

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2022 • e-Bulletin

A 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.



November – A Month to Reflect on Gratitude

“It is gratitude that ultimately asks one thing, but at a great price: fall extravagantly in love with what is given.”

Those words were penned by a Jesuit priest, Pat Malone, a man who volunteered for service at Ground Zero after the 9/11 World Trade Center bombings, and who struggled with leukemia and associated complications before succumbing to the disease in his early fifties. A mystic, Father Malone endured, or as he described it, “was given” much

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suffering. He was also given love, as he was beloved by his parishioners at Creighton University's parish, St. John's, who put together a book of his homilies and writings following his death.

During the month of November, those of us who live in the United States are focused on a major national holiday, Thanksgiving; the fundamental theme of which is “gratitude.” Gratitude is a foundational principle of Christian stewardship, so November is a great time for stewards to contemplate giving thanks. But sometimes, there is a tendency to get distracted and the deeply spiritual aspect of thankfulness gets lost in the preoccupation with family, home, income – that we often take for granted but pause to acknowledge over the turkey and stuffing.

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Father Malone's words ask us to think much more radically about gratitude. How often are we grateful for "what is given?" Natural disasters have caused immense suffering globally. War and ethnic cleansing continue. Refugees swarm the planet in record-breaking numbers. Mindless violence haunts our streets. How do we fall in love with tragedy? Doesn't this seem wrong?

And in our own lives, troubles and struggles, small and sometimes great, are seldom things for which we pause and give thanks. But as any good spiritual director will tell you, a fundamental question of our prayer lives must be: Where was God in this for you? How did you find God in this event?

Perhaps a good November exercise for Christian stewards would be to keep a 30-day journal of thankfulness. But don't just make it a list of the "good" stuff. Make it a review of the day in which, for better or worse, you found God guiding you through good times and bad. Father Malone suggests that falling in love – extravagantly – with what's given in your life will exact a great price. What does he mean? How might you be changed? What more ordinary ideas of thankfulness will you put aside as you learn to love your life and your struggle in the given moment?

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*

Saint Columban

The life of Saint Columban (also referred to as Columbanus) reveals a man who exercised remarkable stewardship over his life of faith and his gifts for evangelizing.

He was born into a noble family in West Leinster, Ireland, in about 543; a time when the great Celtic monasteries were being established in Ireland. He received a classical education and as a young man

including the famous monastic community at Luxeuil in France, where he served as abbot for more than 20 years.

At age 70 he resumed his missionary journey, traveling to what is now Switzerland and then, over the Alps to Lombardy where he finally settled on gifted land in Bobbio. Here he founded the monastery that has the greatest claim to him. He remained there until his death on

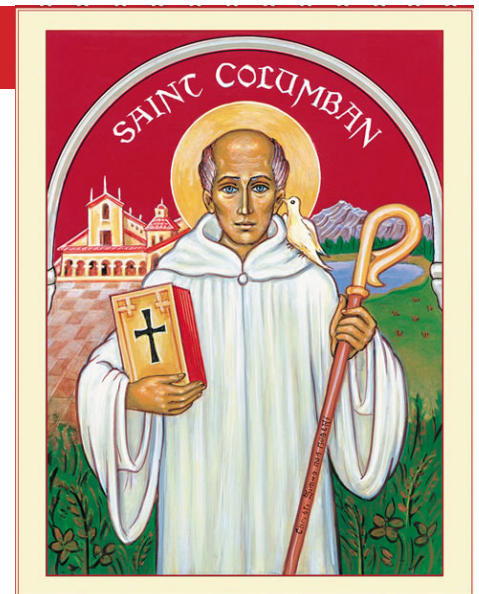
In mid-life, he believed he was being called by God to preach the Gospel in foreign countries. He responded to this call, becoming one of the great Irish missionary saints.

became attracted to the monastic practice of integrating prayer, manual labor and study of the scriptures into one's daily life. He entered the renowned monastery of Bangor and for many years embraced a life of asceticism.

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November 23, 615. His followers continued to preach the Gospel in France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy, and are credited with founding over 100 monasteries.

Saint Columban possessed gifts well-suited for evangelizing. He invariably attracted large crowds who were struck by his enthusiasm for the Gospel, his persuasiveness and humility. He and his monks led the simplest of lives, and their meals oftentimes consisted of nothing more than



forest vegetation, herbs and berries. He developed a monastic rule and promoted penitential practices which emphasized private confession to a priest and doing penance. He also wrote a commentary on the Psalms.

