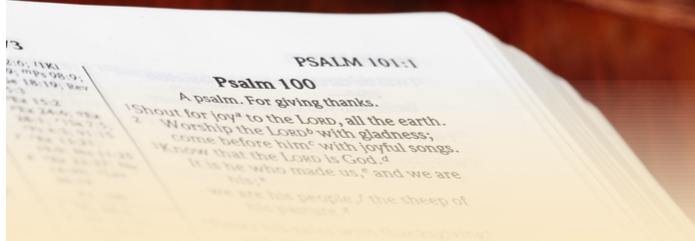


INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2016 • e-Bulletin

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING



The Thanksgiving holiday is an excellent time to re-discover the psalms of praise and thanksgiving. When you find a quiet moment, sit and relax with your bible. Think of a time when awe and gratitude overwhelmed you. Maybe it was a sunrise, or children playing in a park, an inspirational hymn at Mass, a family gathering, or a walk in the woods. Remember how you appreciated that special moment. Then, open your bible to one of the psalms of thanksgiving and recite it to yourself, like Psalm 118 for instance:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Listen to the words. Close your eyes. Let the psalm speak to you.

Other psalms of praise and thanksgiving you might consider include psalms 92, 95, 98, 100, 103, 104, 105, 107, 111, 117, 145, and 147.

Whatever psalm you choose for that quiet moment, thank God for that special time of awe as well as all the good things in your life, and praise God for his glorious deeds.

In Everything Stewards Give Thanks



Every November, the United States celebrates a great national holiday: Thanksgiving. Canada celebrates a similar feast in October. Although the origins of the U.S. festivity are somewhat historically murky, it's evident that some of the earliest immigrants to America celebrated this day as an expression of gratitude to God for bringing a healthy harvest which would ensure their colony's survival through the winter. It was the most primal kind of thankfulness: you have spared our lives, O Lord, and we are grateful.

Over the years, Thanksgiving in the U.S. has become a national expression of gratitude, but sometimes it veers into the neighborhood of cliché, and often it strays away from the source of our gifts. Television hosts will remind us we should be thankful for all the "stuff" we have, including some non-tangible items like freedom, but to whom are we grateful? In some circles, it's unfashionable to mention that it is God, the source of life and goodness, to whom we owe our deep, humble sense of appreciation.

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The faith of the Christian steward, on the other hand, proclaims gratitude to God as its wellspring and cornerstone. The Christian steward is aware of thankfulness to God twelve months of the year, not just in November, and the steward knows, as St. Ignatius of Loyola taught us, that we “find God in all things.” Therefore, we find reason to thank God in all things – for health of mind and body, for our families, our livelihoods, our successes and the gifts of education, intelligence and freedom that make our lives full and rewarding.

The Christian steward is aware of thankfulness to God twelve months of the year, not just in November

We also thank God for the embarrassing moments of our lives, for the disappointments, the sorrows, even the mistakes, because we know that God was present in each of those moments, ready to teach us and to guide us. The Christian steward can go deep in prayer and thank God for lessons learned in times of trouble as well as times of bounty. Gratitude, for the Christian steward, is not just rendered in times of plenty, but in times of sadness and deprivation. The God of all is present in all situations.

Perhaps the challenge for stewards during November is to be a source of reminder to those around them that thanksgiving is a fundamental lifetime habit, rendered to the God of mercy and plenty.

STEWARDSHIP PRAYER FOR NOVEMBER

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
for the beauty of the earth and its amazing colors;
for crisp autumn mornings and sparkling winter nights;
for mountains and forests, rivers and seashores.

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
for the water that cleanses, the clothes that bring warmth, the food that nourishes
and the home that gives comfort.

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
for those who love us and care for us; for those who value us for who we are;
for those we call family, friends, neighbors.

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
for the gift of Christ, your son;
for his life, his gospel, his cross, and his Church;
for his Eucharistic meal
and the promise to be with us always.

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
for the time you've allotted us, the life you've offered us,
the opportunities you've afforded us, and the miracles you've worked for us.

Thank you, Lord

For all the beautiful and wonderful things we experience in our life;
and for your infinite love that meets our daily needs.
May our love, too, be known for its abundance,
its readiness to bless and heal,
to offer peace and promote justice,
and to serve in Jesus' name.

Amen.



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*



Saint Catherine of Alexandria

For six centuries, Saint Catherine was one of the most venerated of women saints in Christendom alongside saints Agnes, Barbara and Lucy. Saint Catherine's was one of the voices Saint Joan of Arc said she heard. She is famous for her extraordinary gifts to evangelize and exercise stewardship of her faith.

