

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Aug 19th 2016

The Greatest Commandments

Like a crowd betting on the next race, they circled Jesus to put him to the test. Lawyers, teachers, and priests, they would snare the carpenter's son. They were educated and respected. Jesus brushed aside the trap. Like Ezekiel, he opens his mouth and our dry bones rattle.

The words are simple. We are born for love. We find the source of our being in love. Not just friends, family, and countrymen, but strangers and even enemies are my neighbor. Loving doesn't deny the self; it brings me home.

Simple words can confound us. We who are organized, articulate, and on task can lose sight of the big picture. Suddenly it is we who lay in pieces on a great plain waiting for the wind to blow. Listening, his words knit us together.

Those testing Jesus are skilled at arguments and strategy. They could cite evidence, debate issues, and create dilemmas. But they lose sight of the truth that directs reason. They did not try to understand. So their sculpted words disappear in the wind.

Often we grow tired of contests and controversy. Wary of being pounced on, we draw the wrong conclusion: stop thinking. Thinking becomes just another way to win. But we can no more stop thinking than stop singing.

Learning to think is like learning to love: it takes us into the world and closer to you.

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