



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2016 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for May*

Gracious and Loving God,

When your Spirit descended upon the apostles at Pentecost, they spoke the languages of those who came to hear their testimony.

They proclaimed a new covenant in Christ Jesus, sanctified by his blood, bound by the Holy Spirit, and sealed in the waters of baptism.

We give you thanks and praise for releasing your Spirit upon us; and in our time pray that it will break through the many barriers that divide nations and people.

Let your Spirit open our eyes as a communion of faith to your ongoing presence among us, so we can recognize you when we serve one another.

Let your Spirit open our minds so that we may gain the wisdom to work together for reconciliation and peace, and unite our talents to build a better world.

And let your Spirit open our hearts so that together we can live more fully in Christ, shine his light of mercy and love and prepare for the day of his glorious return.

We pray this through your son, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.

Stewardship in the Public Square

Discussing civility in the public square, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., reminds American Catholics that they are “citizens of two worlds,” the kingdom of God and of a great nation. The incivility displayed in this year’s presidential campaign season sometimes makes it hard to reconcile these two citizenships. But it’s precisely at this time that good stewards of God’s love and mercy must become engaged politically.

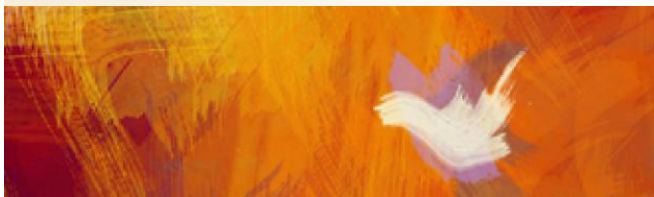
Our Holy Father urges us to be ambassadors of Christ in the public square. Pope Francis has said, “We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves. . .” (Daily homily, 9/16/13).



Pope Francis challenges us to “immerse” ourselves in politics.

How can we “offer the best of ourselves” in this political season? There are many ways. Christian stewards have a starting point: They recognize Jesus’ admonition that nations will be judged by how they treat the poor, the sick, the weak, and most vulnerable in society (Matt 25:31-46), as well as how they respond to their neighbors (Luke 10:25-37).

They understand that political differences are expected, even among Christians, but their convictions are expressed with “gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15).



When we express our views through social media, we can raise the bar and interact with mercy, respect and dignity, as Jesus did. We avoid name-calling, mockery and insulting remarks, even in the privacy of our homes and especially in front of our children.



We never forget to vote,
and to pray for our
public leaders.

We become involved in organizations that focus on issues and advocate for causes that promote mercy, compassion and justice. We write to elected officials with well-expressed convictions to affirm or hold them accountable for their stewardship of the public trust. We speak truth boldly in the public square, not to force our faith and beliefs on others but as Christ's ambassadors, bearing the fruit of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22–26). We never forget to vote, and to pray for our public leaders.

Pope Francis challenges us to “immerse” ourselves in politics. As citizens of two worlds, we commit to promoting and supporting the common good. Our convictions on how best to nurture the common good may differ, but we must keep the pontiff's exhortation in mind: in politics, just as in life, Catholics must offer the best of themselves, and seek to find and pray for political leaders who do the same.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*



Saint Bernardine of Siena

Saint Bernardine of Siena, commonly referred to as the “Apostle of Italy,” was heralded as an eloquent preacher, missionary, reformer, and economist. He was born in 1380 to a noble family in Tuscany but was orphaned early in his life. In 1400, at the height of the great plague in Italy, he volunteered to care for the sick in the city of Siena, stopping only when he himself became ill.

In 1402 he entered the Franciscan order in Siena and was ordained to the priesthood in 1404. For several years, he studied and lived the life of a quiet contemplative.

In 1417, he was sent to Milan to help out at one of the parish churches. Here, Bernardine discovered his gift of preaching. News of his exciting sermons spread rapidly, and soon he had invitations to travel and preach all over the peninsula. He brought his enthusiasm for preaching the Good News to crowds of thousands. During his ministry he was asked to be a bishop on three occasions. Each time he refused because he believed his gifts were best used as a missionary.

