



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

July 2020 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER
for July

Dearest Lord,

As we continue to confront the pains and struggles in our lives and in the life of our country, whose birth we celebrate this month, the tensions, anxieties and fears that pervade us cry out to you for healing, courage, faith and hope.

Be with your people now.
Show us a sign of your presence.
Do not leave us in fear and despair.
Let us know that you are ever faithful and will not abandon us.

We pray that all who suffer may find comfort in you who have carried all the sufferings of the world and have died to bring new life. May all those who are in agony and pain see in your cross a sign of hope.

Give us the wisdom to be good stewards of your Gospel.
And show us how we may more readily reveal your presence to all those most in need of a sign of your boundless love and mercy.

You who live and reign with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Amen



The Legacy of Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy

and the ICSC Award That Was Named in His Memory

This year's recipient of the Archbishop Thomas J Murphy Award will be its 20th recipient, honoring a servant of the Church who left a broad legacy that included an evangelizing spirit and a commitment to teaching Christian stewardship as a way of life.

In his book on the spirituality of Christian stewardship, *What Do I Own and What Owns Me?* Dan Conway pays tribute to the late Archbishop Murphy and reflected on some of his noteworthy attributes, his personal warmth, gracious hospitality and his passion for helping others understand the spirituality of stewardship as a renewed catechesis on the Christian life.



Archbishop Murphy believed that embracing stewardship as a way of life would do much to solve stagnation in one's spiritual life.

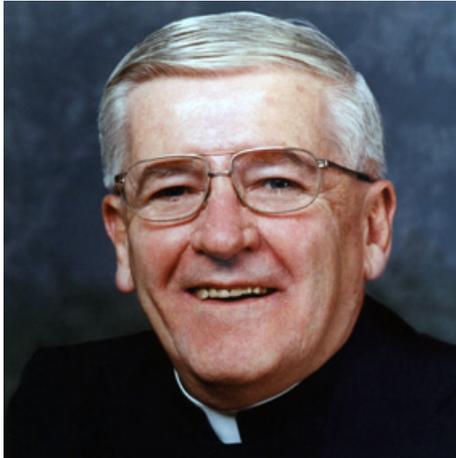
Archbishop Murphy was a man motivated by compassion for the poor, a desire to have the Church reflect its multicultural heritage and a deep concern for priests and parishioners alike. Murphy envisioned a solution to every challenge he faced while leader of the Catholic faithful in the Archdiocese of Seattle, be it unemployment in Western Washington's timber towns, too many teen pregnancies or too few men in priestly formation.

The archbishop possessed a prodigious work ethic and would visit as many as three or four parishes a day. He worked tirelessly to engage young people in the life of the church, to share with them what a gift life is and to urge

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them to be truly present to those less fortunate than themselves. The archbishop even learned to speak Spanish so he could celebrate the Eucharist for the many Hispanics in the archdiocese.



Murphy also believed that embracing stewardship as a way of life would do much to solve stagnation in one's spiritual life. He maintained on many occasions that stewardship was much more than just the sharing of our resources. Stewardship is Christ's call to us to be a holy people who reflect Christ's active presence in our lives onto others. As Conway put it, "Archbishop Murphy taught that stewardship invites us to assume a lifestyle of sharing, and in the divine economy, to discover the richness of finding God" (*What Do I Own* p. 7).

The Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award is presented to a parish for its outstanding work in Christian Stewardship formation in honor of the late archbishop. He was an ardent supporter of the International Catholic Stewardship Council and attended many of its annual conferences. The award is a fitting tribute to his memory.

Archbishop Murphy passed on to the Lord on June 26, 1997. He was 64 years old.

For parishes interested in applying for the Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award, please click [HERE](#).

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for July*

Saint Martha – One of Jesus' Closest Friends

Just before Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, his close friends, Martha, her sister, Mary, and brother, Lazarus, entertained Jesus at their home in Bethany (John 12:1-8). Martha "served," while Mary anointed his feet. It is in the simple statement, "Martha served," that we recognize Martha for her witness to stewardship. She isn't a prolific evangelist, she doesn't work miracles. She simply serves Jesus.