Born in the late 3rd century C.E., Catherine was the daughter of a wealthy governor of Alexandria, Egypt, the renowned Christian center of scholarship, and at the time, second only to Rome in size and wealth. She possessed a great love for learning and became

exceptionally well educated in philosophy and science. She also showed a keen interest in religion and while still a teenager became a Christian.

In early 4th century Rome, Christianity was growing but continued to endure persecution. Eager to share the faith she had embraced and lobby for religious freedom, Catherine was granted an audience with the Roman Emperor Maxentius who was not much older than the young scholar.

Saint Catherine's was one of the voices Saint Joan of Arc said she heard. She is famous for her extraordinary gifts to evangelize and exercise stewardship of her faith.

Impressed by her boldness and taken by her beauty, the emperor arranged a debate between Catherine and some fifty of Rome's philosophers and orators who promoted the official state religion. Reportedly, Catherine prevailed and succeeded in converting them all to Christianity. Maxentius ordered his pagan advocates executed, and then tried to make Catherine his mistress. When she rebuffed him, he had her imprisoned.

The emperor's wife, however, was fascinated by Catherine; and while her husband was away on military matters, she went to visit this extraordinary young apostle in her prison cell. The result was that Catherine converted the empress and eventually two hundred of the palace soldiers. News of these recently baptized Christians infuriated the emperor, and he had his wife and soldiers executed as well.

Maxentius tried yet again to win Catherine over by proposing marriage to make her his new queen. When she again refused him, the emperor had her tortured and beheaded. Not long after, he himself would die in an historic battle against Constantine in October 312. It is Constantine, who, upon becoming the new Roman emperor, made Christianity the dominant religion of the Roman Empire.

Saint Catherine is the patroness of Christian philosophers and her Feast day is November 25.

A Stewardship Parish *Par Excellence:* Good Shepherd Catholic Church



Good Shepherd Parish was founded in May 1965, to serve the Catholic population of the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria, Virginia. Parishioner participation in liturgical ministries, lifelong faith formation, fellowship, and a commitment to serving those in need have been the hallmarks of Good Shepherd Parish from the first days of its history. Parishioners are encouraged to live faith-filled lives and to recognize how their God-given gifts may be used in service to one another and in their local community.

The community at Good Shepherd has a long tradition of "welcoming the stranger" through its hospitality and welcoming newcomers to the immediate area. Their hospitality has also extended to those new to the United States. Over five decades, parishioners have opened their hearts and homes to new arrivals from Southeast Asia, those escaping war and strife in Central and South America and even the families of armed service and government personnel whose lives, by the very nature of their service, are so transient.

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Good Shepherd's family of faith is also committed to outreach to the poor and underprivileged in its community, nationally, and internationally. In the past ten years over \$500,000 has been raised at its parish International Festival. These funds have been distributed to the community through "Shepherd's Gate Grants" and to charitable organizations that provide support to those in need of food, shelter, and educational opportunities.



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Good Shepherd has grown from 900 to more than 3,400 families, with 57 original families still worshipping and serving in the parish. Eight Sunday Masses in English and Spanish are celebrated each weekend. There are over 150 active ministries, encompassing liturgy, faith formation, outreach and more.

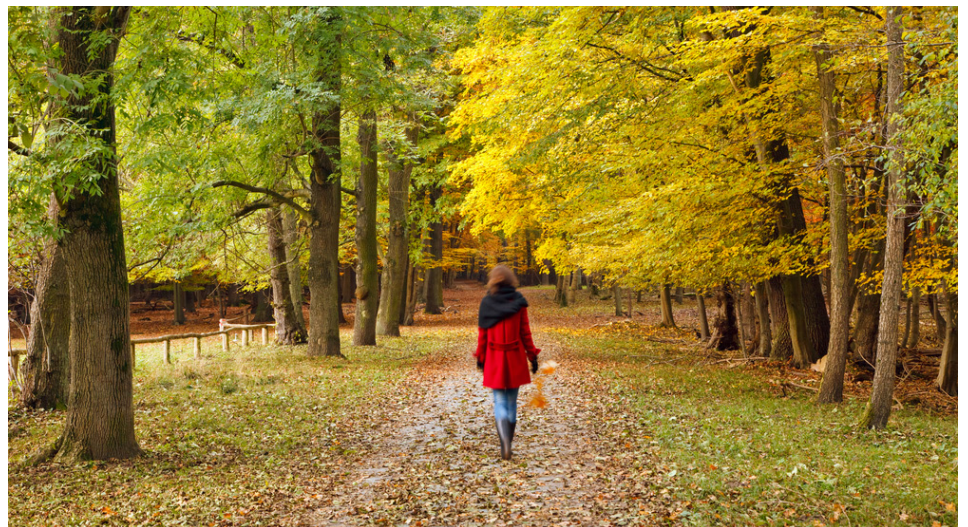
This year the International Catholic Stewardship Council presents its 2016 Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award to Good Shepherd Catholic Church.

