The Neu Waves Youth Ministry just wrapped up another great year. I say great because I work side-by-side with authentic leaders, mothers & fathers who said “yes” to the calling to extend their love beyond earthly measure. I say great because they know of God’s love for them and surrender themselves to fully receiving his love, then in turn freely giving it away. I say great because they show our youth the meaning of our greatest commandment through their presence, mercy, care, and listening.

Their charity, and the charity of other authentic leaders, like those who prepared the many fine young ladies & gentlemen for their first holy communion today, all speak volumes of God’s command to love one another.

Jesus tells us in our Gospel to remain in his love, to keep his commandments, to go and bear fruit. Why? Not that we might just know joy, but that our joy may be complete.

You see as Christians we believe that “God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him.”1 The late Msgr. Chester Michael wrote “the only way for human beings to attain lasting happiness and fulfillment is to devote all our energies toward the unification of reality in an experience of true love.”2

In other words, we Christians recognize that love and life were created as the one reality human beings call existence. We were created to use all our energy to live in charity.

But when we try to separate love and life, or try to hold back on love, we quite simply end up with disastrous results. Just take one look around the world today. So much stored up human energy that exists to serve in charity is instead being released as instruments of greed, power, self-esteem, violence, and hatred. And Christians are not immune to this corruption. Many who hear of, or witness to, a lack of charity among professed Christians in turn end up rejecting our faith and not knowing our God of love.3

My brothers and sisters, our earthly mission is to build the Kingdom of God, to share the Good News, to become who we are, a friend in Christ. So let’s all recall for a moment some examples of mutual unselfish love that we have experienced or observed.

Hopefully on this Mother’s Day one of your first thoughts has something to do with your mom, our first teacher about love. How they showed us to respond to those in need.
Maybe one of your first thoughts was about the Church who offers herself and intercedes for all.

The prime example of all unselfish love is the relationship that exists between our savior and his Heavenly Father. He stretched out his arms on the cross, through him, with him, and in him. Jesus was sent to us so that we may have a personal relationship with a God who has no hands in this world but ours. And Jesus gave us a model to follow: first to remove anything that may disguise or get in the way of our humanity, then to tie a towel around our waists and wash the feet of another. Even if that means wiping lamb poop from between the toes of their feet.

For when we allow the love of God to dwell in our hearts, a marvelous grace is given to us before we expect it. That grace makes us whole... and impelled by the Spirit, brings us sometimes to unexpected places!

Take Peter for instance in his encounter with the gentile named Cornelius. Peter enters Cornelius’ house and what does he find? He’s surrounded by people with whom, as a good Jew, he could have nothing to do with. They’re all Gentiles you see – all uncircumcised, unclean according to Jewish law.

Our reading from Acts tells us that Peter doesn’t run away. Nor does he allow his energy for loving to become misdirected. Instead he recalls his earlier experience of the holy Spirit where he’s told to take and eat all sorts of foods forbidden to Jews. And it dawns on him just what the Spirit was trying to get him to understand.

He raises up the prostrate Cornelius saying “I myself am also a human being.” Peter isn’t simply telling Cornelius to “get up.” He’s affirming the life-giving power of the Spirit and acknowledging Cornelius’ dignity as a child of God.

This intervention of the holy Spirit was decisive. Our Church’s doors were opened to all, without partiality. Gentile, Jew, ex-convict, prostitute, old, poor, alcoholic, beggar, leper, transgender – the love of God was shown to be universal. Such is the unbridled nature of the holy Spirit to bear the intentionality of God in the most astonishing ways.

We may not be prepared for the Spirit’s every expression. Peter wasn’t sure what to make of it at first. But we may always count on the Spirit to be motivated by the love that led Christ to the cross.

So let us come now with all our sins to this table and gaze into the body and blood of Christ, knowing that Jesus waits for only one thing from us: to “Love one another as I have loved you.”
1 John 4:16


3 1 John 4:8

4 John 13:34