



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

March 2015 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for Lent

God of mercy,
You have given us this special time
to reflect on our lives,
embrace the Good News
and draw closer to You.

During this season of Lent
help us use this time
to fast and pray,
be more generous
and show others
how to live in Christ.

Let us see each day of this season
as a new opportunity to renew
our lives
and gain a deeper appreciation
of Your active presence
in our hearts and our community
of faith.

Give us the grace to see Your
face in others,
especially the poor
and those who suffer.

And through your Spirit,
enkindle in us the fire of Your love
so that we may be better stewards
of Your redeeming work throughout
the world.

We ask this through Jesus, Your Son,
who lives and reigns with You and
the Holy Spirit, One God, forever
and ever.

Amen.

Almsgiving: An Expression of Gratitude

When we look at the three traditional “disciplines” of Lent, prayer, fasting and almsgiving, we know that almsgiving gets the least attention. Yet, the Bible places emphasis firmly on almsgiving:

Prayer and fasting are good, but better than either is almsgiving accompanied by righteousness ... It is better to give alms than to store up gold; for almsgiving saves one from death and expiates every sin. Those who regularly give alms shall enjoy a full life (Tobit 12:8-9).

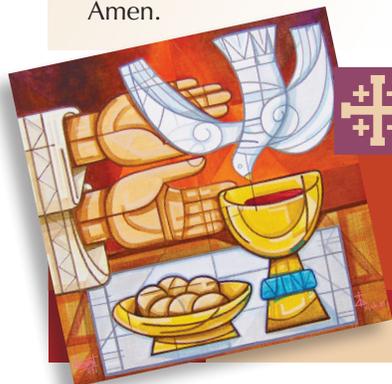


Almsgiving opens
our hearts to the
realization that God
blesses us through
those we serve.

Almsgiving is simply an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given us, and a realization that as a member of a community of faith, it is never just about “me and God.” It is fundamental to being a good steward of our community. For disciples of the Lord, almsgiving means much more than simply throwing a little change in the poor box. It is an attitude of generosity. It challenges us to examine how we are using our time, abilities, and money to better the lives of those around us. It urges us to share what we have been given by God with others in love and justice. It reminds us that Jesus blesses those who seek to be “poor in spirit” (Matt. 5:3).

Almsgiving opens our hearts to the realization that God blesses us through those we serve. It is here that we find the great mystery of Christian service. We see God in the life of Jesus, and we see Jesus in all those who are in need of our care. Look around, see those who are in need, and ask God to take away those obstacles and distractions that keep us from being generous with them. In turn, we will receive God’s blessing.

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THERE IS STILL TIME TO REGISTER!

2015 ICSC

Stewardship Institute

March 16-18 | Franciscan Renewal Center | Scottsdale, Arizona

Visit www.catholicstewardship.com to register today

Lenten Session

Continued from page 1

Consider one or more of these creative almsgiving ideas for the remainder of this Lenten season:

- Show an act of kindness to someone you don't speak to often.
- Visit an elderly person who may be lonely.
- Reflect on the regular contributions you make to the parish. Could you do more?



Almsgiving is simply an expression of our gratitude for all that God has given us, and a realization that as a member of a community of faith, it is never just about “me and God.”

- Perform an extra chore for your parents one day each week during Lent.
- Go through your closet and find some clothes in good shape to give away to other children who are in need of clothes.
- Write a letter or create a card for someone who is sick or might be lonely.
- Buy some cans of food to give to a local food bank or soup kitchen.
- Donate diapers, formula, baby clothing, baby furniture or maternity clothing to a local crisis pregnancy center.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for March*



Lucy Filippini was born on January 13, 1672, in Corneto-Tarquinoa, Italy, to a wealthy, aristocratic family. Both her parents died when she was still young and she was cared for by an aunt and uncle. Growing up, she cultivated a habit of daily prayer, practiced religious devotions and dedicated herself to the Blessed Mother.

