



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

August 2024 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *For August*

Lord God,

As we prepare for the transitions of August; of routines becoming regular, signs of schools beginning to emerge, and traffic patterns getting heavier, help us to appreciate the sacred rhythms in our lives.

Give us the wisdom to make our hearts be still, much as the August wind is still, so that we may listen to the gentle words you speak to us.

Help us understand that you alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life.

And help us see that we are called to be good stewards of all that you have entrusted to us; tending them faithfully and responsibly so they may ultimately be returned to you with increase.

In this month of August while a measure of summer's stillness remains, speak to our hearts, guide us in your Son's ways, and through your Spirit, give us the strength to proclaim your justice and peace in our everyday words and deeds.

We ask this through Christ,
Our Lord.

Amen



Stewardship and Evangelizing Young Adults: A Conference Focus

Few issues resonant more with Catholics today than the evangelization of the young Church. How is your parish prepared to reach out to young adults and respond to their pastoral needs? This vital question will be explored at the 2024 International Catholic Stewardship Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, from September 15 to 18. Pope Francis, in *Evangelii Gaudium* ("The Joy of the Gospel"), captured the importance of the young in sharing the Good News: "How beautiful it is to see that young people are 'street preachers,' joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth! ... Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope."



There is a renewed interest in scripture studies among young adults both inside and outside of the Church.

Yet, as Christian stewards, we are concerned about how to engage young adults, who often see the Church with cynicism and disappointment. How can we bring forth from them the enthusiasm and devotion of which Pope Francis speaks? How do we involve them and support them pastorally so that our pews – and our street corners – are filled with young adults committed to Jesus?

At this year's ICSC conference, a number of inspirational speakers will touch on topics related to evangelizing young adults in your parish today.

History shows us that young adults are inspired by Catholic leaders who step forward in social justice causes and in service to the poor. Some parishes are finding that an effective way to reach unchurched young adults is to give them the opportunity to work with young Catholics who are committed to work in service and justice projects. Relationship building is key to evangelizing young adults. There is a renewed interest in scripture studies among young adults both inside and outside of the Church. How can a parish committed to studying scripture in an engaging and transformative way help to demonstrate to young adults the relevance of the Gospel to modern life? To explore all these important questions, join us in September at the annual ICSC Conference in New Orleans.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for August*

Saint Augustine of Hippo, *bishop and Doctor of the Church*



Saint Augustine of Hippo was one of the most distinguished theologians in the history of the Church and may have exercised more influence on the shape and direction of doctrines of faith than any other theologian including Saint Thomas Aquinas.

He was born in 354 to Saint Monica, a Christian, and Patricius, a pagan until just before his death. He was registered as a catechumen but not baptized since Baptism at the time was delayed until adulthood. His

formal education as a lawyer and rhetorician took place in the North African city of Carthage, a major metropolitan city of the Roman Empire. He entered into a relationship with a woman who bore him a son, and at age 22, started his own school of rhetoric and grammar. At age 29, he and his companion and their son traveled to Rome so he could further his career. He was appointed professor of rhetoric in Milan, the seat of the imperial court.

While in Milan, Augustine became captivated by the eloquent sermons of Saint Ambrose, and after a long interior conflict, vividly described in his *Confessions*, he was baptized at the Easter Vigil. Augustine was 33 years old.

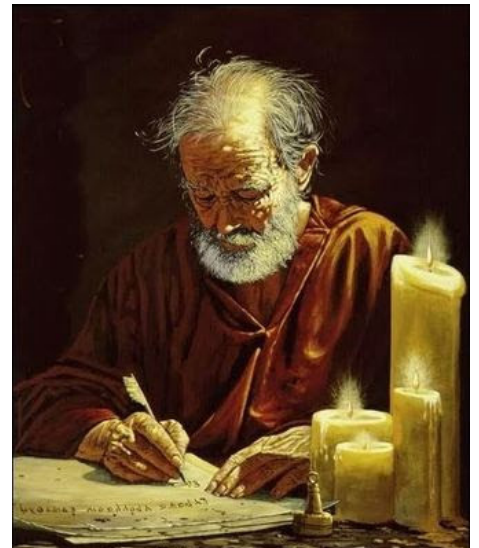
Augustine's mother, Monica, had followed him to Rome and then to Milan while his companion, after having lived with him for fifteen years, returned to Africa. Augustine's mother died in 387 and his son passed away in 390 at age 17.

Augustine was especially devoted to the care and relief of the poor.

During a visit to the African port city of Hippo in 391, Augustine was recognized and acclaimed by the local Christian community and was practically compelled to accept ordination. In 395 he became their bishop and remained bishop of Hippo for the rest of his life, preaching, writing, administering the sacraments and engaging in a broad range of other pastoral activities. He was especially devoted to the care and relief of the poor. He presided over synods and councils, and adjudicated civil as well as ecclesiastical cases.