Bernardine left a lasting symbol to the Church when he created the symbol, “IHS,” the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. The letters were placed within an image of a blazing sun. It was a compelling visual aid to his listeners and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings.

Bernardine was a scholar as well. He wrote a book on economics. *On Contracts and Usury* dealt with the justification of private property, the ethics of trade, the determination of value and price, the usury question and it offered a well-reasoned defense of entrepreneurship.

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In 1430, he was elected vicar general of the Franciscans of the Strict Observance. During his term of office, many Franciscan monasteries that enjoyed a looser rule, changed to the strict observance to benefit from Bernardine's charisma, wisdom and leadership. He added rigorous education programs to their daily routine and the community's numbers grew dramatically.

St. Bernardine's tireless commitment to spreading the Good News remained until the very end of his life. In 1444 he set out to preach in Naples. On the way he fell ill with fever. He died on the vigil of the Feast of the Ascension at age 64. His feast day is May 20.



The ICSC Family Celebrates Bishop Robert Morneau in May

A beloved founding father of the Christian stewardship movement in the Catholic tradition celebrates his 50th anniversary as a priest this month, May 28. Auxiliary Bishop *Emeritus* Robert Morneau of the Diocese of Green Bay, Wisconsin, was ordained there in 1966. Although his ministry assignments have kept him close to his Wisconsin roots, his impact on the stewardship movement has extended nationally and internationally. Bishop Morneau served as a member of the ad hoc committee on stewardship which produced the U.S. Bishops' pastoral letter, "Stewardship: A Disciple's Response," and following its adoption by the bishops' conference, Bishop Morneau became one of the most eloquent and effective proponents of stewardship in the Catholic Church, and a resource on stewardship for dioceses and parishes worldwide. A much sought-after writer, speaker and retreat leader, Bishop Morneau's speaking style, folksy and soft-spoken, yet peppered with literary and poetic references, have made him a favorite at Catholic conferences, including at ICSC's stewardship conference. Calling stewardship "a way of life based on conversion of heart," Bishop Morneau would often use garden imagery, challenging his audience to respond to the question, "What have you done with the garden entrusted to you?" In 2013 he told the *Compass*, Green Bay's diocesan paper, "In preaching, I try to image a tired housewife or a stressed out father who sits in the back pew. What will help them to grow in faith and make it through the next week?" A golfer, runner, avid reader and Green Bay Packers' fan, his essays have appeared in publications including *U.S. Catholic*, *St. Anthony Messenger*, and *America*. Bishop Morneau is the author of several books, including one he cites as a favorite, *Spiritual Direction: Principles and Practices*, as well as a children's book, *The Gift*, which carries a stewardship theme. He is the pastor of Resurrection Catholic Church in Green Bay, and a number of his homilies and pastoral reflections can be found on the parish's website. Catholic stewards owe Bishop Morneau a deep debt of gratitude, and will remember him in prayer in a special way on his 50th anniversary as a priest.

"In preaching, I try to image a tired housewife or a stressed out father who sits in the back pew. What will help them to grow in faith and make it through the next week?"

~Bishop Morneau

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](#)



Servant Leadership: Ascending from the Prevailing Culture

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

Last month, we considered the way in which our leadership is inspired and modeled by our Lord, Jesus Christ, captured in the phrase, “servant leadership.” As stewardship leaders, not only are we called to servant leadership, it is also up to us to draw others into servant leadership with us – we cannot, nor should we, do this alone! There are many in our parishes who lead through their coordination of ministries, participation in service and outreach, membership in committees and councils, and when we really think about it, participation in the life of discipleship, at home, in the workplace, and in the wider community of the world. Each of us leads, in many ways, in a variety of capacities, every day of our lives.

