

# INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

November 2014 • e-Bulletin

## A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for November*

Gracious and loving God,  
as the autumn season continues its transformation;  
and the days become shorter, the earth cooler;  
as we anticipate joining family and friends  
in joyful celebration on Thanksgiving Day,  
we pause to give You thanks and praise  
for the abundant blessings You have bestowed upon us:

For life and health, safety and comfort,  
food and nourishment, we are sincerely grateful.  
Through your Spirit, open our hearts  
so that we may be even better stewards  
of these rich and unmerited gifts.

Show us how to be a blessing for the poor,  
sick, lonely and all who suffer.

And help us nurture the gift of faith,  
revealed to us by your Son, Jesus Christ,  
our greatest gift,  
who reigns with You and the Holy Spirit,  
one God forever and ever.

Amen.



## Transform November into a Month of Thanksgiving

Very soon Americans will celebrate the Thanksgiving holidays; a time where so much is devoted to sumptuous meals highlighted by turkey and pumpkin pie, traveling to and from the ancestral home, enjoying family, feasting on leftovers, seeing a Thanksgiving Day parade and watching football.

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Perhaps this November we might allow  
Thanksgiving to permeate our lives for  
more than just a day. How about  
the entire month?

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For many of us, Thanksgiving Day is so full of activity that there is a tendency to forget what's at the heart of Thanksgiving, offering our thanks to God for the many gifts that have been bestowed upon us. Although sometimes the reason for the holiday is forgotten in our secular culture today, good stewards of their life and faith recognize that Thanksgiving should be directed primarily in God's direction.

Because the "busyness" of Thanksgiving Day can easily distract us from slowing down to a pace more suitable to adequately expressing our gratitude to God, perhaps this November we might allow Thanksgiving to permeate our lives for more than just a day. How about the entire month? Expressing gratitude is at the heart of good



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stewardship. So, let's dedicate a little time each day in November to giving thanks for our blessings.

Begin with November 1 and 2, All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Spend a few minutes each of those days thanking God for all the people in your life who have gone before you. Then, each day thereafter, set aside a few minutes to remember all that God has given you and say "Thank you."

Take part of a day and walk or hike down a woodland path. Express your gratitude for the beauty of God's autumn creation.

Take a minute each day to thank the people in your life who matter to you. Tell them you're thankful for them. Drop someone a note, place a short phone call or even text them! Telling people you're thankful for them will enrich your life as well as theirs.



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Make a point to attend at least one Mass outside the regular weekend Masses. Going to Mass on Thanksgiving morning is an excellent way to enrich that holiday. As a community of faith, we know that giving glory to God in this way is an important aspect of our communal life of faith.

Transform the month of November into a month of Thanksgiving. If you do, you will find your celebration of Thanksgiving Day a more richer and fuller experience than you could have imagined. In fact, you might just discover that your overall happiness with life improves. May this month of Thanksgiving be a time when we not only say "Thank You" to God, family and neighbor, but a time when our hearts draw us much closer to the Lord.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for November*

### Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini



St. Frances Cabrini was the first American citizen to be elevated to sainthood. Born in northern Italy in 1850, she was one of 13 children. When she was 18, she wanted to become a nun but was unable to because of poor health. She worked on a farm with family members until she was asked to teach in a girls' school which

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she did for six years. Her bishop asked her to establish a religious community and she founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart to care for poor children in schools and hospitals.

Sister Frances Cabrini dreamt of being a missionary in China, but Pope Leo XIII had other plans for her. He asked her to travel to the United States of America and minister to the Italian immigrant community. She made that journey in 1889 with six members of her community.

Said to have possessed remarkable administrative abilities, Frances Cabrini was responsible for the establishment of nearly seventy orphanages, schools and hospitals, scattered over eight countries in Europe, North America and in parts of Latin America.

There is much that can be learned first-hand about Mother Cabrini because of the letters and diaries she left behind. A very prayerful person, she was able to accomplish in her work what others said could not be done. And even as she was maintaining schools and hospitals and in charge of hundreds of nuns, she was ever mindful to care for the poor, the homeless and immigrants who were without jobs.

Frances Cabrini's legacy continues today through the Missionary Sisters, their lay collaborators and in the innumerable religious institutions that bear her name. Her charism continues to inspire thousands who serve the poor in schools, hospitals and other ministries around the world.

St. Frances Cabrini died in Chicago on December 23, 1917 at the age of 67. She was proclaimed a saint by Pope Pius XII in 1946. She is the patron saint of immigrants and her feast is celebrated on November 13.

