



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

# CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

April 2026 • e-Bulletin

## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for April

Loving Father,

We know the truth of the Easter proclamation.

Christ is risen and with him all creation!

Light replaces darkness, joy replaces sadness, life replaces death.

Through the power of your Spirit, there is no failure his love and mercy cannot reverse, no humiliation he cannot exchange with blessing, no anger he cannot dissolve, no routine he cannot transform.

All is embraced by the victory of your son's cross and resurrection.

Help us always be good stewards of Easter's light, see Resurrection as a daily event, and yearn for the love of Christ as intensely as he yearns for our love.

We pray this in Jesus' name.  
Amen

## Easter – A joyful season for those who are the “Light of Christ”

For those who exercise good stewardship of their Catholic faith, this April is the happiest, most joyful of months for it ushers in the great Easter season – a season of profound hope and joy. During the Easter season, which extends 50 days, from the Easter Vigil Mass of Saturday evening, **April 4** to the Vigil Mass of Pentecost Sunday, on Saturday evening, **May 23**, Christian stewards are exhorted to celebrate and be joyful, for our Savior is with us.



“Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father”  
(Matt. 5:16).

In his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (“The Joy of the Gospel”), Pope Francis revealed that the best way to live out the joy of Easter is to become a genuine family of faith, an “evangelizing Church that comes out of herself.” He urged Catholics around the world to contemplate the mind of Jesus Christ and what it means to be the “light of Christ.” From there, Francis believed a spirituality of missionary discipleship could be cultivated that would “help the Church get out of herself “ and reach out to those who live in darkness.

At the Easter Vigil, all the great symbols are there: darkness, light, fire, water. The Vigil begins in darkness; not a darkness to be ignored, but a darkness in which we realize where we would be without the light of



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Christ, a darkness that reveals much about our world, our own sinfulness, the darkness that sometimes envelopes our own lives and even shrouds our own hearts. But then, the great fire of the Vigil is lit, a fire which consumes the darkness, and the procession into the church reminds us of the light and strength provided by the community of the faithful and the saving light of Christ. Indeed, Saint Paul maintains that we are stewards of this great light. We remember the waters of baptism



Indeed, April is the most glorious of months.  
Christ is risen! Alleluia!

during the Vigil as we renew our baptismal vows. The Vigil also brings into our community those newly baptized who proceed joyfully with us into April.

As Christ's disciples who exercise stewardship of Jesus' teachings, come into the glory of this April, join with those apostles whose hearts were on fire, and contemplate the words of the risen Lord: "Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father" (Matt. 5:16). **For good stewards of their faith**, this charge should be enough to bring hope and joy. Indeed, April is the most glorious of months. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT for April



### Saint John Baptist de La Salle

St. John Baptist de La Salle is the patron saint of schoolteachers. He was the founder of the Brothers of the Christian Schools and is renowned for his lifelong devotion to educating the poor. John Baptist was born to a wealthy family in Reims, France, in 1651. He was a scholar, studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1678. He earned a doctorate in theology in 1681. Although he lived a comfortable life at the cathedral in Reims, he was drawn to education early on. At the urging of a layman to open a school for poor children in Reims, John Baptist opened two schools that became very popular, even though the prevailing view in France was that children of the poor should only be taught how to perform manual labor, not to be educated.

John Baptist continued to discern the will of God in his life. He sold all that he possessed and donated the proceeds for hunger relief. He and a small group of men formed themselves into a religious community by taking a vow of obedience and adopting the name Brothers of the Christian Schools. In 1686, he opened four more schools in Reims as well as a school to train teachers. He would later establish other schools in Paris and Saint-Denis.

Although his religious community was not yet approved by the Church, in 1694 John Baptist and twelve of his community members took perpetual vows, committing themselves to providing free education to the poor for the rest of their lives. John Baptist's educational theories and practices became standard including classroom instruction instead of one-on-one instruction, teaching in the native language instead of in Latin and integrating faith formation into a curriculum.