In 2004, a portion of Saint Columban's journey from Ireland to Italy was highlighted in a travel memoir entitled, *The Accidental Pilgrim: Travels with a Celtic Saint*. The author wrote about his experience of retracing the missionary journey of St. Columban on bicycle.

Saint Columban's feast day is November 23.



Stewardship and Thanksgiving Day

Thanksgiving Day, in Canada and the United States, is a special North American feast. Although it is not a feast on the Catholic liturgical calendar, many parishes celebrate the Eucharist with the Mass of Thanksgiving. Some will have a basket of fruit and grain, or a cornucopia, adorning the foot of the altar. Thanksgiving Day truly holds a spiritual significance for the Christian steward. It is a day that makes us take notice of the fundamentals of stewardship and the importance of having a grateful heart.

Thanksgiving is a day that gives us an opportunity to show our gratitude, provide hospitality and celebrate with loved ones. For the Christian steward, the holiday is rooted deeply in the biblical belief that the world was created by a loving God as a gift for each of us. From the two creation accounts in the Book of Genesis we understand that this gift of creation is intended to be received by us in thanksgiving and held in stewardship. As a matter of fact, this principle is one of the starting points for a truly Catholic worldview; that all creation is good and that the response to this gift can only be that of awe and a feeling of such gratitude that we would want to share this gift.

Stewardship in the Catholic tradition affirms that into this creation, God sent Jesus the Christ to live among us and teach us the ways of God, and that our stewardship of the world includes cultivating it and building it into an even better and more grace-filled world; a world that reveals the light of Christ and is returned to his Father with increase.

Stewards strive to embrace a life of gratitude; a life that reminds them of the relative abundance they enjoy. It is an abundance unavailable to most of the earth's inhabitants. Most of us have much more than we really need, and the spirit of gratitude should impel us to share this relative abundance with those who are less fortunate.

As Thanksgiving Day approaches, let us take stock of the many wonderful blessings we enjoy. Let's be sure to take time to thank God in prayer for our abundance; avoid the sin of an ungrateful heart; and consider how we might be even better stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us.

Giving Thanks for Our Parish Communions

For most of us, the ultimate way we experience Christ's active presence is in our parishes. It is there that we hear the Word of God and are nourished by the Eucharist. So, this Thanksgiving let us offer prayers of gratitude for our parishes, pastors, pastoral teams, parish leaders and all the faithful who gather together to give witness to Christ's presence.

What does it mean to be a parish, though, and how is a parish a unique manifestation of the Church? Sixty years ago, when Saint John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, he urged the Council Fathers to reflect on the mystery of the Church present throughout the world. One of the



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major descriptions employed by the Council Fathers to describe the Church was "communion." The very opening words of the first document of the Council, *the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* proclaim: "The Church is a kind of sacrament or mystery; a sign and instrument of communion with God and of unity among all people."

Note that the Second Vatican Council made a deliberate choice to refer to the Church as a "communion" rather than simply using the term "community." While the term

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community refers to independent persons working toward a common goal, the term communion conveys a much deeper reality, persons sharing the same sacramental life. Our communion is literally a “sharing of gifts” as sisters and brothers of the one Christ Jesus whose Spirit brings us into unity not only with God but also with each other.

Sacramentally, we manifest the mystery of the divine communion of the Blessed Trinity. Sharing the Trinity's communion in love, as a Church, we have been called to live together

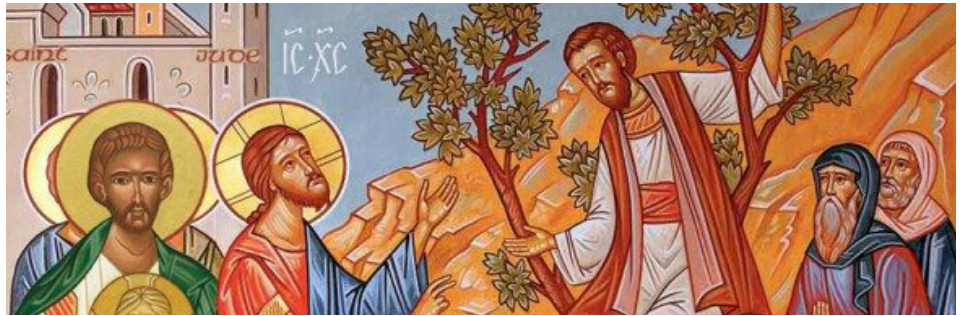


in unity for the sake of following the Gospel and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. As a communion of faith, as a Church, we are born out of and live within the Paschal Mystery.

