

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL PARISH STEWARDSHIP

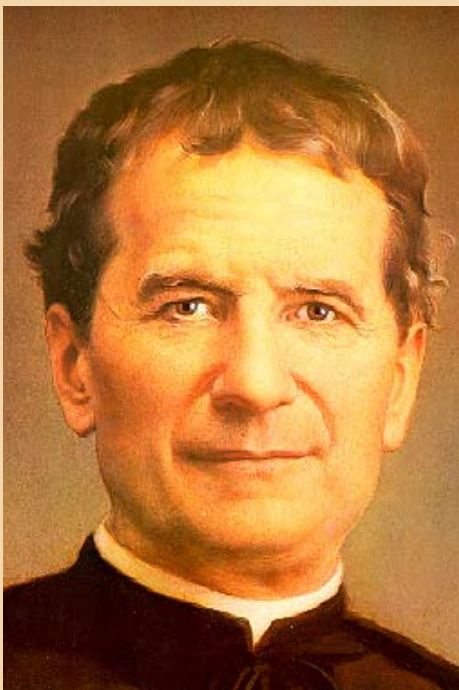
Education and Services Committee e-Bulletin • January 2009

A New Year's Promise

STEWARDSHIP SAINT FOR JANUARY

Saint John Bosco

Saint John Bosco could be considered the patron saint of vocational education as he is noted for his tireless efforts to provide skills training for boys and young men.



Born in 1815 to a poor farming family in Turin, Italy, John Bosco began working at an early age, mainly tending sheep in the hills surrounding the family farm. At age nine, he announced to the family that he wanted to become a

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The promise of Christmas is always followed by the promise of a new year; a time for new beginnings and resolutions aimed at changes for the better.

In some respects, this new year may not seem so promising given the challenges that lie ahead; the most striking of course is living in economic uncertainty in the coming year. While governments around the world are trying to find solutions to the current global economic crisis, many are left to wonder about their present or future job security, the status of retirement savings, or the adequacy of health care coverage. Many others must face more dire challenges such as the lack of resources to provide food, shelter, or heating for themselves and their families.

The start of a new year is a good time to reflect on the promises of Christ and the hope offered by the prophet Isaiah in the first Sunday scripture reading for the new year:

"Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come, the glory of the Lord shines upon you. See, darkness covers the earth, and thick clouds cover the peoples; but upon you the Lord shines, and over you appears his glory" (Is 60:1- 2).



As a people of faith we profess to live in hope that Jesus Christ is among us; our Savior who is calling us even more urgently in these anxious times. He invites us to come closer, and to know his strength and consolation.

We have lived through economic downturns before. And although many economic forecasters tell us that this time the forecasts look dimmer, we can imitate St. Paul and look upon anxious times as opportunities to be better stewards of our relationship with the Lord. Perhaps it is also time to adopt a simpler lifestyle; to remember to give God thanks for at least one thing each and every day; to better appreciate the virtue of community; and to open our hearts even more compassionately to those in need.

As we face the coming year with all its challenges, let us remember each day to turn to Christ, our promise and our hope. Let us discover new ways in which to experience the light of Christ shining on us and let that light shine through us, so we may offer hope to others.

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priest. He worked as a tailor, baker, shoemaker, and carpenter while attending college and the seminary.

While still a young priest, the plight of multitudes of homeless young boys living in the streets caught his attention. He worked with these youths, and learned their needs. He found places where boys could gather and recreate. He started boarding schools where they could live and learn a trade.

Don Bosco was a pioneer in vocational training. He taught boys to lay brick, restore buildings, learn to garden and raise produce, and even run printing presses. He not only taught boys good work habits, he taught them how to pray as well. He wrote short treatises aimed at explaining the Catholic faith to children in ways they could understand.

He believed education was a discipline best implemented with kindness, compassion and sensitivity. He taught that the first principle of education is letting young people know that they are loved.



In 1859, Saint John Bosco founded the Society of Saint Francis de Sales, later known as the Salesians. This religious community today numbers approximately 17,500. Their primary ministry is educating youth. With the help of a friend, Saint Mary Mazzarello, he also founded the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians when the demand for a girls' school arose.

