

32C 2019 SML
LK 20:27-38

This evening's/morning's gospel is one of those, what I call, "for crying out loud gospels." Why? Because I can only imagine what Our Blessed Lord was thinking when the Sadducees asked such an asinine question, which Luke 20:20 puts into context:

Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor.

They wanted Jesus to look foolish. But then again, sometimes faith is an exercise in what non-believers consider foolish.

- ✓ Noah looked foolish building a boat in the middle of the desert.
- ✓ Moses looked foolish demanding Pharaoh to let God's people go.
- ✓ Moses looked foolish a second time raising his staff over the Red Sea.
- ✓ And he looked foolish a third time promising meat to eat in the middle of the wilderness.
- ✓ The Israelite army looked foolish marching around Jericho blowing trumpets.
- ✓ A shepherd boy named David looked foolish bring a slingshot to sword fight.

- ✓ The Magi looked forward tracking a star to Timbuktu.
- ✓ Peter looked foolish getting out of a boat in the middle of the Sea of Galilee.
- ✓ And Jesus looked foolish wearing a crown of thorns.

But the results speak for themselves:

- ✓ Noah was saved from the flood.
- ✓ Moses led the exodus out of Egypt
- ✓ The Red Sea was split.
- ✓ Quail in abundance in the wilderness.
- ✓ The walls of Jericho came tumbling down.
- ✓ David defeated Goliath.
- ✓ The Magi discovered the Messiah.
- ✓ Peter walked on water.
- ✓ Jesus was crowned the King of Kings.

So what's the moral of the story: If you are not willing to look foolish, or to put it in more pragmatic terms, if you are not willing to take a risk . . .

- ✓ If you're not willing to step out of the boat, you'll never walk on water
- ✓ If you're not willing to circle the city, the walls will never fall
- ✓ If you're not willing to follow the star, you'll miss out on the greatest adventure of your life!

Last week, I preached on the risk that Zacchaeus took climbing a tree. He risked looking foolish to see Our Blessed Lord, and overcame the risk of being ridiculed. Yet without that risk, Zacchaeus would have returned to the same rotten, shallow life of cheating and tax collecting that sent him climbing the tree in the first place.

This weekend is the second of two “Called by Name” weekends when we will ask young men to take a risk with Our Blessed Lord, to consider a vocation to the priesthood. In the pew are cards for you to complete. Last week, Father Roy and I encouraged all of you to look around and submit names of young men, ages 16-40ish, who you think has the qualities to be a good priest. So if you took a card last week, be sure to drop it in the collection basket. If you forgot your card, complete another and drop it in the basket. Put as much info about the young man as you know. I will probably be able to flesh out the rest from our parish census database.

This program has been implemented in more than a few dioceses in the country and it has been very successful. A mini “Called by Name” was test piloted in Mercer County earlier this year. Pastors, youth ministers and directors of religious education programs were asked to recommend young men in

their parish who are high school and college students. A list of 90 young men was submitted to the vocation director. He in turn invited these 90 to a vocations evening, which included Mass and dinner with the bishop and about 8 priests. Thirty accepted the invitation, and of the 30, 20 indicated at the end of the evening they were interested in discerning a vocation to the priesthood. So it works!

Following Our Blessed Lord in such a public way as a priest takes some guts. I've met a few men from the parishes where I've served who admitted to me they should have at least looked into the priesthood, but either no one encouraged them, or they didn't have the guts to take that first step. Hopefully this program will help young men at SML to take the first step.