



## INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

September 2023 • e-Bulletin



Dear faithful stewards,

This fall I bring to an end my tenure as the Episcopal Moderator of the International Catholic Stewardship Council. It has been a great pleasure to welcome so many of you to ICSC conferences throughout the years and I have always looked forward to meeting you, praying with you and experiencing a time together with you that has always proved fruitful.

I have been attending ICSC conferences for more than 20 years and I can honestly say that each time I have gathered with you I have learned something new and gained spiritual nourishment, so that when I returned to my own episcopal ministry I have felt renewed, invigorated and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

I encourage everyone to join us this year in Orlando, Florida, as ICSC celebrates its 61st annual stewardship conference. The theme for the conference is ***Eucharistic Stewardship: Responding with Grateful Hearts***. In this year, when so much is being done to focus our attention on the great gift of the Eucharist, I'm sure you will find this to be a very appropriate theme.

The Bishops of the United States have invited us to reflect more deeply on the gift of the Eucharist. This year's conference will give us an opportunity to experience and appreciate in a special way Christ's presence among us in each day's Eucharistic liturgies. We will reflect, too, on how the Eucharist informs our response in faith as good stewards of God's abundant gifts.

We recognize the spiritual connection between the Eucharist and stewardship. The Bishops' pastoral letter on stewardship calls us to consider a life of "Eucharistic stewardship." Once we have embraced stewardship as a way of life, we naturally call others into conversion and a deeper appreciation of the Eucharist by our hospitality and by the witness of our lives.

As I look back on my tenure with ICSC, I am very grateful for all who have dedicated so much of their time, talent and treasure to help us advance the Gospel's unique perspective on stewardship. I also wish to thank each of you for the dedication you show to your own ministries in your parishes and dioceses for being good stewards of the Church. The witness you offer by your faithful service encourages others to listen to the Lord's call and to participate in His redemptive activity.

Please join me in October for a few days filled with shared wisdom, laughter, inspiration and the spiritual nourishment that will help us be even more fervent disciples in Christ's name.

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

Most Reverend Donald F. Hanchon  
Bishop *Emeritus*  
Archdiocese of Detroit  
Episcopal Moderator of ICSC





## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for September*

Lord Jesus Christ,

As we begin to shift from summer schedules to autumn demands, teach us to recognize you, and help us follow you amidst our busy life.

Open the Scriptures to us that we may know you, see you, hear you –  
in the voices of friends and family,  
in the ministries of our parish,  
in the proclamation of the Word,  
and in the Breaking of the Bread.

Teach us to be good stewards,  
that we may use your gifts wisely  
and care for all those you place  
in our path.

Encourage us, when we are overwhelmed.  
Strengthen us, when we are frightened.  
Challenge our complacency.

Help us make this new season a time  
of spiritual renewal,  
hope,  
and action to proclaim the Gospel  
in our words and in our deeds.

For the kingdom and the power  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.

# Be Generous and Prudent with Parish Commitments

For millions of kids in the Northern Hemisphere, September marks the beginning of school. Little ones bid a teary farewell at the kindergarten door, and college students embark on their first steps towards adulthood. For everyone in between, it's a time when the lazy days of summer are transformed into a season of routines, schedules and commitments.

The same goes for grown-ups, even those of us who don't have kids. If you're not being besieged to sign up for a long list of volunteer opportunities at school, sports or scouts, your parish may be gearing up for the ministry fair and "commitment Sunday." A good steward will approach this season of "sign-ups" with the right attitude and prayerful reflection.



Here are some considerations for using your gifts of time and talent wisely and generously: a smart person once said that your vocation is the place where your greatest happiness intersects with the world's greatest need. So commit yourself to something you can get excited

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about. Don't sign up from a guilt complex, or a "nobody's going to do this so I guess I should" frame of mind. Feel free to try something new; don't think that since you joined one committee last year, you're stuck for life. Be generous with your time, but don't over-commit. Think of the time you spend surfing the web or watching television, and then think about how you can channel some of that time into service for your parish family. Just don't overbook yourself.

Remember that stewardship of your family, and taking care of your own spiritual health, are of primary importance. Be selective about the parish commitments you make, and then give yourself whole-heartedly and efficiently to your chosen role. Be a person your committee can always count on. And when you're pondering commitments, don't forget to consider the commitments of your whole family and how they intersect. Today's kids are often over-booked, and all these "sign-ups" should never take away from family nights around the dinner table and evenings spent together. Plan a family discussion, and family prayer, before everyone plunges into a fall and winter of busyness. Make this year's commitment of time and talent enriching for all!



## STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for September*

### Saint Peter Claver

Peter Claver, a Spanish Jesuit priest, is the patron saint of Colombia and of evangelization among people of color.

Born in 1580 to a Spanish farming family, Claver was educated at the University of Barcelona. He was known for his prayerfulness and intellectual prowess. He joined the Jesuit community in 1602 and was inspired to become a missionary. In a notebook he wrote the words that he kept with him throughout his life: "I must dedicate myself to the service of God until death, on the understanding that I am like a slave."

In 1610 Claver was sent to Cartagena, Colombia, a major center for the African slave trade. He also spent time in Bogotá and Tunja, Colombia, where he became deeply disturbed by the horrific treatment of the slaves being brought from Africa. By this time the slave trade had been established in the Americas for about 100 years. Although it was condemned by the Church, slave trading was an extraordinarily profitable industry and thus continued to flourish.

In Cartagena, where thousands of slaves were brought each year, Claver headed to the wharf as soon as a slave ship was sighted. He moved through the filthy and diseased holds to doctor and minister to their ill-treated and terrified human cargo. After the slaves were herded from the ship and penned in nearby yards to be studied by buyers, Claver brought them medicine, food, and other basic necessities. He assured the slaves of their human dignity and Christ's love for them.

During his 40-year ministry, Claver worked tirelessly for the spiritual and physical care of slaves. It is estimated that he single-handedly catechized and baptized 300,000 of them.

Claver's ministry extended beyond slaves as well. He preached in the city square, gave missions and brought the sacraments to sailors, traders and the wealthy landowners too. He was also a frequent visitor to the city's hospitals. He became a moral force in the city, eventually becoming instrumental in improving slave conditions.

At age 70, Claver contracted a paralytic illness resembling Parkinson's Disease that almost killed him. For the last four years of his life he suffered constant pain and could no longer celebrate Mass. His care was neglected and he became largely forgotten. He died on September 9, 1654.

It was only after his death that the amazing scope of Peter Claver's ministry began to be realized. He was canonized in 1888 by Pope Leo XIII and is his feast day is September 9.

## Eucharist and the Spirituality of Stewardship

*Part III of a four-part series by author and lecturer, Reverend Joseph D. Creedon from his 2018 book, **Stewardship: A Life-Giving Spirituality.***

Perhaps one of the best ways to explore the miracle, the mystery of the Eucharist with the attitude of giving thanks, the fundamental aspect of stewardship, is to take part in an extended meditation of just what happens when we gather to break bread as the People of God.



We should never make the sign of the cross without realizing our need to thank God for sending Jesus to be our savior!

The first thing we do after the entrance procession is to sign ourselves in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The cross is our sign of contradiction. It tells us of God's Trinitarian love by reminding us that Jesus' love led him to suffer and die for us. We should never make the sign of the cross without realizing our need to thank God for sending Jesus to be our savior!

Next we pause to call to mind our sins. We are sinners; we need God's mercy. Every time we gather to celebrate Mass, God offers us forgiveness. We are invited to thank God for his prodigal forgiveness.

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Now we stand to hear the Gospel and what do we say when it is finished? "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!"

The forgiveness of our sins leads us to say, "Glory to God!" As we sing the Gloria we pray, "We give you thanks for your great glory." This is the first, but certainly not the last time we will say or hear the word "thanks" in the celebration of the Mass.

Now we sit so the readings from scripture can both challenge and comfort us for the journey of faith. After the first reading, what do we say? "Thanks be to God!" After the second reading, what do we say? "Thanks be to God!" Now we stand to hear the Gospel and what do we say when it is finished? "Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!" Praise is but another way to say "Thank You."

After the homily, we proclaim our belief in God as the creator of all things seen and unseen in our Profession of Faith. We are expressing our belief that everything we have is a gift from God. Our response is to live as caretakers of God's gifts and to use them wisely for the good of all. Another word for caretaker is "steward." We believe that we are called to live as stewards of God's creation. Stewardship is a way of life that enhances our relationship with God and a steward's heart would say, "Thanks be to God." (See Part IV in the October ICSC eBulletin).

