

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

October 2017 • e-Bulletin



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for October

Gracious and Loving God

We give you thanks
for this time of year;
a time of transformation
that reveals the awe-inspiring
gift of your creation.

Teach us how
to be good stewards
of all the gifts
you have given us;
and show us how
we may share
those gifts generously,
especially with those
most in need
of your loving care.

Give us the strength
to be good stewards
of the Gospel,
to love others as we
love ourselves,
and to follow in your Son's
footsteps, until we
find our way home to you.

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

Amen

RCIA Brings New Life into Our Community of Faith

Here's a ray of light into an anxious world: Every year thousands of people choose to join the Catholic Church. That's a big deal, and it's happening in a parish near you, in a process called RCIA, or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.

We live in a cynical age, where many mistrust institutions and increasingly reject organized religion. RCIA is a powerful sign of the enduring strength of our shared faith. But, as the United States Catholic Bishops tell us, this ancient rite was reinstated following the Second Vatican Council because the initiation of new Catholics is not just a private affair for them, but a communal event for all of us: "(The Rite) was restored in the Church to highlight the fact that the newly baptized are received into a community of faith, which is challenged to realize that they too have become different because of this new life in the community."



Let's be good stewards of these new Catholics. They will
be bursting with enthusiasm to get involved

We who embrace Christian stewardship should be mindful to welcome, greet, support and even be transformed by these spirit-filled new Catholics. Our hospitality is a hallmark of our stewardship and our own evangelizing spirit. We are called into a "community of faith" with them. As RCIA progresses through the year, we begin to see the catechumens – those preparing for baptism – being excused after the Liturgy of the Word to continue their preparation. How can we become more supportive of these aspiring Catholics?

Notice who they are. Seek them out and welcome them. Introduce yourself.

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Consider volunteering for RCIA. Often, a variety of speakers are needed – perhaps you could help with one or two classes if not the entire year. Each candidate needs a sponsor to walk through the process with them. This is a gift to an initiate, but also a way to renew your own catechesis about our church. Then,

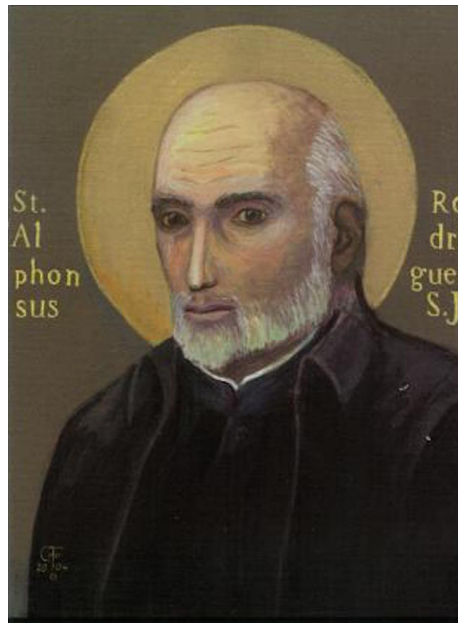


Every year thousands of people choose to join the Catholic Church. That's a big deal, and it's happening in a parish near you

attend the Easter Vigil, the preeminent liturgical event of our Catholic year, where new Catholics are baptized and receive the other sacraments of initiation. Often, those who have been previously baptized into other Christian faiths are received into the Church on this night as well. It's a night rich in symbolism, and despite the late hour, it's usually followed by a reception. It's a great way to celebrate this "new life in the community."

Let's be good stewards of these new Catholics. They will be bursting with enthusiasm to get involved. Make a special effort to welcome them into your ministries and into the liturgical life of the parish.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for October*



Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez

Alphonsus Rodriguez was a Spanish Jesuit lay brother whose assignment for 45 years was being a doorkeeper at one of its colleges. One observer noted that Alphonsus carried out this simple task with such loving hospitality that the act of opening the college door became a "sacramental gesture."

Born in Segovia, Spain in 1533, Alphonsus was the child of a prosperous wool merchant. His father died when he was 14 and he left school to help his mother run the family business. He inherited the business when he was only 23 years old and at the age of 26 he married

Alphonsus exercised a marvelous influence not only on the members of the college community, but upon a great number of people who came to him for advice.

