

The Last Sunday after the Epiphany - Year B
February 22, 2009 - Youth Sunday
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“Puzzle Pieces”

Thanksgiving has always been an important event for my family. Every Thanksgiving my grandmother would get a puzzle. Sometimes they would be 3-D other times they would be thousands of pieces. We would work as a family to put them together. The rule was to not look at the picture while working the puzzle because that would be cheating. I must say this rule was broken a few times, but never the less we really tried to remain pure. Some spent hours others would stop by to put in a piece or two. The puzzle was only complete after days of effort. In many ways today's gospel reading reminds me of working a puzzle.

This reading has a lot to do with the process of growing up. After Peter, James, and John saw the transfigured Jesus Moses and Elijah Jesus ordered them to tell no one of what they saw. This reminds me of the times when we are younger and we feel cheated of information. When we are little we cannot comprehend many aspects of life. Our parents make it so we grow up learning bit by bit. We start out with our ABC's and then we learn small words like I and can. We had to start out with learning our ABC's first to fully understand how to form words. So learning our ABC's is one piece of the puzzle. Entering young adult life there are many times where we do not get the full story. We are left hanging without that piece of the puzzle. We often want to know why. We seem to all want answers and we want them now, but that is not what Jesus wanted for us. He knew that Peter, James, and John had to have more pieces of the puzzle to be able to proclaim the Word of God. He knew that it would all come together in the end. This is much like not being able to look at the picture while working a puzzle. Although we want to look at the picture it is not right. God does not give us the whole picture to look at all at once. Life would be sort of boring that way.

As humans we have a lot to deal with. We have our world around us, personal problems, and various obstacles to overcome. It may seem like a lot at the time, but it is only a piece of the puzzle. Our faith is something that is constantly questioned. We are given a little at a time until we can understand the bigger picture. When we are little we learn about the body and the blood. We sing Jesus loves me and we have a strong faith. Kids have the strongest faith of anyone, possibly because they have not had the chance to question it yet. As we grow older we learn about Adam and

Eve and Noah's ark. As we enter into our teenage years we are given more pieces of the puzzle. We learn about our individual faith. We grow personal relationships with God. There are many times that we just want an answer from God. We want him to just tell us what to do, but we must learn on our own. He is there to guide us. He gives us each as much as we can handle.

Patience is also something that God gave us. If we are patient with life and with ourselves then things will become easier and the picture will unfold before us. In my life I have struggled with patience and truly believing that everything will come together in the end. The biggest example in my life that relates to this passage would have to be wanting to grow up to fast. I was the baby of the family up till about five years ago when my cousin Mary Frances was born. I was constantly reminded that I was the baby. My brother is only a year older, but my older cousins are varying from 4 to 8 years older than me. So, when we would get together at thanksgiving the conversation would always be a couple levels above my understanding. I would always be the first one to go to bed, and no one seemed to want to do what I wanted to do. One thanksgiving in particular I really wanted to go on this Christmas lights show. Well my cousins were in high school at the time and this did not appeal to them very much. We all had to sing Rudolph the red nose reindeer and they would not stop making fun of the song. All of them were laughing and I did not see why. I didn't understand why they had to pick on the song or weren't singing along. So like any 8 year old would I got up and told them to be quiet I wanted to hear the song! I was too young to know that the singer was way off tune and the lights were horrible. While I was amazed by the experience the older people in my family were bored. This seemed to constantly happen to me. I always felt like I was too young. Only in the past few years was I able to join in and feel like I was a part of my family. I finally got all of their jokes and I could understand what they were saying when talking about politics. I no longer was the first to go to bed and I could relate to their life experiences. All it took was some growing up. I think that growing up is the best way to relate to the gospel. The journey of life we take is much like the journey the disciples took in following Jesus. At times they could not understand what is going on, but in time as they got more pieces of the puzzle they began to comprehend.

No one said that working a puzzle was easy. It takes many people and a lot of time. It becomes easier when you have help and guidance. God will guide us and help us in life. Going to church and participating in activities at church is a good way to get all of the pieces of the puzzle. Personally I find my relationship with God grow by working with children. In the church nursery is where you will usually find me. I am constantly being questioned in there by two and three year olds. They will ask about God and it always makes me feel like I am doing a good service. Some of my favorite things are when the parents pick their kids up and the kids will say mommy! I

played with Jesus today! I find answers in my life through the eyes of children. I find my faith grow by working in environments surrounded by children. I even tried to start a youth group within the church to strengthen my relationship with God and try to help other young people strengthen their relationships with God. It worked for awhile, but I had no help in doing this. Most of the people around me just thought that youth group was a waste of time. Sadly my youth group plan failed. This is just an example that not everything works out. Like when you are working a puzzle and you find two pieces that you think should fit together but they don't. You become frustrated and feel like giving up, but if you have patience and give it time you will eventually find that next piece. So, go to church and build a strong relationship with God by allowing him in your life. Be patient and things will be revealed to you. The puzzle will eventually be complete.