

## Homily for Palm Sunday, 2022

Around fourth or fifth Grade is when parishioners come up with a big smiling on their faces and ask the famous question, “Can God make a rock so big he can’t lift it?”

It is a delightful question. They have reached an age where they are trying to figure things out. They are also interested in God. It is also a riddle. What is the correct answer? With riddles, you have to think about the answer.

In this case, the question assumes there are only two possible answers: Yes or No. But both of those answers are problematic.

God is supposed to be able to do everything. But to answer Yes or No both mean that God cannot do everything. If God can lift everything, then that means God cannot make such a rock. If God can make this big rock, then God cannot lift everything. Since God is supposed to be able to do everything, then – God isn’t God?

Any satisfactory answer to the question is to not answer just Yes or No. And some of those answers are quite long.

The answer I like to give is, “God has already done that!”

“God is pure Spirit. God made everything else that is spiritual and everything that is material. God made human beings. God the Son became a human being. As a human being, he had all of our human limits. His bones and muscles could only lift what humans can lift. So Jesus – who can do everything with rocks because He is God – made rocks that in his humanity he could not physically lift. Isn’t that a great God? He made rocks He could not lift! And that did not take away from His divinity! Instead, it means God is even more amazing!”

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That is one of the first questions people ask as they begin a lifetime of exploration about God. There are many other questions like that which come up, including dealing with human free will, or suffering.

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**In the gospel today, we focus on the Passion and Death of Jesus. This is the Big event that many people end up asking a “God creating a rock He cannot lift” question.**

**The riddle goes like this:**

**“Was Jesus’ suffering and death the only way to save us?”**

**“If there was no other way to save us, then God is limited, and that is a God who is not worthy of my worship.**

**“But if God could have saved us in another way, then God is bloodthirsty to demand His own Son suffer. That, again, is not a God who is worthy of my worship.”**

**And like the riddle of the rock, this question takes more words to answer than it took to ask.**

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**The example that helps me, and I have shared with all of you before, is Firefighters.**

**Parents do not want their children to suffer and die. But parents who love others are proud and honored when their children choose to go into a profession that helps others, even at the cost of their own lives.**

**Our Lord came as a firefighter. God is Love. Christ is God incarnate. Christ is Love incarnate. He died for us in order to save us.**

**We do not know if God could have saved us another way. We only know this is the way God did it.**

**Jesus did not die because His Father demanded some kind of torture. Instead, He paid the debt we could not pay. In a fallen world, love costs. And Christ’s payment is the unlimited riches of Divine Love. Pain was involved because it is painful work to let go of sin. Think of all the images we use for sin, such as slavery, addiction, and bad habits. It takes work to be freed and healed from these.**

**God did not demand suffering. God came to earth, and did the hard work, which was suffering. God did not just remove the cancer, God took on the cancer. God brought us out of the burning building at the cost of being set ablaze Himself. This He did out of Love.**

**God the Son – almighty and immortal – reduced Himself and died – because God is willing to do that for us.**