

We proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles

When I was much younger, as I was driving to work, I had to stop at a red light.

I thought that since I was running early, I would stop by my girlfriends house and visit her. Once that decision was made, my thoughts were not about traffic, or the light, or getting to work for I was consumed with her.

Now I could get there two ways. I could go straight and turn left a couple of blocks up, or I could turn left at this intersection. I was thinking pretty hard about it, when I made the decision to turn left, and so that is what I did.

Now the police officer who had been behind me all along was totally stunned that I had turned left on a red light. I know that because he told me so when he pulled me over. (Pause)

Love is like that. It prompts us to do some things without always thinking through our actions or weighing the consequences of those actions.

After 30 + years married to that same girlfriend, I hope I still have lots of these foolish things left to do.

(Short Pause)

Today's second reading mentions that Christ Crucified is **foolishness** to the unbelievers. Now, we know that foolishness is a **human** trait. God cannot act foolishly, it's not possible. What St. Paul is telling us is that God's wisdom is **so superior** to ours, that the things He does that **we cannot understand** can seem foolish, yet they are far more wise than even our **highest** wisdom. But, so that we may begin to see the immensity, the LAVISHNESS of God's love, we can sometimes best grasp it in the light of a **sense** of foolishness by human standards . God is just too big to fit into our brains without that kind of help!

All of that being said, that does not mean that there is no similarity between us and God. The foolishness that prompted me to drive through that red light was a desire to see, a longing to be with a person that I loved.....it was motivated by love. **(PAUSE)**

God is always - motivated – out - of - love. ....Always.

In our first reading today, God gives us the Ten Commandments.

**He did not give them because He is legalistic, not because He is demanding, not because He wants to keep us under His thumb,**

**He did it out of love.**

God knew that without these foundational principles, Love of God, Love of Self and Love of Neighbor, we would **not only** be miserable, we would be less than what He intended us to be. We would be less than authentically human. We would be less than the Image of God in which we are created.

**(PAUSE)**

Yet the Ten Commandments, *given out of love*, **do have a sense** of foolishness about them.

They were foolish in that we..... left to our own limited abilities, are totally and completely incapable of keeping them, much less, living them.

And – God – knew - it!

He knew that we could only follow those commands if we **lived** them out of love .....and we humans *did not then* and *do not now* have the **unaided ability**

- to love that greatly,
- to love that selflessly,
- to love that unconditionally.

Not only did we lack the capacity to love like that, we lacked the example.

Since the fall of Adam, there was no one, not Moses, or Elijah,.....not ANYONE, who could fulfill the precepts of these laws.

All humankind, like the Israelites in Egypt, was doomed to live in slavery to sin and to our own desires.

And so, God is **moved** from eternity to an unprecedented act of love. We recall that love in our great Easter Prayer the Exultet when we sing of the Father : **“to ransom a slave, you gave up your Son”**

**God freely** entered into our **humanity**, so that **we** might be **ransomed from death and slavery** and so that we might **know** his great love for each of us as a model of the love **we** are to live.

## **(PAUSE)**

In the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus purged what was not only bad for the Temple, but destructive of the persons in the Temple, indeed destructive of all of humankind. For He saw in the activities there a violation of every principle of the Commandments.

It was enacted in anger, yes, but it was **motivated** by love.

In referring to His **very... human... body** as a **temple**, we are shown that ours is one as well.

Not only our bodies, but all of creation is His Temple.

We are called, by virtue of our Baptism, to cleanse the temple. To cleanse it from oppression, tyranny, malice, hatred, injustice, hunger, poverty, homelessness and all other sins against love.

But we must start with the temple of **our bodies**, for many of those sins reside there in one form or another and to one degree or another.

The Season of Lent should remind us of that. It should also enable us to renew that mission.

It's a **huge** calling..... And it is not easy..... It isn't **meant** to be.

But since the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we do not have to do this by ourselves. We are no longer **unaided**. (Pause)

- We have the example of Jesus Himself.
- We have the examples of the Saints who have gone before us.
- We have the Traditions and the teachings of His Church to guide us.
- And we have the grace and power of all seven Sacraments to nourish us and encourage us.
- And we have one another

**(Pause)**

Lent can also be an example of **what we might** call the loving foolishness of God .....in this way:

Lent is a season of **risks** and **hope**, but it is **God** who takes the **greatest risks!**  
**Why?** To give us the **greatest hopes**.

God takes the **risk** of showing himself in His *mercy*, and in His *Humility* in becoming man and dying His **Sacred and Sacrificial Death**, in the **hope** that we will simply say “yes” to Him.

**God - risks - it - all**, everything He is, everything He has for the love of us, in the **hope** that He might live in us, love in us and **love - through - us**.

There is much about ourselves we can find unlovable, and Lent can be real effective at bringing that out, yet God loves us unto death.

He loves us unto Calvary.

And that much sacrifice, that much pain, that much suffering, that much.....**Loving** for the sake of us who are **so sinful**, so....so NOT GOD can seem foolishness to us,.....especially to those who have yet to experience this kind of love.

**(PAUSE)**

In all this talk about love.... and.... foolishness...and...sacrifice,

Can we be wise enough to respond to God?