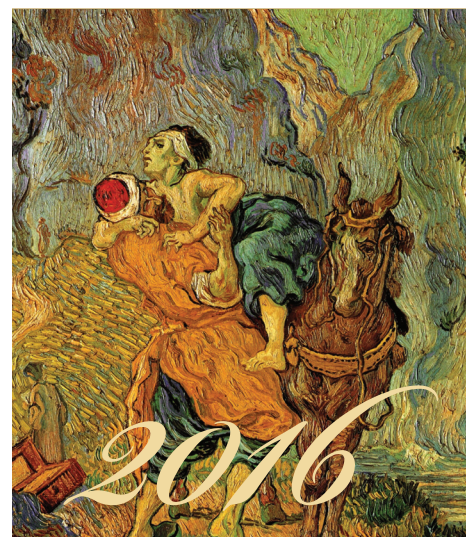


Each of us leads, in many ways, in a variety of capacities, every day of our lives.

Reverend Donald Senior, theologian and president emeritus of Catholic Theological Union, draws upon the writing of business leadership author Robert Greenleaf in describing the servant leader:

In contrast to the prevailing culture that emphasized ‘watch out for number one,’ servant leaders ‘put others first’; where the prevailing institutional culture would strive for the ‘survival of the fittest,’ servant leaders say, ‘We are all in this together.’ Where the prevailing culture says, ‘Never trust anyone,’ servant leaders ‘trust everyone unless, and until, they prove themselves untrustworthy.’ Greenleaf also emphasized that the person who aspires to servant leadership must choose first to be a ‘servant’ and then later to be a ‘leader.’ In other words, the vocation to service, to reaching out to others in need rather than being absorbed by one’s own needs and ambition, is the crucial starting point for this kind of leadership.

I am struck by Greenleaf’s description of the prevailing culture, and I’ve seen how that culture can sometimes creep into the culture of the parish. I’ve also seen how many parish leaders who experience this “prevailing culture” in their workplace, however, strive to “ascend” from this culture and help the parish community grow in a different, more life-giving way, inspired by Jesus himself. The more we grow as servant leaders the more able we will be to create an environment in which “we are all in this together,” for the good of our parish community, for the life of the Church and for the world.



INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE

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



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\$499

through July 31

Visit catholicstewardship.org
to register TODAY!

Embracing Those Who Suffer from Mental Illness

Adapted from a reflection by Mary Ann Otto, Stewardship Director, Diocese of Green Bay, WI

May is Mental Health Awareness month, and what better way for us to reveal God's compassion during this Year of Mercy than to become more aware of and embrace the people we encounter who suffer from mental illness.

People with mental illness sometimes behave in ways we can't comprehend. Those with severe depression sometimes stay in bed all day, unable to manage the most basic motivation to move. People with anxiety disorders can be gripped by irrational or even unidentifiable fears that don't incapacitate others. Those affected by psychotic disorders may see things that aren't real, hear voices that don't exist, and sometimes lose the ability to discern reality at all. Sometimes people with mental illness mistreat or hurt the people they love—or themselves. Some who need medication stop taking it or won't start. Some who seem to be doing well suddenly start showing symptoms again. Whatever the mental health crisis, members of our family of faith are called to be good stewards and embrace these vulnerable brothers and sisters, as Jesus did.



As stewards of Christ's love and mercy, we are called to follow his example, to reach out to those who suffer.

When people see symptoms of mental illness in others there is a tendency to distance themselves, ignore them and hope someone else will help, even in our parish communities. One weary mom lamented: "When a family member suffers from cancer or other diseases, people send cards, visit and bring a casserole. If your family member suffers from a mental illness, there is no contact or support." This mother's feeling of abandonment is regrettable and suggests that our family of faith has no tolerance or empathy for this kind of suffering. But the parish community is the Body of Christ. It cannot leave the impression that Christ himself is ready to walk away from those who carry these burdens.

As stewards of Christ's love and mercy, we are called to follow his example, to reach out to those who suffer, even those who suffer mentally and emotionally; to embrace them rather than shrink away. No one is beyond hope, past the point where God's grace touches them. We are not called to have all the answers or understand all the mysteries of mental illness. But we are called to love. That is the disciple's response.

When we encounter mental illness among family members, friends, neighbors, fellow parishioners, what should we do?

