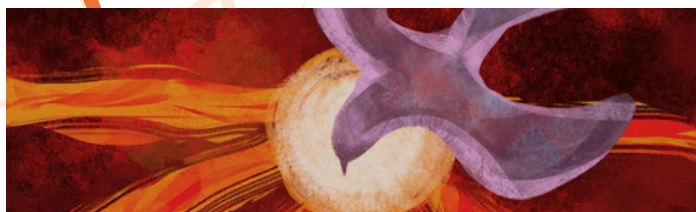




INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL
CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP

May 2020 • e-Bulletin



A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER *for May*

Gracious and Loving God,

When your Spirit descended
upon the apostles at Pentecost,
they spoke the languages of those
who came to hear their testimony.

They proclaimed a new covenant
in Christ Jesus,
sanctified by his blood,
bound by the Holy Spirit,
and sealed in the waters of baptism.

We give you thanks and praise
for releasing your Spirit upon us;
and in these uncertain times
pray that it will break through
the many barriers that divide people.

Let your Spirit open our eyes
as a communion of faith
to your ongoing presence among us,
so we can recognize you when we serve one another.

Let your Spirit open our minds
so that we may gain the wisdom
to work together to show love for our neighbors,
and unite our talents to build a better, safer world.

And let your Spirit open our hearts so that together
we can live more fully in Christ,
shine his light of mercy and hope
and prepare for the day of his glorious return.

We pray this through your son, Jesus Christ
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God forever and ever.

Amen.

The Holy Spirit Gives Us Strength

This year, the Church celebrates the great feast of Pentecost on May 31.

As recounted in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, Pentecost occurred when the followers of Jesus were, filled with fear, clustered together in a room and were suddenly surprised by the dynamic presence of the Holy Spirit in their midst. Strong wind and flame seemed to sweep the room, and the Apostles were so filled with the gifts of the Spirit that they emerged with new confidence, energy and a newly discovered strength. They experienced a new life in the Holy Spirit.



In our secular culture, Pentecost goes largely unobserved. “Pentecost” cards don’t pop up on store shelves weeks in advance, and there’s no merchandising that remotely compares to Easter and Christmas.

Yet make no mistake. To Christians, Pentecost is a great celebration, sometimes called the birthday of the Church. The word Pentecost has its roots in the Greek word for “fifty;” Pentecost comes fifty days after the Resurrection on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

Why was Pentecost such a watershed event in the life of the Church? As Christian stewards, we know we are called to live a life using the “fruits of the Spirit.” This calling has its roots in the momentous events of Pentecost. Up until that time, the followers of Jesus were still a somewhat disorganized band of believers, still in shock over the events of the crucifixion, still confused about the meaning of the sightings of the Risen Lord.

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Pentecost abruptly and forever changed that. Suddenly, missionary disciples were born, followers both called and sent forth. Like us, they were called together, in community. They became aware that their great mission was to reach, not just their Jewish brothers and sisters in Palestine, but the disparate crowds who visited Jerusalem and beyond. Like us, they were called to bring Jesus to the world.

The Holy Spirit brought courage to replace fear, understanding to replace confusion, faith to replace doubt. The same Holy Spirit moves in our own lives, perhaps not always with the



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drama of that first Pentecost, but with the same spiritual energy. The Spirit calls us within our Church community to share Jesus with others, just as the disciples were called.

Our task is to embrace the strength and energy of the life of the Holy Spirit moving through us. Let's celebrate Pentecost this year as heirs to this great moment in the life of our Church, as stewards inspired to be people of hope for others in this world desperate for God's presence.

STEWARDSHIP SAINT *for May*

Jeanne de Lestonnac *Stewarding the sick and poor during plague years*

Jeanne de Lestonnac was born in 1556 into an influential family in Bordeaux, France. Her father was a member of the French Parliament, and a prominent Catholic. Her mother, who was the sister of the renowned humanist philosopher Michel de Montaigne, had embraced the teachings of John Calvin. Jeanne remained a devout Catholic, and the richness of the renaissance culture in which she grew up would have a great influence on her education.

Jeanne married at age 17 and gave birth to eight children, three of whom died in infancy. She would experience deep pain and sorrow because of the deaths of



At age 46, widowed and with children grown, Jeanne sensed a call from the Lord to do something extraordinary.

her husband, the three children and her father. Eventually on her own, she ensured that her children would receive the best education she could afford as well as a devout upbringing in the Catholic faith.

At age 46, widowed and with children grown, Jeanne sensed a call from the Lord to do something extraordinary. She first turned to contemplative life and entered the Cistercian monastery in Toulouse. Illness forced her to leave the monastery, but she was led into a period of deep discernment. She prayed continuously that the Holy Spirit direct her and she searched for models of great Catholic women to be her guides and cultivated an interest in the lives of Saints Scholastica, Clare, Catherine of Siena and Teresa of Avila.

In 1605, a deadly plague spread throughout Bordeaux. Placing her own health at risk, she visited and cared for people in the poorest parts of the city. It was through her stewardship of the sick and the poor that she discovered the presence of Jesus in them. She also envisioned a religious institute to provide formal education for women. She encountered many young people who wanted to make a commitment to her endeavor.

