

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

October 2025 • e-Bulletin



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for October*

Gracious and Loving God

We give you thanks
for this time of year;
a time of transformation
that reveals the awe-inspiring
gift of your creation.

Teach us how
to be good stewards
of all the gifts
you have given us;
and show us how
we may share
those gifts generously,
especially with those
most in need
of your loving care.

Give us the strength
to be good stewards
of the Gospel,
to love others as we
love ourselves,
and to follow in your Son's
footsteps, until we
find our way home to you.

We pray this through your Son,
Jesus Christ,
Who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit,
God, forever and ever.

Amen

Stewardship and the Family

We refer to the family as the “domestic Church.” It is a phrase the Second Vatican Council brought forth from the writings of the early Church fathers and describes family life as the center of Catholic spirituality and faith. Those of us who live in a modern family, though, can attest to the incredible challenges of creating a family life that fully lives up to that image of “domestic Church” especially in the autumn of each year.

Busy schedules can make family members feel as though they live as ships passing in the night. Job demands, class schedules, school events, church groups, business trips, commute times, sports – the list goes on. Experts tell us the family dinner, a nightly event years ago, is



Schedule a big breakfast or brunch on Sunday after Mass. The table celebration could include everyone's favorite food. Make it a family event from beginning through clean-up.

an increasingly rare occurrence, and even when families are together under one roof, smart phones, televisions, and every imaginable screen demanding their attention keep them isolated from each other in the same house, even the same room.

What can we do to make sacred the “domestic Church” within our homes? What can we do to exercise better stewardship of our families? How about starting with the family meal? Schedule a big breakfast or brunch on Sunday after Mass. The table celebration could include everyone's favorite food. Make it a family event from beginning through clean-up. Keep a large, visible calendar on which everyone's schedule is

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

noted, so that a family dinner can be planned and prioritized. That meal should be a social occasion, not the time to check if Bobby passed his science test or scold Suzy because she wouldn't get out of bed that morning. It is a time for pleasant conversation, no electronic devices permitted. And don't worry if it's not roast beef – pizza out of a box and a salad can be just as fun.

Then, create a plan to work on family prayer time. Besides going to Sunday Mass together, how about a time in the evening when everyone stops what they're doing and gathers

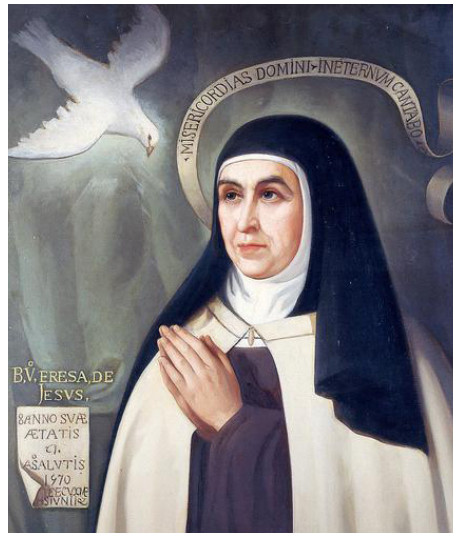
As a steward, prioritize your own sense of family stewardship.

for just a few moments before bedtime for prayer? Perhaps use commute times – the trip to the soccer field or the morning drive to school – to share a brief and heartfelt prayer with your children. Do your children see you pray with Scripture? Let children see you make prayer a priority. Saint John Paul II stressed the importance of prayer as a family. "Prayer makes the Son of God present among us," he wrote.

What else might you do to elevate the sacredness of your own domestic Church? Do your children see you honor special time with your spouse? Do you make quality time with each child individually? Do you listen to them when they speak, or are you checking your mobile phone texts as they talk? Communicate the idea that family comes first and they will catch on. As a steward, prioritize your own sense of family stewardship. If our children grow up with the idea that "church" is indelibly linked to "family," their faith will grow stronger.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for October*

St. Teresa of Avila, Doctor of the Church



St. Teresa of Avila founded the Discalced Carmelite religious community of women and was one of the first two women to be named Doctor of the Church (with Catherine of Siena) because of her extraordinary contribution to Christian mysticism and spirituality.

