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The Vineyard

A bi-monthly publication from
the Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Parish Stewardship Office

In Praise of the Season

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

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
creativity 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 the holidays of this time of year –
from Memorial Day through the Fourth of July till
Labor Day – those days we set aside to remember
special people and special times in our nation’s history.

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
outing, 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

- REFLECTING ON THE READINGS
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 - ANSWER HIS CALL...
- ICSC 2012 CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO



***“Partly too, stewardship of the world
is expressed by jubilant appreciation
of nature, whose God-given beauty
not even exploitation and abuse
have destroyed.”***

Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response
U.S. Bishops’ Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

In this issue

Reflecting on the Readings

May 6th– 5th Sunday of Easter

The poetry of today's gospel speaks about the union between Jesus and His disciples; they are one, each living through, and in, each other. Faithful stewards recognize all that we have, all that we are and all that we will be comes from God. Only by living fully in concert with Him are we able to draw the strength to "bear good fruit".

May 13th - 6th Sunday of Easter

In the gospel today, Jesus says, "*This is my commandment; love one another as I love you.*" As good stewards we are called to follow His example; to reach out to others with our hands, our hearts and our gifts. When we *actively* love one another, we cannot help but live as faithful stewards.

May 20th - 7th Sunday of Easter

In the second reading today, St. John continues a theme we have heard before; our love for each other flows from our faith in Jesus. As our personal faith deepens, our love overflows into action. Take some time each day to talk to the Lord. Through prayer, our faith will never stop growing.

May 27th - Pentecost Sunday

St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians is a very familiar reading often used in the discussion of stewardship. The message is more profound, however, than it may seem to be at first glance. We are all unique individuals with our own special talents because we have a role to play in God's grand design. Some roles seem larger than others, but no part is insignificant in the eyes of the Lord. At its heart, good stewardship is knowing this truth - and acting accordingly!

June 3rd-Trinity Sunday

Today's gospel ends with Jesus' words, "*And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*" When it becomes difficult to live as faithful stewards in our 21st century "me" culture, we can draw hope and regain focus by remembering His promise. Good stewards always seek Him, the source of our strength, from Whom all good things come.

June 10th - Body and Blood of Christ

The readings today speak of "covenant", an unbreakable bond between God and His people. God remains faithful, showing us with blessings every day of our lives. As good stewards we can do no less. It is good to stop and ask ourselves, how are *we* living up to *our* part of the covenant?

June 17th - 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time


In today's gospel we hear the parable of the mustard seed. This image helps us remember that every kind word, every good work, every instance of sharing, has the potential to transform. Individual lives, parish communities, even our world can be changed for the better, for faithful stewards know that when we each, in turn, sow the seeds planted in us by our God, great things can happen!

June 24th - Nativity of St. John the Baptist

In the readings this Sunday, we hear the prophet Isaiah and St. John the Baptist proclaiming the wonder of the Lord. Wonder - the sense of awe and amazement - can be difficult to find in our everyday, modern lives. Good stewards search for, and hold on to that sense of wonder. When we reflect on the goodness of our God, Who gives us all good things; our families, our health, our resources, our next breath, *wonder* is truly the fitting word!

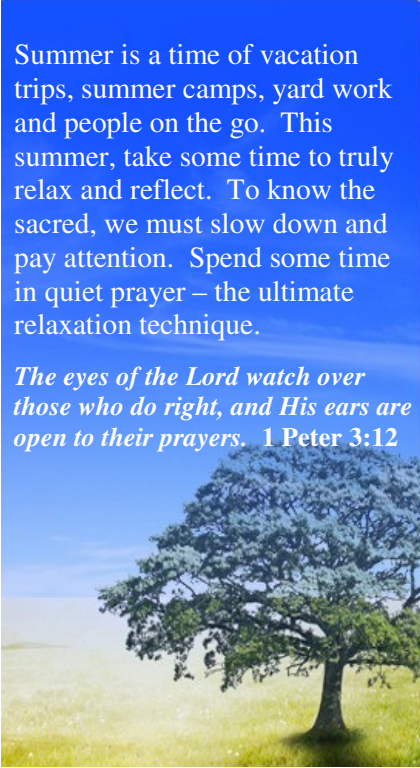


Bulletin Bits & Pieces



As we see the glory of spring, let's remember to give thanks to the Creator who designed the world with rhythms and cycles of life that operate with incredible precision. When you stop to smell the roses, take a minute to say thank you to the supreme Gardener!

