

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

July 2015 • e-Bulletin

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH

All-powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness
all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue
the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world
and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.
Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.
Amen

~By Pope Francis



Being Good Stewards of Our Common Home: The Pope's Encyclical

Seldom has a papal encyclical been anticipated with so much noise and discussion and even premature criticism and fear as our Holy Father, Pope Francis' *Laudato si* ("Praise Be to You"); with a beautiful subtitle "On Care for Our Common Home." This is the pope's encyclical on the environment – easily found on Google—but most of us will admit encyclicals aren't as engrossing as our favorite summer reading. Nevertheless, it deserves our prayerful attention; not just the commentary that journalists, pundits, radio hosts and television analysts provide.



The letter urges us to examine our lifestyles and invites us to prayerfully consider a significant shift in our own practices and habits.

Each of us, as Christian stewards, will find something that inspires and challenges us from Pope Francis' prescription for a healthy planet. For many readers, the challenge might come particularly in the pope's warnings about "extreme and selective consumerism." In our culture, we're taught that more is better – more production, more growth, more profits, more spending. But can the earth sustain this kind of economic dogma? Pope Francis echoes the Catholic teaching tradition that we should "replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with a spirit of sharing."

The letter urges us to examine our lifestyles and invites us to prayerfully consider a significant shift in our own practices and habits. For example, one question we should ask ourselves: Can we live with less? A visit to our closets is a good place to start, and while committing to buy less, we might ruminate on the mistaken values of our con-

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sumer economy and culture. Our pontiff points out that one-third of food that is produced is discarded. Again, our own kitchens present evidence of our complicity in this wastefulness.

The poor suffer the most from changes in the earth's complex ecosystem, and that is readily evidenced by their struggle simply to find clean water. The pope also reminds us as Christians called to exercise good stewardship of the planet to consider what in our own life comprises "need" and what is "greed."

Pope Francis urgently calls us to a renewed commitment to the Eucharist as well – something many commentators fail to mention – and asks us to re-discover our common bond within this "act of cosmic love." For the Christian steward, improving the environment must be a topic of prayer, a chance to call our politicians to action, and a time to renew our commitment to that wonderful Catholic principle of the common good.

Christian Stewardship and the Need for Recreation

Is there such a thing as a stewardship of recreation? Some people might dismiss the thought. But they'd be wrong.

In his book, *The Gift of the Jews*, author Thomas Cahill observes that, in receiving the Ten Commandments, the ancient Hebrews did something no other ancient society had ever done: they established a day of rest. "The God who made the universe and rested bids us to do the same, calling us to a weekly restoration of prayer, study, and recreation (or re-creation)."

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere at least, probably no other month bids us to relax as the month of July does. Backyard barbecues, days at the pool or the beach, a recreational outing or simply the lazy idleness of a mid-year Sunday afternoon invite us to slow down. And this invitation should be heeded. Sometimes, our society induces in us a sense of guilt if we're not



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"doing." But turning off the computer and the phone and spending quality time with those around us, or finding time for our own interior lives, is stewardship of our time which leads to the place where God dwells. It's a good example for our kids as well: July presents a wonderful time to "rest" from all the electronic screens and busyness that dominate their young lives.

July is also the month when U.S. citizens celebrate the proclamation of their freedom. When the Hebrew people first received the Ten Commandments, they too had just received their freedom from the Egyptians after a sojourn in the wilderness. Cahill thinks it's no coincidence that a people recently liberated were in need of a directive to rest and reflect. "Leisure," he writes, "is the necessary ground of creativity, and a free people are free to imitate the creativity of God."

So, the next time you feel guilty about a quiet, reflective time of doing "nothing" remember that recreation also means "re-creation" and that to be a truly creative person, a steward of our interior resources, we must honor our need to rest, relax, be with others, read and play.



STEWARDSHIP

in the Footsteps of Pope Francis

Chicago, Illinois | October 22-25, 2015



“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” (John 13:15) The ICSC 2015 conference takes place less than a month from our Holy Father’s visit to the United States. As Jesus demonstrated for the apostles, and us, in the washing of the feet, Pope Francis also leads us by example. As stewards, he inspires us to go forth in the world to both proclaim and live the joy of the Gospel, and to journey with and serve everyone we meet. Pope Francis encourages us to allow ourselves to be surprised by the God of surprises.

The ICSC annual conference is filled with workshops and forums providing us with practical information we can take home and use immediately as we journey, serve, proclaim, and live our faith. The conference exposes us to fundamental topics, as well as new ideas, innovations and strategies. It is 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 Chicago...in the Footsteps of Pope Francis!**

First-Ever Preconference Workshops!

