

"Create for me a clean heart, O God, and renew in me a steadfast spirit." (Psalm 51:10)

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL PARISH STEWARDSHIP

Education and Services Committee e-Bulletin • March 2009

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER for Lent

God of mercy,

You have given us this special time to reflect on our lives, believe in the Good News and draw closer to You.

May this season of Lent help us use this time to fast and pray, be more generous and show others how to live in Christ.

Let us see each day of this season as a new opportunity to renew our lives and gain a deeper appreciation of Your active presence in us and our community of faith.

Give us the grace to see Your face in others, especially the poor and those who suffer. And through your Spirit, enkindle in us the fire of Your love so that we may be better stewards of Your redeeming work throughout the world.

We ask this through Jesus, Your Son.

Amen.

Stewardship and the Season of Lent



Lent is a special season for the Christian steward to center attention on conversion, one of the first principles of Christian stewardship. It is a time when conversion finds practical expression in prayer, fasting and developing habits of greater generosity. In the current financial crisis, with rising unemployment, and a deepening global recession, the Lenten season invites stewards to focus more intensely on their relationship with the Lord and cultivate a greater awareness of those in need. It is because we live in such an increasingly interconnected world, that the poor and vulnerable suffer the worst during these times.

In his annual Lenten message, our Holy Father, Pope Benedict, made clear that fasting from food and detaching oneself from material goods during Lent helps us open our hearts to God and our hands to the poor. "Fasting is an aid to open our eyes to the situation in which so many of our brothers and sisters live."

Lent is also a time to practice almsgiving; to renounce those conveniences and material comforts that keep us from hearing the cries of a fragile world and find creative ways to respond to the poor. Almsgiving brings together love for God and love for neighbor.

As we begin this season of Lent, let us make a concrete commitment to prayer, fasting and acts of generosity. Let us pray for the wisdom and strength to let go of things that get in the way of our relationship with God; for a strengthening of faith; and for the grace to see that the poor of the world are not strangers, but are our sisters and brothers.

ICSC Parish Stewardship-related Awards Request for award submissions

Every year ICSC recognizes those parishes that have best embraced Christian stewardship and promoted the concept of stewardship through print and video during the year. We now invite parishes to submit their entries for the various ICSC award and recognition categories:

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The Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy Award, presented to a parish for its outstanding work in Christian stewardship formation.

Parish Stewardship Certificates of Recognition recognize parishes that give witness to stewardship in many areas of parish life.

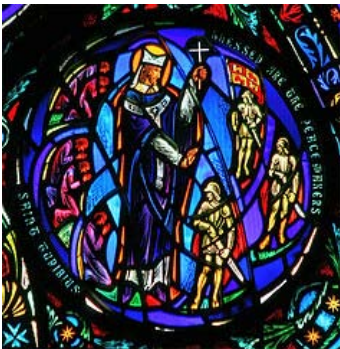
Parish Stewardship Promotional Awards honor parishes that promote stewardship in the following categories:

- Total Parish Stewardship Effort
- Parish Stewardship Commitment Materials
- Parish Capital Campaign Materials
- Parish Stewardship Video

Please review and complete the applications found on our web site for one or more categories in which you wish to be considered. The deadline for submission of award entries is April 24, 2009. The awardees will be announced at the 2009 ICSC Conference in Dallas this October.

Submit Your Parish Stewardship Promotional Materials Today!

A STEWARDSHIP SAINT FOR MARCH



Saint Turibius on 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 highly 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.

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 was 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. He died on March 23, 1606. He was canonized in 1726.

NEW
DATES

The image shows the cover of a brochure for the 2009 Stewardship Living, Our Baptismal Call conference. At the top, there is a gold seal with the text "NEW DATES". Below the seal is a painting of a religious scene. The text on the brochure includes "INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL", "2009 Stewardship: LIVING, OUR BAPTISMAL CALL", "INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP CONFERENCE", and "11-14 October • Dallas, Texas". The main title "ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009" is in large, gold letters, followed by "October 11-14 Dallas, Texas" in white.

The image shows the cover of a brochure for the Summer 09 Stewardship Institute. At the top, there is a photograph of a landscape with trees and a sunset. The text "Summer 09" is in large, white letters. Below that, "STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE" is in orange. The main title "July 20 - 24, 2009" is in black, followed by "San Damiano Retreat Center Danville, California" in black. Below that, "JOIN US!" is in large, orange letters. At the bottom, the website "www.catholicstewardship.org" is in black. There is also a small painting of a religious scene on the right side of the brochure.

www.catholicstewardship.org



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

For Wednesday, February 25, 2009 **Ash Wednesday**

The Gospel reading for Ash Wednesday concerns itself with what has become a traditional three-part Lenten exercise: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Jesus instructs his followers to turn to God, to turn from self interest and to deepen their relationship with the Lord in secret. He tells them in effect that a humble and quiet disposition toward prayer, self-denial and reaching out to others is transforming and leads to a favorable outcome. What is our plan to turn ever closer to God in this Lenten season? Are we prepared to treat this season as a sacred time, a time to deepen our own relationship with the one who redeemed us?

