



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

PARISH STEWARDSHIP

Education and Services Committee e-Bulletin • July 2011

A STEWARDSHIP PRAYER FOR JULY

Lord and Creator,
 You are the source of wisdom and grace,
 the author of human freedom and creativity.
 We thank you for these gifts, and ask that you
 teach us to be good stewards of our creative spirits.
 Show us how to quiet ourselves, and to learn the art of re-creation, reflection and relaxation
 so that we might recharge and refill ourselves
 for the work you have planned for us.
 Help us never to be too busy to pause
 and realize your gracious presence all around us:
 in nature, in other people, in ourselves.
 Slow us down, Lord, and teach us to be stewards
 of our time of recreation.
 Amen.

Christian Stewardship and the Need for Recreation



Is there such a thing as a stewardship of recreation? Some people might dismiss the thought. But they'd be wrong.

In his book, *The Gift of the Jews*, author Thomas Cahill observes that, in receiving the Ten Commandments, the ancient Hebrews did something no other ancient society had ever done: they established a day of rest. "The God who made the universe and rest-

ed bids us to do the same, calling us to a weekly restoration of prayer, study, and recreation (or re-creation)."

For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere at least, probably no other month bids us to relax as the month of July does. Backyard barbecues, days at the pool or the beach, a recreational outing or simply the lazy idleness of a mid-year Sunday afternoon invite us to slow down. And this invitation should be heeded. Sometimes, our society induces in us a sense of guilt if we're not "doing." But turning off the computer and the phone and spending quality time with those around us, or finding time for our own interior lives, is stewardship of our time which leads to the place where God dwells. It's a good example for our kids as well: July presents a wonderful time to "rest" from all the electronic screens and busyness that dominate their young lives.

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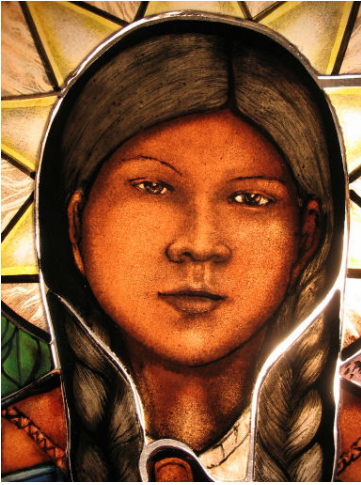
July is also the month when U.S. citizens celebrate the proclamation of their freedom. When the Hebrew people first received the Ten Commandments, they too had just received their freedom from the Egyptians after a sojourn in the wilderness. Cahill thinks it's no coincidence that a people recently liberated were in need of a directive to rest and reflect. "Leisure," he writes, "is the necessary ground of creativity, and a free people are free to imitate the creativity of God."

So, the next time you feel guilty about a quiet, reflective time of doing "nothing" remember that recreation also means "re-creation" and that to be a truly creative person, a steward of our interior resources, we must honor our need to rest, relax, be with others, read and play.

-Effie Caldarola



STEWARDSHIP SAINT FOR JULY | Blessed Kateri Teckakwitha



Blessed Kateri Teckakwitha is the first Native American to have been beatified. Born in 1656 on the south bank of the Mohawk River near Auriesville, New York, Tekakwitha was the daughter of a non-Christian Mohawk chieftain and an Algonquin mother who was a Catholic convert, educated and baptized by French missionaries.

When Teckakwitha was four years old, a smallpox epidemic claimed the lives of her parents and baby brother. She survived the disease but her face was left severely scarred and her eyesight impaired.

At age 20, after having taken religious instruction at a nearby mission, Teckakwitha was baptized and given the name Kateri (Katherine). She vowed not to marry, which was considered aberrant in her tribal culture and created great difficulties for her. Kateri was persecuted by her fellow villagers for her faith.

A year later, finding the persecution unbearable, Kateri fled her village and walked 200 miles through forests, rivers and swamps to settle in a Christian mission in Sault St. Louis, near Montreal.

The remainder of her young life was dedicated to prayer and devotion to the Eucharist, teaching children at the mission and caring for the sick and the elderly. She died of an illness in 1680 when she was 24 years old.

A profound commitment to stewardship is revealed in a quote attributed to Kateri:

I am not my own; I have given myself to Jesus. He must be my only love. The state of helpless poverty that may befall me if I do not marry does not frighten me. All I need is a little food and a few pieces of clothing. With the work of my hands I shall always earn what is necessary and what is left over I'll give to my relatives and to the poor. If I should become sick and unable to work, then I shall be like the Lord on the cross. He will have mercy on me and help me, I am sure.

Kateri is known as the “Lily of the Mohawks” and devotion to her is responsible for establishing Native American ministries in Catholic churches throughout the United States and Canada.

She was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1980 and her feast day is July 14.