ICSC conference attendees have an opportunity to receive additional education at little or no extra cost. This year, ICSC has partnered with organizations to provide three separate pre-conference workshops! See brief descriptions below. For detailed information on these workshops and how to register, visit our website at

www.catholicstewardship.org

Strategic Partner Workshops

Thursday, October 22, 8:00 am - 3:30 pm

FREE for ICSC 2015 conference attendees

Twenty workshops for parishes and dioceses from our strategic partners on topics such as parish and diocesan capital campaigns, parish leadership training, ideas for stewardship, offertory increase programs, and new approaches that inspire faithful living and giving, and many more!

Catholic Foundation Forum

Begins Wednesday, October 21, at 4:00 pm
Ends Thursday, October 22, at Noon

\$95 for ICSC 2015 conference attendees
\$150 for non-conference attendees

Calling all Foundation Directors, CEOs, Board Members, etc. Join us for the First Annual Catholic Foundation Pre-Conference Forum. This will be a highly interactive format, addressing challenging and timely topics of discussion facilitated by subject experts. Not to be missed!

Stewards of Our Strengths

Thursday, October 22, 8:00 am - 3:00 pm

\$95 – Open ONLY to conference attendees

Led by Leisa Anslinger and Stephanie Moore, from Catholic Life and Faith, the morning session is divided for beginners and those more experienced with the StrengthsFinder® talent-identification tool. In the afternoon session, the group comes together to focus on strengths-based ministerial teams, and leaves with the knowledge and tools they need to quickly and effectively implement the experience when they return to their parish or diocese.

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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REGISTER TODAY! \$499 Early Bird Rate (before July 31, 2015)

The 2015 ICSC Annual Conference offers something for everyone whether you are a priest, deacon, religious, parish life administrator, stewardship and evangelization coordinator or committee member, parish business manager, youth minister, ministry leader, or a faithful parishioner feeling called to do more. A sample of the conference's many sessions includes:



- Developing Leadership in Our Youth
- Stewardship and Evangelization: Two Sides of the Same Coin
- Best Practices for Successful Grant Writing
- Stewardship of Our Elders
- The Ministry of Parish Management
- Stewardship Success on a Budget
- Parish Strategic Planning
- Theology and Spirituality of Stewardship
- Engaging Parishioners With a Parish Covenant
- Best Practices for Working with Consultants
- Calling Forth Gifts of Time and Talent
- Stewardship and the Family
- Separate Parishes Moving Forward as One
- Numerous how-to workshops in Spanish
- Exclusive sessions and forums for diocesan staff working with stewardship, development and Catholic foundations
- And many, many more!

How does stewardship equip us to go forth in the world to proclaim and live the joy of the Gospel?

Join Catholic stewards from around the world at the annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council October 22-25 in Chicago, Illinois, and we will learn together!

More details and online registration available at www.catholicstewardship.org or call 1.800.352.3452, or e-mail us at register@catholicstewardship.org.

The International Catholic Stewardship Council has named the recently renovated Hyatt Regency Chicago at 151 East Wacker Drive as host hotel for the 2015 annual conference. The Hyatt Regency Chicago is conveniently located in downtown Chicago, is connected to the Illinois Center and within minutes of the Magnificent Mile. A block of rooms has been reserved from October 21 to 25, 2015, at the rate of \$229 single or double occupancy, plus taxes. For best availability, please reserve your room early! Reservations must be made through our conference coordinator, Plaza Meetings, at www.plazameetings.com/icsc/



Living between Love and Fear

by Mary Ann Otto, Stewardship Director, Diocese of Green Bay, WI



I'm involved in a small group. We're reflecting on Father Robert Barron's *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.

Father 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. Father 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 stewards. Each day we 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-actu-

alization 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 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!*

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 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.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for July* | St. Martha

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, 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).

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 the 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.



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

Being Good Stewards of Our Talents

“You cannot live your strengths until you love your strengths.” This statement from Curt Liesveld, one of the authors of *Living Your Strengths* captures much of what we have learned about being stewards of our talents in the past ten years. Our talents are gifts from God. Growing as good stewards of our talents requires that we know what our greatest talents are, accept them, and develop strengths by applying our talents, and generously giving through them, as good stewards of the gifts that our talents are.



Our greatest areas of talent come so naturally to us that we may not even think of them as talents.