Jesus may have been a frequent visitor to Martha's home and perhaps this is one of the reasons the Gospel of John reveals to us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus" (11:5). This unique statement in the gospel informs us of the special relationship Jesus had with Martha and her siblings. And, as another one of Jesus' visits to Martha's home affirms, Martha continues to be concerned that Jesus be served. Like any good steward, hospitality was very important to Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

Martha isn't a prolific evangelist, she doesn't work miracles. She simply serves Jesus.

What is most revealing about Martha is on the occasion of the death of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Martha takes an active role, going out to meet Jesus to let him know what happened to her brother while Mary stays at home. Jesus assures her that Lazarus will be raised from dead.

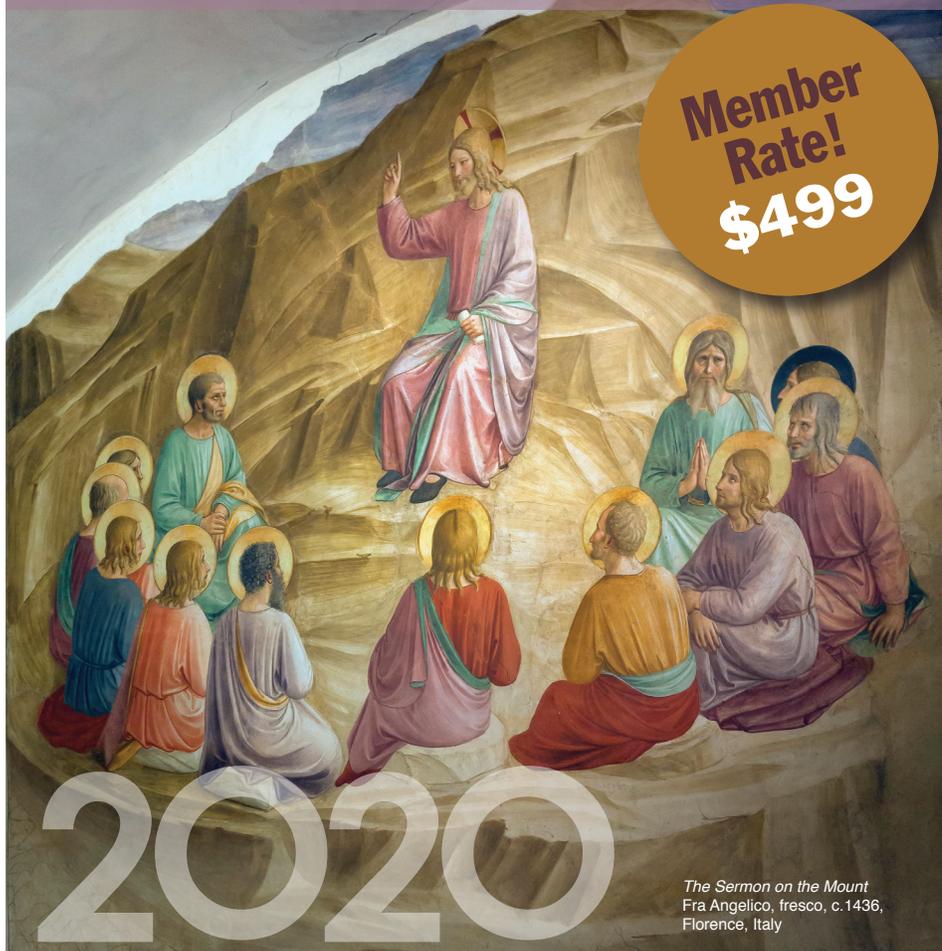
With courage and conviction, Martha confesses her deep faith in Jesus Christ: "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." And then Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." When he asked Martha if she believed this, she replied: "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world" (John 11:24-27).

The feast of St. Martha, a witness to service who confessed her faith in Jesus, is July 29. She is the patron saint of homemakers, cooks, domestic workers, waiters and waitresses, and hotel employees.

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ICSC 2020 Parish Stewardship Award Information

Has your parish developed stewardship materials that would help others?

Did your committee work hard on resources you are proud of?

Please consider applying for one or more ICSC Parish Awards in 2020

Parishes at all stages of the stewardship journey are encouraged to apply!

