very important that we begin forming our children and teens as stewards, so that they will recognize and respond to God's grace in their lives, understand themselves as disciples of Jesus Christ from a very early age, and reflect on their response to Christ's call and their many blessings as good stewards.

There is much evidence that such real-life, day-to-day faith formation is needed if our children are to remain actively engaged in a life of faith within the faith community as young adults. In the United States over 30 percent of adults under the age of 30 are now unaffiliated. The majority of these young people leave their congregation before age 24. Young adults tell us they are looking for a meaningful way of life; they want to contribute to something that matters; they need to know that religion is not at odds with science, but rather, that faith brings a larger perspective to what is learned through science. They want and need to learn from the witness of adults who are actively living as faith-filled people in the world. Stewardship provides so much that our young people need! Forming people to live their vocations as disciples who live as stewards is a gift beyond what most of us can ask or imagine.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Third Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 3/4, 2025**

This weekend's Gospel reading from John enjoys a number of themes not least of which has to do with hearing Christ's call to live differently but returning to our "comfort zones." Even after seeing the risen Lord and receiving his blessing and missionary charge, his disciples go back to what they were doing before Jesus first called them. Instead of continuing Jesus' ministry, they return to the life they knew. When faced with the choice between embarking on a new way of life or staying where life is familiar and comfortable, they chose the latter. Good stewards know that Christ has called them to open their hearts and live in a different way. How often do we retreat from the Lord's call so that we may remain with what is comfortable and familiar?

Fourth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 10/11, 2025**

Jesus, the "Good Shepherd," makes a promise in today's Gospel to those who hear his voice and follow him. He promises them eternal life. Amidst all the other voices that clamor for attention in their daily lives, the voices that make demands, give advice, seek to persuade or like to gossip, good stewards listen for the Good Shepherd's voice. The other voices are legion and we do not always recognize how contrary they are to the voice of the Good Shepherd. Good stewards know that it takes a compassionate heart, a habit of prayer, a hunger for the Eucharist and a love of neighbor for them to truly hear the voice of the Good Shepherd. What might we do in our daily lives to prepare us to more authentically hear the voice of the Good Shepherd?

Fifth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 17/18, 2025**

In today's Gospel Jesus makes a bold and clear statement to his disciples. "I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are

my disciples, if you have love for one another." We are called to love others as a sign of our discipleship in Jesus Christ. That includes even those "others" we might prefer to forget. We are so often tempted to draw lines between those who we will love and those who we consider not worthy of our love. This week take time to reflect on Jesus' love command. How often do we heed Jesus' love command? What change in our lives must take place in order for us to obey this command?

Sixth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 24/25, 2025**

In today's Gospel we witness the last evening Jesus spends with his disciples before his death. He has already made it clear that his followers will show their love for him by serving others. To live that kind of love, they will need the active presence of God in their midst. Jesus tells his disciples that he and his Father will come and make their home with them. He also tells them that the Holy Spirit will be among them to teach them and remind them of all that Jesus had taught. Good stewards recognize that God is in their midst and that the Holy Spirit is guiding them. How often do we acknowledge God's presence in our lives? How often do we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us?

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord **May 29 or Weekend of May 31/June 1, 2025**

Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, a feast which, in part, celebrates the confidence he placed in his close followers to continue his ministry. In the Gospel reading Jesus reminds his followers of the purpose of his mission, and commissions them to continue his work by proclaiming his word and by living courageously that which they preached. He also promises them the Holy Spirit who he said would strengthen them for the task ahead. As stewards of Jesus' life and ministry, a good question for us to reflect on this week might be this: Has Christ's confidence in the quality of our own witness been well placed?