Born in 1515 to a large, aristocratic Castilian family in Avila, Spain, Teresa entered the Carmelite monastery when she was 20 years old. She spent a number of relatively average years in the convent before she experienced a vision that changed her life forever.

In 1554, while praying before a statue of the crucified Christ, Teresa underwent a profound spiritual conversion. She later wrote: "When I fell to prayer again and looked at Christ hanging poor and naked upon the cross, I felt I could not bear to be rich." She prayed that she might be as poor as Jesus. Teresa had a number of mystical experiences centered on Christ's passion. She was motivated by these visions to reform her religious community which had relaxed the observance of its original rule.

In 1562, Teresa established a convent in Avila with thirteen other nuns where she felt the primitive Carmelite Rule could be strictly observed. Their communal life was marked by prayer, poverty, manual work, abstinence

Teresa had a number of mystical experiences centered on Christ's passion. She was motivated by these visions to reform her religious community which had relaxed the observance of its original rule.

from meat and solitude. This convent would become the model for 16 other Discalced convents she would establish between 1562 and 1582 while traveling across the rugged Castilian countryside by mule. In 1567, she met St. John of the Cross, who she enlisted to extend her reform into the male side of the Carmelite community.

St. Teresa was a prolific writer on the spiritual life and left a substantial body of writings on Christian mysticism. These works include the Way of Perfection and Meditations on the Song of Songs. Her masterpiece was the Interior Castle which was a disguised autobiography. For St. Teresa, the test of growth in the spiritual life was the extent one responded to Christ's stewardship call to love one's neighbor.

Teresa died on October 4, 1582, and was canonized in 1622. She is the patron saint of Spain. Her feast day is October 15.

Embracing Technology to Build the Kingdom

By Lisa Schillace, National Director, #iGiveCatholic



In 2015 when #iGiveCatholic launched its first giving day campaign, many organizations – particularly parishes and parochial schools – did not have online giving available on their home websites. Many did not have social media accounts or know how to effectively use them. Technology moves so rapidly, it can be hard to “keep up,” especially for a small staff!

accounts, but participants come back each year for the specific technological features that make a giving day feel exciting and dynamic.

Through our livestream on GivingTuesday, #iGiveCatholic connects Catholics across the country to celebrate our shared culture and the innumerable positive impacts our thousands of ministries have every

We are an online charitable marketplace serving donors with Catholic values, connecting them to the real and immediate needs of our church.

#iGiveCatholic was designed to be a “plug-and-play” resource to help Catholic organizations learn and apply best practices in stewardship, specifically through digital and online tools. Most organizations have since incorporated online giving into their websites and activated social media

day on their local communities and beyond. #iGiveCatholic also has strategic collaborations with vendors seeking to apply the benefits of technology to enhance the operations and promote the missions of our Catholic ministries.

Last year, the #iGiveCatholic National Advisory Board took on the task of updating the key organizational language. As we discerned what was most important to capture, we celebrated that #iGiveCatholic is a niche service ministry harnessing the latest technology to inspire and celebrate generosity for the benefit of the Catholic Church. We are an online charitable marketplace serving donors with Catholic values, connecting them to the real and immediate needs of our church.

This year, #iGiveCatholic changed technology partners. With this change came a multitude of opportunities with our new website and new strategic features available to our users. After Giving Tuesday ends, participants can now continue to use the platform for Catholic Schools Week, special group or team fundraising projects, or even collective fundraising campaigns for individuals in need – like a “Catholic Go Fund Me.”

We are not afraid of technology, but neither do we immediately adopt each new fad. In prayerful collective discernment, we allow the Holy Spirit to guide where we can connect technology to better serve our community of Catholic dioceses, foundations, parishes, schools, and ministries across the United States and Puerto Rico. We invite you to join us in exploring what future opportunities await!

