

Whether we call them idiosyncrasies, hobbies, things that make us tick, stress-relievers; some of which we don't mind sharing with the general populace around us, some we'd rather not so much to avoid any potential embarrassment. And, just so we're clear, I did check with Sarah, first, before I make this one public: for her, rocks can do the trick. It may be incredibly mind-numbing for me, but, for her, it works. We can walk up-and-down an entire beach-front, while our dog, Zoey, and I chase after sticks kicking up those very rocks along the way; Sarah could spend an entire day checking every single one of them out.

Now the only time I have ever been fascinated with anything related to such rocks, was when Sarah and I made the trip to the Upper Peninsula in Michigan to Lake Superior. Now, with all due respect to the Great Lake only a few miles from here, Lake Superior is a Caribbean-like blue in comparison, that has you convinced you have reached another part of the world, right in the backyard of the Midwest. Along the shoreline of the deepest and largest of the Great Lakes is a national treasure called Pictured Rocks.

Now, just to give you a glimpse of the "geologic formations of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore [, there are these] 50-200 feet sandstone

cliffs...[that] extend for more than 15 miles along the shoreline. Sea caves, arches, blowholes, turrets, stone spires, and other features have been sculpted from these cliffs over [hundreds of millions of years] by unceasing waves and weather. The name ‘Pictured Rocks’ comes from the streaks of mineral stain that decorate the cliffs. [Even bored-out-of-my-mind-over-rocks me can be blown away by the] stunning colors [that come to life] when groundwater oozes out of cracks and trickles down the rock face. [There are layers of red and orange because of the iron, blue and green through copper, brown and black via manganese, and even limonite white]” (nps.gov). All part of this magnificent tapestry on a side of a cliff overlooking the water, as if the Creation has any kind of voice to offer to the world.

Sarah, of course, still had more in her for the whole rocks thing for that particular trip. So, as we made our trek back down through the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, we had to make a stop in a town along the Lake Michigan shoreline, in a place called, Petoskey. Now, for those of you who know anything about geologic whatever, the Petoskey stone is, evidently, a rather big deal. I don’t get it, but thousands of people do, searching for these corral-draped stones that scientists believe developed from the warm shallow

waters that covered Michigan 350 million years ago. Again, as if the Creation has its own mind-boggling story to tell the world.

I bring such lifeless objects up because Jesus is under the impression that even if you, somehow, silence his most inner-circle of disciples in the midst of holy chaos in Jerusalem; even if you, somehow, get *them* quiet; don't worry, because the stones will shout out, instead. Jesus doesn't go into detail into what, exactly, the inanimate objects would say to the world. It never comes to that, because the disciples are just so overcome with joy, fear, hope, trepidation and plenty more in the entire human emotion spectrum to, in any way, consider shutting up. The stones never have to rise to vocal Gospel proclamation action.

Nevertheless, if, for whatever reason, God deemed it so: that the stones had to, in fact, cry out; such things could speak for the vast history of the universe that is, quite simply, beyond any level of our human comprehension. Granted, amongst us Christians throughout the church universal, we are not, exactly, in agreement with the age of the earth. It's as if we allow the possibility that the earth is older than however many thousands of years, precisely counted back through all the combined works of Scriptures; if we

allow the possibility that this God has been at work for hundreds of millions of years, it just messes everything up for us. We just can't allow that. We need God to be more on our level of understanding. We need God to work in our mode of how we see the world. We just need God to make more sense. The stones, on the other hand, may have a different story to tell.

The stones would shout just how long this God has been at work not in trying to pit Christians against one another in meaningless debates, but just how long this God has been preparing a world to be overcome with love and compassion and an overwhelming beauty that spews from the very surface of the earth that God intimately shaped from the beginning. The stones have a way of not letting us forget just how beyond our comprehension this God truly is not just through geological means, but in the very trenches of our soul, that God has designed the most beautiful work of art of all: the very place that Christ marched into to win us over. He didn't stop at the cross, after all; He went straight into our hearts, and to make absolutely certain that not even that torrential waves of death can tear us apart from the ultimate love dug into the depths of our life forever in Jesus Christ, our Lord. And for that Greatest News of all, we give thanks to God indeed! Amen.