



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2017 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for November*

Gracious and loving God,
as the autumn season continues its transformation;
and the days become shorter, the earth cooler;
as we anticipate joining family and friends
in joyful celebration on Thanksgiving Day,
we pause to give You thanks and praise
for the abundant blessings You have bestowed upon us:

For life and health, safety and comfort,
food and nourishment, we are sincerely grateful.
Through your Spirit, open our hearts
so that we may be even better stewards
of these rich and unmerited gifts.

Show us how to be a blessing for the poor,
sick, lonely and all who suffer.

And help us nurture the gift of faith,
revealed to us by your Son, Jesus Christ,
our greatest gift,
who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Amen.

Let's Show Gratitude for Our Parish Family



During the month of November let us remember to include our parish family when we express gratitude for the abundant gifts we have been given. Our parish families are great blessings because they are signs of Christ's active presence in the world today.

Saint John Paul II once described a parish as a "family of families." If we accept that the parish is a family, then surely it takes on the characteristics of a family. And just like a family, the gifts of the Holy Spirit to our parishes include the many different talents and temperaments we find in the pews, parish house and parking lot. They become great strengths when we are united in building up the Body of Christ.

The love that we share is a gospel that
has been given to us to live and proclaim
in word and deed.

The mission of our parish is to continue the saving work of Jesus Christ, who expressed his own ministry resolutely: "I must proclaim the Kingdom of God" (Lk 4:43). The parish is a steward of this ongoing ministry, and as members of a parish family we too are stewards of Christ's work. That is why it is so important to be nourished by the Eucharist regularly and to participate fully in the great prophetic





witness of the parish: to offer our time, assist in one or more of the many parish ministries, invite others into our parish life of faith, carry our share of the financial responsibility for the parish and celebrate when our parish family celebrates.

Remember as well our pastors and those other priests and pastoral professionals who seek to nourish us with the Bread of Life and to help us understand more fully our faith and the actions which spring from that faith.

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The life of faith we experience in our parishes is not perfect. What family is perfect? Our parish family never has been and never will be perfect because we are not perfect. But part of what we share in our parish is Christ's love, which is perfect. The love that we share is a gospel that has been given to us to live and proclaim in word and deed. It is a gospel that gives us hope. And for that, we should be grateful.

Stewards Keep God in Thanksgiving

Every December, we hear much talk of "keeping Christ in Christmas." But sometimes in the national discussion of Thanksgiving in the United States, we talk about being thankful but leave out God as the source of all. Good stewards never miss an opportunity to thank God. Here are some suggestions for "keeping God in Thanksgiving."



- Many parishes see as many people attend Mass on Thanksgiving Day as on holy days of obligation. Make sure you're in the crowd, and bring your kids to Mass to say "thank you" to God on this special day.
- Food banks and shelters need food all year long, but many launch special drives on Thanksgiving Day. Fill up your trunk with donations, and remain mindful that you are acting out of a spirit of gratitude to God.



- Line up a trip to help at a soup kitchen, food bank or meal delivery service on Thanksgiving or sometime near the feast. This can be especially beneficial to children, but everyone who experiences the needs of others appreciates not only what they have, but the fellowship they share with their sisters and brothers who may have less.
- Make grace at your family feast especially memorable. Let people know ahead of time that they will be asked to name a person, a situation, an experience, for which they are grateful to a loving God.
- Make that phrase, "Thank God," a little more frequent and sincere in your conversation. Don't be afraid to use the language of a grateful steward.
- Set time aside this month to pray over some experience in your life that was difficult for you. Let God show you his presence in this moment and feel your heart respond with gratitude.
- Set aside another time in which you recall an experience of deep happiness and joy – the birth of a child, a special moment with a loved one, a gift you received that was beyond your expectation. Let God be with you in these moments and express your deep thankfulness.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*



In 1609, attracted to the evangelizing activities of the Jesuits, Father Roque entered the order and began his own evangelizing ministry as a missionary in a vast region of South America where today the countries of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay intersect.

Saint Roque Gonzalez de Santa Cruz

Saint Roque Gonzalez de Santa Cruz was born on November 17, 1576 in the city of Asunción, now the capital of Paraguay, South America. The son of wealthy Spanish colonists, he was well-educated and a devout Catholic. He was ordained a priest at age 22.

In 1609, attracted to the evangelizing activities of the Jesuits, Father Roque entered the order and began his own evangelizing ministry as a missionary in a vast region of South America where today the countries of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay intersect. He would spend the next two decades searching for indigenous peoples, gaining their trust and showing them how to improve their lives by settling them into organized communities protected from slave traders. He then converted them to Christianity. The written records of his extraordinary accomplishments as a missionary and explorer still exist.

At a time when Spanish conquistadors were brutalizing and enslaving natives, Father Roque helped them become self-sufficient and free. In 1613 he established his first native settlement, and spearheaded the Jesuit-movement to establish what came to be called “reductions,” independent Indian village communities that were off limits to slave traders.

The economy of these villages made the Indians self-supporting by combining communal agriculture with private property holding. And the villages had their own political structure that gave the natives a measure of freedom. Father Roque was an innovator who created the model for these unique communities.