Registration for #iGiveCatholic on Giving Tuesday is open until November 1. Catholic parishes, schools and ministries in one of fifty-four partner dioceses can participate for free; those in non-partnering dioceses can participate through our National Ministries group. Learn more at www.igivecatholic.org.

Stewards of a Missionary Church

The month of October is an ideal time to focus our prayerful reflections on the world and to see its people as a gift from God. The global community is a gift to be received with gratitude and held in stewardship. With the celebration of World Mission Sunday, October is a month that offers Catholics world-wide the opportunity to renew their commitment to proclaim the Gospel and to give a greater missionary focus to parish activities. It is time to reflect on the global context of our stewardship, and to express our gratitude to missionaries who bear witness to Christ in the most remote and challenging places of the world, often with their lives.



The month of October can remind us that being witnesses to Jesus Christ is a stewardship responsibility of us all. In a world experiencing increasingly disturbing forms of alienation and indifference, our communion of faith can offer signs of hope and work to make the planet a home for all people.

We are “communion” because of the gift of the Eucharist. And this gift that we celebrate in the sacrament is not something we can keep to ourselves. By its very nature it demands to be shared with everyone. That is one reason the missionary impulse of our Church has always been a sign of vitality in its unique witness of unity around the world.

The Church’s work around the world is as important as the work in our own neighborhood.

There are a number of ways you can focus on the missionary activity of the Church:

- Include petitions for the Church’s missionary work in your daily prayers.
- Increase your awareness of the wider global mission of the Church.
- Discover ways to participate in specific missionary activities taking place in your parish or diocese.
- Give generously on World Mission Sunday, celebrated this year on October 19.

The Church’s work around the world is as important as the work in our own neighborhood. Let us be mindful this month that we are stewards of the Gospel, called to proclaim it to the ends of the earth, bringing hope to a world that hungers for Christ’s peace.



Stewardship and the Gift of Human Life

October is Respect Life Month for Catholics in the United States. Dioceses and parishes around the country will begin the celebration with Respect Life Sunday, which has been traditionally designated as the first Sunday of October each year. This monthly celebration calls our attention to the Church’s reaffirmation and recommitment to protect human life from conception to natural death.

To be good stewards of the gift of life obliges us to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed when it comes to preserving the sanctity of life. We have complex issues facing us today in the areas of health care, assisted suicide, care for the aging, the destruction of human embryos or harvesting stem cells, the death penalty, abortion and post-abortion concerns and reconciliation. To address these complexities, the message should be compassionate, yet compelling.

In his pastoral letter, *Ecclesia in America (The Church in America)*, our late pontiff, Saint John Paul II, wrote:

Nowadays, in America as elsewhere in the world, a model of society appears to be emerging in

Continued from page 4

which the powerful predominate, setting aside and even eliminating the powerless: I am thinking here of unborn children, helpless victims of abortion; the elderly and incurably ill, subjected at times to euthanasia; and the many other people relegated to the margins of society by consumerism and materialism ... This model of society bears the stamp of the culture of death, and is therefore in opposition to the Gospel message.

To be good stewards of the gift of life obliges us to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed when it comes to preserving the sanctity of life.

Faced with this distressing reality, the Church community intends to commit itself all the more to the defense of the culture of life.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issues information packets each year to parishes to help them in their promotion and their commitment to be faithful to the Gospel of Life. The bishops encourage each parish to get involved in at least one activity during Respect Life Month so that parishioners can understand their role in being better stewards of the gift of human life.

What is most important for good stewards is to remain faithful to prayer and to renew this month a firm resolve to proclaim a culture of life and an end to the killing and degradation of human beings, especially those who are vulnerable due to their age, health, dependency or ethnic background, and to work to rid our culture of the notion that humans are simply part of a disposable society.