Saint John Bosco died on January 31, 1888 at the age of 72. On the date of his death, some 40,000 mourners filed past his body. He was canonized in 1934 and is the first canonized saint in whose honor a national holiday was declared in Italy. He is also noted as being the first saint in history to give an interview to the press. He is the patron saint of youth, apprentices, laborers and editors. His feast day is January 31.

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER

for The New Year

Loving Father,

You are the Lord of our history;
our yesterdays, todays and tomorrows.
We join all of creation in giving you
Praise and glory for the year behind us
and for the days you give us
in the year ahead.

Forgive us for any misuse of days
passed, and help us in this new year
to use Your gift of days
in a more loving and generous way.

Give us the strength to be less
fearful and anxious,
but to find our hope in the Good News
brought about by the gift of Your Son.

Show us how to face
adversity with Your grace and only
the peace You can provide,
and to see challenges as
opportunities to draw closer to You.

Fill us with Your compassion,
that we may do our part to bring about
a more just and non-violent
world, and to care
for the most vulnerable among us.

We thank you for the gift of this new year,
and ask that you bless it, and help us be
good stewards of the time You have so graciously
entrusted to us.

We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
One God forever and ever.

Amen.



Stewardship Expressions

JANUARY 2009

“Let us preach the peace of Christ like he did; he went about doing good.”
– Blessed Mother Teresa

We begin a new calendar year with fresh opportunity to integrate stewardship practice into life – at home, work, school, on-the-road, with friends and neighbors ... everywhere. Let us strive to rethink, recommit and rededicate our daily living with focus and determination to reflect caring discipleship and service throughout the year.

by Suzanne Erpenbach, Stewardship Director, Diocese of Knoxville in Tennessee

MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

Celebration of Life Month – Life is a gift from God, deserving of respect, care and support.

Financial Wellness Month – Budgeting promotes healthy balance of treasures and priorities.

International Creativity Month – Talents/abilities can be celebrated and expressed in inventive ways.

National Get Organized Month – Planning / ordering varied aspects of life support good stewardship.

National Mentoring Month – Each of us is called to serve as a mentor/model/teacher to others.

National Poverty in America Month – Offering food /volunteer time are serving ministries.

National Volunteer Blood Donor Month – Blood donations support life and health.

WEEKLY OBSERVANCES

National Vocation Awareness Week (11-16th) – God calls each person to a vocation. How are you called?

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18-24) – May the love of God unite people in friendship / respect.

DAILY SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

January 1 – *New Years Day, Holy Day Octave of Christmas, World Day of Prayer for Peace* – May we maintain the spirit of Christ's coming and pray for world-wide peace as we begin 2009.

January 4 – *The Epiphany of the Lord* – Like the three kings, we can also find direction, purpose and reward in seeking a relationship with Christ.

January 10 – *National Cut Your Energy Costs Day* – Stewardship reflects responsible and careful use of environmental resources.

January 15 – *Humanitarian Day* – We all can promote human welfare through caring words/acts of serving outreach.

January 16 – *Religious Freedom Day* – Freedom to practice religion is a treasure. Reflect gratitude for this opportunity, and pray for those desiring the same freedom.

January 19 – *Martin Luther King Day* – Honoring one man's efforts, we see that each person can have an impact on the world. Consider how you are influencing life and history.

January 20 – *Inauguration Day* – Pray that the new leaders of our nation will use their gifts with care and responsibility in serving all.

January 22 – *Celebration of Life Day (Roe vs. Wade Day)* – This is a day to celebrate life and to pray against violations to the dignity of the human person.

January 24 – *National Compliment Day* – Find ways to honor others with respectful, kind and caring compliments. Practice making kind compliments each day.



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

For the weekend of January 3/ 4, 2009 – Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord

The famous Christmas story of the visit of the magi to the baby Jesus is foretold in Psalm 72, which reveals how all nations will pay the newborn king homage and pledge to serve him. We too are invited to hear the Good News of our Savior and use the gifts given to us in service to the Lord. At the beginning of this New Year it is appropriate to ask: Will we accept the Lord's invitation to embrace His Gospel more fervently? What is it that we will do to serve the Lord more faithfully this year? How will we exercise stewardship over our own gifts to proclaim the Good News?

