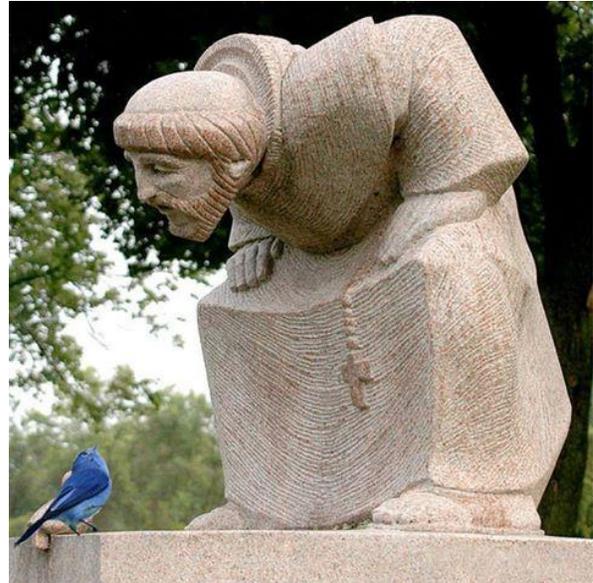


The Foolishness of God

Third Sunday of Lent, Year B

Perhaps no one embodies the foolishness of God more than St. Francis of Assisi. [Sean Fitzpatrick](#) writes, "*St. Francis' extremism may have appeared wild, but it rendered the multitude of stars and beasts his brothers and sisters, every peasant a king, and every stone a building block for a holy edifice. St. Francis' earthly extremism, his holy folly, was characterized by a heavenly optimism and the freedom and felicity that comes with being a fool for Christ's sake.*"



As a reflection on St. Francis of Assisi and the foolishness of God - where the highest of realities can be witnessed in the lowest of forms - the readings for the Third Sunday of Lent extend an offbeat, St. Francis-like invitation to flip all the wisdoms of the world, and discover, instead, the happiness of simplicity, the pleasures of charity, and the richness of poverty -- the gifts of Lent.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:22-25

People of God:

For while the Jews call for signs and the Greeks look for wisdom, here we are preaching a Messiah nailed to a cross.

To the Jews, this is an obstacle they cannot get over, and to the Greeks it is madness – but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God.

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

For all the readings for the Third Sunday of Lent click [here](#).

FOR REFLECTION

1. Stephen Colbert, the late night talk show host, once [described](#) his alter ego as a fool and defined "*foolishness for Christ*" as the willingness "*to be wrong in society, or wrong according to our time, but right according to our conscience as guided by the Holy Spirit.*" As an LGBTQ person, how has God's foolishness animated you? Where have you taken risks to follow your conscience and where have you let your conscience be silenced out of fear or feebleness? How have you felt in both situations?
2. To be a "*holy fool*" can mean that we do not need to pretend to be anything other (or better) than who we are--that we ought to revel in the innate colors of our identity and

trust in God's design for our uniqueness. As an LGBTQ person, how do you play the "holy fool?" Does doing so free you to espouse your true identity? What images of yourself do you protect or promote to cling to the good regard of others, or perhaps to be prudent, but which distract you from your divine uniqueness?

3. In today's first reading (Exodus 20:1-17), God offers the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, saying: *you shall have no other gods besides me; you shall not carve idols for yourselves; you shall not utter the name of God in vain; remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy; honor your mother and your father; you shall not commit murder nor adultery; nor shall you steal, bear false witness or covet.* Reflecting on this wisdom of God, how would you draft a modern-day Decalogue for either yourself or the LGBTQ/ally community? How will your Decalogue be life-giving, given signs of our times?
4. How do you interpret Jesus' actions against the moneychangers/merchants in the Temple described in today's Gospel? This episode is traditionally referred to as the "cleansing of the Temple" (John 2:13-25). In 1 Corinthians 6:19 it is written, "You must know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is within you - the Spirit you have received from God." What might be new ways to declutter or cleanse the sacred spaces within you to be an authentic temple of the Holy Spirit?
5. In the first reading we are introduced to the wisdom of God; in the second, the foolishness or weakness of God, and in the Gospel, the anger of God. As an LGBTQ person/ally, how do you visualize God? Has your image of God remained constant or has it changed? If it has changed, in what ways has it done so and what brought about the changes? As a community, how and where have we used God's wisdom, God's foolishness and God's anger to advance LGBTQ identity, rights, and equality?

PRAYER

Psalm 19: 8-11

YHWH, you have the words of everlasting life

Your law, YHWH, is perfect; it refreshes the soul.
Your rule is to be trusted; it gives wisdom to the naïve.

Your purposes, YHWH, are right; they gladden the heart.
Your command is clear; it enlightens the eye.

Holding you in awe, YHWH, is purifying; it endures forever.
Your decrees are steadfast, and all of them just

They are more precious than gold, than the purest of gold,
and sweeter than honey, than honey fresh from the comb.



Unity