



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2026 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for May

Gracious and Loving God,

When your Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, they spoke the languages of those who came to hear their testimony.

They proclaimed a new covenant in Christ Jesus, sanctified by his blood, bound by the Holy Spirit, and sealed in the waters of Baptism.

We give you thanks and praise for releasing your Spirit upon us; and in these anxious times pray that it will break through the many barriers that divide people.

Let your Spirit open our eyes as a communion of faith to your ongoing presence among us, so we can recognize you when we serve one another.

Let your Spirit open our minds so that we may gain the wisdom to work together to show love for our neighbors, and unite our talents to build a better, safer world.

And let your Spirit open our hearts so that together we can live more fully in Christ, shine his light of mercy and hope and prepare for the day of his glorious return.

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

Amen.



Pentecost: The Holy Spirit at Work in the World

The feast of Pentecost is quickly approaching (May 19) and it is an annual reminder that the Creed we profess is not for the timid. It's not a part-time deal, a Sunday morning interlude, something we try to get around to when we're not so busy. Pentecost also reminds us, with mighty wind and terrifying flame, that as Christian stewards we must be all in to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and be open to the Spirit's direction and power.



The working of the Spirit continues to make forgiveness possible and transforms our lives.

Throughout the history of Christianity we can see evidence of how the Holy Spirit continuously breaks out afresh in our Church and world. The Holy Spirit has awakened Christians from their complacency, led them into new frontiers of celebration, sacramentality and evangelization. The working of the Spirit continues to make forgiveness possible and transforms our lives. We believe that God's Holy Spirit has been poured out as a principle of unity to bring to completion the divine plan of salvation for everyone. Good stewards know that they must cooperate and not resist the work of the Spirit.

Saint Paul tells us that there are characteristics by which we can recognize the Holy Spirit at work within each of us. These characteristics are called the fruits of the Spirit and they are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

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These fruits are made manifest through our attitudes and actions in Church, among our neighbors, in the marketplace, the public square and in our use of social media.

In his first Letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul also writes that no one can believe in Jesus Christ without the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:3). No one can even live as a disciple of the Lord without the Holy Spirit. No one can pray without him. We are convinced that when someone speaks or thinks well of another, the Holy Spirit is at work. When people do not think first of themselves but treat others as sisters and brothers, when they do not give up hope in God's promises for humanity and the world, God's Spirit is at work. Stewards know that the Spirit inspires trust, confidence and the energy not to be satisfied with what one has already accomplished. The Holy Spirit gives us the wisdom to follow the Gospel and put the Eucharist into action every single day.

The working of the Holy Spirit, though, does not restrict or oblige people to do what they do not accept. God has given us the freedom to follow Jesus or not to follow him. Of course, the Holy Spirit will not be denied, but works most effectively through us when we are committed to the Gospel. If we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit we discover, often to our surprise, capabilities in ourselves of which we could hardly imagine. This in turn allows us to inspire others.

In a world where there is so much conflict, divisiveness and polarization, even among Christians, good stewards have confidence that in the end, the Holy Spirit is going to win. The Feast of Pentecost is a feast celebrating stewardship, for it is a reminder for us to be ever vigilant to listen for the Holy Spirit's wisdom and allow ourselves to be guided by that wisdom as we seek to do the will of the Father whose plan will be fulfilled.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*

Saint Philip Neri

Philip Neri was born in 1515 in Florence, Italy, during a time of intensive reform and vigorous renewal in the Church. The Council of Trent convened on three occasions during his lifetime. He went to Rome in 1532 where he lived in extreme poverty, but devoted himself to visiting the sick and helping poor children.

With his engaging style, he evangelized young Florentines of the banking and merchant class. He arranged informal prayer and discussion groups. In 1548 he established an organization to provide hospitality for pilgrims to Rome and to care for shut-ins.

At the urging of his confessor, Philip at age 36 was ordained a priest. He soon earned a reputation for being an outstanding confessor and spiritual director; gifted with being able to



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pierce the pretenses and illusions of others and to help them see the truth about themselves. He received penitents and visitors from all walks of life, from cardinals to the very poor. Many were attracted by the warmth of his personality, his wit, unpretentiousness and cheerfulness.

Some of Philip's followers became priests. Five of them lived together with him in community and began to share a common life under his direction. The group eventually grew and became the Congregation of the Oratory, which was approved in 1575. They are best known in England through their most famous member, Saint John Henry Newman. Philip and the Oratorians introduced a new style of personal spirituality for the laity, and encouraged them to give public testimony to their faith, put on theatrical productions and compose and play songs with religious themes.

