

So... This is a weird Sunday. Not only do we have the lessons appointed for the Sunday before Ascension to deal with, this is also Rogation Sunday – and it's memorial day weekend to boot!

Lots of themes to choose from: Some themes are imposed on us by the secular calendar. Some themes are a function of the timing of Easter. All of them are worthy of comment. If I were to try to address all of them from the pulpit, you'd be sitting there for a while. But there's good news: We'll deal with the Rogation Sunday message in the liturgy after the worship service.. We'll acknowledge the significance Memorial day in the Prayers of the People and I followed that theme up with a "Saints Alive" article.

And that leaves us with the simple bottom line of today's lessons:

Think about this: Jesus was about to die. He knew that and He knew Judas would betray him and that he would be crucified the next day. This was his last opportunity to teach the disciples or to tell them something that might help them with the time to come. What would he say? Would he tell them once again of his resurrection to come? Would he tell them a parable that reinforced their faith in God's ultimate sovereignty? Would he reveal some hidden secrets of God's plan for the end of time?

Of all the things he could have said he said, "*Love one another.*" Of all the hidden knowledge he could have revealed to them, of all the spiritual depths he could have sounded, he chose to remind them to love one another, as he had loved them.

Pretty simple – pretty basic -- and a good reminder for a people who love the complex -- who glory in organizational nightmares. A reminder to strip away all the complexities and additions to life and remind ourselves what is most important. What is more basic to the Christian's faith and life than love? That is what it all boiled down to: "*Love one another.*"

That's what all of this is supposed to be about.

Isn't that great?

When things get complex and there's lots to do and there are committees and commissions and task forces and agendas to deal with and to understand – when all is said and done, it's about loving one another – and if it doesn't serve that goal in some way... Well, it is of questionable utility.

Bottom line: The most important message Jesus gave us – at the most important time in his ministry – when he knew this was his last chance to give his followers marching orders:

Love one another.

Love one another.

Please open your hymnals to Hymn No...