Benedictine Stewardship Integrates Prayer and Work

By Dan Conway, Chair, ICSC Board of Directors

For more than 1500 years, the women and men who follow the Rule of Saint Benedict have shown themselves to be generous, grateful, and responsible stewards of all God's spiritual and material gifts. The Benedictine motto, *Ora et Labora* (prayer and work) is itself a stewardship commitment. Benedictines



promise to integrate their spiritual lives with their material existence. In his Rule, Saint Benedict urges his followers to treat the goods of the monastery with the same reverence and care as they do the sacred vessels of the altar.

Care for creation is an essential component of Benedictine life. So is hospitality, care for the poor and vulnerable, and profound respect for all human persons made in the image and likeness of their Creator. The followers of Saint Benedict know that every spiritual and material gift belongs, first and foremost, to God alone. We are but stewards of God's bounty, called to take care of, and share generously, the spiritual and material blessings we have received from God's goodness.

Benedictines pray always because they combine their formal prayers (both personal and in community) with all their daily activities. *Ora et Labora* means integrating these two essential dimensions of their lives—prayer and work. As a result, what they do is less important than how they do it or why they do it. If every hour of the day and night is consecrated to the praise of God, then everything that a Benedictine does becomes an expression of the *Opus Dei* (the Work of God).

In a recent homily, Pope Leo XIV, who clearly understands the importance of integrating our spiritual and material lives, said:

We should set aside moments of silence, moments of prayer, times in which, quieting noise and distractions, we recollect ourselves before God in simplicity of heart. This is a dimension of the Christian life that we particularly need to recover today. We must make room for silence, for listening to the Father who speaks and sees in secret (Mt 6:6).

Benedictines "make room for silence." In their prayer and work they strive to take the gifts they have been given, cultivate them responsibly, and share them generously with others. Benedictine spirituality teaches all of us how to be good stewards, how to care for creation, and to share God's gifts with everyone we encounter, especially the poor and vulnerable.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 4/5, 2025

From today's second reading, we are made to realize, like Timothy, that Christ's call to follow him is meant for us all. Good stewards realize they have everything necessary to live for Christ. "Stir up the fire that is already burning inside you." Another way to express this thought in the vocabulary of stewardship is: "Use your gifts now! Serve the Lord now! Get involved now! God put the fire inside you but you have to stir up the flame! Let it burn!" Everyone can give witness to Christ's presence in the world, and most of us can do more than one thing for the Lord. How exactly do you "stir into flame" God's unique gifts you hold within you?

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 11/12, 2025

In today's Gospel, we hear of the ten men afflicted with leprosy, and the one who glorifies God for being healed. It is a dramatic scene of gratitude. But in order for the miracle to happen in the first place, these men had to start walking in faith before their diseased conditions change one tiny bit. Good stewards of their faith realize that they cannot wait until their problems are over to start walking in faith. They praise God even in the darkest of nights, and in the worst of circumstances. Do we walk in faith, offering the Lord our gratitude even when we are in difficult circumstances?

Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 18/19, 2025

If we want to know what Jesus' parable is about in today's Gospel, it seems that we don't need to work too hard because Saint Luke tell us right at the beginning: "Jesus told his disciples a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart." This parable has often been used to bring comfort to us about our prayer life. But could there be a more challenging message for those who take stewardship seriously? Widows were the poorest and most vulnerable of people in Jesus' time. Oppressive legal and economic structures were the norm. Jesus embraced with great compassion the poor and the marginalized. Could it be that we are also encouraged to pray persistently for the poor, the weak and the vulnerable as we hear their cry for justice? And that we must not lose heart that we can effect change in their lives?

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 25/26, 2025

There is an interesting twist we find in today's gospel when we hear Jesus' parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the temple. The Pharisee is "praying to himself." It doesn't mean he was praying silently. It seems to mean something a lot more troubling, that he is praying to himself; that God is not his prayer's intended audience. The words of the Pharisee are very much centered on himself: he makes claims about his character. He highlights his own admirable activities. Good stewards of their prayer lives know that a prayer of praise and thanksgiving should focus on the goodness of God. Do your prayers of thanksgiving always stay focused on God's unfathomable, immeasurable goodness and generosity?