



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL PARISH STEWARDSHIP

Education and Services Committee e-Bulletin • July 2009



PARISH BUSINESS MANAGERS:

A Focus for the ICSC Conference

Parish business managers and administrators offer special gifts to the parish communities they serve. They assume the all-important role of exercising stewardship over areas such as financial management, human resources management, and administration of the parish's physical plant and facilities. Because parish business managers give witness to stewardship in a very special and practical way, the 2009 ICSC Conference will offer a two-day continuing education program just for them.

Whatever title they work under at the parish, those who are asked to take on the responsibilities of a business manager serve the pastor and the worshipping community by advising, making recommendations and implementing sound fiscal procedures. They also relieve the pastor of additional responsibilities so he can focus on the demanding pastoral priorities of the parish.

ICSC recognizes the vital stewardship role of parish business managers in our Catholic life of faith and will devote an eight-session track specifically designed for them. The 2009 ICSC conference will be held in Dallas, Texas from Sunday, October 11 to 14.

For more information, see this year's e-brochure at www.catholicstewardship.org or contact ICSC at (800) 352.3452.

Taking a "Trust Walk" with God

by Leisa Anslinger

Have you ever taken a "trust walk" so popular in team-building workshops and leadership seminars? One person is blindfolded, simulating loss of sight. The "blind" person is dependent upon a companion who acts as guide in order to reach his or her destination. At times, the "blind" person holds onto the guide for direction. At other times the guide calls the person, providing insight into the moment's situation and giving essential instruction. As long as the "blind" person follows her or his guide, all is well. Trust provides the bond that allows both to journey together as companions.

If we really think about it, each of us is on a "trust walk" with God, every moment, every step of our lives. When we follow Christ and learn to make decisions based on Jesus' instruction, our lives are filled with depth and fullness. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we come to trust that God, who has given us our very lives, who we are, and what we have, will continue to provide all we need to live in holiness. As long as we follow our guide, all will be well. Trust will provide the bond that allows us to journey with God in love.



A disciple is one who is learning the ways of a master teacher. Our master teacher is Jesus Christ, whose very life is the lesson we will learn throughout our lives. We look to Christ as our model and "see" the fullness of what it means to live for God and to live for others. Each step along the way, we meet challenges and joys, making choices and decisions based upon our understanding of the Master's way. The choices may be simple, yet often they are profound. Looking to Christ as the mirror of our heart's desire, we learn to live as image and likeness of God, to be our very self. We consider how we can best reflect Christ's love through our prayer, our presence, by sharing our gifts and offering service to others.

Summer can be a great time of the year in which to step back and reflect on our journey with Christ who is the way. Each of us has been particularly blessed with talents and abilities, material and financial resources, time, life itself. Following Jesus as a disciple calls us to always be seeking ways to offer back to God what we have been given in abundance, as good and faithful, trusting stewards.

Stewardship Prayer

from St. Ignatius of Loyola
(Feast: July 31)



Take Lord, and receive
all my liberty,
my memory, my
understanding,
and my entire will,
all that I have and possess.

You have given all to me;
to you, O Lord, now
I return it;
all is yours,
dispose of me wholly
according to your Will.

Give me only your love
and your grace,
for this is enough for me.

Amen

A STEWARDSHIP SAINT FOR JULY



St. Martha

Just before Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem, his close friends, Martha, her sister, Mary, and brother, Lazarus, entertained Jesus at their home in Bethany (John 12:1-8). Martha "served," while Mary anointed his feet. It is in the simple statement, "Martha served," that we recognize Martha for her witness to stewardship. She isn't a prolific evangelist, she doesn't work miracles. She simply serves Jesus.

Jesus may have been a frequent visitor to Martha's home and perhaps this is one of the reasons the Gospel of John reveals to us that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus" (11:5). This unique statement in the gospel informs us of the special relationship Jesus had with Martha and her siblings. And,

as another one of Jesus' visits to Martha's home affirms, Martha continues to be concerned that Jesus be served. Like any good steward, hospitality was very important to Martha (Luke 10:38-42).

What is most revealing about Martha is on the occasion of the death of Lazarus (John 11:1-44). Martha takes an active role, going out to meet Jesus to let him know what happened to her brother while Mary stays at home. Jesus assures her that Lazarus will be raised from dead.

With courage and conviction, Martha confesses her deep faith in Jesus Christ: "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." And then Jesus said to her: "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." When he asked Martha if she believed this, she replied: "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." (John 11:24-27).

The feast of St. Martha, a witness to service who confessed her faith in Jesus, is July 29. She is the patron saint of homemakers, cooks, domestic workers, waiters and waitresses, and hotel employees.



Newly
Designed

2009 Catholic Stewardship Institute

Join Us!

July 20 – 24, 2009

San Damiano Retreat Center • Danville, California

For more information visit www.catholicstewardship.org



A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

For the weekend of July 4/5, 2009 Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today, the Gospel reveals that Jesus is amazed that the people in his hometown of Nazareth do not accept his teaching and ministry; he is amazed at their lack of faith (Mk 6:6). Good stewards recognize and participate in Christ's teaching, reconciling and healing presence in their community. Are we good stewards of our family of faith? Do we value and support the ministries that take place in Christ's name? Are we attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit in our parish and encourage those who work to enhance our life of faith?

