



A quarterly publication from the Development Office of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee funded by the *Catholic Stewardship Appeal*

## Where does God go in the Summer?

### Inside this issue:

Stewardship & Evangelization; The Chicken or the Egg?	Pg. 2
Practical Ideas for Practicing Evangelization & Stewardship	Pg. 3
Give Thanks to the Supreme Gardner	Pg. 3
Points to Ponder	Pg. 3
Standing on Holy Ground	Pg. 4
Join the International Catholic Stewardship Council	Pg.4

### He goes wherever you go!

Summer brings joy and challenges. One of the challenges is staying connected to God in the midst of all our summer activities. It's summer after all, and time for catching up with friends and spending time with family, a time for vacations and having fun.

The pace is slower, the days are longer, everything is more casual – it's time to relax in the sunshine. Summer is also the perfect time to reawaken your relationship with the Lord. If you look, you're sure to see Him everywhere:

**Patio Prayers.** Enjoy a refreshing glass of lemonade out on your deck or patio while reading something inspirational. The scriptures go very well with a cool drink! As you sip, consider how God refreshes your soul.

**Gardening with God.** When you garden, your hands are touching God's amazing creation. The soil, crumbling beneath your fingers supports the life of the flowers, plants and trees that God created to beautify our world and sustain us. As you work the soil, work out problems with God as Counselor. As you weed and remove old blooms, ask God to "prune" the distractions from your life so that you can grow stronger in relationship with Him. As you plant, ask God to help you plant the seeds of His love in others.

**Vacation Prayers.** When you leave behind those things that have become routine in your life, you may find that you pray your best. Whether your vacation is quiet and relaxing, adventurous and thrilling, alone or with many others, nearby or far away, remember God is with you. You can pray in a car full of children or in the silence of nature's beauty, while scaling a mountain or sitting in your backyard. Where-ever you are and whatever you are doing, God watches over you and listens. **How better to relax, recharge and refresh this summer than by keeping God close?**

Sincerely,

*Barb Vite*

Director of Parish Stewardship



## A Prayer of Thanksgiving for Summer

Lord, all praise and thanks to you for this refreshing season of summer. We ask you to grant us time of leisure and relaxation, to give our body and mind the needed rest so as to be renewed for the coming autumn.

For the glorious morning sunrises, the warmth of the summer days, the refreshing cool rains, and for those quiet summer nights – all moments to see your awesome creativeness at work.

For the summer trips, vacations, and get-a-ways where we see new things, enjoy the company of others, and make joy-filled memories.

For bugs in the air, for birds of the trees, critters of the yard and blossoms of the field of all kinds, and the cycle of life they are all reminiscent of.

For recreation and activity – baseball games, fishing outings, rounds of golf, long walks, cool swims, afternoon drives, and backyard talks under the stars.

With each new season, Lord, you bless us in wondrous ways. Help us to be ever mindful of the delights each time of year brings to us. May we always take the time to enjoy them for the blessed gifts they are. Amen



## Save These Dates!

Save these dates for an insightful seminar on a unique aspect of the enhanced offertory process. Pastors and Parish Directors, members of Pastoral and Finance Councils, Stewardship Commission members and other parish leaders who are interested in strengthening their parish communities are encouraged to attend.

### Taking it to the Next Level;

#### Increasing Offertory through Major Donor Cultivation

In order for our parishes to be the vibrant centers of ministry that we envision, we must grow our financial resources by engaging and encouraging parishioners to make prayerful, planned and proportionate financial commitments to their parishes. A key component of increasing offertory income in our parishes is the cultivation of our strongest supporters - our major donors. We often think of this donor segment only in relation to capital campaigns. However, engaging these parishioners in the mission of the parish community, and inviting them to take a leadership role in supporting that mission, benefits both the individual giver and the parish as a whole. This presentation will discuss a practical approach to adding this important dimension to the annual enhanced offertory process.

#### When and Where? Each session will run from 6:30 to 8:00 PM

Tuesday, October 25th	Archbishop Cousins Center
Thursday, October 27th	Shepherd of the Hills Parish, Eden
Thursday, November 3rd	St. Thomas Aquinas Parish, Waterford

**Watch for registration information coming soon.**

### Don't Second Guess the Urge to Share

Colleen Smith, author of *Catholic Stewardship – Sharing God's Gifts*, tells this story:

*“Even the smallest act of sharing can make a difference. I remembered that one summer day when slicing a cold watermelon. From my kitchen window I could see the thermometer’s reading of nearly 90 degrees by 9 a.m.*

*I heard the usual Friday morning roar as the lawn crew arrived with their mowers, blowers and edgers. These deeply tanned guys show up each Friday during mowing season, covered in dust and grass clippings. I know from experience that mine is not an easy job given my corner lot and the fairly steep banks on which my house sits.*

*Then it occurred to me how delicious and how welcome a slice of cold watermelon might be to these young men on a morning so hot and getting hotter.*

*I hesitated. I wondered what they might think. Would they consider it some sort of bribe? Was it improper? Would they grow suspect? Maybe they don’t even like watermelon, I considered. Maybe they’re allergic.*

*Then I caught myself. How frequently we censor altruistic instinct, fearing rejection, fearing misunderstanding, fearing **something**. The nonsense of this line of thinking struck me. Who doesn’t like a cold slice of watermelon on a hot summer’s day? I grabbed two slices and two paper towels. Based on their response, the pink fruit might have been gold ingots, so appreciative were they, so astonished. That small sharing – the giving and receiving – made my day, and perhaps theirs.”*



**The next time you feel the urge to share, do it!**

## Tithing Time

### or How I Spent My Summer Vacation

Those of us of a certain age remember that the first writing assignment of a new school year was most likely an essay about what we did during the summer months.

