

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis
Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Other Student Publications

Resources for Ministry

2-14-2018

SA Lenten Devotions 2018 "The Fool" Week 1

Ahren Reiter

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, reitera@csl.edu

Ryan Maser

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, maserr@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/osp>

 Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Reiter, Ahren and Maser, Ryan, "SA Lenten Devotions 2018 "The Fool" Week 1" (2018). *Other Student Publications*. 4.
<https://scholar.csl.edu/osp/4>

This Devotion is brought to you for free and open access by the Resources for Ministry at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other Student Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

LENJEN
DEVOTIONS

THE
Fool
THE
Beloved

A CONCORDIA SEMINARY
STUDENT COLLABORATION
LENT 2018

Introduction

For the first time in over 70 years, Ash Wednesday and Easter fall on Valentine’s Day and April Fool’s Day, respectively. This gives us Christians a relatively unusual opportunity to consider the direct contrast between two very different views of holidays (holy days)—especially since the four holidays provide an interesting mix of being “celebrated” (rightly or wrongly) by church and/or world as sacred and/or secular holidays. In some ways this year we are compelled to make a decision: as Christians, which holiday will we allot more of our time and energy to honoring, and why?

	“Belonging” to only church or world	“Belonging” to both church and world
Sacred	Ash Wednesday	Easter
(Primarily) Secular	April Fool’s Day	Valentine’s Day

As with other times in life we find ourselves in the tension between love and mourning, faith and foolishness. For this reason, the Spiritual Life Committee invites you to join us as we travel the seven weeks from Lent to Easter, exploring themes related to “The Fool and the Beloved.” In these short meditations, various student authors consider the interplay and differences between God’s ways and the world’s ways. Devotions will come out weekly via e-mail for the duration of the season. Special thanks goes to our authors, and to Courtney Koll and those in Creative Services for designing our cover.

During this first week we focus on the theme of “The Fool.” May our God bless your Lenten journey!

Ahren Reiter, Spiritual Life Chair, 2018

Ash Wednesday

February 14, 2018

Seminarian Ahren Reiter, 4th Year

The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. —Ecclesiastes 7:4

This is a bold, counter-cultural statement even in our day. Why would the Teacher in Ecclesiastes assert that the heart of fools is in the house of mirth? Such an upending of conventional wisdom gives us pause and makes us think, which is precisely the point. Considering one's end is an invitation to wisdom. In v. 2 we hear it laid out simply: "[death] is the end of every man." Death, that sobering reality and ultimate leveler, is the problem that demands a solution.

For the fool, making the most of this life and enjoying temporal pleasures to the fullest—trying to remain in the house of mirth, as it were—is the solution. Death is feared and avoided as long as possible. "If you only live once, make the most of your life; don't waste time thinking about death!" the fool would say. The wise, in contrast, takes a different approach. Knowing that he cannot solve death on his own, he fears and trusts God who can.

Such fear and trust in God is not misplaced. As beneficiaries of the far side of Easter, we know that what was once the end for us, death, became the means by which we obtain life. Christ met and submitted to "the end of every man," but refused to stop at that end. He conquered death and opened the way to eternal life, making a new beginning possible for all. Christ broke the power that death has over us, that we might face even it with boldness and confidence, not fear. Just as he arose bodily from the grave, we too will rise to new life.

Because of that confidence—odd, counter-cultural, or even foolish though it may seem—on a day like today we forego the house of mirth, trading our flowers and chocolates for fasting and ashes. And by so doing we make a bold counter-cultural confession to the world that true love has come in the person of Christ, and we invite them to trust in his death and resurrection that they too may have life.

The Fool

Thursday

February 15, 2018

Seminarian Ryan Maser, 1st Year

The wise person has his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I perceived that the same event happens to all of them. Then I said in my heart, "What happens to the fool will happen to me also. Why then have I been so very wise?" And I said in my heart that this also is vanity. For of the wise as of the fool there is no enduring remembrance, seeing that in the days to come all will have been long forgotten. How the wise dies just like the fool! —Ecclesiastes 2:14-16

A quick Google search on "famous American intellectuals" reveals a few of the most revered and inspirational people our country and world has ever seen. People from the ranks of transcendentalists such as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson appear. Civic leaders such as Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks also trickle their way in. Even the mention of names such as Milton Friedman, Noam Chomsky, and Abraham Maslow raise eyebrows in their respective fields of discipline.

One may ask why these names matter for us yet, as they no longer live among us today. Are they and their work not gone and mostly forgotten? The author of Ecclesiastes seems to have a similar concern. In the second chapter of Ecclesiastes, the author identifies several areas of life that are meaningless to those who do not have the hope of salvation. From the self-indulgence of material possessions to the glorification of work to seemingly wise intellect, there is nothing that offers truly secure worth and meaning for life. Indeed, everything a person does and aspires for is meaningless and aimless, destined for failure and waste. The wise find their end just like the fool, dead and easily forgotten.

At the pit of depravity, we look to God. We find that our meaning and purpose is in him. In this season of Lent, we realize that we are the fool who walks in darkness, boasting in our own wisdom and accomplishments. When we look to Christ and his atoning work, we acknowledge our brokenness and worthlessness. In baptism, he makes fools like us his own, as heirs of his eternal kingdom. Our eyes are opened to his life-giving work, as we live in him each and every day.

The Fool

Friday February 16, 2018

Seminarian Ryan Anderson, 4th Year

“But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’” —Luke 12:20

In this section of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is telling a parable which is commonly called the “Parable of the Rich Fool.” The man has a rich and abundant crop due to his good land, but he has nowhere to store his abundance. He tears down his barns and builds larger ones to store all his grain and goods. He then leans back and assures his own soul: “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” The Lord rightly calls him what he is: fool!

The man is a fool because he shows more concern for his own comfort and security than he does for richness toward God. Jesus clearly says that “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” This man was confident in his life because he had to build larger barns to store all his stuff. The fool looks to himself and his possessions for confidence. The wise man instead looks to God and His gifts of righteousness and salvation for confidence.

As we begin the season of Lent this week, some of us will give up things until Easter. Oftentimes, they are simple things: drinking soda, eating chocolate, etc. This rich fool leads us to consider what possessions we have laid up for ourselves. Let us this Lent “be on guard against all covetousness,” lest the Lord should come to us and say, “Fool!” If you were to die this night, who would receive the things that you have prepared for yourself? Let us rather learn this Lent to look continually to the riches of Christ for hope and confidence.