

January 9, 2008
Wednesday after the Epiphany

Readings of the day may be found on the following link:
<http://www.nccbuscc.org/nab>

1 John 4:11-18
Psalm 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Matthew 6:45-52

*They were completely astounded. □
They had not understood the incident of the loaves. □
On the contrary, their hearts were hardened.*

There is so much in both readings today that call me to reflection. Yet, what I am most drawn to is the last three lines of today's gospel. There is much in the world that I do not understand. I am sure that, just like the disciples that accompanied Jesus that day over 2000 years ago, I too miss the meaning of much of what is happening around me. Does that mean that my heart is hardened too? It is a difficult concept to take in—that these men who so willingly gave up their 'regular' lives to follow Jesus are described as having hardened hearts. I tend to view them as generous and open to the spirit, even though they did not understand. This seems like a harsh comment. But I cannot ignore it. It is the one line that really stirred something in me. So I must ask myself, what does this mean? How does it apply to my life? And I must pray for the grace to understand what happens in me and around me so that I do not continue to live in darkness. If my heart is hardened, then my prayer is that I might see what I need to see and what I need to change.

The whole message of the Gospel is this: Become like Jesus. We have his self-portrait. When we keep that in front of our eyes, we will soon learn what it means to follow Jesus and become like him. □

~Henri Nouwen