For more information about the Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award, [CLICK HERE](#).

Be a Good Steward of Thanksgiving Day

Your Thanksgiving Day can be more than just enjoying a great meal and turning on the television to search for the traditional parades and football games. How about expressing your stewardship of this day in a more meaningful way? Here are some suggestions for making Thanksgiving an opportunity for expressing our gratitude to the Lord in creative ways:

- **Go to Mass and count your blessings.** Start the day off on a positive note and celebrate the Eucharist. In your prayer reflect on five things you are most grateful for in your life. Then reflect on how you can be an even better steward of these gifts.
- **Write "I'm thankful for you" cards** and give them out or e-mail them on Thanksgiving (or mail them beforehand).
- **Share your Thanksgiving meal** with someone who is alone this Thanksgiving. Look for someone, such as a neighbor, co-worker, fellow parishioner, college student or armed services personnel who may be separated from family and ask them to join in your Thanksgiving dinner.
- **Practice ecumenism!** Many parishes make Thanksgiving an opportune time to join in ecumenical services with other Christian worshipping communities, or inter-faith activities and programs with non-Christian centers of worship. Find one nearby and experience something new and enriching.
- **Visit the sick.** Check with hospitals, assisted living facilities or nursing homes in the area to see if there are volunteer opportunities to visit with patients or residents on that day.
- **Help someone if you can.** Extend your generosity and blessings beyond your own family. Be part of an adopt-a-family effort, help distribute food baskets, or bring canned foods or clothing to St. Vincent de Paul centers.
- **Volunteer your time** at a soup kitchen to help prepare and serve Thanksgiving dinners to others.
- **Take a walk.** Find a place to enjoy God's gift of creation. Head out the door for a refreshing walk. Invite family, friends or others to share the experience too.
- **Most important!** Take advantage of the Thanksgiving holidays to focus on what you're grateful for and the things you appreciate about yourself and others. It is an ideal time to remember and to celebrate the many blessings in our lives.





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 5/6, 2016

In today's second reading, Saint Paul offers encouragement to the Christian community and prays that the Lord instill encouragement in their hearts. There is nothing worse than discouragement to drain people spiritually and emotionally. Yet, at times, it is much easier to lose patience with others and offer critical and discouraging words. We are "our brothers' (and sisters') keepers." We are stewards of our relationships with others. Offering encouragement is essential to the exercise of that stewardship. Saint Paul understood that God worked through him just as God works through us to encourage others. How often do we ask the Lord for encouragement? How often do we look for opportunities to affirm, strengthen and encourage others in our daily lives?

33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 12/13, 2016

In today's gospel Jesus tells his followers there will be plenty of time for them to bear witness to what he taught and did. He helped them understand that the Holy Spirit would guide them and help them persevere in their own stewardship of his gospel even when friends and family betrayed them. Do our friends and neighbors, or classmates and colleagues, know we are disciples of Jesus Christ? How do we bear witness to Christ each day? Do we hide our faith out of fear of rejection? Or are we bold in our witness to others? Are we good stewards of Christ's gospel?

The Solemnity of Christ the King Weekend of November 19/20, 2016

Today we listen to the humble confession of Saint Dismas, the good thief; a confession that brought him mercy, forgiveness and great favor by the Lord. What can his humility teach those who seek to be good stewards? That we must give up our self-importance, our self-centeredness, and learn to give ourselves over to God? That God has entrusted us with everything we have as gift to be used in God's service? That we treat others not with arrogance, sarcasm or put down, but with reverence and respect as gifts from God? Is it by recognizing that God is the center of the universe, not us, and that only Christ the King can bring us genuine peace and salvation?

First Sunday of Advent Weekend of November 26/27, 2016

On this first Sunday of Advent Jesus urges his disciples to stay awake and prepare themselves for the Lord's coming. Good stewards prepare themselves and await Christ's judgment in joyous expectation. This kind of attitude requires genuine spiritual maturity, the kind that is cultivated by prayer, participation in the sacraments, loving attention to family and one's communion of faith, and love for one's neighbor. Are we prepared for the Lord's second coming? Are we ready to receive Christ? Are we ready to look joyously for Christ's judgment?