

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

April 2016 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for April

Dear Lord, risen Lord, merciful Lord!

The Easter season is filled with your presence, and we come to you in gratitude for the deep and abiding joy you offer us through the promise of your resurrection.

Help us hear your call as did Mary Magdalene. Teach us as you did the disciples at Emmaus.

Dispel our doubts as you did for Thomas. And reveal yourself to us as you did to your friends from the shore of Lake Tiberius.

Make us good stewards of this Easter season. Open our hearts and minds in a special way to the great mystery of your active presence in our lives, and give us the courage to help others discover your presence in their lives.

For you are the light of the world. To you, Christ Jesus, be praise and glory!

Amen.

Stewardship and Our Baptismal Promises

The practice of *renewing* baptismal promises at Easter is essential for those who take the stewardship of their faith seriously. It focuses the steward's attention on answering Christ's call to follow after him, proclaiming his Gospel in word and deed, putting the Eucharist into action, building up the communion of faith, and sharing Christ's peace with a broken world.

Renewing our baptismal promises and the baptismal focus of holy water is most compelling at the Easter Vigil where the sprinkling is directly connected to the renewal of promises. The use of holy water compels us to reflect on our baptism, calls us back to our central identity as Catholic Christians, and strengthens us anew "as servants of Christ and *stewards* of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:10).

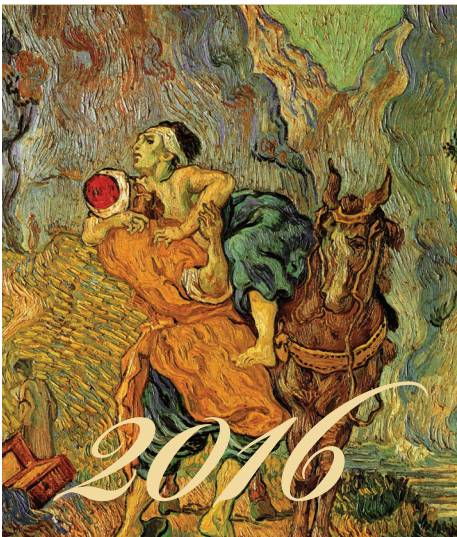


The baptismal focus of holy water is most compelling at the Easter Vigil where the sprinkling is directly connected to the renewal of promises.

The baptismal water of Easter performs a twofold purpose. It baptizes the catechumens and it refreshes our covenant with God in Christ through the renewal of our baptismal promises. It "seals" our resolve to follow Jesus more closely.

Many who say they are Catholic desire to live their lives as if Jesus was still in the tomb. But he is not. Christ has risen and is present among us, calling us each day to follow after him and radiate his example onto the world. Living our baptismal promises inspires us to be good stewards of God's plan as individuals and as a Eucharistic community in the 21st century.





INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE

Join us in New Orleans
for the International Catholic
Stewardship Council's
54th Annual Conference
October 2-5, 2016



**Early Bird Member
Registration Rate only**

\$499

through July 31

Visit catholicstewardship.com
to register TODAY!

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for April*



Saint Peter Chanel

Peter Chanel was born in a small village near Lyons, France in 1803. Observing his simple piety and intelligence, his parish priest had him admitted to a church-sponsored school. Chanel eventually studied for the priesthood and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Belley in 1827. His mind was set on missionary work and after four years of parish ministry, he joined a recently formed religious community of missionary priests called the Society of Mary, the Marists. Father Chanel sought an assignment to a foreign mission, but instead was sent to teach in the local seminary where he soon became a spiritual director and the vice rector.

Father Chanel was declared a martyr and was canonized in 1954. His feast day is April 28

In 1836, the Marist congregation was assigned a vast area in the South Pacific for its mission work. Very

little was known of the New Hebrides, the colonial name for the island group that now forms the nation of Vanuatu. But a delighted Father Chanel was appointed superior of a small group of missionaries that travelled to the area. They split up and Father Chanel went to the Island of Futuna, between Fiji and French Samoa, accompanied by a lay brother and an

Although his mind was set on missionary work, he instead was sent to teach in the local seminary where he soon became a spiritual director and the vice rector.

English layman. They were received by the island inhabitants with much hospitality and soon earned a great deal of respect for their care of the sick. Once the missionaries learned the local language and began preaching directly to the people, the king of the islanders became disturbed that Christianity would pose a threat to his sovereignty. When his son asked to be baptized, the angered king sent warriors to assassinate Father Chanel. On April 28, 1841, Father Chanel was killed with an axe and his body cut up with knives.

Two weeks after the killing, a passing American trading ship took Father Chanel's companions and others to New Zealand and safety. The French landed the following year to make official inquiries and to take Father Chanel's remains with them. By the time of their arrival, however, the entire island nation had converted to Christianity.

Father Chanel was declared a martyr and was canonized in 1954. His relics were returned to Futuna in 1977.

Saint Peter Chanel's feast day is April 28.



We offer an image of the Good Samaritan to keep us mindful of the biblical message of mercy, compassion, kindness and love.

54th Annual ICSC Conference: *Stewards of God's Mercy*

Pope Francis tells us that Jesus is the face of God's mercy, and Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan to reveal the true nature of his Father's mercy. Indeed, the Good Samaritan models Jesus' own behavior which is an expression of the behavior of his Father. Just as Jesus acts, so does God the Father. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, the 54th annual ICSC conference, October 2-5, 2016, takes the theme, *Stewards of God's Mercy*. We offer an image of the Good Samaritan to keep us mindful that the biblical message of mercy, compassion, kindness and love is a Gospel imperative that should be imprinted on the hearts of all those who strive to be good stewards of their life of faith.

