

15th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Cycle B

July 15, 2012 10:30am and 12 noon

Saint Margaret Parish, Bel Air

Zits: A Maturity Moment

Some of us are probably familiar with the comic strip called *Zits*.

Zits is about the upsets of a teenager and the challenges of a parent trying to guide a teenager. In one episode, 15-year-old Sarah is having a bad hair day.

Sarah screams, *"I hate my hair. I should just cut it off and start all over."*

Sarah's mother calmly suggests, *"That's a good idea, Sarah. I know some people who would love to have it."*

Sarah responds, *"Are you kidding? Who would want to be stuck with a whole head of this stuff?"*

Mom then hands Sarah a brochure about an organization called *Locks of Love*. *Locks of Love* makes wigs for children who have lost their hair from chemotherapy.

Sarah reads the brochure and asks, *"So this Locks of Love organization would use my hair to make wigs for kids with cancer?"* Her mom explains, *"Yes, and that way your problem becomes somebody else's solution."*

Sarah just sits there in silence until finally her mom asks, *"Are you okay, Sarah?"* And Sarah says quietly, *"I think I'm having a maturity moment."*

Faith and Maturity

I see today's Scripture readings as calling us to embrace these maturity moments.

In fact, they call us to a life of personal and spiritual maturity. In the gospel, Jesus sends the apostles on a mission.

He instructs them to take very few personal belongings. In other words, they are not to be preoccupied with themselves.

Instead, they are to guide others to what is good and bring personal healing and wholeness wherever possible. In our first reading, the prophet Amos is also focused beyond himself.

Amos is trying to persuade government leaders to take better care of the needy. He does this even to the point of being disliked and unwanted.

Then the underlying point that Saint Paul is making in our second reading is that we are not to be self-absorbed. Instead, he wants us to be looking beyond ourselves at the bigger picture of life – much as her mom was trying to get Sarah to do in the comic strip.

Maturity Moments and Maturity

So the Word of God today calls us to maturity moments and through them to full maturity.

Maturity moments are those experiences when we manage to put aside our own personal needs and problems and desires for the sake of someone else. For example, parents may hold back on buying a car or going out to dinner and watch the spending so that they can provide well for their children.

Maturity moments are those breakthroughs when we realize that we are not the center of the world but only a part of a much larger world. For example, we Americans may realize that we who have so much are really lessened or diminished when billions of people in Third World countries are dying because they lack potable water and enough food and medical care.

And maturity moments are those holy times when our disappointment at what life has handed us gets transformed into gratitude simply for the gift of life itself. For example, instead of going under when things at work aren't as good as we want them to be, we can thank God for life and health and the ability to work in the first place.

Conclusion

So, our prayer today is: may the Lord open our minds and hearts to embrace these maturity moments.

And may these moments form us into a good personal and spiritual maturity.