In 1607, Jeanne established a community of consecrated women, The Company of Mary, whose primary ministry would be education. She worked very hard in this new ministry, and by the time of her death at age 84, the community had established 30 schools throughout France. Today the mission of The Company of Mary continues, with over 400 educational institutions in 26 countries, ranging from nurseries to universities. St. Jeanne de Lestonnac's feast day is May 15.

INVITATION

for all ICSC
Parish Members!

ICSC 2020 Parish Stewardship Award Information

Has your parish developed
stewardship materials that
would help others?

Did your committee work hard
on resources you are proud of?

*Please consider applying for
one or more ICSC Parish
Awards in 2020*

Parishes at all stages of the
stewardship journey are
encouraged to apply!

Entries will be judged by
members of the ICSC Parish
Stewardship Education and
Services Committee.

*Application Deadline is
June 30.*

Additional information, list of
awards and entry forms will be
available on the ICSC website,
[http://catholicstewardship.com/
stewardship-awards/](http://catholicstewardship.com/stewardship-awards/)



Reflecting the Beatitudes of Jesus

By Dr. Dan R. Ebener, professor,
School of Organizational Leadership,
St. Ambrose University, Davenport, Iowa

In his famous song, James Taylor sings that when you are “down and troubled and you need some loving care, ” you just have to “call out his name” and he will be there, “yes, you have a friend.”

These words could just as well have been written by Jesus as Carole King. In

many ways, his beatitudes have become my friend since I authored the book, *Blessings for Leaders*. It has taken me all over the country speaking and listening to other’s insights about these beatitudes.

The beatitudes teach us from a deep font of the wisdom of Jesus. If we become poor in spirit, mournful, meek, hungry, merciful, pure of heart, peace-making and persecuted for the sake of righteousness, we discover glimpses of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:1-12).

There is abundant paradox in these eight proverbs. To be poor in spirit, for example, is exactly the opposite of what it sounds like. I grew up thinking that these were the poor folks who were not good at praying the rosary or who had a hard time concentrating at Mass. While that resonated with me, it was not what Jesus was teaching here.

Praying the Our Father is praying by the beatitudes, most profoundly evident in finding mercy by being merciful.

Poverty of spirit is the starting point for these beatitudes just as they are for leadership, life and stewardship ministry. To be poor in spirit means to place your total trust and confidence in God, to be so desperate for God’s presence in your life that you realize you are naught without it. Remember that it was the rich in spirit, the scribes and Pharisees, those who had it all figured out, with whom Jesus was most despondent.

The wisdom flows from this first beatitude to each that follows along a path that reminds me of the road to Emmaus. Jesus accompanies us as we explore the wonders of being comforted because we mourn our losses and the misfortune of others. We inherit the earth when we become down-to-earth humble in our interactions with each other. We are satisfied when we hunger for righteousness. We begin to wonder: Who thinks this way?

Praying the Our Father is praying by the beatitudes, most profoundly evident in finding mercy by being merciful. Jesus connects the heart to the eyes when he teaches us to become pure of heart so we can see God all around us. Running toward conflict to become a peacemaker endows us as children of God. And finally, we sprint all the way to the Kingdom of Heaven when others become critical of our beatitude ways and persecute us for living, loving and leading by these very beatitudes.

At the end of these eight proverbs, we not only discover we are just beginning the journey into three chapters of Matthew citing Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, we also find ourselves glowing in the Kingdom of God. Indeed, when we are down and troubled, and we need a helping hand, we can find Jesus in these beatitudes, and he is very much our friend.

Attendants in a “Field Hospital”

By Mary Ann Otto, pastoral minister for missionary discipleship, St. Mary and St. Joseph Parishes, Appleton, Wisconsin

I believe one of the most enlightening comments Pope Francis has made thus far in his papacy is that the Church is a “field hospital” in the world. He believes our community of faith is called to “heal wounds” and to “warm the hearts of the faithful.” This is what Jesus modeled so well in the Gospels, and we are called to actively participate in his life and ministry here and now.



We are called to stand with and to serve our brothers and sisters during some of the most difficult times in their lives.

As a visual person, our Holy Father’s image conjures up for me images such as the story of the Good Samaritan, armed forces medical care units and the work of Blessed Mother Teresa. It also brings to mind early missionaries who brought Christianity to people around the globe. I find the idea of a “field hospital” attendant somewhat overwhelming. But being good stewards of the Gospel, we are called to stand with and to serve our brothers and sisters during some of the most difficult times in their lives. This is a tremendous challenge and yet a sacred honor.

Recently, I was selected to serve as a juror in a criminal case. It was my first experience and I found it an unsettling and emotional experience for me. The fears and tears of witnesses as well as the defendant brought a very human and vulnerable dimension to this legal process. Though the outcome of the trial was based on the evidence and testimony provided, for me, the face of Jesus was everywhere in the courtroom.

