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The Vineyard

A quarterly publication from
the Development Office
of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee

Where Does God Go in the Summer?



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 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. Wherever 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?*

- SEASONAL REFLECTIONS
- MASS; IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR
 - WHAT'S YOUR STORY?
- SAVE THESE DATES: FALL SEMINARS
 - 2015 ICSC CONFERENCE



In this issue

"If you read five pages of a great Catholic book every day you will be amazed how your knowledge and enthusiasm for the faith will begin to grow. ...Continuous improvement - it makes incredible things possible."

The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic
by Matthew Kelly



In Praise of the Season

Lord, all praise and thanks to you for this refreshing summer season.

We ask you to grant us time of leisure and relaxation, to give our bodies and minds the needed rest so as to be renewed.

We thank you for glorious morning sunrises, the warmth of the summer days, refreshing cool rains, and for quiet summer nights – all moments to breathe in the beauty of your creation.

We thank you for vacation trips to places where we see new things, for family reunions where we enjoy the company of others and neighborhood barbeques at which we make joy-filled memories.

We thank you for constant reminders of the cycle of life; for bugs in the air, for birds in the trees, for critters in the yard and blossoms of the field.

We thank you 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**

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.

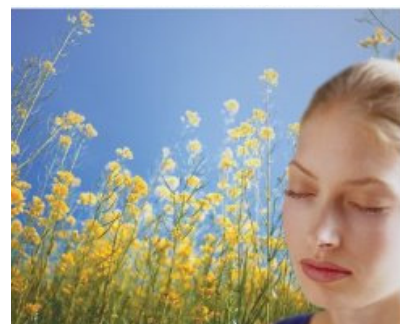
I hesitated. I wondered what they might think. Would they consider it some sort of bribe? Was it improper? Would they grow suspect? Maybe they don’t even like watermelon, I considered. Maybe they’re allergic.

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!

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!**





Coming to an understanding of stewardship as a way of life is a very personal experience. Some of us change our perception of stewardship little by little. Others experience a conversion moment; a significant event that reshapes our stewardship response.

Many Catholics throughout our archdiocese share the gift of their real life stewardship stories with fellow parishioners; stories that teach, encourage and inspire all of us as we continue our growth as faithful stewards.

The following example tells the story of one family's devotion to attending weekly Mass.

Mass... it's a Family Affair

I believe that my husband and I have strived to become better parents at taking the formation of our children's Catholic faith a little more seriously. We are fortunate to have a phenomenal school to partner with in the faith formation for three of our children, and also a great Christian Formation program, which has guided our oldest son tremendously.

We cannot, however, take these resources for granted. We must nurture these children of ours at home with a prayer life, setting examples of Christian behavior and most importantly, attend Mass every Sunday - no matter what sporting event, club opportunity, and/or social engagement we may have on a particular weekend. Our busy schedules sometimes require us to go at separate times so that everyone gets there. Occasionally, we need to find a nearby parish (we have four in our cluster) that has a more suitable Mass time. We believe if we are to call ourselves Catholic parents, we need to take the time to receive God's gift of the Eucharist every week and give thanks for such a gift!

We travel as a family quite a bit and never miss the opportunity to attend Mass in a different city. Whether exploring caves in Kentucky, taking in Disney World in Florida, far away from home in another country like Mexico, or simply camping in the northwoods of Wisconsin, we go to church. Why? We need to receive the Eucharist!

Our youngest son will be receiving First Holy Communion this year. He is so excited to finally receive this gift after all the years of watching us, that I am happy to say he will be very comfortable in saying aloud, "Amen!"



Everybody who practices authentic Christian stewardship has a moving, magical story. It's important that we tell our stories, not only to convey them to others, but also to reinforce them for ourselves. It's all too easy, once a miraculous moment has passed, to forget about it or to write it off to coincidence.

Reflect upon a time in your life when you have extended yourself, risen to the occasion, gone above and beyond the call of duty – and been rewarded in ways you could not have imagined. Tell your story to someone or write it down. Intentional Disciples share their stories as a way of bringing Christ to others. *So - what's your story?*

Save These Dates!

Two seminar series are scheduled for fall of 2015. Pastors and Parish Directors, members of Pastoral and Finance Councils, Stewardship Committee members and other parish leaders who are interested in strengthening their parish communities are encouraged to attend. **Watch for registration information coming soon.**

September Seminars;

Increasing Offertory;

Growing Financial Resources to Support Expanding Ministries

When it comes to parish finances, maintaining the status quo is not where we want to be. 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. This seminar session will address topics including:

- An overview of Catholic giving. (*Myths and Misconceptions vs the Facts.*)
- Annual renewals (*Do they really work?*)
- The role of the Stewardship Committee. (*“Treasure” is one of the three “Ts” after all.*)
- Process components and timelines. (*Building the right process for your parish.*)
- Donor cultivation. (*It’s not just for capital campaigns.*)
- New themes and tools available through the archdiocese website. (*You don’t have to reinvent the wheel.*)
- ...and much more.