As a communion of faith we experience and celebrate these mysteries of Christ's life in and through its daily and weekly sacramental life. All of this means that a parish is not simply a human creation, it is God's work. The Holy Spirit calls us into being and bonds us together in communion and mission with God and each other.

Jesus assures us that we are not left to our own devices when we walk in his footsteps and gather in his name. He has given us the Holy Spirit, who teaches, guides and protects us. And that is accomplished most uniquely through the sacramental life of our parish. This month, let us give thanks to God for our parish and re-commit ourselves to participating more fervently in its life and mission.

Zaccheus: Saint Luke's Model of Stewardship



The gospel reading for the last weekend of October reveals to us the encounter Jesus had with a wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus as he was passing through the town of Jericho on his way to Jerusalem (Luke 19:1-10). The significance of this incident gives us insight into that aspect of Saint Luke's theology of stewardship that concerns itself with the appropriate stewardship of money and wealth. This encounter is unique to the Gospel of Luke as it is not found in the other three gospels.

Arguably, it can be said that the meeting between Jesus and Zacchaeus can be regarded as one of the most important in the gospel for it illustrates the gospel's concern that one show substantial generosity toward the poor and the exploited in order to enjoy Jesus' friendship.

Zacchaeus was a superintendent of customs officials. Tax collectors were often corrupt, and hated by many of their fellow Jews who saw them as traitors for working for the Roman Empire. His position would have carried both importance and wealth.

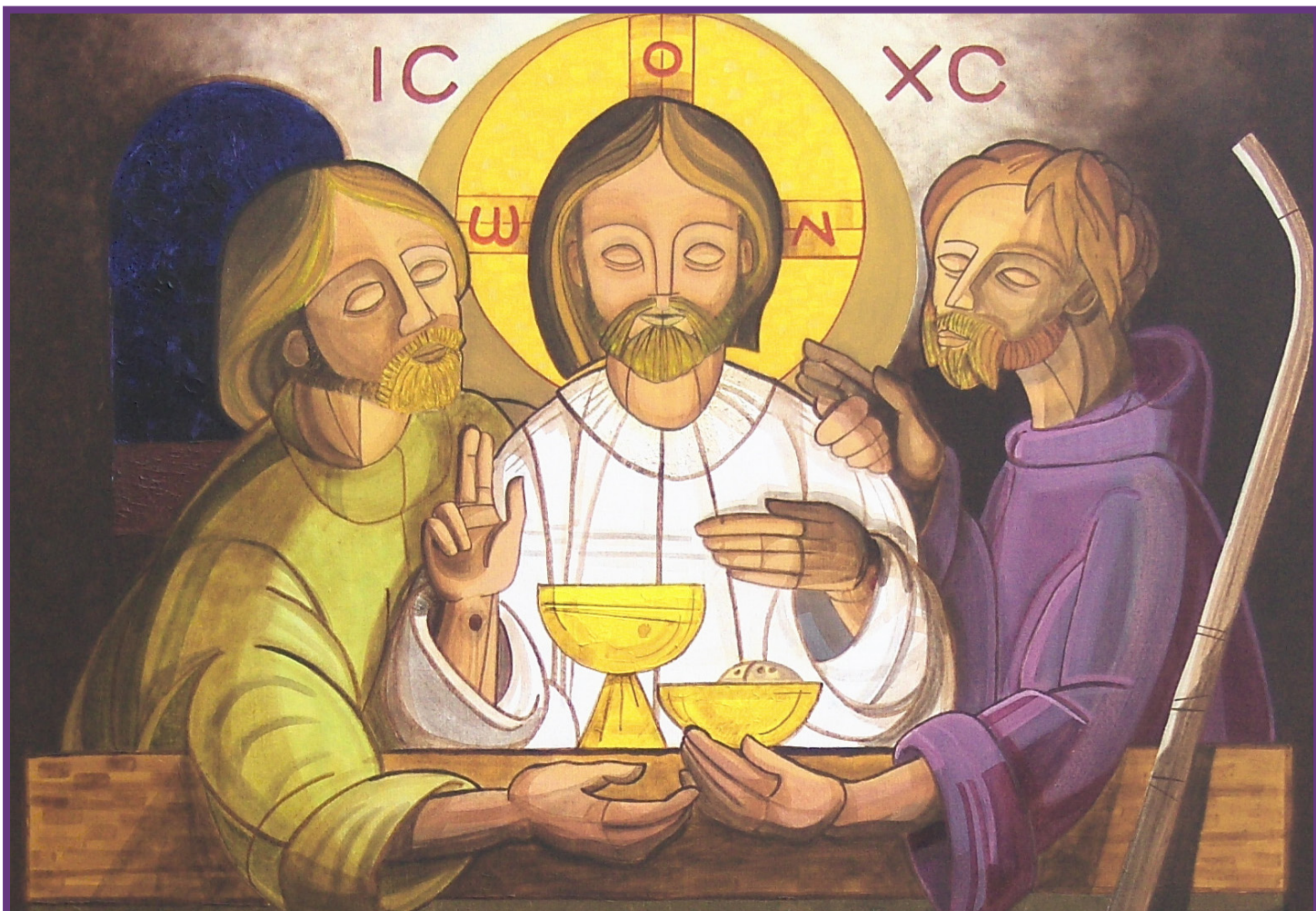
Described as a short man, Zacchaeus climbed up a sycamore tree so that he might be able to see Jesus. When Jesus reached the spot he looked up into the branches, addressed Zacchaeus by name and told him to come down for he wanted to visit his house. The crowd was shocked that Jesus would condescend himself to being a guest of a tax collector.