Located in Lucy's neighborhood was a women's Benedictine community, and Lucy spent much of her time there. The community had a school where the daughters of the wealthy were educated. She was an excellent student, took advantage of the many religious education opportunities, and found the serenity of the community a place that fostered her spiritual growth. Her teachers and companions alike were moved by her humility, kindness and compassionate nature.

Into Lucy's life stepped Cardinal Mark Anthony Barbarigo, one of seventeenth century Italy's great religious figures. He has been favorably compared to Saints Frances de Sales and Charles Borromeo. Upon making his first pastoral visit to Corneto, he made a lasting impression on Lucy. She gave up her life in Corneto in order to help him realize his vision for establishing centers to educate and evangelize young girls, especially those from impoverished families. He believed young women were the future of the Church.

At the age of 20, Lucy plunged headlong into the plans to establish schools that not only would educate young women, but would show them how to influence a healthy and faith-filled family life. In 1692, teachers were trained to staff what soon became a proliferation of women's Catholic learning centers. Fifty-two schools were established during Lucy's lifetime. As the community grew, it attracted the attention of Pope Clement XI who, in 1707, called Lucy to Rome to establish schools there as well.

Lucy passed away on the Feast of the Annunciation, March 25, 1732, at the age of 60. In 1930, she was canonized and given the last available niche in Saint Peter's Basilica. Hailed as the foundress of the Pontifical Institute of Religious Teachers, her legacy goes far beyond Italy. The Institute's mission has spread into other parts of Europe, the United States, Brazil, Ethiopia and India.

Her feast day is March 25.

Attendants in a “Field Hospital”



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

I believe one of the most enlightening comments Pope Francis has made thus far in his papacy is that the Church is a “field hospital” in the world. He believes our community of faith is called to “heal wounds” and to “warm the hearts of the faithful.” This is what Jesus modeled so well in the Gospels, and we are called to actively participate in his life and ministry here and now.

As a visual person, our Holy Father’s image conjures up for me images such as the story of the Good Samaritan, armed forces medical care units and the work of Blessed Mother Teresa. It also brings to mind early missionaries who brought Christianity to people around the globe. I find the idea of a “field hospital” attendant somewhat overwhelming. But being good stewards of the Gospel, we are called to stand with and to serve our brothers and sisters during some of the most difficult times in their lives. This is a tremendous challenge and yet a sacred honor.

Recently, I was selected to serve as a juror in a criminal case. It was my first experience and I found it an unsettling and emotional experience for me. The fears and tears of witnesses as well as the defendant brought a very human and vulnerable dimension to this legal process. Though the outcome of the trial was based on the evidence and testimony provided, for me, the face of Jesus was everywhere in the courtroom.

After the trial concluded, I wondered if any of those who participated in the trial were ministered to in some way by the “field hospital” workers in their respective parishes or worshipping communities. Was anyone visited, prayed for or given a compassionate ear and encouragement? I certainly hope so. There was so much opportunity here.

Until Jesus returns, our Church will always need to be a “field hospital.” I thank those who have special gifts of empathy, compassion, courage, and love, and use them to be Jesus in the world. And, I ask you to pray with me that we will all recognize where we are called to heal wounds and warm hearts so we can share the love of Christ and be a witness to the Good News.