For the weekend of July 11/12, 2009 Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

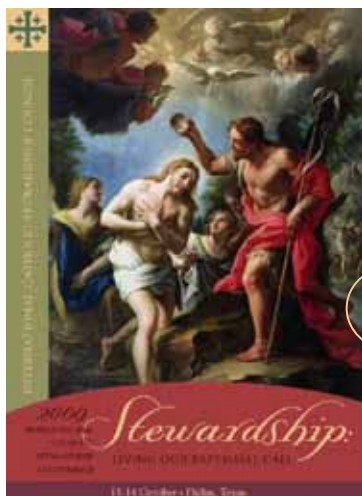
The *Letter to the Ephesians* relates to us that God, the Father has established a divine plan to bring all of creation to Christ and that He has blessed us with the divine gifts to help implement that plan. Christian stewards know what their gifts are and are committed to using them in the service of the Lord. Do we know what our gifts are? Do we believe that God has given us these gifts? Are we committed to using our gifts to serve the Lord?

For the weekend of July 18/19, 2009 Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The *Letter to the Ephesians* reminds us that Christ is creating a new world order: one that brings about relationships based on love, peace, reconciliation, hope and unity. As a Eucharistic community, we are stewards of Christ's new creation. How are we promoting peace and reconciliation? How are we showing love for our neighbors? What are we doing to encourage unity and understanding among those with whom we gather around the Lord's Table each week?

For the weekend of July 25/26, 2009 Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

The story of the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes is a familiar one, and has many lessons, not least of which is how our willingness to share who we are and what we have - exercising good stewardship - releases God's power and bountifulness on the world and its people. Do we realize that there is enough for all if we are willing to share? Are we aware that God is at work when we share our time, our money and our other resources in His name?



REGISTER TODAY!

2009 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Stewardship:
LIVING OUR BAPTISMAL CALL

October 11-14, 2009
Hilton Anatole Hotel
Dallas, Texas

Visit www.catholicstewardship.org to register online

LIVING AS A STEWARD – CREATION AND STEWARDSHIP

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 Parish Stewardship for the Archdiocese of Seattle.



God settled humankind upon earth to be its steward – “to cultivate and care for it” (Genesis 2:15) This human activity of cultivating and caring has a generic name: work. It is not a punishment for or a consequence of sin ... God’s mandate to humankind to collaborate with him ... comes before the Fall. Work is a fundamental aspect of the human vocation. It is necessary for human happiness and fulfillment. It is intrinsic to responsible stewardship of the world.

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

Christians see human achievements as ‘a sign of God’s greatness and the flowering of his own mysterious design.’ (Gaudium et Spes, 34)

At my local supermarket, there is a checkout clerk who is always smiling. The clerk even smiles to those who are mean, abrupt, difficult, in a hurry, pressured. Why? I asked. Well, because this is my vocation! I know many of these people are hurting. At least I can try to make their day a little better, and maybe they will go on to be nicer to someone else in turn – their kids, their spouse, someone else in traffic.

QUESTIONS:

- Do you see your work as a vocation?
- In what ways could you make your job more of a vocation?

We must be faithful in using the gifts that we receive from God. It is easy to be faithful and appreciate the spiritual gifts God shares with us ... But I must also be faithful to what I would call my personal possession. Stewardship challenges us to ask whether anything we ‘own’ is really personal. Whatever we ‘own’ impacts our own lives and the lives of others. Our possessions call us to a sense of accountability and responsibility. Just as God is faithful to us in ways we never dreamed possible, we must be faithful to God by daring to see the face of God in others. Stewardship calls us to a new sense of collaboration with God where we are accountable and responsible.

Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy

LIVING AS A STEWARD – COLLABORATORS IN CREATION



Stewardship of the world is expressed by jubilant appreciation of nature, whose God-given beauty not even exploitation and abuse have destroyed ... Beyond simply appreciating natural beauty, there is the active stewardship of ecological concern. Ecological stewardship means cultivating a heightened sense of human interdependence and solidarity

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

Simplicity, moderation, and discipline, as well as a spirit of sacrifice, must become a part of everyday life, lest all suffer the negative consequences of the careless habits of a few.
(Message for the World Day of Peace, Jan. 1, 1990, Pope John Paul II)

A family in my parish tells me that they live in 'joyful frugality.' They have made the decision to live in a smaller house with a smaller yard – a living room but no family room, a backyard but a small front yard. Because they have made the decision to live with just one car, they live near a bus line so that it is easy to commute to work, and leave the car for all the little errands. And in a hundred other ways they live simple, moderate, disciplined lives.

To me they seem very happy, with very uncluttered, unhurried lives. They take great joy in what they do. Not having a boat or eating out often, or buying a lot of toys (for parents and children) has helped them savor the things they do have.

While the results have been greater happiness for them and more satisfied children, their motivation for doing this was to do as little damage to God's earth as possible and to sacrifice to give more back to God through the Church and community.

From so many points of view, the human race is becoming far more aware of its obligation to be a stewardship of creation. The heart of stewardship is offered in this first command given to the human race. The dominion and rule of all living things involves a care for and a respect of creation ... Human beings were asked to be 'caretakers' of creation (through the First Commandment). As they were asked so are we.

Archbishop Thomas Murphy

QUESTIONS:

- How could you collaborate in helping preserve our ecology?
- List specific ways you could be more frugal – living more simply, moderately, with more discipline, and sacrificially.

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.

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