

July 11, 2008
Friday of the Fourteenth Week in Ordinary Time
Memorial of St. Benedict

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

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

Hosea 14:2-10

Psalm 51:3-4, 8-9, 12-13, 14 and 17

Matthew 10:16-23

Jesus said to his Apostles: "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves.

I have no idea why this line from today's gospel speaks to me. It sounds a bit unlike the God of love we want to embrace. I remember many years ago, a mother of a young teenage girl who was having difficulty growing up, said to me that her desire was to help her daughter learn the lessons of a self disciplined life without ever having to say no to her. This mother could not tolerate the remote possibility that her daughter might be upset with her if she set any boundaries or limitations on her behavior. I think of that often, as I believe that if we are truthful, we would acknowledge that that is the kind of God we prefer. The kind of God who places no limits on our behavior is incongruent with the words of Jesus today who tells us that a life of discipleship is like being thrown to the wolves. That we will be rejected, ridiculed, even killed for the way we live and the message we bring to the world. "You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved." And so, we must decide. Do we go the route of an easy life longing for the kind of God that makes life 'feel good' or do we surrender to the God that calls us to make a difference in the world at the risk of great loss?

"The road to faith passes through obedience to the call of Jesus... Only he who believes is obedient, and only he who is obedient believes."

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*

What limits or boundaries must I place on my behavior in order to be a disciple of Christ?