

INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL  
**CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP**

September 2025 • e-Bulletin



**A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER**  
*for September*

Heavenly Father,  
September is a month that offers hope  
for things to come:  
our daily life has a new rhythm,  
there are new beginnings  
and new encounters,  
and a new energy is seen in the  
parish community.

In this month of accelerating activities,  
keep us mindful that we live for Christ  
and not for ourselves.  
Give us the strength and  
the wisdom to be  
“Doers” of Your Word,  
and not just listeners;  
to be good stewards of  
the Gospel each and every day.

In this month of transition  
help us find a deeper spiritual  
balance in our lives  
that takes time for you,  
listens to the promptings of your Spirit  
and gives us hope that  
the body of Christ  
has well begun the transformation of  
a troubled world.  
We ask this through your Son,  
Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, forever and ever.  
Amen.

## Gathering Together in Christ: *The Power of Christian Fellowship*

*by Mary Ann Otto, 2025 recipient of the Saint Joseph Stewardship Award*

Have you ever contemplated the blessing of being part of a global Church? As we approach the ICSC international conference in Chicago next month, I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to gather with other friends and stewards in Christ from all over the world. Yes, we attend to hear inspiring speakers and capture the latest best stewardship practices to take back to our diocese or parish. But unlike those attending conferences from the secular world, we have the bond of our identity in Christ and our baptism which draws us into a deeper relationship. No matter how we identify “the ends of the earth” in the 21st century, when we gather in Chicago in September of this year, we will come face to face with our brothers and sisters in Christ.



**The value of the ICSC conference is beautiful on so many levels but none more important than bringing the Body of Christ together from around the world.**

The words of Saint Paul in his letter to the Ephesians rings so true (2:19):  
*So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God.*

This is true not only in parish life but when we encounter each other at the ICSC conference. I believe the Holy Spirit is present in the vibrant worship, excellent presenters and is very uniquely connecting participants in a way more meaningful than networking. Yes, we exchange business cards, great ideas and practices but we also share hopes and dreams for our ministries, parishes, dioceses and Church.

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Through the wonder of technology, we are able to connect immediately when necessary. Our fellowship continues throughout the year until we meet again at next year's conference. For me, it is one of the most impactful aspects of attending the ICSC conference.



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In the end, the value of the ICSC conference is beautiful on so many levels but none more important than bringing the Body of Christ together from around the world. Somehow participants who need to find each other connect. If we look to the beginning of our Church, it was being stewarded through a powerful faith and the building up of relationships in Christ Jesus. The early Christians supported each other's ministries and accompanied each other on their faith journey. The fact that these relationships can exist on a global level in our time is pure gift. Join us at the 2025 ICSC conference and be inspired by Christ's presence all around you.

## STEWARDSHIP SAINT for September

Saint Teresa of Calcutta gave us an extraordinary example of Christian discipleship and stewardship by her faith, simplicity and service to women and men without considering their race, religion or nationality. She was born Agnes Bojaxhiu in Albania on August 26, 1910, and at age 18 went to Ireland to join the Sisters of Loreto following what she discerned to be a call to become a missionary.



She was sent to India in 1929, and began her novitiate in Darjeeling near the Himalayan mountains. Eight years later she made her solemn vows and took the name Teresa after Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the patron saint of missionaries. From there she taught at the Loreto convent school in Calcutta for almost twenty years. Though a dedicated educator, she was increasingly disturbed by the desperate poverty in Calcutta.

On September 10, 1946, Sister Teresa had an extraordinary conversion experience, what she later described as "the call within the call." While traveling by train from Calcutta to the Loreto convent in Darjeeling she experienced interior visions that led her to the conviction that Christ was calling her to serve "the poorest of the poor."

In 1948 after a few months of medical training, Sister Teresa ventured out into the slums to tend to the needs of the destitute and starving. Her first year was very difficult. She had no income and had to resort to begging for food and supplies. She experienced loneliness, doubt and the temptation to return to the comfort of convent life. But at the beginning of 1949 she was joined by a group of young women who wished to be a part of her ministry.

In 1950 "Mother" Teresa's community was formally recognized by the Vatican. Its mission was to care for, in her own words, "the hungry, the naked, the homeless, the crippled, the blind, the lepers, all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone." In 1952, she opened a hospice for the poor. Then she established several leprosy clinics throughout Calcutta, providing medication, bandages and food. In 1955, she created a home for orphans and homeless youth.

