



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

April, 2010

ICSC Committee for Parish Stewardship Education and Services
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Do you have material you'd like to submit for inclusion in our next newsletter? If so, please email it to ParishStewardship@catholicstewardship.org. All submittals are gratefully received, although we cannot promise that all will be published.

Check out these recent articles on stewardship:

- - in *Catholic Digest*, an article titled “Simplifying Your Life,” available online at http://www.catholicdigest.com/articles/well_being/how_to/2010/03-01/how-simplifying-saved-our-family
- - in *Today's Parish*, an article on hospitality, by our colleague, Simone Brosig, in Calgary, at <http://www.todaysparish.com/the-key-to-effective-stewardship>

ICSC Parish Stewardship Awards

Is yours an award-winning parish? Apply now for one of ICSC's annual parish stewardship awards!

The **Archbishop Murphy Parish Stewardship Award** - for outstanding long-term work in stewardship. Find application information at:

<http://catholicstewardship.org/en/introduction/awards.cfm>

Other parish awards (**Video, Capital Campaign, Materials**) - for parishes that have best promoted the spirituality and practice of stewardship through Video, Materials (of any sort), and Capital Campaigns: http://www.catholicstewardship.org/PDF/Parish_Stewardship_Promotional_Awards.pdf

Parish Stewardship Recognition - for any parish that meets certain set criteria demonstrating how it promotes the practice of stewardship in several different areas:

<http://www.catholicstewardship.org/PDF/Parish%20Recognition%202009.pdf>

All ICSC parishes are encouraged to apply. Deadline is April 30, 2010!

A Stewardship Prayer

Lord God,

You alone are the source of every good gift, of the vast array of our universe, and the mystery of each human life. We praise you and thank you for your great power and your tender, faithful love.

Everything we are and everything we have are your gifts; and after having created us, you have given us into the keeping of your son, Jesus Christ. Fill our minds with His truth and our hearts with His love. In His spirit, may we be bonded together into a community of faith, a parish family, a caring people.

In the name and spirit of Jesus, we commit ourselves to be good stewards of the gifts entrusted to us, to share our time, our talents, and our material and spiritual gifts as an outward sign of the treasure we hold in Jesus.

In His holy name we pray,

Amen.



STEWARDSHIP AND THE SUNDAY READINGS

by John Baumann, Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish
(Archdiocese of Seattle)



April 4th – Easter Sunday

Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil take us through a lived experience of the Paschal Mystery – life, death and resurrection. The readings for Easter Sunday have the themes of Resurrection and new life woven through all of them. Stewardship is the way we celebrate this resurrection and new life every day of the year in our personal and family affairs, work, and civic involvement. It is bringing the strength of our faith into all of life.

April 11th – from the Acts of the Apostles

“Many signs and wonders were done among the people at the hands of the apostles.” Little things that make a difference in another’s life are most certainly “signs and wonders.” A smile or a comforting word can lift someone’s sagging spirit. A few dollars given to the St. Vincent de Paul Society joins a few others and someone has electricity for a month. Little things offered with love make for great stewardship.

April 18th – from St. John’s Gospel

“Jesus came over and took the bread and gave it to them, and in like manner the fish. This was now the third time Jesus was revealed to his disciples after being raised from the dead.” Jesus continues to be revealed to us in Eucharist and in our serving others through stewardship. The presence of Jesus is a given. It is stewardship that opens our eyes to experience this presence.

April 25th - from the Acts of the Apostles)

“The disciples (Paul and Barnabas) were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.” Paul and Barnabas had just been expelled from Antioch. It may be hard to believe that they were then filled with joy. It may be even harder yet to believe that Antioch became one of the early centers of Christianity! The promise of stewardship is that even when we struggle and our efforts seem to fail, the Holy Spirit is experienced and joy can be present.



Register now for the **2010 ICSC Conference**

*An international gathering of stewardship practitioners,
sharing their experience, enthusiasm, energy, and ideas*
September 19-22, San Diego, CA

Register online at:

[https://www.catholicstewardship.org/
Conference/register.cfm?ConferenceID=29](https://www.catholicstewardship.org/Conference/register.cfm?ConferenceID=29)

(Call the ICSC office at 800-3523452 for more information or for payment options that could allow you to register now and pay after July 1, 2010.)

Don't miss it! Register now!

Forming Good Stewards...

These weekly stewardship nuggets by Dn. Jerry Martinez of the Archdiocese of New Orleans are perfect for your parish bulletin – and for homilists, liturgists, and catechists, too!

April 4 – Easter Sunday

The Lord has truly been raised...He was made known to us in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:13-35

The exact location of Emmaus has not been established. Two sites northwest of Jerusalem make strong claims. One is about seven miles from Jerusalem, as reported in Luke's Gospel; the other is approximately twenty miles away, but makes a stronger case. The disciples who encountered Jesus would have left Jerusalem early in the morning. Walking at a brisk pace, they could cover twenty miles in one day. They do not recognize Jesus, but are impressed with his knowledge of Scripture. They urge him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over." It would be nice to know the exact location of Emmaus, but it is much more important to understand that the two disciples realized, "our hearts were burning within us." They recognized Jesus as the Risen Lord in the Breaking of the Bread and rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the others. Do we recognize Jesus as the Risen Lord in the Breaking of the Bread? Do we rush out to tell others? This Easter morn is a good time to start doing that!

