



SAINT MARGARET  
PARISH

30<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time  
Cycle A  
Rev. Mr. Steven Roth

I'd like to tell you about something that happened to me a few days ago. I was in our worship space with a few friends and as you would expect, we were talking about our religion. When all of a sudden, this guy walked in. As soon as I saw Him, I recognized who He was although I never had met Him before. He wasn't dressed too well and I don't think He even had any formal education, but I had heard of Him because He was known for having quite an opinion, let's just say, a very eccentric opinion about our faith.

Well, I'll be honest, I was feeling quite confident and wanting to show off. I thought ... let me have a shot at this guy. Let's see how He responds to my question. So I asked Him, "what is the most important commandment to follow?" As soon as I asked the question, I could barely contain my laughter inside. I thought, let's see how He will answer this one. We have 617 rules in our Torah, good luck explaining which one is most important.

But then came His answer. The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul. Before I could even respond He added...and love your neighbor as yourself. What could I say to that? How could I respond? What did I say you ask? I said nothing. I was silent.

Now I know what you are thinking. But before you sit there with your arms crossed thinking that I missed the obvious way to answer...think about it. Is it really most important to love God and neighbor?

To love God with your whole heart and soul...that means loving God even when things are not going the way we want or expect. That means loving God even in the midst of illness, pain, struggles in relationships and school. It means loving God even when we call upon Him and at times feel He is not listening or helping.

Or to love our neighbor. His answer wasn't "like your neighbor." Instead, it was "love your neighbor." Liking is easy, but loving...that's a different story. Loving requires action. To love someone means we take responsibility when someone is in need and never qualify our care for them based on the way we think they should live their lives. And neighbor...His answer didn't just mean the people who live near us or even our family and friends. "Neighbor" means everyone. Neighbor means people of every faith, nationality and color.

So loving God with our whole heart and soul and our neighbor as ourselves. Is that really most important? Ah...I see. Your answer is the same as mine was. SILENCE. Well maybe in our silence today we might use the time to consider whether this really is the most important. Is it the most important to love God and neighbor? If it is, do our lives reflect that it's most important?