



56
YEARS!

2018 Annual
Conference

Nashville, Tennessee
October 28-31

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

January 2018 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for the New Year



Loving and merciful God,
 You are the Lord of
 new beginnings.
 You sent us Your Son so that we
 may begin anew
 and enjoy new life in Your Spirit.
 We ask you to bless this new year,
 to guide and direct our plans,
 and to show us how to find the
 resources necessary
 to carry out these plans.
 Give us the wisdom to take
 advantage of opportunities
 we may have to help and
 serve others,
 to bring peace to the hearts of
 those who are troubled,
 and hope to those who suffer.
 Help us approach this new year
 as good stewards of your
 abundant gifts,
 with an awareness of your
 daily presence,
 and the obedient spirit we need to
 be your faithful servants.
 We ask this in Jesus' name.
 Amen

A Stewardship Resolution for the New Year: Living with Compassion

January is traditionally the time for new beginnings, fresh starts. For the Christian steward, the grace of being given another day, or God willing, a whole new year, stirs our deep gratitude. But it also calls us to ask what a "resolution" should really be. Our first resolve should always be to involve ourselves more intimately in the life of Christ, and how better to do that than by embracing Christ's call to be compassionate?



After all, Jesus himself instructed us, "Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate" (Luke 6:36). Clearly, we strive now to live and give compassionately, as we generally understand the term. We try to be kind, considerate and understanding individuals. We share with others. But Jesus' words challenge us to embrace a compassion that is much deeper, much more radical than our general understanding.

The word compassion, at its root, means "to suffer with." This goes beyond merely writing a check, offering a prayer or sending a note. Suffering is not a popular notion in our society and we strive to avoid it. But now we hear Christ instructing us to "suffer with" the poor, the vulnerable, the powerless, the neglected, the weak.

How can we possibly choose such a journey, this challenge to be truly present to those who suffer?

All things are possible with God, and it is through a commitment to a life of discipline, discipline in action and discipline in prayer, that we move towards the goal of true compassion. The Christian steward is committed to the Eucharistic life, and it is through this life which Christ offers us that we gain the courage and the will and even the need to follow him in his own example of compassion.

Compassion is the doorway to a more responsive stewardship and a committed discipleship. Through our deepening sense of compassion in 2018, may we resolve to be the kind of Christian stewards who bring Christ's presence to a suffering world.



Stewardship Reflections at the Turn of the Year...

By Teresa Keogh
Advisor for Stewardship
Archdiocese of Southwark, U.K.

As I write this we are fast approaching Christmas, a time when few of us have time to 'take stock' of what and how we are living...But January is quieter for many of us – a time when we might have a spare moment to assess where and how we are. Many of us try and make New Year resolutions – and they are often 'all about me'. I need to be thinner, wealthier, more hard working and so on. And they are often doomed to failure.

I would like to suggest something different this New Year. As stewards we talk about and live gratitude; we strive to make that foundational in our lives. We are thankful for all we have received and we have a great desire to give. But do we make opportunities for others to give? Are we receptive to their giving? Maria Bolding, an English Benedictine nun who died in 2009, spoke of this in her final illness. She describes herself in the prologue to her last book, *Gateway to Resurrection*, as "...like a helpless child who has nothing to give except its need." At that stage in her life she was finally able to accept with gratitude the gifts that others offered her. She was able to receive.

As we enter this New Year, can we pledge to be open to receiving the gifts that others offer to us? Can we be grateful for these too? Having an attitude of receiving as well as giving will mean that a greater number of people will be able to fully use the gifts that God has given them – and allow each of us to be grateful for a greater range of gifts, not just those we recognize and use, but also those that we receive. In this way we can fully live what Saint John Paul II wrote about in *Novo Millennio Ineunte (At the Beginning of the New Millennium)*, when he asserted: "A spirituality of communion implies also the ability to see what is positive in others, to welcome it and prize it as a gift from God: not only as a gift for the brother or sister who has received it directly, but also as a 'gift for me'" (#43).



2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 28-31
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Early Bird Special

\$399 Registration

Hurry!

Rates increase January 2, 2018

Visit www.catholicstewardship.com for more information

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for January*



Ita of Killeedy, Ireland

Ita of Killeedy, Ireland, also known as Ida, is one of the two most famous women saints in Ireland, along with Brigid of Kildare. Born near present-day County Waterford, allegedly of a royal family, she was baptized as Deidre. She is said to have rejected a prestigious marriage for a life as a consecrated woman religious. She moved early in her life to Killeedy (in County Limerick), where she founded a small community of nuns and resided for the remainder of her life, in community with other consecrated women. She dedicated herself to prayer, fasting, a simplicity of life and cultivating a gift for spiritual discernment.

Ita was well known for having the gift of being able to guide people in holiness. She was much sought after as a spiritual director and confessor. During this period of Christianity, the Celtic Church was more advanced than other churches at the time in recognizing qualities of spiritual leadership in women and in encouraging women in this role. It is thought that Ita may have been abbess of a double monastery of men and women and that she was a confessor to both, giving difficult penances while maintaining a forgiving and compassionate spirit. Confessing one's sins to a priest had not yet been established as the normal form for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and ordained priests were not yet regarded as the only members of the Church authorized to hear confessions, forgive sins, and impose penances.

Three things Ita believed God especially loved included a pure heart, living a simple life and great generosity inspired by gratitude for God's gifts.

She began a school for boys, some of whose graduates became saints in their own right, the most famous of whom was Saint Brendan. She was also known as the "foster mother of the saints of Erin." The name "Ita" ("thirst for holiness") was conferred on her because of her saintly qualities.

She believed that the three things God most detested were a scowling face, obstinacy in wrong-doing, and too great a confidence in the power of money. Three things she believed God especially loved included a pure heart, living a simple life and great generosity inspired by gratitude for God's gifts.