- Seek understanding instead of passing judgment. Mental illness is a disease, one we may not initially understand.
- Get more information—read a book, do some research online, or perhaps even attend a workshop sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.
- Resist the temptation to believe that people in treatment have all their needs met; mental health professionals can't be expected to provide all the needs of one in treatment. It takes a community to provide acceptance, spiritual guidance and compassion.
- Offer positive support and be sensitive to those seeking medical intervention
- Be silent if you don't know what to say—but be there for and merciful to those with mental illness.
- If you're not a mental-health professional, acknowledge your limitations but remember no professional qualifications are required to be friendly and kind or to enter into a supportive friendship.
- Offer the dignity of a handshake and a smile, companionship and perhaps even friendship.
- Remember in your prayers those who suffer from mental illness, their families, caregivers and mental-health professionals.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Weekend of April 30/May 1, 2016

In today's Gospel we listen to some of the last words Jesus spoke on the night before his death, but they are words that prepared his disciples for his physical departure from them forty days after his resurrection. Jesus speaks of coming back with his Father so that they can make their home in the disciples who love them. Our notion of the Triune God is one who is prepared to come and live within each of us. But God waits patiently to be invited into our hearts; our inner space. God is neither demanding nor intrusive. How do we make our hearts the home where Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit dwell? How do we welcome this sacred presence?

(For those dioceses that celebrate the Seventh Sunday of Easter on the weekend of May 7/8, 2016)

Seventh Sunday of Easter Weekend of May 7/8, 2016

In today's first reading we hear the story of Saint Stephen, proclaiming God's word in the "public square" and suffering martyrdom by being stoned to death. At the scene were those who supported Stephen, those who became jealous and angry, and those who simply stood by and did nothing. Sometimes it seems like those who exercise good stewardship of the Gospel embark on a terribly lonely journey, with a destination that looks rather ominous. It certainly was for Stephen. But he lived and died with an incredible faith. Do we mock those who proclaim God's word? Do we turn a blind eye to those suffering persecution today? Or do we have the courage to preach the Gospel with our lives?

(For those dioceses that celebrate Ascension Sunday on the weekend of May 7/8, 2016)

Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord Weekend of May 7/8, 2016

Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension of our Lord, a feast which, in part, celebrates the confidence he placed in his close followers to continue his ministry. In the Gospel reading Jesus reminds his followers of the purpose of his mission, and commissions them to continue his work by proclaiming his word and by living courageously that which they preached. He also promises them the Holy Spirit who he said would strengthen them for the task ahead. As stewards of Jesus' life and ministry, a good question for us to reflect on this week might be this: Has Christ's confidence in the quality of our own witness been well placed?

Pentecost Sunday

Weekend of May 14/15, 2016

In today's first reading we encounter the Holy Spirit who at Pentecost came rushing in over Jesus' followers like a powerful wind. It must have been a frightening experience for them. But their great acts of prophetic witness began when the Spirit drew them out of their "comfort zones." Jesus said the Holy Spirit, like the wind, blows where it wills; into the lives of good stewards, empowering them to perform wondrous acts of healing, reconciliation and evangelization; encouraging them to proclaim the Gospel with boldness and confidence. All of that is a little beyond the comfort zone where most of us live our lives. This week, reflect on how the Holy Spirit may be calling you out of your personal comfort zone.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity Weekend of May 21/22, 2016

In today's Gospel Jesus talks about life with his Father and the Spirit. He tells his disciples that what belongs to the Father belongs to him, and that the Spirit will take from what is his and give it to them. Jesus helps us understand that the relationship between Father, Son and Spirit is one of perfect sharing and loving generosity. This shared life is the foundation for what we now understand as part of living life in the Trinity. The abundant generosity of those who are good stewards of the gifts entrusted to them gives us a glimpse into the love of the Triune God. Does the generosity with which we live our lives bear witness to God's extraordinarily generous life within us?

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Weekend of May 28/29, 2016

From the rich Eucharistic themes to be drawn from today's second reading, one stewardship theme stands out: The Eucharist is Christ's gift to us. Good stewards are grateful for this gift and realize that no matter their station in life, they are welcome to come to the table and receive the body and blood of Christ. If Jesus could break bread with his betrayer, Judas, his denier, Peter, and the other ten who deserted him, then he will welcome us. Do we truly appreciate what a tremendous gift it is to approach the Lord's table? Do we accept the transforming power of the gift of Christ's body and blood?