For the weekend of February 28/March 1, 2009 **1st Sunday of Lent**

In today's Gospel, Jesus urges his listeners to do two things: to believe in the Good News and to repent. The steward is called to repent: to acquire an openness to begin anew, to change existing attitudes and habits, and to act with faith in the Gospel. In this season of Lent, now is the time to ask ourselves whether or not we truly believe in the Gospel; and if we do, to what extent are we willing to change our prevailing habits and be more faithful to the Gospel?

For the weekend of March 7/8, 2009 **2nd Sunday of Lent**

The Gospel story of the transfiguration of Jesus holds many lessons; the most prominent being the transformation of Jesus from simply being perceived as a wise and gifted prophet to the one who has fulfilled the sacred traditions of the Mosaic law and the hope of the prophets, the Messiah, the Christ. The Lord calls his stewards to participate in His redemptive activity. Heeding this call requires transformation, being willing to renounce patterns of behavior that draw us away from God. In this coming week of Lent, let us pray for the grace to be transformed, so that by our goodness and generosity, we may walk more authentically in the footsteps of Jesus.

For the weekend of March 14/15, 2009 **3rd Sunday of Lent**

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple is a familiar story as the prophets Jeremiah, Zechariah and Malachi prophesied that when the Kingdom of God was at hand, the Temple would be cleansed of all activities unworthy of an encounter with God. Stewards of the Lord's abundant gifts are referred to as the Temple of the Lord. What are we doing to be cleansed of activities unworthy of an encounter with the Lord? What are we doing to cleanse our Temple and make sacred space for the gift of our Savior, Jesus Christ?

For the weekend of March 21/22, 2009 **4th Sunday of Lent**

Jesus tells his disciples of the immeasurable generosity God has bestowed on them by offering His only Son for their salvation. Good stewards realize this wonderful gift. God has sacrificed what is most dear to Him for our sake. Do we rejoice in this gift of Our Savior and respond to this love with our own immeasurable generosity? Do we allow the light of Christ to shine in the world through us? Or do we withdraw, refusing this gift, and prefer to live in a way that denies the light of Christ?

For the weekend of March 28/29, 2009 **5th Sunday of Lent**

The climactic event of Jesus' passion and death is drawing closer; a time when the great confrontation between Jesus and the powers of darkness takes place. Jesus invites his disciples into a great mystery with curious pronouncements: Those who love their lives just as they are, will lose them. If a grain of wheat dies, it will bear much fruit. When Jesus is lifted up, he will draw all to himself. The Christian steward knows life can't be lived in complacency. We are called to die to self, bear more fruit, be raised up with Jesus. In today's Gospel reading Jesus brings discomfort to those who are comfortable. How would we respond to Jesus?

STEWARDSHIP, A DISCIPLE'S RESPONSE

The following pages are based on the United States bishops' pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response* (1992). It is compiled, edited and written by Scott Bader, Director of Stewardship for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

What is stewardship? It is the ability to share one's gifts of life, time, talent, and resources with others with no strings attached and no conditions. And people dare to share these gifts because they realize that they have these gifts that come from a good and gracious God who enriches our lives.

Archbishop Thomas Murphy



THREE CONVICTIONS UNDERLIE STEWARDSHIP:

1. Mature disciples make a conscious, firm decision, carried out in action, to be followers of Jesus Christ, no matter the cost to themselves.
2. This commitment is expressed in an entire way of life.
3. Stewardship is an expression of discipleship, with the power to change how we understand and live out our lives.

Stewardship: A Disciple's Response, a Pastoral Letter on Stewardship



Disciples who practice Stewardship:

Recognize God as
the origin of life,
the giver of freedom,
the source of all they have and are
and will be.

They are deeply aware of the truth that 'The Lord's are the earth and its fullness and those who dwell in it' (Psalm 24:1).

They are grateful for what they have received and are eager to cultivate their gifts out of love for God and one another.

They know themselves to be recipients and caretakers of God's many gifts.

THE CALL – THE DISCIPLE’S VOCATION



The vocations of all Christians do have elements in common. One of these is the call to be a disciple. In fact, we might say that to be disciples – to follow Christ and try to live His life as our own – is the common vocation of Christians; discipleship in this sense is Christian life.

Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response,
a Pastoral Letter on Stewardship

What are you looking for? Jesus asks (two of John’s disciples). Rabbi, they say, Where are you staying? Come and you will see. They spend the day with him, enthralled by his words and by the power of his personality... The next day, encountering Philip, Jesus says ‘Follow Me.’

(See John 1:35-50)

I realized that when my parents and my family, my teachers and mentors, my pastor and my parish leaders were calling me to do better, to share my gifts with others and to live as Christ lived, it was actually God calling me through all these people. I was being constantly called and constantly challenged to follow Christ in big and small ways. But this realization helped me to feel joyful about what had earlier seemed burdensome and difficult. I was being called just like James and John, Peter and Andrew, Mary and Martha, Paul, St. Francis, and Mother Teresa!

QUESTIONS:

- Have you ever heard/felt “the call” of Jesus?
- What was happening when you heard it?
- How did you know it was Jesus calling?
- How did you respond?

When we begin with the far greater challenge of being a disciple of Jesus, stewardship becomes a response that is part and parcel of who we are and what we believe. Stewardship formation and education must begin with a radical call to be disciples of Jesus.

Archbishop Thomas Murphy

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

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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.