20 Stewardship Ideas FOR THE MONTH OF JULY

By Effie Caldarola

- Think of a charity which is amply blessed at Christmas. Remember them with a gift mid-year.
- Invite a single friend over for a meal.
- Attend an extra Mass on a weekday this month.
- Abstain from something you like – meat, a latte, a cold drink – on Fridays and save the money for a charity.
- Take your rosary with you for an early morning walk.
- Recycle more.
- Each day, say a prayer for one of the world’s trouble spots.
- Turn off the TV, phone, and computer, and spend an hour devoted to someone you love.
- Surprise an old friend with a phone call.
- Buy or pick a flower for someone without a “reason.”
- Take your family to a farmers’ market if in season.
- Stop for a moment during your busy day and enjoy an ice cream cone or other favorite treat.
- If you hear a great homily, tell the homilist.
- Splurge on some produce and buy enough to share with someone in need.
- See if you can go one day without complaining.
- On occasion, try turning your prayer before meals into a spontaneous prayer of thanks, using your own words.
- Send an unexpected thank you note for a small favor.
- If you spot a neighbor in the yard, stop for a brief chat.
- When standing in the store checkout line, let someone with fewer items go ahead of you.
- Sing – or sing louder – at Mass.



COMMUNICATION AND MUTUAL SACRIFICE: *Keys to a Healthy Marriage and Good Stewardship*

I preach approximately 250 homilies each year. Only one of them, the one during the third weekend of stewardship renewal, is about money. All my homilies, though, deal with *love*.

I was married 30 years before my wife, Kacky, died and I became a priest. I learned bunches from Kacky. Love requires intimacy. Intimacy requires communication, and communication requires lots of talk. Love also requires a willingness to sacrifice, me for you. If wife and husband deeply communicate and regularly sacrifice, everything else falls into place.

When I began stewardship at Visitation, I applied Kacky's lessons. I told the parishioners we must have an intimate relationship with God; we must talk with our God often. We must also be willing to sacrifice for each other the way He sacrificed for us. Talking with God is, of course, prayer. Sacrificing for each other is ministry.

I mention the words Good Steward in every homily I preach. I also constantly talk about love, prayer and minis-

try. Does that make me a head-in-the-clouds financial fool? I don't think so. My last job before becoming a priest was as a vice-president of a \$3 billion dollar company.

During the last five years at Visitation, prayer commitments have increased more than a thousand percent. The number of our ministries has increased more than 150 percent. Collections too have more than doubled!

Some marriage counselors tell us the primary reason couples divorce is money. So, they argue the key to a healthy marriage is a good budget. Baloney! The key to a healthy marriage is communication and sacrifice. Many tell us the key to good stewardship is an emphasis on tithing. More baloney! The key to good stewardship is communication (*time* talking with God) and sacrifice (using our *talents* to minister). Trust me: the money (*treasure*) follows.

Excerpted with gratitude from an article by Rev. Michael J. Kettenring, pastor, The Visitation of Our Lady Parish, Marrero, Louisiana, Archdiocese of New Orleans.

2011 Annual Stewardship Conference

Orlando, Florida | October 23-26, 2011



INTERNATIONAL CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



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A STEWARDSHIP MOMENT

Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time **Week of July 2/3, 2011**

One of the most well known and beloved passages in scripture is the gentle invitation of our Lord in today's Gospel reading: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." When we need physical rest, we sleep or take a nap. When we need emotional rest, we sometimes take a vacation. But how do we find spiritual rest? How do we discover Christ's peace as we grapple with the complex issues of life deep in our hearts? Good stewards find their rest in the Lord. Reflect this week on what you do to welcome the peace of Christ.

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time **Week of July 9/10 2011**

In today's reading from the prophet Isaiah, there is a guarantee that the unleashing of God's Word will bear much fruitfulness in the world. The Word of God will accomplish whatever God sends it forth to do. His Word is given to us as a gift to be nurtured, shared and made to "bear fruit." The question is whether or not we are exercising good stewardship over God's Word. Have we been "fruitful" with God's Word? Have we unleashed God's Word? Do we share God's Word or do we leave that task to others?

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time **Week of July 16/17, 2011**

In today's second reading, Saint Paul bids us to take comfort in knowing that when God invites us to pray to him, he knows our true needs, even if we do not. The Holy Spirit intercedes and prays for us even if we can't come up with appropriate words; even when we don't have a clue what

to ask for. We are not left alone. Good stewards know that prayer is an important part of living a life in Christ. The important thing is to make space for God. Do we let God into our hearts? Do we make room for the Holy Spirit to pray within us?

Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time **Week of July 23/24, 2011**

A profound stewardship prayer is offered by the young king Solomon in today's first reading. He asks the Lord to give him an understanding heart, compassion towards God's people and the insight to distinguish right from wrong. An understanding heart, or wisdom, is a gift from God. It is a gift that enables us to make good decisions and prudent choices. Cultivating and sharing this gift is essential, especially when poor decisions and lack of compassion have consequences that affect the lives of others. Do we exercise good stewardship over the gift of wisdom? Do we share our compassionate hearts with others?

Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time **Week of 29/31 2011**

In today's Gospel we find an equation the disciples of Jesus couldn't solve: Five loaves and two fish divided by 5,000-plus people. They failed to recognize Jesus in the equation; that whatever they had to offer, Jesus could take it and bless it and satisfy the hunger of the crowd with it. Good stewards recognize that the Lord can work miracles with the gifts they offer to a hungry and broken world. How often are we willing to offer our gifts in faith, even as insignificant as we think they are, and count on the Lord to do the rest? How often do we count Christ into the equation?

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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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