



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL **CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP**

September 2024 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *For September*

Loving and Gracious God,
We ask You to open our hearts
to your Son's life and ministry
and to answer the call
to be his disciples.

May our response
be rooted
in the Gospel;

may we be
ever mindful
of the needs
of our communities;

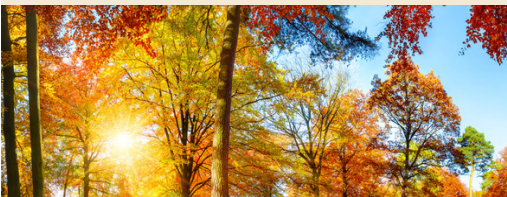
and may our stewardship flow from a
profound sense of gratitude
for Your many blessings.

By the gift of the Holy Spirit,
empower and inspire us
to respond in a way
that brings hope to others
and reveals the love
that comes to us
through Jesus Christ.

We ask this in His Name,
who is Lord
forever and ever.

Amen

*By Monsignor Anthony J. Marcaccio,
(May 5, 1963 - July 19, 2024)
Beloved pastor of Saint Pius X Catholic
Church, Greensboro,
North Carolina and friend of ICSC.*



Gathering Together in Christ: *The Power of Christian Fellowship*

Have you ever contemplated the blessing of being part of a global Church? As we approach the 62nd annual conference of the International Catholic Stewardship Council in New Orleans to be held from Sunday, September 15 to Wednesday, September 18, many attendees have expressed their excitement and gratitude for the opportunity to gather with other friends and stewards in Christ from all over the world. Yes, we attend to hear inspiring speakers and capture the latest best stewardship practices to take back to our



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diocese or parish. But unlike those attending conferences from the secular world, we have the bond of our identity in Christ and our baptism which draws us into a deeper relationship. No matter how we identify "the ends of the earth" in the 21st century, when we gather together this year, we will come face to face with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

The words of Saint Paul in his letter to the Ephesians rings so true (2:19): *So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God.*

This is true not only in parish life but when we encounter each other at the ICSC conference. The Holy Spirit is truly present in the vibrant worship, excellent presenters and is very uniquely connecting participants in a way more meaningful than networking. Yes, we exchange business cards, great ideas and practices but we also share hopes and dreams for our ministries,

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parishes, dioceses and Church. Through the wonder of technology, we are able to connect immediately when necessary. A rich and inspiring fellowship continues throughout the year until we meet again at next year's conference. It is one of the most impactful aspects of attending the ICSC conference.



In the end, the value of the ICSC conference is beautiful on so many levels but none more important than bringing the Body of Christ together from around the world. Somehow participants who need to find each other connect. If we look to the beginning of our Church, it was being stewarded through a powerful faith and the building up of relationships in Christ Jesus. The early Christians supported each other's ministries and accompanied each other on their faith journey. The fact that these relationships can exist on a global level in our time is pure gift. Make plans to attend the 2024 ICSC conference and be inspired by Christ's presence all around you.



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for September*

Blessed Antoine Frédéric Ozanam

During the 1997 World Youth Day celebrations in Paris, Saint John Paul II beatified Antoine Frederic Ozanam in Notre Dame Cathedral and proclaimed him to be a model for all Catholic laity. "No better model could be given to the youth of the world than this young man ... 'Show us your works!'"

Blessed Antoine Frédéric Ozanam was a French Catholic scholar and defender of the Catholic faith at a time when it underwent severe challenges in early 19th century France. He also founded the Catholic association of laity dedicated to serving the poor, which came to be known as the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

Frederic was born in Milan, Italy, in 1813, the fifth of 14 children. Showing academic promise at an early age, his parents encouraged him to study. He was interested in law, languages and philosophy, and in 1831 went to the renowned Parisian university, the Sorbonne, to study law. It was here that he encountered hostility to Catholicism. He published a short work responding to this hostility that attracted the attention of French Catholic writers and politicians.

Frederic's writings emphasized the important social contributions of the Church, but a conversation with another student disturbed him: "Frederic, I accept that the Church may have done things for people in the past but what are you doing now? Show us your works!" Those words stung the young Frederic so much that he decided to work with the poor. In 1833, with seven university companions, he laid the foundations of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul honoring the great saint who in another time had also ministered to the poor of the city of Paris. He was 20 years old.

Frederic earned a doctor of laws in 1836 and a doctorate in letters in 1839. He became a professor at the university and, in time, chair of foreign languages. His lectures at the Sorbonne were among the most popular as students flocked to hear this young, vibrant speaker.

In 1841 Frederic married, had one daughter, and is said to have embraced a youthful enthusiasm for his marriage and his parenting. Each month he would observe the anniversary of his wedding with a thoughtfully chosen gift, however small. Frederic brought that same domestic love and attention to the growing Society which spread throughout France and other countries within a relatively short time.

He gained a reputation as the leading historical and literary critic in the "new" Catholic movement in France, and his popular writings in the late 1840s won him a number of French writing awards. He was hailed as a brilliant promoter of the Catholic faith. Frederic died of tuberculosis at age 40 on September 8, 1853. Today the Society numbers nearly a million members in 142 countries. Frederic's feast day is September 9.