Zacchaeus receives Jesus with joy, opening his heart and his wallet in a heartfelt expression of generosity. Moved by Jesus' public acceptance of him, Zacchaeus promises Jesus to give half his wealth to the poor and to pay fourfold in restitution to anyone he may have defrauded.

In addition to his dignity and reputation, Zacchaeus now risks his financial security and his social standing among the rich. His vow of giving to the poor and restoration to those defrauded goes far beyond what is contemplated in Mosaic law. But he seeks Jesus' approval and friendship, and he makes a great sacrifice in order to do so. Jesus does not ask Zacchaeus to leave behind his profession nor to give away the rest of his possessions. Rather, he meets him in the place where Zacchaeus wants to meet him and he opens up a saving way forward within his life's reality.

For Saint Luke, those who sincerely desire to see and be known to Christ, like Zacchaeus did, will make the necessary sacrifices to do so. They show a specific concern for the poor and the marginalized, those who suffer injustice and oppression. Those who listen to Christ's call become sensitized and proactive at some level to the suffering in the world.

Zacchaeus gave public proof that he was willing to be converted in order to enjoy Jesus' friendship. Christ has come to his house, and where Christ comes he brings salvation with him. And through Zacchaeus, Saint Luke offers a model of stewardship.



As our Church enters the final year of the
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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 5/6, 2022

In today's second reading we hear Saint Paul urging the members of the community at Thessalonica to direct their hearts to God's love through Christ. He wants them to be laser-focused on Christ, and nothing else. He desires that they be strengthened by the Lord and shielded from what is not Christ-like.

Good stewards cultivate a "laser-sharp" focus on Christ; not on things that could give them false or superficial images or ideals. Let's think about our own daily focus: Do we direct our hearts toward Christ or are there other "gods" that claim our attention? Our career? Material possessions? Sexuality? Favorite sports team? Political leanings? Does our daily life point to Christ so that those who are younger and less mature in their faith learn from our example?

Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of November 12/13, 2022

In today's Gospel Jesus suggests that his disciples must be prepared to suffer ridicule, persecution and perhaps even death if they are to follow him. Sometimes we may wonder if enduring ridicule and scorn are what we really signed up for when we received the sacraments of initiation. Would we not rather sneak through life as painlessly as possible? Good stewards take their faith seriously and find comfort in the closing words of today's Gospel: "You will be hated by all because of my name but not a hair on your head will be destroyed. By your perseverance you will secure your lives." Let us make

it part of our daily prayer routine to ask the Holy Spirit for the courage to act in Jesus' name no matter the consequences.

Our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe Weekend of November 19/20, 2022

In today's Gospel we hear of the rulers who sneered at Jesus, the soldiers who jeered at him, the criminal who reviled him, and the people who just stood by. At our own parish church the cross stands high. Yet, every Sunday there are those who sit in front of it and are not moved by it. There are people who walk right by the cross, unmoved by it. Perhaps they've walked by it so many times they no longer give it a second thought. Could it be they are unmoved because the heart of this unbelieving thief is in them? Good stewards walk by the cross, notice it and ask themselves: "All this you did for me, what have I done for you?"

First Sunday of Advent Weekend of November 26/ 27, 2022

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 attitude requires genuine spiritual maturity, of course; 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?