2015 International Conference



STEWARDSHIP
in the Footsteps of Pope Francis

Chicago, Illinois | October 22-25, 2015



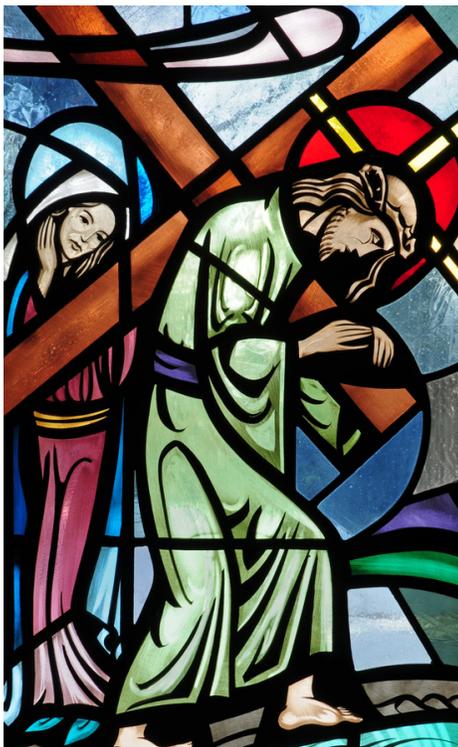
Don't wait to register!
Take advantage of our

Early Bird

Registration Fee!

visit catholicstewardship.com
to register TODAY!

Being a Good Steward of Lent



This is the seventh 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).

Every liturgical season has its natural stewardship connection, providing seasonal focus and themes for spiritual growth. Perhaps no season is as rich as Lent in providing a springboard for exploration, reflection, and transformation. As people who hope to lead others to a fuller expression of discipleship as Christian stewards, let us consider Lent as a gift which we are called to steward well.

Part of our Catholic culture: I often tell leaders who are ready to adopt new practices or to deepen current ones that Lent has great potential, because Catholics will do things during Lent that they will not do any other time of the year! Whether we were baptized as infants or were initiated as adults, Lent is a season that connects to our daily lives. The three traditional practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving or doing works of charity lead us to live each day as good stewards who put God first and who think about and act on behalf of others.

Perhaps no season is as rich as Lent in providing a springboard for exploration, reflection, and transformation.

Metanoia: Lent is a season of turning away, turning toward, and turning around. Jesus tells us to repent and believe in the Gospel. The repentance of Lent is about turning away from sin, and it is about turning toward God. We are invited to turn our lives around, to embrace the way of Christ as people who are truly committed to grow in his self-giving way. This turning can also be one of accepting the call to grow as good stewards, as we turn away from selfishness, self-centeredness, and sinfulness, and turn toward God as the giver of all good gifts.

Simplicity and Sacrifice: During Lent, we encounter again Jesus' mercy, forgiveness, healing, and salvation, and we recognize more fully the depths of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Jesus' sacrifice challenges us to give of our selves, our talents, time, prayer, attention, and resources. This call to sacrifice also leads us to separate our wants from our needs, inviting us to simplify our lives, rid ourselves of unnecessary material possessions, and open our hearts to the grace of life lived in imitation of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Calling All ICSC Parish Members!

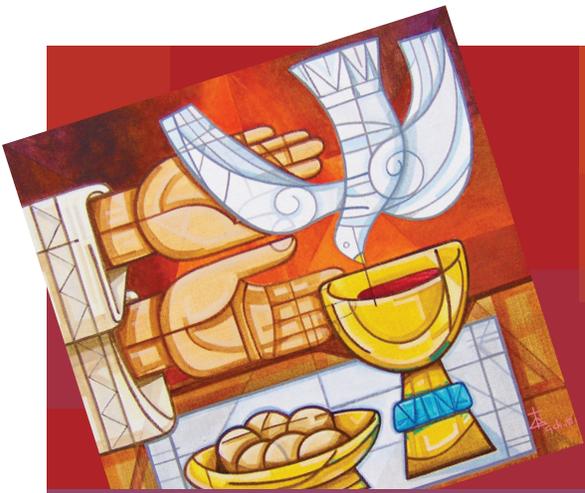
ICSC 2015 Parish Stewardship Award Information

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 2015. 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](#)





Called.
Transformed.
Sent to serve.

BECOME AN ICSC MEMBER TODAY

It will enhance your stewardship efforts tremendously!



**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

Who is ICSC?

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is a professional organization recognized internationally as a source of education, networking and information to advance the ministry of Christian stewardship as a way of life in the Roman Catholic Church in dioceses and parishes worldwide.

