

July 10, 2008
Thursday of the Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:

<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

Hosea 11:1-4, 8e-9

Psalm 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16

Matthew 10:7-15

Jesus said to his Apostles: "As you go, make this proclamation: 'The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

In the first reading today from the book of Hosea, God says, "When Israel was a child I loved him, out of Egypt I called my son. The more I called them, the farther they went from me." That seems to be true for our lives as well. In so many grand and subtle ways we are lured by the culture of our day rather than the kingdom of God. I think that we find peace with our straying from God by fixing our eyes on a 'kingdom' that exists in the afterlife rather than the kingdom that is at hand, in our midst—the kingdom we are called to bring to life. The kingdom of God is, as Richard Rohr puts it, is "a reality that breaks into this world, now and then, when people are like God." When love prevails, the Kingdom of God is at hand—even if for a brief moment. It is up to each of us to make this kind of life a reality. It takes people who are ready to surrender their egos for a better way. The world outside the Kingdom of God is the culture of our day. It is a world built on Ego: the need to succeed, the need for power, and the need for recognition to name but a few of the entities we strive for in this world. But the Reign of God is to let go of all our attachments and simply allow God's love to flow through us as Jesus models for us. This gospel encourages us to live as Kingdom people in the Reign of God rather than in the world. It prescribes a life of surrender that engages us in a struggle with all the demons of everyday life: the needs for power, acceptance, bodily comfort...Can we let go enough to walk this path? Are we Kingdom people or people of our present culture?

"People often think of Christian morality as a kind of bargain in which God says, 'If you keep a lot of rules, I'll reward you, and if you don't, I'll do the other thing.' I do not think that is the best way of looking at it.

"I would much rather say that every time you make a choice you are turning a central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long, you are slowly turning the central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow creatures, and with itself.

"To be the one kind of creature is heaven, that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to one state or the other."

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*