Philip suffered a stroke on May 25, 1595 and died the next morning. He was canonized a saint in 1622, although many church leaders considered him a saint even in his lifetime. He was known as the "apostle of Rome" for evangelizing and reviving a spirit of faith among the city's populace. His many friends included St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Charles Borromeo and St. Francis de Sales. He is the patron saint of the city of Rome. His feast day is May 26.

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



“As someone who works in a parish office, I gain invaluable insights and practical strategies for fostering a culture of stewardship within our faith community every time I attend the ICSC Conferences. The sessions have opened my eyes to the profound significance of stewardship as a way of life, extending far beyond mere financial contributions and showed me how stewardship is a spiritual journey, a means of living out our Christian values through the responsible use of our time, talents, and treasures.”

~ **Carol N.** *Holy Cross Melkite Catholic Church*



“When my husband and I attended our first ICSC stewardship conference, we were overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of information we received, both at the spiritual and the very practical levels, as to how embracing stewardship has not only the potential to transform our parish but also our own lives as we continue our spiritual journey to be better disciples of the Lord.

As a couple, Luis and I are involved in several different ministries, programs and social activities at a parish that consists of middle and working class parishioners, retirees and a growing number of Hispanic families.

The ICSC conference was awe-inspiring for this first-timer. Learning more about getting lapsed parishioners back in the pews was invaluable. I encourage everyone who is a pastoral leader or volunteer in their parish to attend, not only for the future of your parish, but also to nourish your own faith in Jesus Christ.”

~ **Silvia P.** *St. Alfred Parish*

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Embracing Those Who Suffer from Mental Illness

May is Mental Health Awareness month, and what better way for us to reveal God's compassion during this Year of Mercy than to become more aware of and embrace the people we encounter who suffer from mental illness.

People with mental illness sometimes behave in ways we can't comprehend. Those with severe depression sometimes stay in bed all day, unable to manage the most basic motivation to move. People with anxiety disorders can be gripped by irrational or even unidentifiable fears that don't incapacitate others. Those affected by psychotic disorders may see things that aren't real, hear voices that don't exist, and sometimes lose the ability to discern reality at all. Sometimes people with mental illness mistreat or hurt the people they love—or themselves. Some who need medication stop taking it or won't start. Some who seem to be doing well suddenly start showing symptoms again. Whatever the mental health crisis, members of our family of faith are called to be good stewards and embrace these vulnerable brothers and sisters, as Jesus did.



As stewards of Christ's love and mercy, we are called to follow his example, to reach out to those who suffer.

When people see symptoms of mental illness in others there is a tendency to distance themselves, ignore them and hope someone else will help, even in our parish communities. One weary mom lamented: "When a family member suffers from cancer or other diseases, people send cards, visit and bring a casserole. If your family member suffers from a mental illness, there is little contact or support." This mother's feeling of abandonment is regrettable and suggests that our family of faith has no tolerance or empathy for this kind of suffering. But the parish community is the Body of Christ. It cannot leave the impression that Christ himself is ready to walk away from those who carry these burdens.

As stewards of Christ's love and mercy, we are called to follow his example, to reach out to those who suffer, even those who suffer mentally and emotionally; to embrace them rather than shrink away. No one is beyond hope, past the point where God's grace touches them. We are not called to have all the answers or understand all the mysteries of mental illness. But we are called to love. That is the disciple's response.

When we encounter mental illness among family members, friends, neighbors, fellow parishioners, what should we do?

- Seek understanding instead of passing judgment. Mental illness is a disease, one we may not initially understand.
- Get more information—read a book, do some research online, or perhaps even attend a workshop sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.
- Resist the temptation to believe that people in treatment have all their needs met; mental health professionals can't be expected to provide all the needs of one in treatment. It takes a community to provide acceptance, spiritual guidance and compassion.
- Offer positive support and be sensitive to those seeking medical intervention
- Be silent if you don't know what to say—but be there for and merciful to those with mental illness.
- If you're not a mental-health professional, acknowledge your limitations but remember no professional qualifications are required to be friendly and kind or to enter into a supportive friendship.
- Offer the dignity of a handshake and a smile, companionship and perhaps even friendship.
- Remember in your prayers those who suffer from mental illness, their families, caregivers and mental-health professionals.





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.

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

PRIESTLY VOCATIONS

Vocation discernment retreats
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
OCIA
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

Stewardship and the Annual Spring Cleaning



When spring rain lets up, and May brings long hours of brilliant sunshine, something stirs within: the desire to tackle that dust we suddenly notice in places we seldom look. And those windows smeared with winter's muck? And that disorganized closet? There's a reason our grandmothers called it "spring housecleaning." The season brings an almost physical desire to get out the mop.