ICSC is the only organization dedicated exclusively to advancing Christian stewardship in North America as well as overseas. Founded in 1962, ICSC has over 1,200 members representing over 800 dioceses and archdioceses, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms.

ICSC Provides

- Expert advice for introducing Christian stewardship to your parish community
- Techniques proven to revitalize parish life
- Practical stewardship ideas
- Support for teaching stewardship to children
- Reflections for preaching stewardship
- A network of speakers for parishes and diocesan gatherings
- Conferences that offer the wisdom and experience of those committed to stewardship as a way of life
- Retreats that offer in-depth reflection and study on Christian stewardship
- Publications that inform and enhance our understanding of stewardship
- Access to stewardship resources, models and samples online
- Opportunities to exchange ideas and information with stewardship parishes in North America and beyond
- Best practices for promoting stewardship in the parish



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



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Second Sunday of Lent Weekend of February 28 / March 1, 2015

The Gospel story of the transfiguration of Jesus holds many lessons; the most prominent being the transformation of Jesus from simply being perceived as a wise and gifted prophet to the one who has fulfilled the sacred traditions of the Mosaic law and the hope of the prophets - the Messiah, the Christ. The Lord calls his stewards personally to participate in His redemptive activity. Heeding this call requires transformation, being willing to renounce patterns of behavior that draw us away from God and to embrace habits that reveal goodness and generosity. In this coming week of Lent, let us pray for the wisdom to be transformed in our daily lives, so that we may walk more authentically in the footsteps of Jesus.

Third Sunday of Lent • Weekend of March 7/8, 2015

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple is a familiar story. The prophets Jeremiah, Zechariah and Malachi prophesied that when the Kingdom of God was at hand, the Temple would be cleansed of all activities unworthy of an encounter with God. Christians are often referred to as "Temples of the Lord." As stewards of a "Holy Temple" God has entrusted to each one of us, what are we doing to be cleansed of activities unworthy of an encounter with the Lord? This week, reflect on one thing you can do to cleanse the Temple God has given you so that it becomes a more inviting home for Christ Jesus.

Fourth Sunday of Lent • Weekend of March 14/15, 2015

Jesus tells his disciples of the immeasurable generosity God has bestowed on them by offering His only Son for their salvation. Good stewards realize this wonderful gift. God has sacrificed what is most dear to Him for our sake. Do we rejoice in this gift of Our Savior and respond to this love with

our own immeasurable generosity? Do we allow the light of Christ to shine in the world through us? Or do we withdraw, refusing this gift, and prefer to live in a way that denies the light of Christ? This week, reflect on the ways you allow the light of Christ to shine through you. Could that light reflect even more brilliantly through you?

Fifth Sunday of Lent • Weekend of March 21/22, 2015

The climactic event of Jesus' passion and death is drawing closer; a time when the great confrontation between Jesus and the powers of darkness take place. Jesus invites his disciples into a great mystery with curious pronouncements: Those who love their lives just as they are will lose them. If a grain of wheat dies, it will bear much fruit. When Jesus is lifted up, he will draw all to himself. The Christian steward knows life can't be lived in complacency. We are called to die to self, bear more fruit, be raised up with Jesus. In today's Gospel reading Jesus brings discomfort to those who are comfortable. Jesus urges us to step out of our "comfort zone." How will we respond to Jesus?

Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion Weekend of March 28/29, 2015

This weekend we participate in the proclamation of the passion and death of Jesus according to the Gospel of Mark. We are witnesses to Jesus' undeterred obedience to the Father which comes at great sacrifice. An important part of Christian stewardship is the willingness to make sacrifices that reveal our own embrace of Jesus' cross. Over the next three days of this most Holy Week, reflect on this question: As good stewards of our life in Christ, what concrete sacrifices are we willing to make to witness God's love to the world?

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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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.