María Suarez, with whom he had three children. By the time he was 31, though, he found himself a widower who had not only lost his wife, but his mother and two of his children as well.

Alphonsus sold his business and began living a life of prayer and simplicity. When his third child died, his thoughts turned to living in a religious community. He wanted to become a Jesuit but was rejected for his lack of formal education. In 1571 he applied a second time and was accepted as a lay brother. At age 40 he was sent to the recently established college on Spain's Mediterranean island of Majorca and was assigned the humble position of porter, a doorkeeper.

His daily responsibilities for the next 45 years included receiving visitors who came to the college, searching for the college staff or students who were wanted in the parlor, delivering messages, running errands and distributing alms to the needy. He would, however, transform this humble station into a ministry of hospitality and spiritual guidance.

Alphonsus exercised a marvelous influence not only on the members of the college community, but upon a great number of people who came to him for advice. His reputation for holiness grew and people began going to him for spiritual direction. Saint Peter Claver, while a student at the college, was one of them. It was Alphonsus who inspired Claver to become a missionary in the New World.

Alphonsus once wrote that each time the bell at the front door rang he looked at the door and envisioned that it was God who was standing outside seeking admittance. He died on October 31, 1617 and in 1633 local officials declared him patron saint of Majorca. In 1888 he was canonized a saint and the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins memorialized him in a sonnet. His feast day is October 31.

Leading Parishioners to Live as Disciples and Stewards Who Evangelize

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



I have been greatly influenced by the wisdom of Bishop Sylvester Ryan, bishop *emeritus* of Monterey, California, who often reminds us that stewardship and evangelization are two sides of the same coin. That coin is discipleship. Forming people who are aware of their call to grow as disciples is a dynamic and life-giving process. It can also be challenging, as is the call itself. Jesus' way is one that places demands upon us, and yet, as the United States bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship notes, it is also

a way of joy and a life filled with meaning. Let us briefly explore these three interrelated calls:

Discipleship: While we are drawn into Christ's Body through the waters of baptism, many of us grow into a living relationship with Christ over many years. Once that relationship has been ignited, or re-ignited, people's lives are shaped by their faith and desire to grow in love of God and all that we believe as Christians. This process of ongoing conversion takes place within the community of faith.

As leaders, we have the opportunity to create an environment in which those who are already on the journey of discipleship recognize their call to reach out to others, building bridges to living faith.

Stewardship: We are Christian stewards because we are followers of Jesus Christ. As the bishops' pastoral indicates clearly, "Stewardship is an expression of discipleship with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives." Through our lives as stewards, we embrace Christ's self-giving, sacrificial way of life.

Evangelization: When we are in love, we cannot help but share that love with others. That is the essence of evangelization. We share the love of God as good stewards of our faith, and our sharing has the potential to draw others into a new or deeper relationship with God in Jesus Christ, as disciples and stewards.

Keeping this interrelationship in mind as we develop stewardship processes and initiatives helps us lead the people we serve to a joy-filled, meaningful way of life.



Behold,
I am the
Servant of
the Lord
~Luke 1:38

2017 AEC Advent
Stewardship Institute

December 1-3, 2017

Cardinal Kelvin Felix
Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre
Archdiocese of Castries, St. Lucia

REGISTER NOW

Co-sponsored by ICSC and the
Antilles Episcopal Conference.

For more information [CLICK HERE.](#)

How Will You Celebrate World Mission Sunday?

October 22 is World Mission Sunday! Every year, this Sunday in October celebrates and encourages our efforts to proclaim the Gospel in both word and deed.

Last year, a parish in Louisiana marked the occasion by offering a glimpse into the Church's global solidarity. Students representing the cultural diversity of the parish processed, readings and songs were offered in various languages, and a feast offering ethnic dishes followed the liturgy.

That Sunday, parishioners enjoyed an intimate connection to the legacy of missionary support that can be traced back nearly two centuries.

