

January 2, 2008
Wednesday the Eighth Day in the Octave of Christmas
Memorial of St. Basil the Great

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

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

1 John 2:22-28

Psalm 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4

John 1:19-28

Who is the liar? ¶Whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ.

"I baptize with water; but there is one among you whom you do not recognize, the one who is coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."

Today, particularly in light of the feast we celebrate, the readings speak to me of the ease with which we put Jesus into the background of our life. Now, in this season of Christmas, we are very much aware and focused on the presence of Jesus. We waited through Advent; we celebrated on Christmas and the week after; and we remember each day thereafter. However, as we remember, the presence of Jesus fades more and more into the background of our life. I say 'we' because I believe that this is truth for most of us. I recently heard an interview with Alan Alda in which he told a story about a conversation he had with a friend. He told his friend that he was a hypocrite. He said, " I am a hypocrite. I won't go fishing because I so not like to kill the fish, but I will eat fish. I won't kill them, but it is ok if someone else kills them." I thought of that when I read the first reading of today. I look at my life and I say I believe, yet I read the gospel and find many places where I do not live what I profess. I do not recognize, as in today's gospel, Jesus among us now in our time. I discovered the following quote a number of years ago, but I only learned today that it was St Basil who spoke these words. They are words that I need to remember-- if I want to actually live what I say I believe.

"The bread which you do not use is the bread of the hungry; the garment hanging in your wardrobe is the garment of him who is naked; the shoes that you do not wear are the shoes of the one who is barefoot; the money that you keep locked away is the money of the poor; the acts of charity that you do not perform are so many injustices that you commit."

St Basil the Great (329-379)