Sometimes we wrote about a special trip, or a family event. Many of these essays, though, focused on ordinary, everyday things. We wrote about the simple joys of spending time with family and friends sharing lazy days at the beach, picnics in the park and watching fireworks on the 4th of July.

Hopefully, as adults, we still think of summer in a special way. Stewardship calls us to nurture and care for God's gift that is ourselves. It is important that we are good stewards of the opportunities at this time of year for rest and renewal, a time to recharge our batteries as part of living a healthy, balanced life.

There is still time this summer to make leisure a priority. Take the opportunity to simplify activities and focus on relationships, resting, recreating and enjoying the wonder of God's world. Instead of stressing while planning the "perfect" barbecue, focus instead on the fun of everyone chipping in to spend time together.

Give yourself permission to spend time alone in the midst of summer's fun. Take time to bask in the glory of long days and beautiful nights. Make time for books waiting to be read, walks waiting to be taken, memories waiting to be made - and prayers waiting to be said. Take time to enjoy life, and to thank God for this most precious gift. *Adapted from the July 2013 ICSC parish newsletter*



## Beginning a New School (& Stewardship) Year

It's hard to believe, but before we know it, the "back to school" ads will return. Although it seems that we just threw the backpacks in the closet for the summer, it will soon be time to dig them out again. During August, we will start thinking about scaling back bedtimes and getting the most out of the last few weeks of "freedom".

For many parents, it's a wistful time. "Can my baby possibly be in 4th grade?" "How could last year's gym shoes have gotten 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. "Thank goodness we're back on schedule!"

Christian stewards can take advantage of this "return to normal". Why not make a plan now to make a few resolutions for this "new" year to incorporate prayer and awareness of God into your kids' new schedule? For example, will you be driving your children 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.

Perhaps a summer of eating on the fly is being replaced by more established family meal times. Why not start a tradition with a new blessing at the evening meal on the first day of school? Along with thanksgiving for our food, each member of the family could relate one person or event for which they were particularly grateful during the day.

At bedtime, each child can recall with a parent the best part of his or her day, and what was most challenging. How is God there through these events? This is a beautiful way to help your child become more conscious of the presence of God and 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, and that God has a special plan for each of us. Habits ingrained in a child's schedule can be retained for a lifetime.

*Adapted from the ICSC August 2013 parish newsletter*



Summer is a time of vacation trips, summer camps, yard work and people on the go. This summer, take some time to truly relax and reflect. To know the sacred, we must slow down and pay attention.

**This summer, spend some time in quiet prayer. It's the ultimate relaxation technique!**

## ***Beyond Donut Sunday Presentation Available On-Line***

Over 270 parish leaders from 90 parishes across the archdiocese attended the *Beyond Donut Sunday* seminars on hospitality. The feedback from participants was very positive and there have been many requests for ways to share the presentation with commission members and others who were unable to attend. **The narrated PowerPoint presentation, and the resources from the seminar packet, are now available on-line.**

These resources, and many others, can be found in the Parish Toolbox section of the Parish Stewardship webpage on the Archdiocese of Milwaukee website ([www.archmil.org](http://www.archmil.org)).

## **Join the International Catholic Stewardship Council**

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is a professional organization recognized internationally as a source of education, networking and information to advance the ministry of stewardship as a way of life in the Roman Catholic Church in parishes and dioceses worldwide. Founded in 1962, ICSC has over 1,200 members representing over 800 dioceses and archdioceses, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms.

### Parish membership includes:

- Monthly parish e-bulletins offering weekly reflections, prayers, bulletin inserts and more.
- Members-only web site access to over 800 parish stewardship resources.
- Discounts for conferences, institutes and publications.
- Networking and mentoring opportunities.
- Access to past conference presentations...and more.



*The Good Samaritan*, Vincent van Gogh

# 2016

## Stewards of God's Mercy

### 54th International Catholic Stewardship Council

## Annual Conference

Register now for the International Catholic Stewardship Council's 54th annual conference, October 2-5, 2016 in New Orleans. **Attending an ICSC conference is the single most powerful way for parish leaders to gain new insight into a holistic vision of stewardship, and to learn about practical ways to move a parish community toward that vision.** Register on the ICSC website, [www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org) or contact Barb Vite, Parish Stewardship Director at [viteb@archmil.org](mailto:viteb@archmil.org)