The ICSC annual conference is a time to learn and share practical information to inspire us in our important ministries at home. The conference is complete with over 80 program sessions, forums and workshops which provide attendees with new ideas, innovations and strategies. This conference has something for people new to their ministries and for the experienced professional. It offers a great opportunity to take a break from our hectic schedules to pray, reflect, learn, listen, share, and participate in uplifting liturgies.

Internationally recognized as the most valuable conference for those involved in Christian stewardship, the ICSC annual conference is an opportunity to connect with others sharing the commitment to live and teach stewardship as a way of life. Many of our participants tell us that sharing experiences with peers is the main reason they attend every year. We invite you to join us in New Orleans to meet and celebrate with others who desire to live as *Stewards of God's Mercy*!

Stewardship of the Earth

This year, spring ushers in Earth Day 2016 on April 22. This year's theme is "Trees for the Earth" and we're all encouraged to plant a tree.

But environmental stewardship goes way beyond our ability to plant a tree. There are so many ways to honor Earth Day. As Christian stewards, we

to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." Words like "essential" and "not an option" underscore the necessity for stewards to step up our commitment to the earth.

The year 2015 was our hottest in recorded history. We've all heard the



As Christian stewards, we know that our commitment to stewardship of the earth is growing increasingly important.

know that our commitment to stewardship of the earth is growing increasingly important. Pope Francis has led the way with his encyclical, *On Care of Our Common Home (Laudato Si)*, and he makes it very clear that stewardship of the environment is front and center for Christians in this time of environmental degradation. Here's paragraph 217 of his 184-page encyclical: "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential

frightening stories of sea levels rising, threatening islands and even some of our coastal cities. "Hundred year storms" are becoming increasingly common. Pope Francis, in the paragraph cited above, also says our ecological crisis is "a summons to profound interior conversion." All of this can seem overwhelming, but small steps can make a difference, and they must start with prayer and a change of heart. Keep canvas bags in your car

so you always have them available at the grocery. Forego plastic. Commit to a few degrees of difference in your heating and air conditioning settings. Wash clothes in cold water and hang clothes to dry. Restrict lawn watering and time your showers. Always recycle. Commit to buying less "stuff" and living more simply. Turn off power strips when not in use. Be a vocal advocate with your political leaders about climate change. Encourage your parish to promote *Laudato Si* in its formation and education programs. Be an example to your children. Keep in mind: stewardship of the earth is "essential to a life of virtue."

Stewardship of Others: Our Life as Servant Leaders

by Leisa Anslinger, author and co-founder of Catholic Strengths and Engagement Community (CSEC).



We can be 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.

During this Easter season we again 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 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:

*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." Fr. Senior goes on to summarize this form of leadership, modeled by Jesus himself, as "servant leadership."*¹

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?

1 Senior, Donald, "The Gift of Administration: New Testament Foundations for the Vocation of Administrative Service," Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 40 .

Calling All ICSC Parish Members!

ICSC 2016 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 2016. 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. All applicants will be contacted by August 15.

For additional information, list of awards, and entry forms [CLICK HERE](#)





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday) • Weekend of April 2/3, 2016

In today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles we hear it proclaimed that many "signs and wonders" were performed in public by Christ's followers, a demonstration that produced two results. First, the people of Jerusalem outside the Christian community were awed by what the disciples were performing. And in the midst of all this amazement, many were being converted. Good stewards know of the evangelizing power emanating from their daily acts of love, compassion, mercy and generosity. They believe that if they stay focused on Christ each day, every act has the power to transform a broken world. What "signs and wonders" will we perform today?

Third Sunday of Easter • Weekend of April 9/10, 2016

In today's Gospel we hear of that mysterious meeting Jesus' disciples had with him on the shore of the Lake of Tiberius. Jesus invited them to have breakfast with him. He took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. None of the disciples were bold enough to ask: "Who are you?" They realized it was the risen Lord. Those who practice good stewardship of their life of faith are touched by joy and moved by deep awe when encountering Christ in the celebration of the Eucharist. How do you experience the mysterious presence of Jesus in the Eucharist? Do you recognize his presence? Do you hear the Lord's invitation to draw nearer? Do you experience a closeness, or a reserve? A familiarity, or a distance?

Fourth Sunday of Easter • Weekend of April 16/17, 2016

In today's Gospel reading Jesus is quite emphatic: "My sheep hear my voice..." Those who exercise good stewardship of their prayer lives realize that hearing or listening is fundamental to prayer. Prayer is a personal encounter with the Lord and requires dialogue. Some people never learn the art of listening. When we enter into a dialogue with someone we love we speak and we listen. Otherwise it cannot be a dialogue. This week let's think about how we pray. Do we do all the talking and then get up and do something else? Or do we sit quietly, waiting for God's voice to enter our hearts?

Fifth Sunday of Easter • Weekend of April 23/24, 2016

In today's Gospel we return to the Last Supper to hear Jesus' new commandment to love one another. Good stewards, as the recipients of God's unending love, take this commandment seriously. Though we are reminded of his love throughout the year, it is Jesus' actions and words during the feast of Passover that show us the extent of his love and the way we too can live a life of stewardship: "... love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another" (John 13:34). Can we accept this commandment from Jesus? Are we able to embrace this kind of discipleship? Can we humbly offer ourselves in loving service to one another?

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

(800) 352-3452
ICSC@catholicstewardship.org
www.catholicstewardship.org

We encourage you to check out the ICSC online community at www.catholicstewardship.org under 'members' where members can share ideas and questions. The Parish Stewardship section is reviewed every day by members of the Parish Stewardship Education and Services Committee.