## Why should YOU attend the 61st Annual ICSC Conference?

1. Enhance your knowledge of stewardship no matter how far your parish has traveled on the stewardship journey.
2. Learn from some of the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world.
3. Discern new techniques for increasing the financial resources you need to sustain your parish.
4. Uncover proven approaches to enrich your parish's life of faith.
5. Discover how to build up the commitment to discipleship in your parish.
6. Experience the hospitality and joy of dedicated stewards from around the globe.
7. Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies.
8. Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment.
9. Compare notes with experienced and flourishing stewardship parishes.
10. Immerse yourself in the spirituality and fundamentals of Christian stewardship in the Catholic tradition.



**NEW!**

Special Bonus Sessions on **Wednesday, October 4:**



## THE 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Orlando, Florida | October 1-4, 2023

### Sessions Designed Especially for Parishes:

- Rebuilt Faith: A Simple Plan for Reviving Your Faith Community
- How an Opportunity for Missionary Discipleship Creates a Parish of Engaged Stewards
- Stewardship Through and Through: Weaving Stewardship into the Fabric of Parish Life for Lasting Impact
- Eucharist and Evangelization: Creating More Active Stewards in Your Parish

### Sessions Designed Especially for Dioceses and Catholic Foundations:

- 2023 ICSC Diocesan Catholic Foundation Survey: What it Reveals and How It Can Help You
- The Best of the Best: Proven Annual Appeal Ideas from Coast to Coast

### PRESENTED BY:



**Rev. Mike White and Tom Corcoran**  
Nativity Church,  
Timonium, Maryland



**Rev. Pat Sheedy**, 2021 Christian Stewardship Award Recipient, and Parish Team at Blessed Trinity Parish, Archbishop Murphy Award Parish Ocala, Florida



**Leisa Anslinger**, 2022 Christian Stewardship Award Recipient, Author and Lecturer, ICSC Stewardship Consultant Nashville, Tennessee



**Tony Brandt**  
Co-Founder and President  
Casting Nets Ministries, Wichita, Kansas



**Chris Stewart** Co-Founder and COO  
Casting Nets Ministries, Wichita, Kansas

**\$599** EARLY BIRD RATE  
*Extended to August 31!*

**CLICK HERE TO REGISTER!**



## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 2/3, 2023**

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus brings up the topic of the cross to his followers. They would not realize the cross was part of God's plan and was to be their legacy until after the Resurrection. Today's followers of Christ recognize they are stewards of his entire legacy, including his cross; that through their mutual sacrifices God's glory is revealed. They don't live their lives in Christ only when it is convenient for them. They make a decision to take up their cross and carry it, no matter what the cost. In the midst of the uncertain times we live in, what crosses do we bear in order to reveal God's glory?

### **Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 9/10, 2023**

In Saint Paul's letter to the Romans he suggests that God lavishes his love upon us through Jesus Christ, who calls us to the kind of loving relationship, if we so choose it, that demands accountability. It is like, in Saint Paul's vocabulary, a kind of "debt" that we can never "pay-in-full." But we begin to repay by following the direction of one of the most familiar statements in the Bible: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Good stewards realize that God does not call them just to love those who are easy to love, but to love the unloved and the hard-to-love people in this world as well. This week, remind yourself: "I am put here as an ambassador of God's love."

### **Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 16/17, 2023**

Today's Gospel reading continues Jesus' instructions on being good stewards of others – the direction that if we love Jesus Christ, we must forgive an individual 77 times. The reading compels us to consider one of the most difficult practices of Christian discipleship. Forgiveness is the way of Jesus, the way of the cross. Vengeance, bitterness and hatred seem so much easier and certainly more desirable. Forgiveness is a hard road to travel, but it is the only road that leads to life in Christ. Consider this week who you need to forgive.

### **Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 23/24, 2023**

From an early age, we tend to distort the concept of "fairness": "I am good. I deserve good things. I am not receiving good things. Something must be wrong. Who's going to fix it?" We also know the age-old expression: "Who ever said life was fair?" Jesus knew this expression when he offered his parable in today's Gospel reading. Christian stewards acknowledge, with humility, that they receive good things from the Lord in abundance; even if these gifts are not the ones they think they need when they need them. Consider which servants you identify with most in the Gospel reading, the ones who demand "fairness", or that final servant who, seemingly, deserves the least.