

January 15, 2008
Tuesday of the First Week of Ordinary Time

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

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

1 Samuel 1:9-20

1 Samuel 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd

Mark 1:21-28

The people were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes.

I was struggling with what this passage meant to me as I live each day until I came across this definition by Richard Rohr.

"Real authority is either having the power or giving someone the power to author another, to call another forth, to challenge another and speak truth to another. You have to bind yourself somehow in that relationship. If you're free to pull in and out when you don't like what you hear, you're not going to grow. Who are the only people we're going to entrust ourselves to? People whose lives are laid down for us."

I know that authority comes from my giving consent to another to lead me. It is based on the trust I have that if I surrender to the lead of that particular person, I will be better for it. I believe that Jesus exhibited that kind of presence-- because he appeared to be authentic, people listened and followed him. Who do I listen to today? I am aware that whenever I see a discrepancy between words and action, I stop listening and I stop following. For me, authentic authority requires my agreement to follow. It can never be forced. For me, any call to me to live the gospel, must be supported by a life of radical gospel living in order for me to truly listen and follow. The litmus test for radical gospel living is not a set of rules and regulations, nor is it a claim of authority through position. It is simply living as Jesus lived: allowing oneself to be vulnerable, forgiving, merciful, compassionate, and always seeking peace and justice in all situations ad for all people. Anything less is less than credible.

To whom do I give authority?
Do they call me forth to a live of love?