

9 OT Wednesday 2020  
Mark 12:18-27

This 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, "In heaven, whose wife will she be? After all, all seven married her." Luke 20:20 puts the question 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 bringing 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.
- ✓ Zacchaeus looked foolish climbing a tree
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Zacchaeus' life took a 180 turn around.
- ✓ 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!

During the pandemic, people are not themselves. People are quick to negate, who outside of a pandemic, probably wouldn't have. A few have questioned why we need to read the list of names of those who are diagnosed w, died from coronavirus, or are helping with the relief effort. Any maybe I look or sound foolish praying for the same persons. One said, "God knows who we are praying for." Another said, "I timed it. 8 minutes 26 seconds."

I began this list at the beginning of the pandemic, taking the idea from our annual 9/11 memorial practice of reading the names of those who died, and those who helped in the relief effort. I have been thanked many times for taking the time to read the Masses. So many say, "Never forget" 9/11, yet so many have. To my knowledge, no one has been upset that we

take the time to pray for the victims and the heroes of 9/11. In fact, there are always thank yous in the handshake line 9/11 memorial weekend.

Similarly, the longest list that takes most of the time is praying for the heroes who are still on the front lines and putting their safety at risk with every shift they work. And now, those working in Philadelphia hospitals not only need to deal with the terror of coronavirus in the hospital; they need to deal with the terror to and from the hospital with the rioters. Therefore I think the time is well spent. Not so much that God knows who we are praying for, but those being prayed for, know they have not been forgotten, are being prayed for, and are most grateful. More than a few have emailed and thanked me, knowing they are prayed for, by name, every day, at SML.

I'll close with a prayer that I concluded my third letter to parishioners as it applies here, when something or someone may appear foolish for their faith.

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when our schools close remember those that have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those who have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love during this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other.

Let us find a way to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbor.

Amen.