The Missionaries of Charity soon began to attract both recruits and charitable donations, and by the 1960s had opened hospices, orphanages and leper homes all over India. Mother Teresa then went global. Her first mission outside of India was in Venezuela in 1965, then in Rome, Tanzania and Austria. During the 1970s the congregation started missions in dozens of countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the United States. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Mother Teresa died on September 5, 1997, departing a religious community with over 4,000 sisters operating 610 missions in 123 countries and aided by more than one million co-workers. Former U.N. Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, said of Saint Teresa: "She is the United Nations. She is peace in the world."

Saint Teresa of Calcutta was canonized on September 4, 2016 by Pope Francis. Her feast day is September 5.



## September: New Beginnings In Your Parish

New Year's resolutions are famously made on January 1, and infamously broken by the end of that month. But for many stewards, the real time of renewal and recommitment comes as we turn the calendar page into September, and the resolutions have a longer and greater impact. Why? Because good Catholic stewards realize that the parish is often times the place where people encounter Christ's presence in their lives, and in the fall, everything kicks into high gear at the parish. Opportunities abound for growth, for giving, for community. It's now that we ponder and make our decisions for how we will make a disciple's response during the coming year through our commitment to the life of our parishes. Here are a few tips for maximizing a grace-filled year:

- Make Mass your top weekend priority, ahead of sports, school activities, or other temptations.
- Consider how best to use your talents in the service of the parish. Pray over the ministry which calls to you the most.
- Serve the poor through activities in your parish, in the spirit of Pope Francis. All parishes have some kind of outreach to the poor.
- Consider taking an adult faith formation class.
- Make plans to attend the ICSC annual conference September 21-24 in Chicago, Illinois. If you can't attend, make sure someone from your parish is going. It's an opportunity to gain a wealth of new ideas, tons of inspiration, and a chance to meet other folks, including the experts, who are dedicated to evangelization and stewardship.
- Visit, or better yet help with, your parish ministry fair. Fun and informative, the fair is a community builder, and a great way to get people to participate.
- Attend back-to-school night and get involved, especially if you have kids in the parish school.
- Visit your child's faith formation class and introduce yourself to the teacher. Let your children know religious education is a priority to you, and be sure to thank in some way the parishioners who give of their time and talent to this ministry.
- Review your financial giving. Were you a faithful giver during the summer? Find out if your parish has online giving, or automatic withdrawal, and sign up so your year-round support helps provide a stable parish income.

## Christ and the Spirituality of Work

On the first Monday of September, the U.S. observes Labor Day, a celebration of the strength and contributions of the nation's work force. The holiday goes back many years. Congress passed an act establishing it in 1894, and it was promoted by labor unions as they grew in power. Labor unions have experienced a decline in recent years, but their ascendancy in late 19th century and early 20th century America contributed to a growing middle class and safer working conditions for all.



**Work isn't separated from  
our spirituality, but should  
be a conscious part of it.**

For many Americans, Labor Day weekend is a celebration of summer's finale, a last hurrah of cook-outs and recreation before vacation time ends and the reality of school, parish committees and snow shovel sales looms. But for the Christian steward, Labor Day should also be a time to pause and reflect on our own work, the work of others in our economy, and what it means for our spiritual growth and the growth of the Kingdom of God.

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part of it. The Lectionary even provides special readings for Labor Day, and one of them is from Colossians 1:24 – 2:3 in which St. Paul describes the source of his strength as Christ’s “power working within me.” Paul is able to achieve his tremendous effort by his reliance on Christ. And his endeavors were tied to his desire to serve Christ in all things. Does this ring true for our own working environment? Does Christ occupy a place in our workday, in the marketplace? Or do we sometimes feel a disconnect, as if our faith is compartmentalized into another realm of our life, not integral to our work life?

Today, in America and other parts of the world, income disparity has become an increasing fact of life. Many people in the U.S. must labor at two jobs just to keep a roof over their heads. Some of the working poor must choose between food and medication. Where are we in this shifting economy? If we are doing well, do we think of our responsibility to the poor and to promoting a fair and just system? If our work feels lifeless and without purpose, do we consider our need to strengthen our relationship with Christ by our labor? As we enjoy summer’s final fling, keep in mind that laborers should be partners in the work of God on this earth, and ask, how does my work fit into God’s plan?

## Why should YOU attend the 63rd Annual ICSC Conference?

1. Enhance your knowledge of stewardship no matter how far your parish has traveled on the stewardship journey.
2. Learn from some of the most renowned stewardship leaders in the world.
3. Discern new techniques for increasing the financial resources you need to sustain your parish.
4. Uncover proven approaches to enrich your parish’s life of faith.
5. Discover how to build up the commitment to discipleship in your parish.
6. Experience the hospitality and joy of dedicated stewards from around the globe.
7. Participate in beautiful and inspiring liturgies.
8. Interact with parish leaders in a spiritual and welcoming environment.
9. Compare notes with experienced and flourishing stewardship parishes.
10. Immerse yourself in the spirituality and fundamentals of Christian stewardship in the Catholic tradition.



