

Ordinary 12A - 2023

Humor: What God Can't Do

A Sunday school teacher was examining her pupils after a series of lessons on God's omnipotence. She asked: "Is there anything God can't do?" There was silence. Finally, one lad held up his hand. The teacher, disappointed that the lesson's point had been missed, asked: "Well, just what is it that God can't do?" "Well," replied the boy: "He can't please everybody." (by Gary W. Houston from *Cowherding Christians*, CSS Publishing Company)

Giraffes afraid of crossing a waterless two feet deep moat:

Among the many wonders at the world-famous San Diego Zoo is the giraffe compound. Enclosed in a natural habitat are several of these magnificent animals. They are every bit as tall and graceful as one might imagine. But they are far more massive and muscular than expected. Tall somehow seems to imply thin. However, these great beasts are anything but skinny. Their necks are thicker and their legs shorter and more powerful than one anticipates. It is not difficult to see why one kick could send an ambitious lion packing. Yet these massive, stately animals are enclosed in a small compound that seems far too restricting for their size and power. But no cage contains them. There are no bars or walls. There is but a simple, waterless moat, no deeper than the beast's knee, that circles the compound. Freedom is but a mere two steps away. But they are trapped. All of them are. For not one of them will take the risk of stepping down and across for fear of breaking its neck. [Don Martin, *Team Think* (New York: Penguin Books Ltd: 1993), p. 76.] — I wonder how many of us are limited like that by our fears. Fear of rejection... fear of failure...fear of looking foolish...fear of being hurt...fear of being alone... fear of intimacy...fear of being taken advantage of ...fear of change...fear of being criticized. "*Do not fear!*" "*Do not be afraid!*" It is the urgent advice of Jesus to his disciples in today's Gospel.

With or Without People?

A second grader once asked his teacher how much the earth weighed. The teacher looked up the answer in an Encyclopedia. "Six thousand million, million tons," she answered. The little boy thought for a minute and then asked, "Is that with or without people?" Viewed from one perspective, it might very well seem that people don't really matter very much. After all, we are but microscopic inhabitants of a tiny planet orbiting a relatively obscure star in a small galaxy among the billions and billions of stars and galaxies that make up creation. Yet the God of creation has counted the very hairs of our heads. Wow! What a magnificent picture of God. (by King Duncan from *The Love of a Father*, www.Sermons.com)

The Work of the Righteous

In his book, *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman recounts a story of an American soldier in Vietnam. His platoon was hunkered down in the rice paddies locked into the heat of a firefight with the Vietcong. The rice fields in Vietnam are often separated by an earthen beam, and on this day, a line of six Buddhist monks started walking along the elevated beam separating the field where the American soldiers lay hugging the ground and the field where the Vietcong were also crouched in battle. The monks walked directly toward the line of fire, calmly and steadily. They did not look to the left or to the right, they just kept walking. The soldier reported, "It was really strange because nobody shot at 'em. And after they walked over the beam, suddenly all the fight was out of me. It just didn't feel like I wanted to do this anymore, at least not that day. It must have been that way for everybody, because everybody quit. We just stopped fighting." Of course, I cannot say what any of us are called to do right now. I can only say that anyone who chooses to walk with God may well be completely out of step with the expectations of the office, the neighborhood or the family. Sometimes, it seems, God's people are called to walk right through the field of fire, faithfully, sacrificially, loyally, doing what we have been called to do. (by Roger Ray from *When God Won't Be Nice*)

Tom Brown's School Days.

This story of an English boys' school, written in 1857 as a novel by Thomas Hughes, was based on his own experiences as a student of Rugby Boys School. A new boy joined the school. As he got ready for bed the first night, he knelt to say his prayers in a dormitory with twelve other lads. Tom Brown was among them and he was the most popular boy. The other boys were looking forward to making fun of the newcomer. Tom noticed a heavy shoe flying in the air to hit the praying boy. But it missed his head. Laughter and ridicule followed. The incident shook Tom and he could not sleep for some time. He kept thinking of his mother and the prayers she had taught him, prayers he had not said since coming to the school. So, encouraged by the example of the fearless newcomer, the following night Tom also knelt down to pray. The other boys who planned to bully the new boy the second night, immediately noticed what their leader and hero was doing, and they withdrew with respectful silence. Soon, the courage of two boys won the respect and admiration of the entire class. Here is an example of what Jesus taught his apostles in today's gospel to preach the good news without fear. (Mgr. Arthur Tonne). Watch the Movie: <https://youtu.be/s1MK7YEP-kY> & https://youtu.be/nefs_66p6bI