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

Wednesday, September 23rd	Archbishop Cousins Center
Tuesday, September 29th	St. Robert Bellarmine Parish, Union Grove
Thursday, October 1st	Holy Family Parish, Fond du Lac

November Seminars;

The 3 “Cs” of Successful Stewardship;

Stewardship Committee, Comprehensive Plan, Good Communication

Building a stewardship culture in a parish does not happen by chance, by accident, or by wishing things would “get better”. The Parish Pastoral Council Norms approved by Archbishop Liskecki in May of 2012 call for *Stewardship* to be among the standing commissions of the Pastoral Council. And, successful parishes are seeing the fruits of a comprehensive stewardship effort (increased participation, revitalized ministries, growing financial support) because they began at the beginning - by developing a good Stewardship Committee. This seminar session will address topics including:

- Do we really need another committee? (*Only if you want to be successful!*)
- Where does the stewardship committee “fit”? (*Who and Where.*)
- What does the committee do and not do? (*What and How.*)
- We have an Evangelization committee. Do we need Stewardship too? (*Yes, and they can work together.*)
- Comprehensive planning (*A map to guide you on your parish journey.*)
- Communication: techniques, tools, methods to spread the Good News. (*Being heard through the clutter.*)
- ...and much more

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

Tuesday, November 10th	Archbishop Cousins Center
Thursday, November 12th	St. Anthony on the Lake Parish, Pewaukee
Tuesday, November 17th	St. Francis de Sales Parish, Lake Geneva
Thursday, November 19th	Holy Family Parish, Fond du Lac



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

If you want to learn how to build a culture of stewardship... ...come to Chicago!

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 Christian stewardship as a way of life. Founded in 1962, ICSC has over 1,200 members representing over 800 dioceses and archdioceses, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms internationally.

ICSC has been offering stewardship conferences to parishes since 1965. At ICSC conferences participants...

Come together as a Eucharistic people

The annual conference is a wonderful time of grace; a time where you not only learn more about stewardship, but are inspired and spiritually nourished by the gathering, by sharing with one another and by celebrating the Eucharist as the summit of each day.

Are inspired by engaging and knowledgeable speakers

Over 70 presenters give of themselves and share their experiences of stewardship. A planning committee of faith-filled Catholics from parishes and dioceses in North America and beyond work together to assemble insightful and engaging speakers who address interesting and timely topics.

Exchange new ideas

ICSC conferences draw together Catholics from all over the world to cultivate friendships, network and share new ideas in parish stewardship

Come away with a renewed sense of energy and faith

Participants return to their parishes refreshed and invigorated, ready to share the beauty and richness of the Gospel call to stewardship with others.

The 2015 ICSC conference will be held just south of our border in Chicago from October 22nd - 25th , providing a wonderful opportunity for parish representatives from our archdiocese to attend with a minimal amount of travel expense.

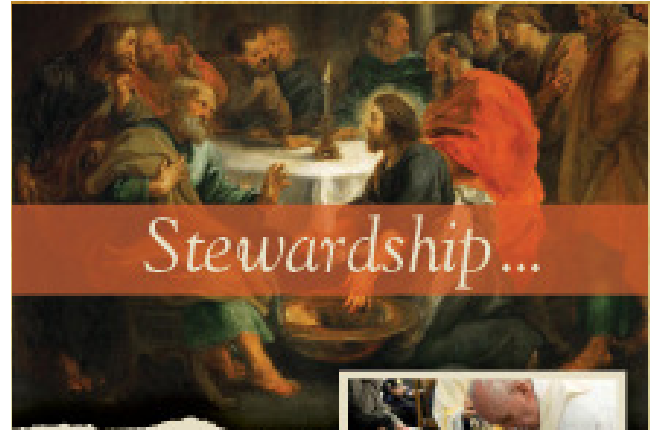
If you want to:

- ◆ learn more about stewardship best practices
- ◆ see examples of stewardship communications from parishes nation-wide
- ◆ hear some of the most inspiring, nationally known stewardship speakers
- ◆ share ideas, discover new methods and get recharged and reenergized

...then, come to Chicago!

Non-member parishes attending the conference for the first time, may take advantage of the archdiocesan membership to register at the member rate.

**For more information about the 2015 conference,
or about parish membership in ICSC
go to <http://catholicstewardship.org>
or contact Barb Vite by phone (414) 769-3331
e-mail: viteb@archmil.org**



Stewardship...

...in the Footsteps
of Pope Francis



Annual Conference | 2015



October 22 - 25
Chicago, Illinois

Register
today!

Register online at
www.catholicstewardship.org