St. John Baptist de LaSalle died on Good Friday, April 7, 1719. He was canonized in 1900 and his feast is celebrated on April 7.



# Stewardship:

## Shining the Light of Christ for All to See (Mt 5:16)

*Join these Special Guests:*



**Most Rev. Shelton J. Fabre**  
*Archbishop of Louisville*



**Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin, C.S.s.R.**  
*Archbishop of Newark*



**Most Rev. J. Mark Spalding**  
*Bishop of Nashville*



**Most Rev. James F. Checchio**  
*Archbishop of New Orleans*



**Most Rev. Andres Cantoria Ligot**  
*Auxiliary Bishop of San Jose*



**Most Rev. Lino Panizza Richero, O.F.M. Cap.**  
*Bishop Emeritus Carabayllo, in Peru*

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### Stewardship themes you will not want to miss:

- Inspiring stewardship testimonies from parish leaders
- Reengaging those parishioners who have been inactive
- Promoting the stewardship message to young adults
- Effectively using social media to increase parishioner involvement
- Building the Body of Christ in a multicultural parish
- How to address the spirituality of giving with parishioners
- Keeping the annual stewardship renewal fresh and inspirational



## Let's Teach Our Children to Be Good Stewards of the Earth!

April 22 marks the celebration of Earth Day 2026. This annual event, which began in 1970 and launched the modern environmental movement, reminds us all that the care and protection of our earth and natural environment is of urgent concern. Let us celebrate Earth Day by cultivating a deep sense of environmental stewardship in our children.

Like many aspects of parenting, creating healthy habits involves repetition and teaching our children the values and reasons behind why we do things. We can explain the importance of recycling or why composting keeps material out of landfills. We can also teach our children about the importance of keeping our parks and beaches clean to protect the ecosystem. Here are a few tips to help raise your children's consciousness of being good stewards of the earth.

- Create your own family recycling center: Teach children to always pick up after themselves and to dispose of trash in the proper containers. This can easily be done by having separate storage bins for trash, recycling and compost that are labeled accordingly. Children love placing things in containers, and they will figure out the system pretty quickly.
- Get children into the outdoors: The best way to get children connected to the planet is to take them outdoors and let them experience nature first-hand. This can be done by taking hikes or visiting a lake or river. Having a picnic in the park is also a great way to experience nature.
- Teach children how to care for plants and animals. Taking care of plants and pets is an easy way for your children to learn how to care for living things. This will also teach them responsibility.
- Teach children to respect nature. When we spend time in nature, our presence often impacts the health of the plants and animals we come into contact with. While spending time outdoors, take the time to teach your children why staying on the trails is important in order to protect sensitive ecosystems, or while at the beach or in a park, teach them to clean up any trash before leaving, or not to disturb the wildlife.
- Set a good example for kids: This is the best way to teach children to be eco-friendly as children look up to their parents and mimic their behavior. The key is to not just talk about being good stewards of the earth, but to actually practice it.

The earth and all its resources are a precious gift from God. Let's teach our children to show their respect and appreciation for this wondrous gift by diligently caring for it. Let's make it a priority to teach our children the importance of showing gratitude to God by being good stewards of His creation.

## Stewardship of Others: Our Life as Servant Leaders

by Leisa Anslinger,

During the Easter season we immerse ourselves in the wonder of Jesus' resurrection and the story of the early Church through our Sunday liturgies. Each year, I look forward to hearing from the Acts of the Apostles during this season. I am inspired by the faith and courage of the apostles and those who came to believe in Jesus Christ as a result of their witness and stewardship of their community of faith. I am also encouraged when reading the story of the development of the early communities of believers – not only did they face immense challenges from



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the Roman and Jewish authorities, they were often challenged from within, as they figured out what it meant to be Christians in community with one another.

