

Easter Day, Yr A, 042411
All Saints Episcopal Church

In the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

There is a four-fold blessing that comes from the Franciscan order, which we have used from time to time here at All Saints. The fourth part of that blessing says, "May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done." Every time I hear it or say it or even think about it, I think about many of the things we do here to try to make a difference - things that might be considered foolish to some people; not that what we do is silly or irrelevant, but what we do might not be what some people think is seemly or proper for a church.

But if I really ponder that last part of the blessing, it occurs to me that foolishness has way more to do with who we are as the people of God than it has to do with who agrees with what we do. The people of God are foolish? Really? So I thought I'd better see what foolishness really means.

Foolishness: ridiculously unreasonable; unsound; having no rational or orderly relationship to human life; having no **meaning**; *especially* : lacking any significance. **Foolish** implies the character of being or seeming unable to use judgment, discretion, or good sense.

Of course! This whole God thing - this history of God's creation of the world - the creation of humankind - of setting us free to choose for ourselves - of saving us from ourselves when we make bad choices - of sending Godself in human form to save us from ourselves once and for all - this whole thing is absolute foolishness! It is ridiculously unreasonable! Unsound! It is utterly irrational and disorderly! Some might even consider that God - in all these acts - is totally off God's rocker!!

But it is exactly in God's foolishness, in God's ridiculous unreasonableness, in God's disorderliness, that we are most aware of God's love for us and the entire world God created. How foolish to think that God could lean down and scoop up a handful of mud and turn it into a human being! How unreasonable to think that if the powers of empire wanted to kill all the Hebrew boy babies, that simply by putting a little lamb's blood on the doorpost would protect them from being slaughtered! What kind of irrational act is it to send your chosen people straight into certain

death by telling them to plunge themselves into the sea - and expect that a poor imitation of Charlton Heston will bring them safely to the other side?

It makes no sense at all, does it?

But God isn't about making sense. God is all about loving us and setting us free to be the people we have been called to be. God sent Jesus in human form to set us free, sure - but a baby human? How silly is that? As an adult, Jesus went around breaking rules, telling stories people couldn't understand, walking on water (how **did** he do that?), telling short little fat guys not to climb trees, and making a lot of people mad. And then his utterly irrational journey on this earth culminated in a disorderly end and an even more ridiculous magic trick called rising from the dead!

Our call now is to be Christ for the world. To love the way Jesus loved. To live the way Jesus lived. To offer hope the way Jesus offered hope. If that means breaking some rules or telling some stories that people don't understand or even making some people mad, well, so be it.

It's called being fools for Christ's sake. It's called continuing the work Christ has begun in the world. Freeing those who are disempowered and displaced by empire. Feeding those who are dying daily from hunger. Helping to provide care for those who suffer from disease. Working for equal education for all children. Improving living conditions where there is no clean water available. Providing hope for those who have lost their own. Offering ourselves as sacrifice for the world.

So, be foolish! Be ridiculously unreasonable! And love others as Christ first loved us and gave himself up for us. Who could imagine that yesterday's grief and sorrow could turn the world upside down the way it has and does?

Such foolishness!

May God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done. Amen.