For the weekend of January 10/11, 2009 – Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Have you ever wondered why Jesus, who was without sin, was baptized? The baptism of Jesus symbolized and anticipated his death. After Christ's ascension into heaven, baptism was required for all those who became Christians. St. Paul makes the connection between baptism and death for Christians when he maintained that we are buried with Christ in baptism, so that we may rise with him to a new life. In what way will we be good stewards of that new life in the coming year?

For the weekend of January 17/18 – Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Christian stewardship begins with the call to discipleship and today's readings offer three stories about discipleship. In the Gospel, John the Baptist points to Jesus and two of his followers immediately walk after Jesus. Jesus asks them: "What are you looking for?" It is a very good question to ask of ourselves. What is it that we are looking for in Christ Jesus? What is it that we want by following Him? Is it that we desire most urgently to be servants, stewards, of the Lord? Or do we want something else?

For the weekend of January 24/25 – Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul

Jesus said to his apostles: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel..." Jesus expects his followers both then and now to evangelize, to give witness to Him by words and actions. Proclaiming the Good News by our daily pattern of living is key to Christian stewardship. And as the practice of stewardship ultimately leads to evangelization, we might ask ourselves: In what ways can we evangelize to family, friends, neighbors and strangers alike through our daily pattern of living?



ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

September 20-23
Dallas, Texas

Early Bird Special



\$499 Registration
now to January 31, 2009

Visit www.catholicstewardship.org
for more information

2009 ICSC Catholic Stewardship Institute

Winter Session



January 26 – 30, 2009

*Franciscan Center
Tampa, Florida*

The ICSC Institute has been re-designed to address the specific needs of pastors and parish leaders searching for a comprehensive, well-grounded introduction to the theology and practical application of Christian stewardship in their own faith journey and in their parishes. This Institute is the only one of its kind to offer such a comprehensive treatment of stewardship.

TOPICS

- Session 1: The Spirituality of Christian Stewardship
- Session 2: Archbishop Murphy DVD #1
- Session 3: Why Stewardship? Why now? Overview of the Pastoral Letter
- Session 4: Gift Discernment: Identifying Personal Gifts and Talents
- Session 5: What Do I Own and What Owns me? A Disciple's Response
- Session 6: Stewardship in Sacred Scripture
- Session 7: Archbishop Murphy DVD #2
- Session 8: Introducing the Parish Communion to Christian Stewardship Part I
- Session 9: Introducing the Parish Communion to Christian Stewardship Part II
- Session 10: The Vital Role of Lay Testimony
- Session 11: The Sunday Offering and Offertory Envelopes
- Session 12: Seven Steps to Success
- Session 13: Making Commitments: The Annual Stewardship Renewal Cycle
- Session 14: Stewardship Formation for Children, Youth and Young Adults
- Session 15: Exercising Stewardship over End-of-Life Decisions: Durable Powers of Attorney, Wills, Endowments and other Aspects of Planned Giving
- Session 16: Integrating Stewardship into Parish annual appeals and capital campaigns
- Session 17: Characteristics of a Stewardship Parish

FACULTY

MARY CAMPO
Director of Stewardship and Development,
Diocese of Venice, FL

DANIEL CONWAY
President and CEO Mission Advancement
Services, O'Meara Ferguson, Louisville, KY

JOSEPH B. CITRO
Executive Director of Stewardship and
Development, Diocese of St. Petersburg, FL

MSGR. WILLIAM HANSON
Pastor, Church of St. Gerard Majella,
Port Jefferson Station, NY

JULIE A. KENNY
Stewardship Services Manager,
Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, IN

LOIS LOCEY
Pastoral Associate for Administration
and Stewardship, St. Mary Magdalen Parish,
Altamonte Springs, FL

REV. DANIEL J. MAHAN
Executive Director,
Marian College Center for Catholic
Stewardship, Indianapolis, IN

MICHAEL MURPHY
Executive Director, ICSC, Washington, D.C.

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

1275 K Street, NW, Suite 880
Washington, DC 20005-4077
T: (800) 352-3452
F: (202) 682-9018

We encourage you to check out the ICSC Forum at www.catholicstewardship.org under 'members' where members can share ideas and questions. The Parish Stewardship section is reviewed every day by members of the Parish Stewardship Education and Services Committee.