A prolific writer, Saint Augustine produced a number of major works. They include not only the *Confessions*, arguably one of the greatest books in Western literature, but also his sermons on the Gospels, Epistles, and Psalms, the *De Trinitate* ("On the Trinity"), and the *De Civitate Dei* ("On the City of God"). His writings were especially influential in the development of the doctrines of creation, grace, the sacraments and the Church. On Christian stewardship, he insisted: "Find out how much God has given you and from it take what you need; the rest is needed by others."

Augustine died on August 29, 430. He is one of the four original Western Doctors of the Church along with Saints Ambrose, Jerome and Gregory the Great.



Saint Paul's Theology of Giving: A Brief Reflection

Usually, homilies, reflections and presentations on the second letter of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor 8:7-15) often get relegated to Stewardship Sundays, diocesan annual appeal weekends and parish fundraising campaigns. But while this reading for the Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time certainly encourages us to think about what we do with our own financial resources and, therefore, should inform our acts of generosity in our Church, Paul introduces us to the deep spiritual dimension of giving.

The text is chiefly concerned with Paul's collection for the Church in Jerusalem which we can see from his letters is a massive campaign. In his letter to the Galatians (2:10), Paul indicates that concern for the poor in Jerusalem has been a part of his ministry from the beginning, and in his letter to the Romans (15:25-26), Paul views this collection as a genuine service to the poor.

Paul maintains that how disciples of Jesus use their money is a reflection of what they believe about God and the actions of the Holy Spirit in the world.

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For Paul, how we use our money sends a message to others about how committed we are to the Lord.

Paul encouraged Gentile Christian communities to collect money for the Jewish Christian believers in Jerusalem whom they had likely never met.



Paul indicates that concern for the poor in Jerusalem has been a part of his ministry from the beginning

Ironically, based on the frustration Paul expresses in his letter to the Galatians over the exclusive dining practices of some of the Jerusalem leaders, it is not clear how well these Gentile Christians would have even been welcomed by the Jerusalem community. Yet, this collection binds the Jerusalem community to the Gentile Christians who are now serving as their benefactors and hence, proclaiming the Gospel in a unique and creative way.

To use Paul's language, this collection shows the communities' indebtedness to one another and ultimately to the Holy Spirit who is guiding them. The Corinthians are urged to give generously with the knowledge that God has already provided abundantly for them for this very purpose (2 Cor. 9:8). Let us reflect this week on how the Holy Spirit might be inviting us to consider our own giving patterns in order to proclaim the Gospel in our world today.



Stewarding Our Families: When "Back to School" means "Back to the Family Dinner Table"

August brings us face to face with one of life's realities: summer vacation has to end. Children may groan and parents may breathe a sigh of relief, but one thing is certain. The beginning of school brings a return to routine, and this translates into less eating on the run and more scheduled meals around the family dinner table. Here are a few dinner table tips:

- Everyone should know certain nights are family dinner nights. Look closely at everyone's schedule, make a plan, and then hold family nights sacred.
- Whether frozen pizza or prime rib, set the table nicely and sit down. Maybe light a dinner candle or pull out the cloth napkins now and then. Pick up a special dessert once in a while.
- Parents and kids often hit the dinner hour fatigued. Make an effort to relax. Start off with a smile and laughter, even when you'd rather hit the couch.

It's not always possible for the whole family to eat together, but making it a priority at least some nights of the week can pay big dividends for the Christian steward trying to raise a family of faith.



- If you haven't already, begin the family custom of praying before meals in a spontaneous way. What was I most thankful for today? Where did I see a situation that calls for prayer? Let everyone take a brief turn. It may lead to a great conversation after the "amen."

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- Resist scolding or criticizing a child at dinner. Never demand to know why the math paper wasn't turned in, or why the kid will not get out of bed on time. Save it for a private discussion later. Allow the dinner table to be a place of welcome and support.
- Share the ups and downs of your own day. Listen respectfully to their exploits and complaints.



- As you review the day's events, don't forget God. Just as you are interested in what your children are reading in literature class or library hour, express an interest in what's being taught in religion class or in weekly faith formation.
- Set the rule that everyone remains seated until all are finished. Then the meal is complete.
- But the work's not done. Divide the duties of setting the table, clearing, washing, even cooking so that everyone has a role to play and the work goes quickly.
- Bring back the custom of an "after dinner" prayer, brief and blessed.



Stewardship of Prayer for Kids

It's hard to believe, but it's that time of year: the "back to school" ads have returned. Although it seems we just threw the book bags in the closet for the summer, it's time to dig them out. As August begins, we start thinking about scaling back the bedtime hour and wringing the most out of the last weeks of freedom.