After the trial concluded, I wondered if any of those who participated in the trial were ministered to in some way by the “field hospital” workers in their respective parishes or worshipping communities. Was anyone visited, prayed for or given a compassionate ear and encouragement? I certainly hope so. There was so much opportunity here.

Until Jesus returns, our Church will always need to be a “field hospital.” I thank those who have special gifts of empathy, compassion, courage, and love, and use them to be Jesus in the world. And, I ask you to pray with me that we will all recognize where we are called to heal wounds and warm hearts so we can share the love of Christ and be a witness to the Good News.



Putting Faith into Action

In a Time of Social Distancing

By Leisa Anslinger, associate department director for pastoral life, Archdiocese of Cincinnati

PRAY Spend time with God each day. Read the Bible or a devotional. Meditate. Listen to prayerful music.

PAY ATTENTION God is with you! Look for God in the care of others and those you care for. See God in the beauty around you.

GROW IN GRATITUDE Make this a time to be grateful for the blessings of life, faith relationships, gifts, talent and resources.

REACH OUT Reach out to those who are fragile, alone, or in need. Call or video chat with elderly neighbors.

GIVE Give to your parish. Your faith community is sustained through your giving.

CONNECT Check in with other parishioners. Gather with others by phone or virtually to stay connected even when physically apart.

SHARE FAITH As you talk with family and friends, share the consolation and hope you have through your faith in Jesus.

KEEP SABBATH Sabbath is a time of rest and renewal in faith. Make this moment of physical distance a time for Sabbath.

A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fourth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 2/3, 2020**

In today's gospel Jesus tries to describe the trust relationship between himself and his followers using the images of a shepherd and a gate for the sheep. In both cases, it is about who or what the sheep can trust, whether shepherd or path, leading the Lord's followers into a bountiful pasture. As the good shepherd, the sheep hear, follow, flee false shepherds, and are able to discern whom to trust. Good stewards understand that, no matter how much they are confronted by fear and anxiety, the Lord will not abandon those who follow him. Hearing Jesus' voice does not always happen easily, though, even for those who are closest to him. In what ways do we dispose ourselves to listen to the shepherd's voice? What obstacles keep us from hearing the Lord?

Fifth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 9/10, 2020**

In the reading from the Acts of the Apostles we see how the first community of Christians gathered together to discern and resolve how to care for each other's needs. As good stewards of the sisters and brothers who gathered around the Eucharistic table, the community of faith selected those among them who were to ensure that no one was neglected. How are we helping to serve the needs of our parish family? How do we ensure that those who might be perceived to be the least of our brothers and sisters are not left alone and neglected during these unsettling times?

Sixth Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 16/17, 2020**

Philip understood very well Jesus' words: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." We learn of Philip's devotion to prayer, evangelizing and healing in the region of Samaria; made up of communities that would not be very receptive to the followers of Jesus. Philip is a model steward, living his discipleship day by day in the Lord without counting the cost. Good stewards summon the courage to proclaim the Lord no matter where they are, and to serve Him by ministering to others even under the most adverse of circumstances. As an Easter people, eager to rejoice in the Lord, let us reflect this week on how we are living out our own commitment to discipleship in Christ Jesus.

Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension

The Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension will be celebrated by your diocese on either Thursday, May 21, or the weekend of May 23/24, 2020

In today's Gospel Jesus charges his followers to "make disciples of all nations." What exactly is going on here? What is this Great Commission anyway? Good stewards know they are directed to share what they exercise stewardship over: their life of faith in Christ Jesus. They know Jesus didn't direct them to go to church and to keep quiet about it; or to go out into the neighborhood, workplace or marketplace and just be nice to others. The Good News of Jesus Christ is meant to be shared. Many people in our communities either do not know about Jesus Christ, reject his Good News or have abandoned him. Does that bother us? Do we care? Do we realize we are supposed to do something about it?

(If the Solemnity of the Lord's Ascension is celebrated by your diocese on Thursday, May 21, 2020)

Seventh Sunday of Easter **Weekend of May 23/24, 2020**

In today's second reading, we hear it proclaimed that we are blessed if we share in the sufferings of Christ. What then does it mean to "share in His sufferings" in this context? Most of us do not live in a part of the world where we could be killed for being a follower of Jesus. But we could face or "suffer" mockery, ridicule and disapproval from others. Far too often, and for various reasons, those who profess faith in Christ act as though they are ashamed of him. But to act ashamed is the same as a denial. Stewards of the Good News are never ashamed to reveal their love for the Lord. How do you reveal to others that you are a follower of Christ each day?

Pentecost Sunday **Weekend of May 30/31, 2020**

Mass during the Day

This weekend we celebrate the feast of Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit among the fearful believers of the early Church. Saint Paul reminds us of the special power the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon us to give us confidence and how that power gives us the potential to live extraordinary lives of faith. Good stewards recognize this power and use their gifts, through God's channel of grace, to transform their lives and the lives of others. Good stewards know that it is through the Holy Spirit that they can proclaim: "Jesus is Lord." How do we allow the Holy Spirit to work within us to give us strength, confidence and hope?