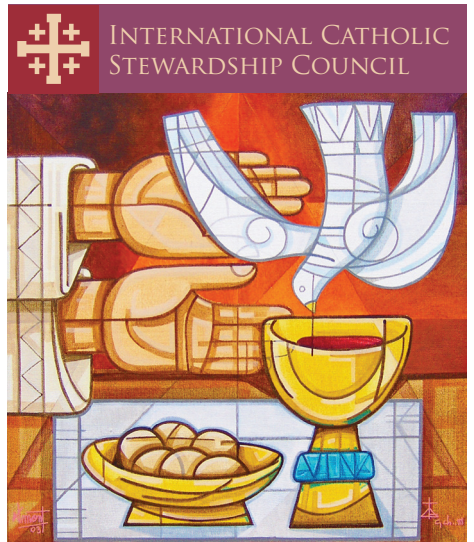
Many people do not naturally recognize their greatest talents let alone think of them as gifts. Hence Curt’s guidance to learn to love our talents before we can become good stewards of them. Let me offer an example from my own life to illustrate how this works. When I first participated in StrengthsFinder (the instrument based on talent research that helps people identify their greatest areas of talent), I have to admit I was

a bit underwhelmed. My first talent as described by the instrument was called “Ideation.” Those who know me would likely say they see this talent in me all the time. This is not uncommon: those around us recognize our talents more readily than we do ourselves. But for me, “Ideation” did not sound very practical. How could this be a talent? Of course I come up with ideas all the time. Doesn’t everyone? This is also common: our greatest areas of talent come so naturally to us that we may not even think of them as talents.

When I came back to my parish after receiving my first introduction to this process of identifying my talents, a colleague asked what I thought. I told her that I still had mixed feelings about “Ideation.” Her response was telling: “You know, Leisa, that our running joke around here is ‘look out, here comes Leisa with another grand idea!’” With that, we began to think together about how I could offer my Ideation talent in the many situations in which new ideas were needed at the parish. Parishioners and staff learned to ask me for ideas when they would be helpful. I felt more purposeful in ministry, and in my life.

Whether you are new to the “strengths” dynamic or are a “veteran” strengths leader, join us for Stewards of Our Strengths, an exciting ICSC pre-conference opportunity on Thursday, October 22, 2015. Capacity is limited. Registration is only available to conference participants.

This is the ninth in a series of stewardship reflections by Leisa Anslinger for parish stewardship leaders. Leisa is an author and co-founder of Catholic Strengths and Engagement Community (CSEC).



Called. Transformed.
Sent to serve.

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

ICSC Membership Includes

- Discounts for conferences, institutes and publications
- Membership directory
- Access to past conference presentations
- Monthly parish e-bulletins offering weekly reflections, prayers, bulletin inserts and much more
- Web site section for members only with the latest parish stewardship resources
- Access to parish leadership planning tools
- Opportunities to exchange ideas, network, share best practices and grow in faith

“The promotion of the practice of stewardship is important for the mission of the Church and for the spiritual well-being of each individual Christian. Everyone benefits from the sacrificial gift one makes of his time, talent, and treasure.”

-Pope Benedict XVI



Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Weekend of July 4/5, 2015

Today's Gospel reveals Jesus being amazed that the people in his hometown of Nazareth do not accept his teaching and ministry; he is amazed at their lack of faith (Mk 6:6). Good stewards recognize and participate in Christ's teaching, reconciling and healing presence in their community. Are we good stewards of our family of faith? Do we value and support the ministries that take place in Christ's name? Are we attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our parish and encourage those who work to enhance our life of faith?

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Weekend of July 11/12, 2015

The Letter to the Ephesians relates to us that God, the Father, has established a divine plan to bring all of creation to Christ and that He has blessed us with the divine gifts to help implement that plan. Christian stewards know what their gifts are and remain committed to using them in the service of the Lord. Do we know what our gifts are? Do we believe that God has given us these gifts? Are we committed to using our gifts to serve the Lord?

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Weekend of July 18/19, 2015

The Letter to the Ephesians reminds us that Christ is creating a new world order: one that brings about relationships based on love, peace, reconciliation, hope and unity. As a Eucharistic community, we are stewards of Christ's new creation. How are we promoting peace and reconciliation? How are we showing love for our neighbors? What are we doing to encourage unity and understanding among those with whom we gather around the Lord's Table each week?

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Weekend July 25/26, 2015

The story of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes is a familiar one, and has many lessons, not least of which is how our willingness to share who we are and what we have - exercising good stewardship - releases God's power and bountifulness on the world and its people. Do we realize that there is enough for all if we are willing to share? Are we aware that God is at work when we share our time, our money and our other resources in His name?

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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.