# Teamwork Advances Stewardship More Effectively



Many of us gathered in Orlando for our annual ICSC conference in early October. It is always encouraging and inspiring to be with so many dedicated stewardship leaders, clergy, staff members and parishioner ministers who share their commitment to fostering stewardship as a way of life. This year, I was particularly struck by the many people who spoke of being part of a team, how the more effective their team is, the more deeply the message of stewardship will be communicated in their parish. How do we form such effective, collaborative teams? From a strengths-based leadership perspective, there are a few key steps to follow:

1. Have a clear vision and purpose for what the team is about, and share the vision as servant leaders. As stewardship leaders, can we clearly articulate what we hope to accomplish together?
2. Begin forming the team and interacting together with talent. Invite each member of the team to discover his or her talents. While there are many assessments that can be used for this purpose, I still believe StrengthsFinder is the best, due to the research that is behind the inventory and the way most people recognize their talent themes already operating in their lives. Many at this year's conference spoke of the impact of knowing and offering their talents as good stewards, and how beneficial this has been in all aspects of their lives.
3. Draw on the talents of each member of the group as you carry out your responsibilities. While none of us has the opportunity to use our talents all of the time, we are more likely to serve well and less likely to burn out if we are given opportunities to use and build partnerships through our talents. None of us can or should do everything; when we agree to tasks that are a good fit for our talents, everyone benefits.
4. Make a plan, stick to it as much as is prudent and possible, and adapt as necessary. This seems self-evident, but much of what I heard in conversation with people at the conference pointed to the difficulties of developing and implementing a plan. The plan provides a framework for our ministry and keeps us on track in the midst of our day-to-day lives within the parish and beyond it. Identify what needs to be accomplished, in what period of time, by whom. Remember to look to talents and complementary partnerships as you assign responsibilities.
5. Pray often! Pray together! Thank God for the many gifts each of you has been given. Ask for the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit as you serve, giving glory to God who is the giver of all good gifts, and know you are in very good hands!

*This is the third in a series of stewardship reflections by Leisa Anslinger for parish stewardship leaders. Leisa is an author and co-founder of Catholic Strengths and Engagement Community (CSEC).*



## 2015 ICSC STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE

March 16-18, 2015

Franciscan Renewal Center, Scottsdale, Arizona

The Institute is perfect for those just beginning their efforts to teach stewardship, and those with experience seeking a great refresher. In a retreat-like setting, Mass is celebrated each day to complement the nine sessions which offer key spiritual and practical components of parish stewardship. There is ample time for networking with presenters and other attendees. Good for priests, deacons, parish staff, lay leaders and all interested in teaching stewardship!



# STEWARDSHIP EXPRESSIONS

*November 2014*

Throughout November certain days give us unique opportunities to live out, or in other words, give “expression” to our faith. Our “stewardship expressions” demonstrate our Catholic values through words, attitude and actions. This month we can especially focus on expressing gratitude for the gifts God gives us, for the relationships we develop, and for the offerings of time, talent and treasure that are shared.

## SELECTED NOVEMBER OBSERVANCES

### **National Native American Heritage Month**

Long before North America was populated by those from across the Atlantic, indigenous Americans flourished with vibrant cultures and were the original stewards of the land. From generation to generation, they handed down invaluable cultural knowledge and rich traditions which continue to thrive in Native American communities across our country today. During National Native American Heritage Month, we can celebrate the lives of Native Americans and learn about their traditions and virtues that honored the sacredness of family, community, and respect for the environment.

### **Child Safety and Protection Month**

The month of November is embraced by child-care workers, doctors and teachers to remind parents to review the safety plans for their children. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, nearly 300 children under four years old die every month in the U.S. because of accidents – most of which can be prevented. Parents are urged to use this month as a reminder to look over everything in your home, from children's toys to wearing apparel, even to internet safety. Make sure your home is a safe place for your children.

### **National Family Caregivers Month**

More than 65 million individuals in the U.S. exercise stewardship over the healthcare of family members. No one else is in a better position to ensure continuity of care for family members than family caregivers. They are the most knowledgeable when it comes to their care recipients' medicines, treatment regimen, diet and exercise routine. In 1994, the first ever celebration of family caregiving was recognized by the federal government. This month is a time to thank, support, educate and empower family caregivers.

## SELECTED DAILY OBSERVANCES

**November 1 – Solemnity of All Saints** is a principal feast of the Church to honor all the saints both publicly celebrated in the Church's history as well as the multitude of saints

whose names are known only to God. In order to honor the memory to these unnamed saints, and to recall their example, the Church dedicates a special feast day so that all living Christians would celebrate at a special Mass the lives and witness of those “who have died and gone before us into the presence of the Lord”.

**November 2 – Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day)** encourages the offering of prayers and celebration of Mass for all those who have departed this life. In the early days of the Church, the names of the faithful departed were posted in Church so that the community would remember them in prayer. Remember your loved ones in prayer today.

**November 20 – The Great American Smokeout** encourages smokers to use this date to make a plan to quit smoking. This year marks the American Cancer Society's 36th Smokeout. The Society's Web site offers insights and advice on the best ways to quit this deadly habit for good.

**November 27 – Thanksgiving Day** is a uniquely special holiday for most Americans, where we celebrate family unity. Good stewards approach this holiday with a deep sense of prayer, gratitude and joy. They are reminded that their lives and daily activities are a constant act of thanksgiving, all of which give glory to God, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist.

