



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

March 2017 • e-Bulletin

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for March*

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for this new day, and another opportunity to give the traditions of Lent genuine meaning in my life.

Help me to be a good steward of this day; to use it wisely to reflect on my words and deeds, review my habits, and correct my faults.

Inspire me to live as Jesus did, to embrace his cross, and live the great paschal mystery in a way that gives hope to others.

Be merciful to me this day. Forgive me my failings and weaknesses. Cultivate in me a humble and repentant heart.

Prepare me for the renewal of my baptismal vows, today and throughout the season of Lent; so that at Easter I may truly rejoice in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,

One God, forever and ever.

Amen.



Be a Good Steward of the Lenten Season

The Lenten season prepares us for the celebration of Easter. It is a time for Christians to embrace prayer, fasting, and almsgiving in a more concerted way. For some it is a time of healing, an opportunity to repair their spiritual brokenness. For others it is simply a good time to cultivate their spiritual lives in a more disciplined manner. The goal of Lenten practices: to prepare ourselves to enter into the paschal mystery of Holy Week with a more humble

spirit and determination to follow Jesus Christ. This ancient triad of prayer, fasting and almsgiving offers wonderful spiritual benefits. Being a good steward of these gifts by planning ahead and following through is essential to having a fruitful Lenten experience.

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Prayer: What greater gift could we give ourselves during Lent than the gift of prayer? The fruits of developing a disciplined time of prayer are bountiful. Make plans for a prayer time each day. Do not wait until you “find time” but make a time of prayer your priority. This will involve sacrifice on your part – perhaps giving up some television viewing time, using part of your lunch hour, or getting up in the morning earlier than usual. Along the way, spend some time in extra prayer with the community: a weekday Mass, Stations of the Cross. Whatever you decide, resolve to spend more time with the Lord.

Fasting: Christian stewards understand that all they receive, including the bountiful food and drink that is often taken for granted, ultimately comes from the Lord. By denying ourselves food for a time, we are reminded in physical and emotional ways of the Lord’s generosity. As we fast, thoughtlessness is replaced by gratitude and mindfulness of the needs of others. The ancient practice of fasting also conditions us for greater spiritual practices. Incorporate some aspect of fasting from food or drink into your Lenten practice, something in addition to the sacrifices we make on Ash Wednesday and the Fridays of Lent.

Almsgiving: This spiritual discipline heightens our sense of generosity. Just as an increase in prayer and fasting leads us to be more grateful for the gifts we’ve received, and promotes a greater awareness of others, almsgiving helps us to reach out to others in gratitude. Just as we don’t “squeeze in” time to pray during Lent, we also don’t scrutinize our checkbook when being generous with others. Again, make a plan and let a meaningful sense of sacrifice be your guide.



STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for March*



Saint Turibius of Mongrovejo

Saint Turibius of Mongrovejo is the patron saint of Peru. He was the archbishop of Lima from 1579 to 1606, and it is because of his missionary work and commitment to social justice as archbishop that he has been a popular saint in Latin America for over three centuries. He had a favorite stewardship message which he used often in his teaching and preaching: Time is not our own, and we must give a strict account of it.

St. Turibius was born in 1538 to an affluent family of the Spanish nobility. He was well-educated; a professor of law at the renowned University of Salamanca in Spain. He was ordained a priest in 1578 at age 40 and sent to Peru to become the archbishop of Lima in May 1579. Reportedly, St. Turibius baptized a half million people; among them were St. Rose of Lima and St. Martin de Porres. He is also responsible for building many roads, schools, churches and hospitals in Peru. In 1591, he established the first seminary in the Western hemisphere in Lima. He was responsible for a new catechism in Spanish and two local native dialects.

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Promoting social justice was a major concern of St. Turibius. He devoted himself to serving the poor and championing the rights of indigenous peoples against the oppressive rule of civil authorities. The governors of Peru mounted continued opposition to the archbishop because of his challenges to their injustices.

The Archdiocese of Lima consisted of 180,000 square miles, (by comparison, the state of California is 164,000 square miles). He traveled the length and breadth of the archdiocese three times, mostly on foot and often alone, exposed to the tropical elements and without protection against hostile tribes and animals of prey. On one of his missionary journeys, he contracted a fever that would end his life. He died on March 23, 1606. He was canonized in 1726.

Reconciliation and the Gift of Peace

The season of Lent reminds us of the need for reconciliation. If the word reconciliation means anything in our lives, it means peace; such as the peace we experience after a difficult encounter when an apology is offered and accepted. There is also the peace of sitting in a church in the presence of the Lord and proclaiming to ourselves prayerfully that we are truly forgiven.



Good stewards proclaim the Gospel, and seeking reconciliation with the Lord, others and within ourselves is such a proclamation.

Each of us experiences a drift from our ideals. We have done foolish things in the past, been neglectful, said things out of anger or resentment. Perhaps we've even done dreadful things. Maybe we recognize that we have not been good stewards of our lives. We are not at peace. But peace can come to us if we sincerely present ourselves before the Lord and know that we are accepted and forgiven.

The Lord never tells us: "First, demonstrate your worth, and then I will reach out to you." The reality is that who we are now is who the Lord loves and accepts. Indeed, there is a

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sacrament available to us, a gift that expresses our desire for reconciliation with the Lord, and with each other. It is a gift that brings peace.