# STEWARDSHIP:

## A JOURNEY OF HOPE

**Calling All Parish and Diocesan Stewardship Leaders!**

Are you ready to be inspired, network with others and learn best practices to further the Stewardship mission in your parish or diocese? Join us September 21-24 in Chicago for the 63rd Annual ICSC conference as we gather to support and encourage each other on our journey as stewards of the Church.

Well-known veteran Stewardship leaders will be sharing their wisdom and experience on topics that are crucial to your Stewardship efforts:

- Inviting, Forming and Equipping Stewardship Leaders
- Maximizing Stewardship Planning: Avoiding the Pitfalls
- Exploring Stewardship of the Interior Life
- Strengthening Parish Engagement through a Diocesan Effort: A Case Study
- Transforming Catholic Giving through Sacrificial Joy
- Teaching Stewardship as an Important Family Value

AND MANY MORE!

**Don't miss this opportunity to renew your mission and expand your vision for Stewardship in your parish and diocese!**

### Reflections on Stewardship from These Special Guests:



Jamie Crane  
*Diocese of Colorado Springs*



Sharon Ehrenkranz  
*St. Laurence Catholic Church, Sugar Land, Texas*



Katie Price  
*Diocese of Springfield*



Steve Homiack  
*Archdiocese of Seattle*



Matt Reinkemeyer  
*Archdiocese of Cincinnati*



Brian Niebrugge  
*Archdiocese of Saint Louis*

# Register TODAY!

[www.catholicstewardship.com](http://www.catholicstewardship.com)



## A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

### **Twenty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 6/7 2025**

At the conclusion of today's Gospel, we hear Jesus tell a "great crowd" that "...anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." A few of Jesus' immediate disciples, such as Peter, John and James, did just that: They responded to Jesus' call, renouncing everything to follow him. How do modern disciples of Jesus respond when confronted with this apparently harsh command of Jesus? Surely the renunciation of possessions need not mean literally giving all one's possessions away, does it? Questions we might ponder this week though: Do our possessions keep us from encountering Christ at Mass? Do they distract us from our parish family? Do our possessions interfere with our relationships? Do they make us insensitive to those less fortunate?

### **Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 13/14 2025**

Among the primary themes in today's Gospel when we hear Jesus' well-known parable of the Prodigal Son is forgiveness and the need to repent. But from a stewardship point of view what is also interesting is one of the secondary themes: the failure to use responsibly the gifts that have been so generously bestowed. The youngest son who demanded his inheritance and left home broke no laws or religious commandments. His wrong doing was that he wasted his inherited wealth, the abundant gifts given to him. His sin was in his extravagant living; squandering his gifts in pursuit of selfish pleasures. Good stewards acknowledge that everything they have comes from God, and they are required to cultivate these gifts responsibly. What are our God-given gifts? Do we use them responsibly? Do we exercise good stewardship over them?

### **Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 20/21 2025**

In Jesus' parable of the Unjust Steward, we encounter a financial manager who has wasted his master's wealth and faces dismissal from his position. To overcome the crisis confronting him, the steward reduces some very considerable debts owed by poor neighbors to his master in order to help them out. Though the steward has sinned against God and his master by squandering what belongs to someone else, both the prudent way in which he goes about resolving the crisis coupled with relieving people who are in need can be seen as a way to better steward the gifts entrusted to us by God. Although good stewards today acknowledge that they may never use their God-given gifts in a way that completely conforms to the demands of the Gospel, a commitment to using their gifts with prudence and for the purpose of helping their neighbors wins God's favor.

### **Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Weekend of September 27/28 2025**

In today's Gospel Jesus offers a warning about living selfishly in his parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The Rich Man holds sumptuous feasts and dresses in fine clothes. But despite his affluence he does nothing to relieve the painful hunger and debilitating condition of his neighbor Lazarus. He neglects to love his neighbor as he loves himself and is sent to hell for his lifestyle and desire for self-gratification. The Rich Man represents those who spend their money on their own personal pleasures with no regard for sharing their material possessions with the poor and needy in their own neighborhood. Good stewards realize the practical implications of not only loving God, but loving their neighbor as they would love themselves. Who are the less fortunate in our neighborhood? Do we share a portion of our own blessings with them?