10 REASONS

Your Parish Should Attend the
62nd Annual ICSC Conference in
New Orleans



1. Discover how to enhance the commitment to discipleship in your parish
2. Learn how to enrich your parish's life of faith
3. Explore the spiritual fundamentals of Christian stewardship
4. Understand how to obtain the financial and human resources you need to run your parish
5. Find what works from dedicated and flourishing stewardships parishes
6. Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment
7. Be exposed to the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world
8. Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies
9. Enjoy the hospitality of dedicated stewards from around the globe
10. Increase your parish's knowledge of stewardship no matter where it is on its pilgrim journey



Be a Good Steward of Your Faith this Autumn

There's something wonderfully renewing about autumn, especially as it begins a new school year. It's all about new beginnings. Maybe it has something to do with new classrooms, new teachers, the great smell of brand new shoes and the smooth touch of that new backpack.

We remember those feelings of starting again even if it's been years since we walked through the school house door, and even if we don't have our own children heading off to the classroom this fall. We still get that heady feeling of new possibilities in the crisp autumn air. This is the perfect time to bring a sense of spiritual renewal to your life and to your family – the domestic church.

Think of the autumn season as a way to discover a new rhythm for your prayer life. If new activities can be scheduled into your daily life, start scheduling in more quality time for prayer.

Autumn can truly bring out a new resolve to improve our lives as summer's freedom gives way to the structure of fall. For adults, faith formation classes and prayer groups are just forming in parishes. Check out the opportunities. With summer ending, many organizations are gearing up for new volunteers. Contact your local Catholic Charities or Habitat for Humanity to see how you might help out.

Think of the autumn season as a way to discover a new rhythm for your prayer life. If new activities can be scheduled into your daily life, start scheduling in more quality time for prayer. Fall is the perfect time to begin a 34-week Ignatian retreat, because if you start in September, the retreat-in-real-life schedule will conform to the liturgical year.

For the children in your house, early to bed and early to rise means there may be more opportunities to be together for short prayer. Say a blessing at breakfast, or a brief morning offering as kids head out for the bus. Try to bring a more regular prayer schedule to your home. Pray with your children as you tuck them in, making the prayer personal and about the day's events. Make a resolve this fall to bring Christ more prominently into your family's daily routine. Make the stewardship of your faith and family a commitment as autumn brings a sense of renewal.

The Eucharist: Promoting Unity in Your Parish

(Part I in a two-part series on promoting unity in the parish)

The Eucharist is the sacrament of unity. Unity is not an “add-on” teaching about the Eucharist. The unity of the Church is the very reason the Eucharist exists (Walter Cardinal Kasper, *Sacrament of Unity: the Eucharist and the Church*, New York: Crossroad, 2013). Therefore, promoting unity in our parishes is not an option for those who love the Eucharist.

As with any relationship, we have to work continually to build and maintain unity in our Eucharistic community. Sacred scripture enjoins us to make every effort to keep the unity of the Holy Spirit through the bond of peace (see Ephesians 4:3). But how do we “strive to preserve unity” (Eph 4:3)? Here are seven quick thoughts to ponder as you prayerfully consider your role in working for unity in your parish.



1. Remember that your parish is part of the Body of Christ

No matter what our differences, we are bound together by one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father who is over all and through all and in all (Eph 4:4,12). Even though we may disagree on all sorts of things, the first step in promoting church unity is recognizing and remaining mindful that all of us who gather around the Lord’s table are members of the Body of Christ and that reality transcends our interests, personalities and personal beliefs.

2. Believe the best in your fellow parishioners.

When we are cynical and assume the worst about other people, we are bound to experience some disunity. We should treat those with whom we gather around the Eucharistic table with authentic friendship and remember Jesus’ command: “Love one another as I love you” (John 15:12).

3. Stay humble

While emphasizing the importance of unity to the church at Ephesus, Saint Paul urged its members to live “with all humility and gentleness” (Ephesians 4:2). Again, to the church at Philippi he wrote: “Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves...” (Phil. 2:3). Saint Paul is



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not telling anyone to be a “doormat.” But he repeats a major New Testament theme. When we are mindful of our own sinfulness and weaknesses, we are less likely to act self-righteous and judgmental and more likely to be open and gracious toward our brothers and sisters in Christ.

4. Thou shalt kill gossip.

People love to gossip. The motives are varied and they are not good. Gossip is a sure way to create or

exacerbate disunity in the parish. No matter how tempted you may be to speak unfavorably about a fellow parishioner, you should commit yourself to building others up rather than talking badly about them behind their backs. As Saint Paul reminds us: “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen” (Eph. 4:29).



Do You Welcome Visitors to Your Parish?

As new energy and activity begin to pick up at the parish in September let us be on the lookout for newcomers to the parish. Welcoming newcomers to your parish is not just the job of the pastoral staff, ushers, ministers of hospitality or greeters. It is everyone's responsibility. Here are ten things you can do to provide better hospitality toward those who are new to the parish.

1. Cultivate the virtue of hospitality at Mass. Many Mass attendees tend to gather into little cliques and ignore those who are not members of their particular clique. They are not really inhospitable, just heedless to the needs of good hospitality. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass.