Good stewards proclaim the Gospel, and seeking reconciliation with the Lord, others and within ourselves is such a proclamation. The woman who came into the dining room where Jesus was having a meal, came not to proclaim her sinfulness, but to proclaim her gratitude for having been forgiven. She brings "alms"



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and performs a great act of generosity, kindness and service. She rubs expensive, perfumed oil into Jesus' hair (Matt. 26:11-13). The Lord's gifts of reconciliation and peace are meant to be proclaimed and shared by our own almsgiving and acts of forgiveness.

During Lent, let's reflect on forgiveness as a gift from the Lord that brings peace. Let's be good stewards of this gift by taking steps to seek peace for ourselves, and by our own generosity and kindness, bring peace to others. If we imitate the woman who anointed Jesus, we will be, as the Lord said, "known as long as the Gospel is preached." Christ's peace can be experienced in a special way this Lenten season. We need only take the first steps.

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response

2017

25 Years of the
Bishops' Pastoral Letter

1962 • CELEBRATING • 2017
55 YEARS
of teaching stewardship

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September 17-20, 2017



Special LENTEN discount for ICSC members only

\$449

registration fee per person, through Easter

Visit catholicstewardship.com
for more information and to register TODAY.

Parish Stewardship: Engaging People in the Life of the Church

by Leisa Anslinger, author and co-founder of Catholic Strengths and Engagement Community (CSEC).



From the outset of the US Bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, we are asked to look honestly at the challenge of teaching stewardship and the choices those who walk the stewardship path must face. They name many of the "isms" of contemporary society, and speak of the temptation to be "of" the world, prioritizing the things valued by our surrounding Western culture. Additionally, the bishops name the challenge of trying to build up the Christian community in a time that prizes individualism: "For example, although religious people often speak about community, individualism infects the religious experience of many persons. Parishes, dioceses, and church institutions appear impersonal and alienating in the eyes of many. Evangelization is not the priority it should be. How to use people's gifts and charisms, how to empower the laity, how to recognize the role of women, how to affirm racial, cultural, and ethnic minorities,

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how to overcome poverty and oppression—these and countless other issues remain vexing questions, as well as opportunities." (SDR, Introduction) The challenges the bishops named twenty-five years ago remain "vexing questions," and if anything, even more pressing now than when the pastoral letter was first published.

Many parish and diocesan leaders have recognized the importance of building up the community of faith, in ways that embrace the tremendous diversity of men and women of differing cultures, races and gifts and talents as expressions of the magnificence of God who is the creator and redeemer of all. These communities have found that an engaging community that celebrates and builds on the unique persons the members are, also compel people toward Christ by living as Christian people in the world. Engaging people as stewards in community has lasting impact on individuals and the parish or diocese, as well as those who are served in the local community and in the world. How is your community engaging people in the life of the Church by celebrating and drawing on their unique talents and gifts? In what ways does your diocese or parish help people to recognize and respond in gratitude to the many gifts and blessings in their lives?

**Important Notice for
all ICSC Parish Members!**

ICSC 2017 Parish Stewardship Award Information

**Has your parish developed
stewardship materials that
would help others?**

**Did your committee work hard
on resources you are proud of?**

***Please consider applying for
one or more ICSC Parish
Awards in 2017.***

Parishes at all stages of the
stewardship journey are
encouraged to apply!

Entries will be judged by
members of the ICSC Parish
Stewardship Education and
Services Committee.

***Application Deadline is
May 31.***

All applicants will be contacted
by July 15.

For additional information,
list of awards, and entry forms
[**CLICK HERE**](#)





A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

First Sunday of Lent Weekend of March 4/5, 2017

At the beginning of this Lenten season we hear proclaimed the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert. He responds to the first temptation by saying that one does not live by bread alone but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. The season of Lent invites us to consider how we nourish our hearts, how we act as stewards of the Word of God entrusted to us. A good reflection for the week: What do we live on? What keeps us going? Could it be possessions, prestige, the need to be in control, the need for security, addictions? Or the fervent desire to listen to God's word?

Second Sunday of Lent Weekend of March 11/12, 2017

In today's second reading, Timothy is issued a strong directive: "Bear your share of hardship for the gospel with the strength that comes from God." For the early Christians this could mean torture and execution. For most Christians today enduring hardship for the gospel might include accepting ridicule or mockery, or the suggestion that we lack sophistication. Nevertheless, in his letters, Saint Paul is adamant that we should not be ashamed of being followers of Christ. Good stewards are not ashamed of their allegiance to Christ. They do not hide their faith. Reflect on this question: Are you willing to speak about following Christ Jesus no matter who your listeners happen to be?

Third Sunday of Lent Weekend of March 18/19, 2017

Jesus' longest-recorded conversation with anyone is the one he has with the Samaritan woman at the well. She discovers she can be honest with Jesus and goes and tells others about him. She gives witness. She's not the most certain, thorough or even convincing witness. But her witness is enough. It is inviting, humble, non-judgmental and sincere. What is the quality of our witness? How do our words and actions give daily testimony on behalf of Christ? During this season of Lent, how might we do a better job at proclaiming the risen Lord in word and deed?

Fourth Sunday of Lent Weekend of March 25/26, 2017

Saint Paul gives us a wakeup call. As stewards of the light of Christ, we are to reflect that light with the help of the Holy Spirit. If Christ's work has transformed and illuminated our lives, there should be a change. The light of Christ's active presence should be at work in us. And as the light shines within us, we take on the properties of that light and we shine too. We are used by God to shine the light of Christ in the lives of others. A challenging Lenten reflection: Is the light of Christ shining in our hearts? Is the light of Christ reflecting out from us to others?