**November 30 – First Sunday of Advent** provides an opportunity for us to begin again and to prepare ourselves anew for the coming of Jesus Christ. It is a time of waiting and expectation, of anticipation and preparation. We can use the coming weeks for personal prayer, growth and change in the way we live. Anticipating the Nativity of Jesus, we can dedicate special time toward considering our relationship with him. As we recall previous Advents, we remember those who inspire us through their faith and actions. We too can be memorable mentors and models to others through our demonstrations of discipleship and stewardship.



Called.  
Transformed.  
Sent to serve.

**BECOME AN ICSC MEMBER TODAY**

It will enhance your stewardship efforts tremendously!



**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC  
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

## Who is ICSC?

The International Catholic Stewardship Council (ICSC) is a professional organization recognized internationally as a source of education, networking and information to advance the ministry of Christian stewardship as a way of life in the Roman Catholic Church in dioceses and parishes worldwide.

ICSC is the only organization dedicated exclusively to advancing Christian stewardship in North America as well as overseas. Founded in 1962, ICSC has over 1,200 members representing over 800 dioceses and archdioceses, parish communities, Catholic organizations and professional firms.

## ICSC Provides

- Expert advice for introducing Christian stewardship to your parish community
- Techniques proven to revitalize parish life
- Practical stewardship ideas
- Support for teaching stewardship to children
- Reflections for preaching stewardship
- A network of speakers for parishes and diocesan gatherings
- Conferences that offer the wisdom and experience of those committed to stewardship as a way of life
- Retreats that offer in-depth reflection and study on Christian stewardship
- Publications that inform and enhance our understanding of stewardship
- Access to stewardship resources, models and samples online
- Opportunities to exchange ideas and information with stewardship parishes in North America and beyond
- Best practices for promoting stewardship in the parish



## Membership Includes

- Discounts for conferences, institutes and publications
- Membership directory
- Access to past conference presentations
- Monthly parish e-bulletins offering weekly reflections, prayers, bulletin inserts and much more
- Web site section for members only with the latest parish stewardship resources
- Access to parish leadership planning tools
- Opportunities to exchange ideas, network, share best practices and grow in faith



*"The promotion of the practice of stewardship is important for the mission of the Church and for the spiritual well-being of each individual Christian. Everyone benefits from the sacrificial gift one makes of his time, talent, and treasure."*

*-Pope Benedict XVI*





### **The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls Day) | November 1/2, 2014**

In today's Gospel we envision a crowd following Jesus, seeking him. He invites them to embrace faith in himself and his Father in heaven and share in their eternal life. He comes right out and says that no one who comes will be rejected, reminding us that even those who feel estranged from God or the Church are welcomed. Good stewards know that everyone can be raised up if they accept the Father's will, and in turn, use the gifts God has given them to further Christ's work. This promise gives us hope. The stewardship question is: Are we true seekers of the Lord? Do we genuinely desire a relationship with Christ? Are we willing to follow him?

### **Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome November 8/9, 2014**

In today's reading from Saint Paul's letter to the Christian community at Corinth, he suggests that we are all called to be "wise master builders" in the building up of God's temple, the local Church. Each one of us has been given gifts to offer this building enterprise, and we are called to be good stewards of this project, to build this church together, in communion with one another, according to God's plan, not ours. Jesus Christ is the solid foundation upon whom we are to build. Saint Paul further suggests that God will judge us according to the quality of our stewardship. Can we see ourselves as "master builders" of God's church? What gifts are we using to construct this holy place that God will call home?

### **Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time November 15/16, 2014**

In today's Gospel, Jesus delivers the parable of the talents; using the example of money rather than abilities or skills. It's a story about investments, risks and returns. Stewards understand that God has given them an abundance of spiritual

gifts. They know God doesn't want them to simply receive these blessings and bury them in fear, but to multiply them; to use these gifts to serve Him and others; to spread Christ's Good News; to go and make disciples of others. Good stewards invest what God has given them in the service of others and are prepared to render an account when the Lord returns. Reflect this week on how you are returning your own God-given gifts back to God with increase.

### **Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe November 22/23, 2014**

In today's Gospel, Saint Matthew offers a compelling vision of the end-time, when the people of all the nations are brought before the Lord to give an account of their lives and actions. Interestingly, the sheep, the righteous ones, are rewarded for having acted with love and compassion without having recognized the face of Christ in others. Good stewards recognize those in need of their care as gifts from God. They know that they are the instruments of Christ's active, loving presence in the world. How will we treat others this week: our family members, neighbors, customers, strangers? What accounting will we make to the Lord for their care?

### **First Sunday of Advent | November 29/30, 2014**

The season of Advent is upon us, and in today's Gospel Jesus delivers a simple message through the pen of Saint Mark: "Be watchful! Be alert!" Christian stewards understand what Jesus meant when he said, "It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with his assigned task." Good stewards realize that to each one a task is assigned by God. They have been set in a particular place and station in life, and have been gifted with unique relationships. How do we respond to the tasks or cultivate our relationships in a way that keeps us alert for the return of Christ?

**INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC  
STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL**

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We encourage you to check out the ICSC Forum at [www.catholicstewardship.org](http://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.

[www.catholicstewardship.org](http://www.catholicstewardship.org) • [parishstewardship@catholicstewardship.org](mailto:parishstewardship@catholicstewardship.org)

