

*Stewardship Bulletin Message Number 16 (November 2011)*

**"iLove"**

*A new consumer electronic device or God's most fundamental gift?*

We are all aware of the seemingly limitless interest in the cutting-edge, technology-based mobile consumer electronic devices by which we communicate, access information on the Internet, entertain and educate ourselves in multimedia formats, and even take photographs. Whether it's the "iPhone", the "iPod", or the "iPad", these devices sell in the millions of units, are particularly of interest to the younger generations, and are all steps toward a convergence of Internet-enabled information exchange and management.

So, what's this got to do with stewardship, you ask? Well, let's revisit the fundamentals of who we are as a parish, what we are called to do, and consider the motivation for our adoption of the stewardship way of life, all in the conceptual context of the "buzz" of the launch of a new virtual device, the "iLove".

Some excerpts from the recent Annual Financial Report of our parish address these fundamentals. Who we are as a parish: "the Body of Christ, brought together by the Lord". What we are called to do: "to serve as the instruments of His love in Lawrence". The key word here is "love".

We know that God is the totality of universal, unending, unconditional love. God is an equal opportunity lover, he loves everyone. So much so, that he sent his only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ to redeem all humankind, and offer all the prospect of eternal life.

O.K., you might say. But, how do we serve as instruments of His love?

One effective and concrete way is to practice stewardship, by which we recognize that everything that is good in this world is a gift from God, that we have each received a particular and unique combination of these gifts, and that we, in gratitude, give back to God the first portion of our time, talent and treasure to help build His Kingdom.

As we enter our eighth year as a stewardship parish, we continue to understand that we are serving as instruments of God's love every time we share our gifts with our brothers and sisters in need.

The twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew tells what is expected of us: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me."

Our motivation for living as true disciples of Jesus Christ, and practicing good stewardship, is based on love of God, and love of our neighbor. Love is the answer. Love is the solution.

The "iLove" is not a new mobile consumer electronic device. It's the most fundamental gift that we return to God, and share with each other.

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