Surprisingly, for the Christian steward, this can actually be a spiritual impulse. There's something intrinsically renewing and revitalizing about cleaning. Everything done with a prayerful heart can lead us closer to God, and cleaning, often a solitary and contemplative task, can definitely include prayer. You might plan to begin your cleaning with prayer, and play music that lifts your spirit as you work.

Start with a closet. Open your heart to what it tells you about how blessed you are materially. But observe the consumerism a closet can reveal. As you examine each item of apparel, remember and thank God for the graces of the occasion: a wedding, a graduation, a vacation. Enjoy "shopping" in your own closet for items you've forgotten about. Pare down what you no longer need

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or what you feel called to share. Wash, mend, iron and select a place where your items may find a good home. Many cities have refugee closets, and many nonprofits have thrift stores which support them. St. Vincent de Paul shops serve the poor with inexpensive used items. Pray for those with whom you are about to share.

Resolve to put your newly reorganized items to work for you and not rush out to buy more.

And those windows? Does anything lift the spirit like a clean window after a long winter? As you polish those panes of glass, pray about where your own inner life could use a cleaning. Perhaps you don't make it to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as often as you'd like. Use your quiet window cleaning time to examine the graces and challenges of your life. Thank God for the many blessings and be honest about failings.

And that ubiquitous dust? It promises to return, afflicts the rich and the poor. It's a sign of our universal connection to the earth and the environment, a reminder of our own mortality. Even the dust we clean can be lifted up to God with a thank you from a steward's grateful heart.

Mother's Day: A Stewardship Reflection

May 10 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.





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fifth Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 2/3, 2026

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we see how the first community of Christians gathered together to discern and resolve how to care for each others' needs. As good stewards of the sisters and brothers who gathered around the Eucharistic table, the community of faith selected those among them who were to ensure that no one was neglected. How do we resolve to serve the needs of our parish family? How do we ensure that those who might be perceived to be the least of our brothers and sisters are not left alone and neglected?

Sixth Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 9/10, 2026

Philip understood very well Jesus' words: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." We learn of Philip's devotion to prayer, evangelizing and healing in the region of Samaria; made up of communities that would not be very receptive to the followers of Jesus. Philip is a model steward, living his discipleship day by day in the Lord without being obstructed by feelings of what cost his actions might entail. Good stewards summon the courage to proclaim the Lord and to serve Him by ministering to others. As an Easter people, eager to rejoice in the Lord, it is important to reflect on how we are living out our own commitment to discipleship.

(If the Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension is celebrated by your Diocese today, Thursday, May 14, or if it is celebrated the weekend of May 16/17)

In today's Gospel Jesus charges his followers to "make disciples of all nations." What exactly is going on here? What is this Great Commission anyway? Good stewards know they are directed to share what they exercise stewardship over: their life of faith in Christ Jesus. They know Jesus didn't direct them to go to church and to keep quiet about it; or to go out into the neighborhood, workplace or marketplace and just be nice. Christ's Good News is meant to be shared. Many people in our communities don't know about Jesus Christ. Does that bother us? Do we care? Do we realize we are supposed to do something about it?

(If the Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension is celebrated by your Diocese on Thursday, May 14, 2026)

Seventh Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 16/17, 2026

In today's second reading, we hear it proclaimed that we are blessed if we share in the sufferings of Christ. What then does it mean to "share in His sufferings" in this context? Most of us do not live in a part of the world where we could be killed for being a follower of Jesus. But we could face or "suffer" mockery, ridicule and disapproval from others. Far too often, and for various reasons, those who profess faith in Christ act as though they are ashamed of him. But to act ashamed is the same as a denial. Stewards of the Good News are never ashamed to reveal their love for the Lord. How do you reveal to others that you are a follower of Christ each day?

Pentecost Sunday May 24, 2026 Mass during the Day

This weekend we celebrate the feast of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit among the believers of the early Church. Saint Paul reminds us of the special power the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us and how that power gives us the potential to live extraordinary lives of faith. Good stewards recognize this power and use their gifts, through God's channel of grace, to transform their lives and the lives of others, and thus hasten God's Kingdom. Good stewards know that it is through the Holy Spirit that they can proclaim: "Jesus is Lord." Do we believe that Jesus is Our Lord? If so, how do we show it?

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Weekend of May 30/31, 2026

In today's second reading Saint Paul's final appeal is a call for unity. God created that unity. Good stewards who share Christ's life in the Eucharist belong to each other, just as God in the three persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit enjoy unity. We are an intimate part of God's divine bond, God's "family." Saint Paul maintains that we ought to act that way. In the Church there is a bond of family, yet plenty of room for variety. Christian stewards use their uniquely varied gifts to live a Trinitarian faith, in unity, promoting Christ's peace and justice. How do we promote unity in our parish?