Father Roque’s creative evangelizing ministry not only made Christianity attractive to the natives of the region, it even got the attention of such European intellectuals as Voltaire who, singularly impressed with Father Roque’s ministry, wrote:

The Paraguayan missions reached the highest degree of civilization to which it is possible to lead a young people. In those missions, law was respected, morals were pure, a happy brotherliness bound men together, the useful arts and even some of the more graceful sciences flourished, and there was abundance everywhere.



Not everyone embraced his model of evangelizing though. In 1628, Father Roque, joined by two other Jesuits who would later become saints themselves, Saint Juan del Castillo, SJ and Saint Alonso Rodríguez, SJ, established a mission that roused the hostility of a local chieftain. In November 1628, Father Roque and his Jesuit companions were tortured and killed.

“All the Christians among my countrymen loved the Father and grieved for his death because he was the father of all our Indian communities along the Paraná River” so testified Chief Guarecupi after Father Roque’s assassination. The chief’s testimony revealed a deep affection by the indigenous people for Father Roque and their awareness of the great personal sacrifices he had made over two decades to improve their lives and bring them to Christ.

Father Roque was canonized by Saint John Paul II in 1988. His feast day is November 17.

Exercising Good Stewardship at the Grocery Store

What is your experience of a trip to the grocery store? Is the grocery store a place where you just run to grab what you need, or is it a place where you pause and take time to exercise good stewardship? We've all been there. A long day at work, rush hour traffic, and then the thought: "What am I fixing the family for dinner?" We detour to the supermarket, make a mad dash, grab whatever looks easy and filling. Then, we rush out, preoccupied with what's happening elsewhere in our lives.

But the experience of shopping at the grocery store can be one where good stewards know the rewards of exercising their stewardship of God's many gifts. Think about a stewardship resolution for the month of November, with its emphasis on food and gratitude. Resolve to go to the grocery store with a steward's grateful heart.



- Visit the grocery when you are not rushed.
- Lift a prayer of gratitude before you go to the grocery store, gratitude that you are able to meet your loved ones' needs in this way. Those who work with refugee populations tell us the thing that amazes the new arrivals most is the opulence and abundance of a First World supermarket. Pray for those who do not have the choices you have today.
- Be aware of your fellow shoppers, the elderly individual slowly taking up the center of the aisle or the mom struggling to control her unruly children. Say a prayer for the people you encounter. Have patience and smile generously.
- Observe the vibrant colors in the produce department, and think of those workers near and far who have labored in the fields and the warehouses, all with the intention of supporting their own families. Say a prayer for them that they may receive wages that are fair, and that they not work in conditions you would not tolerate for a loved one working in similar circumstances.
- Each week, plan to make a sacrifice out of your family's food budget, and buy something for your parish's food drive or a local pantry. Perhaps it means you purchase a less expensive version of your favorite beverage, do without the best ice cream or plan one vegetarian, low-cost meal. Use the savings to share with the hungry.
- Be present to the cashier who rings up your order. Think of the difficulty of a job spent standing all day, greeting customers both cheerful and surly. Thank her/him with a smile.
- Recite a thanksgiving prayer from the heart at dinner. Be grateful to the God who has given you so much to meet your needs and to share.



Servants of Christ, Stewards of God's Grace

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Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia

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Psalms of Praise and Thanksgiving

The Thanksgiving holiday is an excellent time to rediscover 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.





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 4/5, 2017

In today's Gospel, Jesus lays judgment on the scribes and Pharisees for the hypocritical way they lived out their faith. The criticisms he levies are all about the ways righteousness turns into self-righteousness, and how religious belief turned into something that was more about elevating themselves than about what they could do for God or their neighbor. Good stewards know that discipleship means finding ways to serve, and searching for ways to be a servant—to live as a servant of Christ. When faith is authentically lived out in community everyone is enriched, and God is glorified. Reflect this week on how you live out your faith.

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 11/12, 2017

Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five of them were prudent. The foolish did not prepare for the wait, they brought no extra oil to keep their flames burning bright. The prudent bridesmaids brought extra oil, just in case the wait was longer than they had expected. And the wait was long. Some of those who were supposed to be waiting were not prepared for the wait, with disastrous consequences. Good stewards heed Jesus' warning: Be prepared to wait for the Lord's return. Is your faith strong enough to endure the wait? Will the "flames" of passion for the Lord endure? What are you doing to keep your passion for the Lord from burning out?

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 18/19, 2017

In today's Gospel, Jesus delivers the parable of the talents; using the example of money rather than abilities or skills. It's a story about investments, risks and returns. Stewards understand that God has given them an abundance of spiritual gifts. They know God doesn't want them to simply receive these blessings and bury them in fear, but to multiply them; to use these gifts to serve Him and others; to spread Christ's Good News; to go and make disciples of others. Good stewards invest what God has given them in the service of others and are prepared to render an account when the Lord returns. Reflect this week on how you are returning your own God-given gifts back to God with increase.

Feast of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe Weekend of November 25/26, 2017

In today's Gospel, Saint Matthew offers a compelling vision of the end-time, when the people of all nations are brought before the Lord to give an account of their lives and actions. Interestingly, the sheep, the righteous ones, are rewarded for having acted with love and compassion without having recognized the face of Christ in others. Good stewards recognize those in need of their care as gifts from God. They know that they are instruments of Christ's active, loving presence in the world. How will we treat others this week: our family members, neighbors, customers, strangers? What accounting will we make to the Lord for their care?