

A nighttime photograph of a cityscape, likely Seoul, South Korea, featuring a prominent bridge over a river. The city lights are reflected in the water, and a tall tower is visible in the distance. The title text is overlaid on a dark rectangular box with a yellow border.

# **Bridging the Unbridgeable Chasm: Beyond Polarization**

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**Fr. Ron Rolheiser. OMI**



## *Love in a Time of Hatred - Some Commandments for the Long Haul*

### Outline ...

- I. Some “Gathering Hymns”
- II. The “Unbridgeable Chasm” in Luke’s Gospel
- III. Living in a Time of Hatred – The Air We Breathe Today
- IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul



## I. Some “Gathering Hymns”

- When reacting to a bad opinion? Don’t ask, in what way is this wrong? But in what way is this right? (Roosevelt Montas)
- Moral courage is not standing up for your own side, but standing up for those who are not from your own side. (Arthur Brooks)
- When Jesus says “love your enemy” it means relate to him notwithstanding your feelings. (Thomas Aquinas)
- Don’t argue with hatred. (Arthur Brooks)
- How well is hatred working out for you? (Arthur Brooks)
- The question is: How to love one’s enemy even while one’s life stands in opposition to him? (Daniel Berrigan)
- It is hard to love as God loves! (Leah Perreault)





## II. The “Unbridgeable Chasm” in Luke’s Gospel (16, 19-31)

- What is that “chasm” in essence?
- Why is it “forever” unbridgeable?
- That “chasm” today?



### III. Living in a Time of Hatred – The Air We Breathe Today

- No bridge between or among us in society, our politics, our churches, or our family tables, rather ...
  - Polarization
  - Hatred
  - Contempt
  - Demonization
  - Ideological camps
  - A billion information channels – and the ‘Tower of Babel’ syndrome
  - A loss of a common sense of morality
  - A loss of a common sense of truth



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 1. Resist the temptation of win this battle with better apologetics and rational arguments.

- Cardinal Newman's years-long argument with his brother and his eventual realization
- The issues here are more issues of
  - Emotion
  - Self-protection
  - History and wound

And will not “won over” by better arguments



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 2. Resist becoming contemptuous

- At the root of our present problem lies contempt
  - Contempt is disgust plus anger
  - Contempt is the worst thing we can offer each other
  - Contempt in a marriage is what leads to divorce
  - Turn off the influences that inflame contempt. (Arthur Brooks)





## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 3. Tell the truth – no matter how inconvenient and painful

- The Gospels on the dangers of lying
  - The unforgiveable sin against the Holy Spirit
  - John's version of this simple - truth-telling as the opposite of blaspheming the Holy Spirit
  - Satan as the “Prince of Lies”
- Holding to the truth no matter how inconvenient and painful
- Holding our moral ground in charity





## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 4. Never, never bracket the essentials of all fruitful dialogue – “charity, respect, graciousness”

- The temptation to give ourselves sacred permission to bracket these
- Their non-negotiability



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 5. Have a virtue that is deeper than that of the Scribes and the Pharisees

- The core invitation in the Sermon on the Mount
- What it calls us to
  - To forgive someone who has hurt you
  - To bless someone who has cursed you
  - To forgive a murderer
- The litmus test for what ultimately makes for
  - Love – What does love ask of me now?
  - A “practicing Christian”



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 6. Be rooted in Jesus and not out in ideology

- The difference between speaking out of the gospel and speaking out of an ideology
  - A story
  - The struggle with this on both sides of the ideological spectrum
- The struggle to distinguish these
  - Theoretically
  - Emotionally
- Our struggle with political correctness, of accepting something as correct because it comes with a politically correct label.



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 7. Let hospitality be your main weapon

- A story
- The ultimate means towards reconciliation and understanding – being good neighbors.



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 8. Offer space for disagreement and anger

- The sensitive person's fear of anger and the insensitive person's lack of fear of anger
- The temptation in the face of anger
  - For the sensitive person - Walking away, separation, emotional apartheid
  - For the insensitive person – aggression, fight, subdue the other
- Creating space for disagreement and anger.



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

9. Reach across the dividing line to “wash each other’s feet”
- Jesus at the Last Supper in John’s Gospel
  - The meaning of this gesture
  - What empowered Jesus to do this?
  - How do we imitate that?
  - Being “compassionate” as our heavenly father is compassionate.



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 10. Know that some demons are cast out only by “prayer and fasting”

- An invitation from Jesus that is not just a pious line.
- Pray to be freed of contempt



## IV. Some Commandments for the Long Haul

### 11. Never forget the power of banter and humor – as an aspect of love

- The concept of love in classical Greece – six components
  - *Eros* – infatuation and attraction
  - *Mania* – obsession
  - *Asteismos* – *playfulness & banter*
  - *Storge* – *care*
  - *Philia* – *friendship*
  - *Agape* – *altruism*
- *The place of playfulness and banter – when healthy*
  - *A part of love that provides the “grease” for community life*
  - *A part of love that helps deflate pomposity*
- *Its danger when overdone – and the danger when it is absent*