North America was "mission territory" in the early 1800s when Pauline Jaricot gathered small groups in her family's mill in Lyon, France to offer prayers and sacrificial giving to support missionary work in North America and China. Her effort grew to become the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, which continues to promote the global mission of the Church.

By the early 1920s, the United States was no longer a primary focus of missionary activity. But there was concern that Catholics in the United States, who focused primarily on their local Church, lacked an understanding of the Church's global and mission outreach. In 1926, Church leaders designated the second to last Sunday in October as World Mission Sunday to broaden the understanding of the Church's global mission.

Every parish is asked to raise awareness of the worldwide evangelizing efforts of the Church. Parishes also take up a collection for the Society for the Propagation of the Faith to be used for the missions.

Worldwide efforts like World Mission Sunday support more than 1,000 missionary dioceses.

In the 1960s, the Second Vatican Council, echoing the missionary credo found in the words of the Gospel of Mathew (28:18), emphasized that the Church is missionary by nature, and every baptized Catholic is called to missionary work through good works and setting a good example.

The new understanding of 'mission' is focused on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and his proclamation of the Kingdom of God. St. Paul maintained that the Kingdom of God is peace, justice, joy and life in the Holy Spirit. If we understand 'mission' as this spreading of the Kingdom of God, then we work for peace and justice. We celebrate life as gift from God lived joyfully in the Spirit.

What is your parish doing for World Mission Sunday? If you are in parish leadership, plan something different this year -- a mission training day, a lunch or dinner event, a guest speaker, a special adult formation class focused on the Church's world mission. Why not highlight the global projects and partners that your parish supports?



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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 30/October 1, 2017

Saint Augustine, a doctor of the church, once wrote that the first, second, and third most important attitude in Christianity is humility. In today's second reading, Saint Paul is concerned with how we conduct ourselves in our community of faith. He urges us to let our conduct be worthy of the Gospel we say that we believe; and that it all begins with humility. He asks us to consider others better than ourselves, and to serve them by looking out for their best interest, not ours. Consider how Saint Paul's appeal to imitating Christ's humility can enhance your relationships.

Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 7/8, 2017

Today's Gospel reading poses some challenging stewardship questions. When Christ returns, will we be found working diligently in the Lord's "vineyard;" converting our own hearts into a rich harvest of love and compassion? Calling those outside our vineyard to enter into the joy of the Lord? Or will we just be living, taking advantage of what the Lord has given us, but not doing our part in return? Jesus' parable suggests that if we aren't good stewards of the gifts we've been given then the gifts will be taken away, and we will be called to give an account for our failures. We have all we need for a bountiful harvest. What will our Lord find when He returns?

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 14/15, 2017

There are certain Bible verses Christian stewards have memorized. One of them is in Saint Paul's letter to the Philippians found in today's second reading—"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (4:13). Most people define themselves either by their problems or their possibilities. Fearful people wake up each morning ensnared by their problems. Christian stewards wake up

reflecting on their possibilities with confidence and hope. Some stewardship reflection questions for the week: What challenges do you back away from because you doubt that you are up to them? What would you attempt tomorrow if you were sure God would help you?

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 21/22, 2017

In today's Gospel we hear proclaimed a profound teaching by Jesus on stewardship. What belongs to Caesar? What belongs to God? Christian stewards recognize that everything they have belongs to God. God created them, and God has claims on every part of their existence. They also realize that the sovereign is an institution whose nature and purpose is to promote the common good and protect the welfare of its citizenry. As long as it accomplishes this mission while treating every single person with deep respect, justice and compassion, it merits the steward's support and cooperation. Christian stewards know what belongs to the Lord, and they are better citizens when they live their lives according to his Gospel.

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of October 28/29, 2017

There is one word or command that summarizes today's Gospel: Love. For Jesus there is no distinction between these two commands of loving God and neighbor. One naturally flows from the other. In fact, for Jesus, these commands constitute a way of life for Christian stewards; a unique approach to life and to their relationship with others. Our neighbors include everyone with whom we come into contact: family members, friends, people we don't like, strangers and particularly those most in need of our love and compassion. Love is always for doing well and helping others grow closer to the Lord. What are ways in which we might do better at following Christ's love command?