2. Come early, leave late. Instead of rushing to Mass to be there on time, and then rushing out at its conclusion, make time to come a little early and linger just a bit later. Make room in your busy life to greet and spend time with others at Mass.

3. "The Mass has ended," now go and greet someone! Seek out someone you've not met before. Introduce

yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them to your parish home, God's home.

4. Welcome everyone. Not only do visitors need your warm welcome, regular Mass attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good habit of greeting everyone with some enthusiasm. You are Christ's ambassador and greeting others in his name.

5. Help newcomers connect. While you are getting to know visitors, introduce them to other parishioners as the opportunity presents itself. Feel free to invite newcomers to sit next to you.

6. Say goodbye with genuine warmth. After Mass, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Introduce them to the pastor if the opportunity arises.

7. Avoid Parish business. Avoid conducting parish business with others immediately before or after Mass. Focus on newcomers and visitors.

8. Give visitors information about the parish. Ensure that a visitor has a bulletin and other information about the parish before they leave. If there



is a social gathering after Mass, invite them to join you.

9. Be part of a greeting ministry or hospitality team. Parishes are always in need of greeters to serve regularly, and provide ongoing formation to new greeters. Help out, be a greeter. If your parish doesn't have greeters, now is a good time to start!

10. Greet those who already minister in the area of hospitality. It isn't necessary to neglect the people who are already ministers of hospitality in order to make newcomers feel at home. A simple wave and a smile go a long way.



2024 Annual Conference

September 15-18, 2024 | New Orleans, Louisiana



Are you ready?

To be inspired, network with others and learn best practices to further the mission of your parish or diocese? Join us September 15-18 in New Orleans for the 62nd Annual ICSC conference as we join together to support and encourage each other on our journey as stewards of the Church.

Don't miss this opportunity to renew your mission and expand your vision!

CLICK BELOW to register today!

Sessions specifically designed for:

- Pastors
- Parish Business Managers and Administrators
- Parish staff
- Catholic School Advancement Professionals
- Parish Stewardship and Discipleship Leaders (for Beginners and Advanced)
- Learning more about Eucharistic Stewardship
- Diocesan and Foundation Professionals
- Wednesday Morning Bonus Sessions with Dynamic Stewardship Presenters



DON'T FORGET to secure your hotel reservation!



catholicstewardship.com
register@catholicstewardship.org



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of August 31/September 1, 2024

In today's second reading, St. James urges us to be "Doers of the Word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22). Being a "Doer of the Word" means being a good steward of the Gospel; meditating on the sacred scriptures and putting the teachings of Jesus Christ into action in our day-to-day lives. Whenever we are uncertain as to what decisions to make or actions to take as good stewards of the Gospel, St. James reminds us: We can never go wrong if we resist popular values that are not compatible with the Gospel and we come to the aid of those who are burdened, distressed or poor. Being a steward of the Gospel is not taking one single action. It means embracing a lifestyle as a follower of Jesus Christ. What can we do this week to be better "Doers of the Word?"

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 7/8, 2024

St. James teaches that those who are perceived to be poor in the eyes of society are the ones who have been chosen to inherit the Kingdom of God. Indeed, we are saved because of our poverty and redeemed out of our need, not because of our material wealth or achievements that the world finds praiseworthy. St. James also suggests that we are stewards of others, especially the poor and it is how we respond to the poor and needy that will define our relationship with the Lord. Can you identify the poverty, whether spiritual or material, that is in your own life? How can that "poverty" be redeemed? As stewards of others, how do we respond to the poverty that exists right in our own parish?

Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 14/15, 2024

St. James asks what our love for Jesus Christ can possibly mean if it does not result in action on behalf of, and to benefit, our neighbor. He suggests that faith in Jesus Christ

is demonstrated most profoundly in our care for the needy, the suffering, and the underprivileged. Stewardship includes proclaiming the Good News by putting our faith into action on behalf of others. In what ways have we been willing to make sacrifices and renunciations for the sake of Jesus Christ and our neighbor?

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 21/22, 2024

In today's Gospel, we learn that the disciples of Jesus had been discussing among themselves who was the greatest. Jesus is about to turn their idea as well as our society's idea of "greatness" upside down. He embraces a child and tries to help the Twelve understand that to be great is to be focused on something other than themselves. Jesus teaches that true "greatness" lies in being a good steward of those who are not great: welcoming one who is not viewed as great by our society's standards, like the child, the innocent, the vulnerable, the suffering, those who are outside our comfortable circle of family, friends, companions and colleagues, those who need a welcome. Jesus redefines our notion of greatness. How do we define greatness? Is our notion of greatness consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ?

Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 28/29, 2024

St. James warns us about accepting the standards of the world and assuming that what is normative in society needs no countercultural challenge. The temptation to hoard riches and make sharp bargains at the expense of the powerless is pervasive because these things are generally done and look respectable enough. St. James points to God's judgment on these attitudes and actions of amassing wealth and comfort at the expense of others. How might we be better stewards of the material blessings we have been given? How might we use our wealth with compassion toward others?