In his book on the gift of administration, Reverend Donald Senior, biblical scholar and former president of Catholic Theological Union, writes of the ways leadership emerged in the early Church. He writes:

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The inspiration for all leadership in the New Testament is rooted in the example of Jesus. His qualities of compassion, integrity, and selfless service in the carrying out of his mission are reflected in the virtues lifted up in the examples of early community leaders such as Peter, Barnabas, Paul, and Priscilla and Aquila. The fundamental responsibility of New Testament leaders is to foster the common good of the community – and here, too, the example of Jesus is paramount. Jesus the healer and teacher was committed to the restoration and well-being of God's people. So, too, the charismatic leadership of Paul and the more administrative type of leadership exercised by Peter, Barnabas, Phoebe, and Priscilla and Aquila and many others were directed to building up the Body of Christ.



Father Senior goes on to summarize this form of leadership, modeled by Jesus himself, as “servant leadership” (*The Gift of Administration: New Testament Foundations for the Vocation of Administrative Service*, Liturgical Press, 2016).

As we hear the story of the early Church this Easter season, let us reflect on our stewardship of others in our family of faith, our role as servant leaders: How do we continue the mission of Jesus with compassion, integrity and selfless service? How do we build up the Body of Christ as a community of disciples and stewards?



## 20 Random 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.



# Sharing the Lord's Work Through Your Diocesan Appeal

Many diocesan annual appeals are now in full swing, and it is important to remember that our generosity toward the ministries of our local bishop offer us a special opportunity to answer the Lord's call in ways we could never think of doing on our own. Responding to our bishops' requests for supporting these diocesan ministries renews our personal commitment to more fully participate as good stewards in Christ's mission for the Church. We are, indeed, the Body of Christ, and through our support of diocesan-funded ministries, programs and services, we are able to impact the lives of hundreds, perhaps thousands of people in our diocese and beyond day-by-day.

**Sample areas where your gifts may be at work in your own diocesan community:**

## **PRIESTLY VOCATIONS**

Vocation discernment retreats  
 Outreach to parishes and schools  
 Financial support for seminarians  
 Vocations literature and prayer cards

## **CLERGY**

Convocation for Priests and Permanent Deacons  
 Pastoral Care of Priests  
 Pastoral Care of Permanent Deacons  
 Ongoing education for clergy

## **STEWARDSHIP EDUCATION**

Parish stewardship commissions and committees  
 Parish stewardship formation  
 Stewardship communications  
 Stewardship resources

## **EVANGELIZATION, CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS**

Catechetical Programming and Formation  
 Catholic Schools  
 Evangelization  
 Men's Ministry  
 Women's Ministry  
 Hispanic Ministries  
 Health, Athletics, Physical Education and Safety



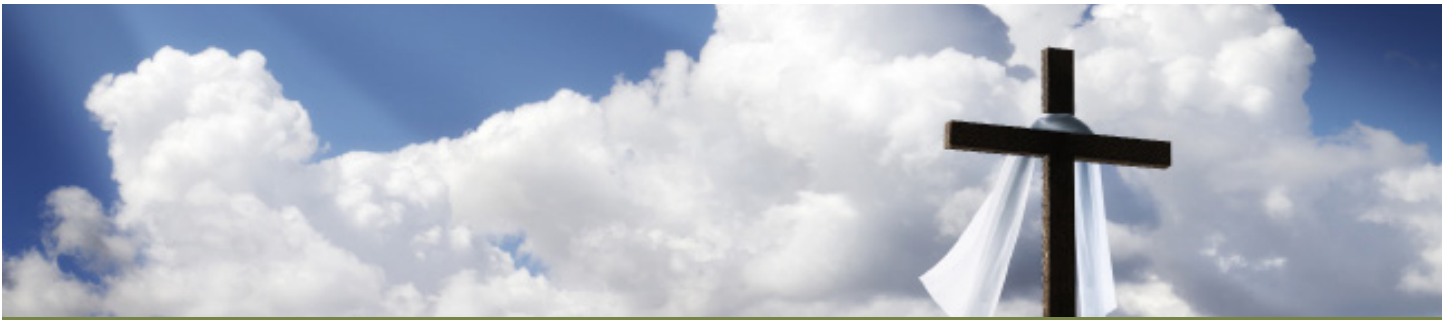
Marriage and Family Life  
 Natural Family Planning programs  
 Pro-Life activities  
 RCIA  
 Youth Ministries  
 Young Adults and Campus Ministries