*The heavens tell of the glory of God.
The skies display his marvelous
craftsmanship. Psalm 19:1*



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. Spend some time in quiet prayer – the ultimate relaxation technique.

The eyes of the Lord watch over those who do right, and His ears are open to their prayers. 1 Peter 3:12

Pondering the Gift of Time

We are always pressed for time.
We try to make time, save time and budget time.
We waste time, kill time and pass time.
We have the time of our lives.
We start things in good time and finish them, sometimes, in no time.

And, of course, there will always be time to attend to things later.

The most important thing we need to know about time is that it is a gift from God and ought to be received and honored as such.

Time is, after all, our greatest gift; the measure of a life.



The Need of the Giver to Give

“One of the strangest-sounding truths of stewardship is that the need of the giver to give is greater than the need of others to receive. At first, it sounds strange. Strange but true. Great artistic works come forth because of the need of artists to give the gifts within them. Even the Dead Sea is a dead sea because it is a dead-end and has no outlet. It continually receives water but never gives water. It isn't God who needs prayer. It's the person praying who needs prayer. A person may be poor, rich or middle-class, but all people, to be fully human, need to give their time and skills and possessions to others. We're made that way...like a rose is made to give to others its beauty and fragrance.”

from **The Little Burgundy Book**,
published by the Archdiocese of Saginaw



Stewardship from the Heart

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 one woman's story of her faith journey.

Answer His call. You'll be glad you did!

I am continually amazed at the power of the Holy Spirit, how the Holy Spirit calls us, and the rewards bestowed upon us when we answer the call. Although I was raised in a Catholic family, I wasn't always blessed with this belief. Admittedly, I spent much of my adult life being a "cafeteria Catholic," attending Mass only when it was convenient, and filling my tray with whatever "tasted" good at the time.

It wasn't until my husband and I made the decision to enroll our son in a Catholic school that our faith began to grow—a decision I now know was made with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. At about the same time, my husband retired, and he soon answered the call of the Holy Spirit by getting involved in parish ministry.

As our involvement in the parish grew, so did our faith; and God's rewards began to pile up in the form of friendships and the ability to witness the many good and faithful deeds of our parish friends. Soon, attending Mass became part of our life and something we looked forward to each week, and watching our son serve Mass was icing on the cake.

As a full-time working parent, my own time for involvement in Church ministries always seemed limited, but the Greeter ministry seemed an easy way for me to make my own contribution. I attended the first meeting, and was asked to join the Evangelization team. Still remembering that "cafeteria Catholic" of my past, I doubted that I was qualified to be a part of this faith-filled group, but the Spirit called, and I answered. And again our rewards grew in the form of more friendships and renewed interest in the Mass and scripture. Through the Evangelization ministry, I had the opportunity to lead a learning series on the Eucharist, but I did more learning than leading, and now I look forward even more to attending Mass and receiving Christ through the Eucharist.

About a year ago, I was asked to do a reading at the funeral of a colleague. I had never read at Mass before, and I was quite nervous about it. I was amazed at the sense of calm I felt as I read God's word in that church, and as I drove home that night, I decided I would like to be a lector at my own church. It took me awhile, but I finally made the leap and am now part of the parish Lector ministry. The Holy Spirit strikes again!

I believe the Holy Spirit calls us all, and calls often, but we may be too busy to hear, or too nervous or even afraid to answer. But when we do answer that call, the rewards are truly great, and with God's grace and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can accomplish great things.



Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13





INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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 archdiocese, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms internationally.

ICSC has been offering stewardship conferences to parishes since 1965. Each year the conference draws hundreds of participants who gather to exchange ideas, listen to marvelous speakers, learn, share and participate in the Eucharist together.

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 2012 ICSC conference will be held just south of our border in Chicago from September 16th-19th, 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

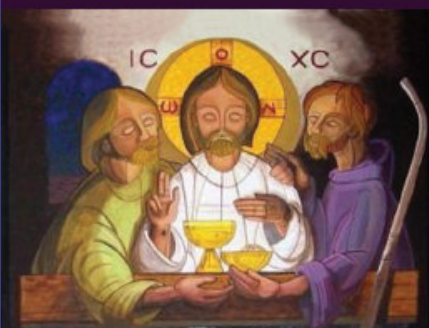
...then, come to Chicago!

**For more information about the 2012 conference,
or about parish membership in ICSC
go to <http://catholicstewardship.com>**

or contact Barb Vite by phone (414) 769-3331 or e-mail: viteb@archmil.org



2012 Annual Conference



With Hearts on Fire

September 16-19
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Register today!

Register online at
www.catholicstewardship.org