Ita died sometime around 570 and was buried in the monastery she founded. It was destroyed by Viking invaders in the ninth century. A Romanesque church was later built over its ruins, but that too failed to survive. The site, however, remains a place of pilgrimage today.

Ita's feast day is January 15. Although not on the Roman calendar of saints, her feast is celebrated as an optional memorial in Ireland.

Following Jesus

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

We follow all sorts of people and organizations on social media. Friends. Celebrities. A favorite author, athlete, charity, or business. At times, we may think before following: do we want the additional postings or emails? Typically, following a business or celebrity does not require much of



To follow Jesus means to enter into a relationship with him and to exercise good stewardship over that relationship.

a commitment. We may or may not read every post that comes through on our feed. We might respond, or we may not. Even when we do, our response is often as simple as hitting the "like" button. Following Jesus is a very different sort of thing.

To follow Jesus means to enter into a relationship with him and to exercise good stewardship over that relationship. When Jesus asks us to follow him, we know that doing so is to have an impact in our lives. As with any friendship, if our relationship with Jesus is to grow, we will have to spend time with and pay attention to him. At first, this might mean taking a few moments at the beginning or end of each day for prayer.

We may be more attentive during Mass; we may pause in the midst of our day's activities to notice the beauty of creation, the blessing

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

of family and friends, the gift of kindness and patience shared among co-workers. The best of friends also influence each other, for the better. Growing in relationship with Jesus will change us, leading us to think of others as well as ourselves, often putting the needs of others first. We learn to be mindful of those who need to know God's love through our actions, serving them, sharing forgiveness, mercy, compassion, and faith.



Following Jesus is the work of a lifetime. At every step forward, one is challenged to go further in accepting and loving God's will. Being a disciple is not just something else to do, alongside many other things suitable for Christians; it is a total way of life and requires continuing conversion (Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, p. 15).

How will you follow Jesus now and into the future? How will you learn from and invite him to have an impact in your life? How will your stewardship of this relationship impact the way you live?

New Year's Resolutions and Stewarding Our Relationship with Christ

The beginning of the new year is an ideal time to reflect on how we intend to follow Christ Jesus and become better stewards of our relationship with him in the coming year. Will Jesus be a priority in our lives in 2018? Take some time to reflect on your own personal priorities and values by taking this short 5-Step self-assessment this week. Is it time to deepen your relationship with the Lord?

Step 1) How I spend the time entrusted to me:

Name six to ten things you spent the most time doing regularly this past year.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Step 2) How I spend the financial resources entrusted to me:

Name six to ten things you probably spent the most money on this past year.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Step 3) Jesus as a priority during the past year a self- evaluation:

Mark an "X" on the line below that you think represents how high a priority Jesus has been in your life this past year (using actual time and money spent as a particular indicator.)



Step 4) Jesus as a priority during the coming year – a personal decision:

Draw a small circle on the line above that represents how high a priority you would like Jesus to be in your life during this coming year.

Step 5) My concrete plan for a better relationship with Christ Jesus:

What are some things I could start, stop or continue that would help me toward what I decided in Step 4 above.

Start:

Stop:

Continue:



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God January 1, 2018

In today's Gospel we again hear the story of the nativity from Saint Luke; of the motherhood of Mary, the vessel who brought forth our savior in a dark corner of the world and reflected on this sacred revelation in her heart. Christian stewards are also the vessels by which Christ is carried out into the world. They continually seek ways to reveal Jesus in the world's dark corners. In this new year, let us ask God to give us the courage to bring forth Christ to those who are strangers to us, who think differently than we do or who may not believe that Christ can make a difference in their lives.

Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord For the weekend of January 6/7, 2018

Today's Gospel reading reveals the story of the magi who come from the east to pay homage to Jesus, the newborn king. The story of the magi teaches Christian stewards three Christmas truths: God, in the person of Jesus Christ, is present and active in the world, and good stewards strive daily to follow his star. Second, each of us, no matter our circumstances or station in life, has a gift to bring to the Lord. And finally, our life's journey always leads to Christ, even when at times we do not know where the road is taking us.

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of January 13/14, 2018

Christian stewardship begins with the call to discipleship and in today's Gospel we discover those first individuals who sought out Jesus and wanted to listen to him, learn from him and stay with him. Today, Christian stewards search out the hidden presence of Jesus in their own lives every day. They know Christ is the "Messiah" who will one day bring about a perfect restoration to a troubled

world. They further understand that they are sacraments of his hidden presence in the world. Their task is to make that reality known through their own words and actions. What is one thing we can do to be better stewards of Christ's life in us?

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of January 20/21, 2018

The first disciples of Jesus in today's Gospel left their work and their daily routines to follow him. They abandoned their livelihoods, familiar surroundings and the lives to which they had become accustomed to be closer to him. The good steward finds ways to be removed from what may be a comfortable existence or daily routine in order to serve the Lord more faithfully. All too often, out of fear, insecurity or even selfishness, we refuse to leave the safety of the little world we have created for ourselves in order to hear the Lord's call and be challenged by his Gospel. Perhaps we should reflect on what comforts we need to sacrifice in order to be better stewards of God's mercy, compassion and hospitality he planted within us.

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of January 27/28, 2018

In today's Gospel we hear proclaimed the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. He teaches. He heals. And all are amazed. By their baptism, Christian stewards realize they are called to do the same in their lives. They are called to be the light of Christ each day. As we bring closure to the beginning of this new year, now is a good time to ask the Lord to fill our hearts with courage and faith, so that we too may publicly minister in his name; that we may be liberated from our insecurities and fear so that we can share the Gospel authoritatively and work to heal at least one wounded relationship in the coming months ahead.