

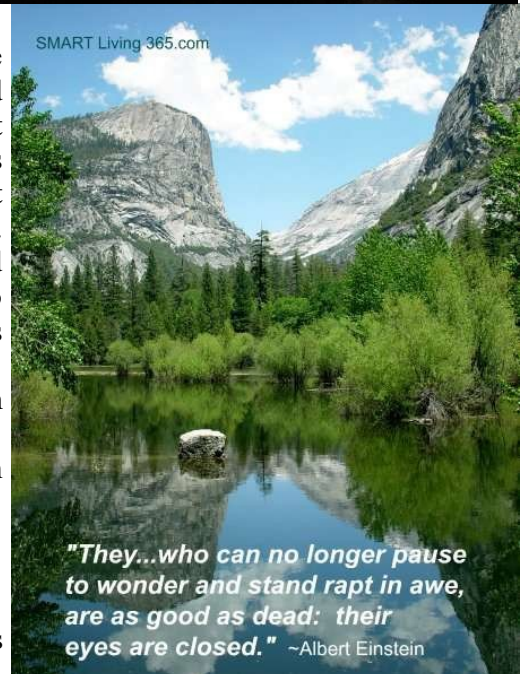
O God, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers.

(Collect for Pentecost)

My Dear and Precious Friends,

As we celebrate Pentecost this weekend, we reflect on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit which are poured out into our lives, the gifts of Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, Wonder and Awe. But a gift given has no impact unless it bears good fruit. Love is the Cornerstone Fruit of the Holy Spirit. Love is not merely an emotion or a human endeavor, but a divine characteristic and the foremost "fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians describes the discernible evidence of the Holy Spirit's active presence and transformative work in a believer's life. Galatians 5:22-23, lists Love first among the attributes that constitute the fruit of the Spirit: This placement underscores love's foundational importance in Christianity. The love spoken of here is to be understood as a selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love, mirroring God's own love for humanity. It is a love that transcends personal feelings or worthiness of the recipient. Saint John teaches us that God is love (1 John 4:8), and therefore, this fruit is a direct manifestation of God's own character being cultivated within the believer. This love is not generated by human effort alone but is a divine gift, nurtured by abiding in Christ and yielding to the Holy Spirit. It empowers believers to love God more deeply and to extend that love to others, including neighbors and even enemies, thereby fulfilling the core commandments of Jesus. Key characteristics of this spiritual fruit of love, often elaborated upon in passages like 1 Corinthians 13, include:

- Patience and Kindness: Enduring with others and treating them with compassion.
- Selflessness: Not being envious, boastful, proud, or self-seeking.
- Forgiveness: Not keeping a record of wrongs.
- Truthfulness: Rejoicing with the truth.



- Perseverance: Always protecting, trusting, hoping, and persevering.

Love as a fruit of the Holy Spirit is the tangible expression of a Spirit-filled life, a supernatural outpouring that shapes a believer's character, actions, and relationships, serving as a primary indicator of true discipleship, bringing the joy of the Gospel to the ends of the earth!

In Awe and Wonder of the Power of God's Love and Divine Mercy,
your friend and brother always,

Father Ralph