For many parents, it's a wistful time. Can my baby possibly be in fourth grade? And how could last year's gym shoes have grown so tight? But for many parents, a sigh of relief comes along with the school bell's first peal. Autumn brings back a welcome routine, a sense of order and discipline that summer lacks. Kids are back on schedule!

At bedtime, each child recall with his parent the best part of his day, and what was the most challenging. How was God there through those events?

Christian stewards can take advantage of this return to "normal." Make a plan now to take advantage of this "new" year and incorporate aspects of prayer and awareness of God into your kids' new schedule. For example, will you be driving your kids to school? That morning journey can be a great time for a shared morning prayer. Even a walk together to the bus stop can be a time to pause and ask God to bless our day. And perhaps your summer of eating on the fly is being replaced by more established mealtimes. Take advantage of that to begin a new blessing at the evening meal on the very first day of school. Along with thanksgiving for our food, each member of the family could relate one person or one event for which they were particularly grateful during the day.

At bedtime, each child recall with his parent the best part of his day, and what was the most challenging. How was God there through those events? Not only is this a beautiful way to help your child be conscious of the presence of God, it's a great way to learn more about your child's experiences. By your own example, show your children that a sense of prayerfulness permeates your day, that life has meaning and purpose when reflected upon, and that the habits ingrained in a schedule can be habits retained for a lifetime.



It's not a Conference Scholarship ...*But it's close!*



Know anyone who can benefit from attending the 2024 ICSC conference?

Share the ICSC conference experience with your friends and colleagues and you could be awarded up to **\$1,400 in value when you secure new 2024 conference registrations.**

ACT TODAY, AND YOU CAN BE AWARDED:

1 Free Conference Registration

When you sign up
5 new*
Conference Registrants

\$499
value

1 Free Conference Registration

PLUS: 1 Hotel Room
Night REBATED
When you sign up
10 new* Conference
Registrants

\$800
value

1 Free Conference Registration

PLUS: 2 Hotel Room
Nights REBATED
When you sign up
15 new* Conference
Registrants

\$1100
value

1 Free Conference Registration

PLUS: 3 Hotel Room
Nights REBATED
When you sign up
20 new* Conference
Registrants

\$1400
value

- Click [HERE](#) to submit your conference registrants.
- NEW* registrants are those you have secured between June 20 and September 1, 2024.

- This special offer is reserved exclusively for ICSC members.
- Awards are not transferable.
- To be eligible for an award, participants and their new registrants must be registered at the conference hotel, Hyatt New Orleans (unless the award participant or registrant is in commuting distance of the conference).
- Allow up to six weeks to receive hotel room rebate.
- ICSC principals, staff, sponsors, partners, affiliates and committees not eligible for this special offer.
- ICSC reserves exclusive right to make final determinations on award eligibility.

For more information or questions about this SPECIAL AWARD OFFER
please contact us at ICSC@catholicstewardship.com



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 3-4, 2024

In today's Gospel we hear Jesus proclaiming that he is "the bread of life." He then offers an invitation to come to him. For us, the invitation is to live the Eucharistic life in Christ. What does it mean for our parish family to live together in the Eucharist? What does it mean for us to share the Eucharist together, to participate in the "bread of life" together? Does it mean we love each other, support our community of faith, work together? Do we carry each other's burdens? Celebrate our joys? What are the practical implications of being good stewards of our Eucharistic life together?

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 10-11, 2024

The Letter to the Ephesians urges us to be mindful that part of our life together in the Eucharist means being kind to one another, compassionate and forgiving, just as Christ has forgiven us. What can we do this week to show our kindness, compassion and forgiving attitude toward others in our family of faith? How can we be even better stewards of our faith community as, what St. Paul refers to as "Imitators of God?"

Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 17-18, 2024

Jesus announces that he is the "living bread." And we understand that the Eucharist is the center of our life in faith: in our families, parish, local church and throughout the world. We are the stewards of Christ's life in the Eucharist. We are called to put the Eucharist into action. How do we do that? St. Paul enjoins us to be always grateful, to worship, to try to understand the will of the Lord and to watch carefully how we live. What are some of the ways we can put the Eucharist into action this week?

Twenty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 24-25, 2024

In today's Gospel, we hear that a number of Jesus' followers left him because his message was too difficult for them to accept. In essence, they did not believe in him. He then asked the Twelve if they wished to leave as well. Peter responds by making a profound profession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior. The Twelve made a choice and stood by their choice, remaining loyal to their commitment to Jesus. A good question for our reflection might be this: Are we satisfied with the stewardship we exercise over our baptismal commitment? Are we just "along for the ride?" Are we keeping Christ in front of us as we make decisions about our daily activities, our relationships, our parish, issues in the workplace, issues such as peace and justice? What is the quality of our stewardship?