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May 17, 2009 • Sixth Sunday of Easter

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## Pastor's Column

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### Love Deeply

The Christian call to be people of love is ever before us. We can experience many negative and/or discouraging forces, pressures, and people in life that can supply us with the motivation to not love, or to love less than what our capabilities allow, and to not give our all for God.

May these words of Fr. Henri Nouwen, taken from his book, *The Inner Voice of Love*, strengthen us to be faithful to our Christian vocation:

“Do not hesitate to love and to love deeply. You might be afraid of the pain that deep love can cause. When those you love deeply reject you, leave you, or die, your heart will be broken. But that should not hold you back from loving deeply. The pain that comes from deep love makes your love ever more fruitful. It is like a plow that breaks the ground to allow the seed to take root and grow into a strong plant. Every time you experience the pain of rejection, absence, or death, you are faced with a choice. You can become bitter and decide not to love again, or you can stand straight in your pain and let the soil on which you stand become richer and more able to give life to new seeds.

The more you have loved and have allowed yourself to suffer because of your love, the more you will be able to let your heart grow wider and deeper. When your love is truly giving and receiving, those whom you love will not leave your heart even when they depart from you. They will become part of your self and thus gradually build a community within you. Those you have deeply loved become part of you. The longer you live, there will always be more people to be loved by you and to become part of your inner community. The wider your inner community becomes, the more easily you will recognize your own brothers and sisters in the strangers around you. Those who are alive within you will recognize those who are alive around you. The wider the community of your heart, the wider the community around you. Thus the pain of rejection, absence, and death can become fruitful. Yes, as you love deeply the ground of your heart will be broken more and more, but you will rejoice in the abundance of the fruit it will bear.”

In two weeks, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, the giving of the Spirit. This gift strengthens the Church as She continues the Mission and Ministry of Jesus.

Mindful of the gift, let us rely upon the Holy Spirit to love in the way in which Jesus has loved us.

Fr. Mike