

Preface of A Saint (2)

Because in the obedience of your saints you have given us an example of righteousness, and in their eternal joy a glorious pledge of the hope of our calling. (BCP 380)

People in today's world of rugged individualism often cringe at the thought of obedience or being obedient. Obedience is believed to be the act of carrying out someone else's commands without question or complaint. And this, we have been taught, is just not the way things are done in today's world.

But a closer look at this word, obedience, reveals a much different picture. This word grew from the Latin root *oboedire*, or *obedire*, which has more of the sense of *listening* with the intention of putting into practice what we hear, more so from willingness than from outside pressure.

St. Benedict's Rule for Monasteries (a standard for over 1,500 years) begins, "*Listen*, my son, to your Master's precepts, and incline the ear of your heart." St. Benedict goes on to say that it is through this labor of obedience (listening and applying the Master's word) that we become united in will with our Father's will. This is the whole purpose of obedience - to understand the love and compassion of God and be willing to shape our life around it.

"The hope of our calling" to God requires us to listen with the ear of our heart. The Master's voice often comes in a tiny whisper as it did for Elijah. (I Kings 19:11-13) Listen for His voice in the little moments of each day as He puts His will in your presence. Let His will and yours become one. This is the source of eternal joy shared by all saints.

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