Entries will be judged by members of the ICSC Parish Stewardship Education and Services Committee.

**Application Deadline is
June 30.**

Additional information, list of awards and entry forms will be available on the ICSC website, <http://catholicstewardship.com/stewardship-awards/>





Stewardship of Leisure Time: Refreshing Our Spirits

This time of uncertainty really has our personal “worlds” turned upside down. Schedules are no longer the same. Planning has gone awry. Calendars look like a mess. And the rhythm of our days has met a new “abnormal.” Many of us have neither the time nor the resources for a vacation, but all of us can resonate with the need to really “get away” from the stress of our daily grind. Good stewardship of our bodies, minds and souls obliges us to get away on a regular basis (see Luke 5:16).

As Christian stewards, we aren’t just encouraged but obligated to consider how we approach our stewardship of leisure time. Stewards are aware of their need to be busy doing God’s work, but often forget that down time is equally important to spiritual growth. Leisure time, whether it’s our evenings, our weekends, or our vacation, provides spiritual, physical, mental and emotional recharging. Leisure is necessary for human wholeness. Leisure reconnects us to the wider mysteries of our world and our God. It helps us daydream, imagine, pray. It refreshes our spirit.

July offers an opportunity to reconnect with the rhythms of God and nature.

Today, connectivity has become almost an obsession. People check their emails, their messages and calls with alarming repetitiveness. Accidents, both pedestrian and automobile, happen because people can’t put down their phones. Employers expect their workers to be available for evening emails. The lines between work and free time increasingly blur, as do the lines between solitude and always being present “online.” We can’t imagine putting aside screens for a two-week vacation. But we must give ourselves time to renew and recharge, not just two weeks of the year, but each day and each week.

July offers an opportunity to reconnect with the rhythms of God and nature. We need to take time off from screens and phones, and practice giving undivided attention to the things before us. When we pray, we commit time and silence. When we enjoy time with our friends and family, we practice being totally present. When we sit on the patio or at the beach, we give ourselves wholly to the wind or the waves. Be a good steward of your body, mind and soul. Don’t overschedule your time off. Listen to the quiet whisper of God encouraging you to relax.

Christian Stewardship: Living Between Love and Fear

By Mary Ann Otto, pastoral minister for missionary discipleship, St. Mary and St. Joseph Parishes, Appleton, Wisconsin

I was involved in a small group reflecting on one of Bishop Robert Barron’s books, *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Seven Lively Virtues*. The beauty of this process is that we are called to a change of heart. The challenge of this process is that we are called to a change of heart.



Bishop Barron begins by suggesting that the polar opposite of love is fear. He suggests we are unloving because we are afraid of losing control, of others having more prestige, more possessions and of not accomplishing personal goals. Bishop Barron describes love as: “Allowing ourselves to be conduits of God’s divine love.” We are called to delight in each other’s hopes, dreams, gifts and successes.

Parallels can be made between love, fear and our ability to be Christian stewards. Each day we

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make decisions either grounded in love or fear in regards, for example, to matters such as the depth of our gratitude, the time we make for prayer, the extent to which we are willing to offer our talents in service, and the extent to which we share generously of our treasure.

In light of this, I decided to do a self-check and reflect on where I fall between these two polar opposites of love and fear. The fear side of me suggests that I love and trust myself first, live independently and make self-actualization my goal. As a person of fear, I am afraid I might be less and have less.

On the love side of this love-fear balance, I have placed my trust in God. My commitment to prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit are key components. Love would be

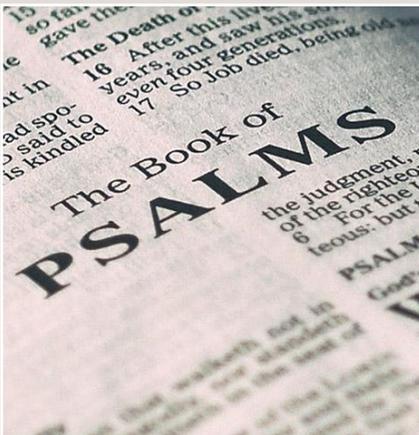
So where am I between love and fear? Let's say I am intentionally traveling on the highway toward authentic love and take less off ramps than when I was younger. I know my

Parallels can be made between love, fear and our ability to be Christian stewards. Each day we make decisions either grounded in love or fear

the measure of my success. I would live life in gratitude, in relationship with Jesus, serve wherever I'm called and give generously of the treasure. I truly want the best for others and *I want to do something about it!*

road will end in front of the Master one day where perfect love exists. I hope that my life as a steward will reflect that I was "leaning into" the love side of the love-fear continuum all along.

