



# REFLECTIONS

April 22, 2018

**Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. "**

*John 14:6*

## Remnants, Temptation, and Innocence

Morning readings and devotions often plant thoughts I feel called to share. Recently the words for the day were remnants, temptation, and innocence. *Remnants* of peoples like the Old Testament Israelites are like bridges linking the past with whatever lies ahead. The bridge we could name *Remember* and the road ahead might be called *Temptation*. The destination is a place named *Innocence*, the place it all began.

Our journeys through this life began with *Innocence*. Few recall being there or leaving its city limits. Memories of it, if any, are buried deep in the mind's archives, covered with scars, and battered by bruises of *Guilt* making *Innocence* a place in the past.

*Guilt* is a place just outside of *Innocence*. *Temptation* leads into this almost boundless place where the road becomes like a giant roundabout encircling it. Eve first forged the route that today is lined with theaters showing movies about *Innocence* lost and *Guilt* suffered. All along the thoroughfare there are sporting events to watch, games to play, parties to attend, and so many other things to see and read and hear that they become perfect distractions to hide from the pains inflicted by *Guilt*. But everyone following *Temptation* into *Guilt* has something to hide.

Some people try to hide by being alone. Others choose to hide among other people; while many hide by pretending they are someone they're not. But everyone is hiding something. And all those activities along *Temptation's* highway capture so much attention that one forgets to look for the only exit to freedom. *Remnants* are the ones who *Remember* where it is—the ones who tell about it—the ones who remind us:

*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.* (Deut. 6:4-9)

With such reminders, *Remnants* try to direct us away from the road that leads to *Guilt*, and they try to help us find the single exit, too often ignored or overlooked, that leads back to *Innocence*. The exit sign reads, *The Way*. Once taken, there is only one stop to make before reaching *Innocence* again. It's a place where all the imperfections and shame from *Guilt* are washed away.

The stop is named *Jesus*.

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard* +

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