April 11 – Second Sunday of Easter

*"Blessed are those who have not seen and believed."
John 20:19-31*

John tells us that the disciples who abandoned Jesus when He was arrested and taken to the cross (John was one of them) were locked in a room a week after they had seen him risen from the dead and He had appeared to them in that same room. Jesus had good reason to be disappointed with them. But He says to them, "Peace be with you!" He knew it was difficult for them to believe even though they had seen. And He knew how difficult it would be for us who had not seen to believe. That is why, at our Baptism, our parents, or we ourselves if we are old enough, promise to make our faith "constantly grow stronger in our hearts" and to "bring that faith unstained into heaven." We renewed our Baptismal Promises on Easter

Sunday. What have we done to make our faith "grow stronger in our hearts"? What are we doing? What will we do in the future? Are we being good stewards of our faith?

April 18 – Third Sunday of Easter

"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." John 21:1-19

After appearing to the disciples twice behind locked doors in a room in Jerusalem, Jesus reveals Himself a third time to seven of His disciples who are fishing at the northwest end of the Sea of Tiberias (Galilee). The scene is a reminder of His first call to them to become fishers of men. After preparing and sharing a breakfast of fish with them, Jesus asks Simon Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Peter, who had denied Jesus three times, finally says, "Lord you know everything; you know that I love you." Peter reveals his great faith in Jesus. Only God knows everything and only God could know what was in Peter's heart. When we encounter Jesus He ask us, "Do you love me?" Is our faith in Jesus such that we have no doubt that He is God and that He knows what is in our heart? How do we respond to Jesus?

April 25 – Fourth Sunday of Easter

"My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me." John 10:27-30

There are very few family members or friends that we cannot identify by their voice. Jesus tells us that His followers hear His voice. Jesus also says He knows us. Jesus does not need to know our voice. *He knows us!* He knows what we need before we say it. But, do we know the voice of Jesus? And, what do we do when we hear the voice of Jesus? Do we hear the voice of Jesus in prayer, when we stop speaking and listen – listen for God's will for us? Do we hear the voice of Jesus in our family, our friends, and strangers – through the people and events in our lives? Jesus challenges us to be and to do all that God created us to be and do. When we hear ourselves saying "No, I don't want to love that person (or take that risk or challenge that evil)," we probably just heard from God. How do we respond as stewards of our prayer life and of all that God has given us? Our first response might be "No!" But our final response must be "Yes, Lord!"

How to be a good steward

(#5 in a series of bulletin inserts developed by Scott Bader, Director of Parish Stewardship, Archdiocese of Seattle, that focus on practical ways to recognize God as the source of all our gifts, to be grateful for those gifts, to cultivate them and use them to build up the kingdom, and to share and return a grateful portion of those gifts.)

Commitment to Re-Allocate

CONCEPT

Set up a giving account. Put a certain amount of money each week into this account. Then make your charitable contributions from that account. Practitioners of this method find it particularly rewarding to make allocations from this account around Thanksgiving and Christmas. They find it helps them focus on the true meaning of those holidays.

BENEFITS

- ☞ *“I’ve never met anyone who practiced tithing who also identified their personal finances as being a major stress point in their life. It didn’t matter if they were wealthy or of modest means.”* Bruce Howard – chairman/professor of business economics, Wheaton College
- ☞ Living as a good steward of your time and money will give you a purpose in life that you had been seeking.
- ☞ Intense joy comes to those who take the risk to live as Christian stewards.
- ☞ *“If you take control of your giving and make it an essential part of your budget, you get to feel good about yourself.”* Personal Finance Columnist, Michelle Singletary
- ☞ *“The Gospel is full of recommendations for a moderate, even poor, life. If we Catholics want to follow the Gospel, we must each ask ourselves if our style of life corresponds in some way to it – and then draw the conclusions.”* Bishop Van Luyn of Rotterdam

QUESTIONS

How did you do at cutting back on your discretionary spending? How did you allocate the money saved?

To what or to whom did you give the time you saved by limiting TV watching, computer games, etc?

ACTION STEPS

- Before you buy anything, ask yourself if it is something you really need.
- Use credit only when buying something that will increase in value.
- When possible, choose charitable events as your entertainment – go to a Knights of Columbus dinner to benefit a charity or the parish school spring fundraiser. You get a nice dinner out and the charity benefits!
- Be a good steward of your assets; put together a will or trust.
- Acquire adequate life insurance.
- Save adequate \$\$ for a rainy day.
- Set aside adequate \$\$ for retirement.