## **PARISH AND SPECIAL PASTORAL SERVICES**

Christian Service and Health Care Ministries  
 Ministry to the Hearing Impaired  
 Disabilities Concerns  
 Hospital Chaplaincy Programs  
 Ministry to the Sick and Caregivers  
 Parish Nurse Program  
 Ecumenical / Interfaith programs  
 Pastoral Planning & Leadership Services  
 Lay leadership training  
 Parish clustering, merging, and closing transitions



Parish Pastoral Councils and Commissions  
 Parish planning  
 Worship  
 Formation for Choirs, cantors, and choir directors  
 Liturgical ministers  
 Liturgical consultation for church buildings/renovations  
 Liturgical resources and research  
 Music Ministries  
 Rite of Election



## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **The Resurrection of the Lord – Easter Vigil April 4, 2026**

In tonight's reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, we are reminded that we are alive in Christ. And it is not merely once a year that we remember what Jesus did to give us this new life, forgiveness and peace. Every day good stewards remember their baptism. They remember that they are united with Jesus in his death; that daily they drown the old sinful nature, and that daily they rise to their new life in Christ. Let us be mindful every day, especially when we are troubled by life or tempted by sin, that our lives are no longer about us, but about Christ's active, loving presence within us. That is our baptism. Alleluia! He is risen!

### **The Resurrection of the Lord – Easter Sunday April 5, 2026**

The reading from the Acts of the Apostles reminds us that we, too, bear witness to the risen Lord. The presence of Christ is within us, making us new, transforming us, turning us into stewards of the Good News. There is no more time for holding grudges, disliking others, seeking vengeance, maintaining old prejudices, tolerating bias. We are Christ's joy and instruments of his peace. Our world is reordered. Reflect on how we are called to let Christ's forgiveness, reconciliation and love permeate our lives. We are Easter people. Rejoice! He is risen! Alleluia!

### **Second Sunday of Easter/Divine Mercy Sunday Weekend of April 11/12, 2026**

In today's first reading, the four activities of the earliest church are introduced to us as priorities of the church: devotion to the teachings of the apostles, communal fellowship, the Eucharist and prayer. The early members of the church saw themselves as devoted stewards of these activities. These were not options. They were the fruits of a genuine conversion to a life in Christ. Sharing

in the Eucharist was the most intimate expression of fellowship, while the most common expression of fellowship in the New Testament was that of sharing financial resources – giving. It was not a perfect community, but one that gave evidence of God's active presence in its midst. This early community offers us an excellent example of how to better exercise stewardship in our own parish families.

### **Third Sunday of Easter Weekend of April 18/19, 2026**

As today's gospel reveals, the first meal shared with the risen Lord happened in a place called Emmaus. Perhaps there is no better time to reflect on this story than in those prayerful moments at Mass when we return to our place after receiving Holy Communion. Those few moments give us an opportunity to reflect on our stewardship of Christ's presence within us. We have a chance to practice hospitality by inviting Jesus into our hearts to walk and talk with us about our own Emmaus journey. We can relive once again the time when he broke bread for the disciples. And just as they did, we too can recognize Christ in this meal we have just shared with others.

### **Fourth Sunday of Easter Weekend of April 25/26, 2026**

Saint Peter plays a prominent leadership role in the first two readings, urging his listeners to be baptized and accept the gift of the Holy Spirit; and encouraging them to follow in the footsteps of Christ. We have just renewed our baptismal promises at Easter and the Holy Spirit dwells in us in a special way. Are we good stewards of those baptismal vows? Have we renewed our commitment to follow in Jesus' footsteps? Have we opened our hearts to discern the will of God in our lives? Take some time to reflect on the importance of our baptismal renewal and our lives as disciples of the Lord.