An Ancient Psalmist Calls Us to Gratitude



The Psalms provide prayers for every aspect of the life of the Israelites, and today they reveal a spiritual wisdom that can draw the Christian steward into a deeper intimacy with God

If you are looking for some consolation from the Bible during these disquieting times, you might try the Book of Psalms. Historically, the psalms are so closely linked to King David that many believe some of them were written by him. They provide prayers for every aspect of the life of the Israelites, and today they reveal a spiritual wisdom that can draw the Christian steward into a deeper intimacy with God, especially through the fundamental notion of gratitude.

Psalms 50 provides an insightful look at gratitude. The psalmist felt so strongly about the call to thankfulness to the Lord that he even chose to speak with the Lord's voice, assuring the people that God did not need their burnt offerings: "I shall take no young bull out of your house nor male goats out of your folds. For every beast of the forest is Mine. The cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine." No, God tells the people, everything is already God's, so your cattle and birds and young bulls need not be offered to their Creator.

So what does God want from us? The psalmist urges us to "offer to God a sacrifice of Thanksgiving."

Keeping in mind that all we have is from God, and remains God's, Christian stewards awake each morning to say with humility, "Thank you." The ancient psalmist's words make sense to a modern Christian, because the God who gave us free will does not possess our thankfulness until we freely give it. And we're asked for more than a perfunctory show of gratitude. The God who already possesses cattle on a thousand hills and every bird of the mountain is calling us to a deep sense of conversion, a sense that we stand before the God who has gifted us with everything we possess.

Go to your Bible this month. Take some quiet time to pray some of the psalms. And remember to be thankful for what he has done for us.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 4/5, 2020

One of the most well known and beloved passages in scripture is the gentle invitation of our Lord in today's Gospel reading: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." When we need physical rest, we sleep or take a nap. When we need emotional rest, we take a break, go for a walk, or when the opportunity presents itself, take a few days off. But how do we find spiritual rest? How do we discover Christ's peace as we grapple with this time of uncertainty and its complex issues deep in our hearts? Good stewards find their rest in the Lord. Reflect this week on what you do to welcome the peace of Christ into your heart.

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 11/12 2020

In today's second reading, Saint Paul gives us reason to hope for a wondrous future beyond our imagination. He preaches this hope amidst the suffering of the early Christian communities. "Brothers and sisters: I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us" (Romans 8:18). Good stewards realize that by remaining faithful to the Gospel with persistence, fervor and endurance, our hope in the promises of Christ Jesus will be rewarded. Reflect this week on concrete ways you can remain faithful to the Gospel during these challenging times.

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 18/19, 2020

In today's second reading, Saint Paul bids us to take comfort in knowing that when God invites us to pray to him, he knows our true needs, even if we do not. The Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for us even if we can't come up with appropriate words; even when we don't have a clue what to ask for. We are not left alone. Good stewards know that prayer is an important part of living a life in Christ. The important thing is to make space for God. Do we let God into our hearts? Do we make room for the Holy Spirit to pray within us?

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of July 25/26, 2020

A profound stewardship prayer is offered by the young King Solomon in today's first reading. He asks the Lord to give him an understanding heart, compassion towards God's people and the insight to distinguish right from wrong. An understanding heart, or wisdom, is a gift from God. It is a gift that enables us to make good decisions and prudent choices. Cultivating and sharing this gift is essential, especially when poor decisions and lack of compassion have consequences that affect the lives of others. During these disquieting times, are we asking God for an understanding heart? Are we exercising good stewardship over the gift of wisdom? Are we sharing our compassionate hearts with others?