

The 3rd Sunday of Lent

Today is Sunday the 7 March, the third Sunday of Lent.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing: 'God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.'

As I enter into prayer now, can I forget for a moment how I am seen by the world? Can I bring myself before God who loves me and has chosen me, with all my foolishness and all my weakness?

Today's reading is from St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 1:22-25

For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Paul's language here doesn't sound very respectful to the Jews and to the Greeks, but it's rhetoric, and the point of it seems to be that if what you're looking for is miracles and portents, then Christianity is not to give you that. And equally, if you're seeking philosophy and scholarship, then following Jesus is not going to offer you that, either. If that is what Paul is saying, do you see either of those desires in yourself – the desire that following Jesus will bring you miracles? – or give you some kind of wisdom, understanding, knowledge?

Paul speaks of the Christian message of a crucified Lord, which makes no sense to miracle-seekers and wisdom-seekers alike. To them, it isn't just strange, it's ridiculous, crazy, madness. But is there some way in which it makes sense to you?

As you listen to the words of Paul again, notice what he has to say about what Jesus does offer.

"God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human



strength.” Is that just Paul playing at rhetoric again, or do you see a profound truth in there? Speak to the Lord, now, about that. What is it that you are looking for in him? What is it that he is offering you?

You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.