

THE INVITATION

We live out our daily lives with our relatives, friends and co-workers and the things that happen in our real world. Sometimes we look at it as a humdrum life, the same routines every day and we dream of escaping it. To be rid of the daily boredom, the problems and all the concerns of this world.

As we sit here today I ask you to think about what the word INVITATION implies. Webster defines it as: to ask someone courteously to come somewhere, or to do something; request the participation of or as a CALL- to summon to a specific duty, profession or to awaken (a person). It really does suggest a REQUEST for someone's presence especially as a guest or a participant and also suggests that the decision to come rests with the person invited.

When you receive an invitation it always presents a location and time and what the event is. In the beginning we feel good about being asked, but sometimes we start second guessing it because of what it asks of us....time, travel ,possibly a gift to bring, even the question arises, do I know this person well enough to go?

As we start second guessing we feel our own inadequacies set in. But, if you follow through and you go to the event and possibly take a gift, you may even enjoy it and those you encounter there.

You were invited to make a Cursillo weekend, but the invitation was really to meet your HOST, Jesus Christ in a different location, your heart.

You were challenged and opened to a way that would lead you to the other paths of growth in his Love.

We were invited to climb the Mountain with him as we hear in the Song of Songs (2:8) "I hear my lovers voice, He comes running over the mountains, racing across the hills to me."

You were invited to this Encounter, you did say yes and Jesus is glad you came...and you know this because he is always present when His people gather together in His name.

Jesus gave you the invitation and where has it led you when you were willing to go. It is the same one he gave his first disciples, "Come, follow me." How did you feel about it? There was probably fear as you started out.....Fear of the unknown.....Fear of Failure.....Fear to leave everyone and everything behind.....Fear of pain and suffering.

Yet, we must remember who planted the desire (seed) for us, and that we can choose to accept it or reject it.

The Call to follow Jesus has been place and cannot be removed..we can ignore it, poo-hoo it, claim we are not worthy of it, He didn't really mean me....a thousand and one excuses can be given not to listen to it and not put it into action. But, the seed has been planted, "God's time" not ours.

At that moment in time when we realize we want to accept the invitation, we give ourselves to the call. But, we must go to that place where we can say yes..where we know that He is present..we may resort to go to a physical place..a church..a chapel..our own prayer space..a mountain top, the reality is it must come from within us.

When you respond with simple words like "I am here Lord and I will go with you anywhere" you then open your heart and hands to him and he will take you onto his path to Him. To the place of God... the mountain, like in the Old Testament...Mt Horeb, the place of God.

It may start out like a beautiful spring day much as the disciples shared with him at the Transfiguration. But, our mountain top experience where we hope to have the experience of complete union with Jesus may be a steep climb, maybe it looks like a sheer cliff and we panic. The only way to reach the top is to take the winding paths we are given, and I am sure many of you have walked and may be

walking today.

We also need help along the way. He gives us companions, but we often do not recognize them for what they are..and think we can go it alone. Remember, Pride comes before the fall. It can become the first obstacle on our path up the mountain. Our companions may be actual people who already exist in our lives or someone new, the gift in group reunions and Ultreya's.

As we start to walk with Jesus, everything is going smoothly and you feel his loving presence in your person. Then we have an encounter with the desert, the dry times, when you feel He is absent. There is no feeling of the love (peace-union) from the initial stages and you make excuses not to follow Him up the mountain. You pull away from the companions he has given you and his call, becomes just a passing fancy. Your heart's desire He is a persistent Lover.

Even so, if we call out to him he returns to support us; to care for us and in that we return to "follow Him", until we meet up again with sheer cliffs and say we can't go on. But, remember we said the mountain top can only be reached by winding paths. These paths seem to take us forever to reach the summit, to be fully united with our God. Each turn gives us another challenge, but each turn also gives us growth and insight about the ultimate goal, complete union with our

Savior.

We know he is molding us as "the potter does His Clay", as human beings we continue to undo it by becoming hard, as he continues to wet us down time and time again with His Grace until we become malleable again.

Loneliness is another experience, because we do not actually have a physical presence with Jesus, (except in the Eucharist). It can lead to resentment and bitterness when we perceive others are by our observation going higher faster than we are or have an easier time of it.

Then we see the light again and find him present. And the dark comes again, sometimes we really need to ask the question to ourselves, Who really walked away? Remember its usually us.

We are given times of Grace when we experience God's peace and presence...almost like awakening from the death of winter. Sometimes we need this to open our eyes to beauty and the stirring of love and new life, its a glorious feeling. We rejoice in it and then we are plunged into difficulties again.

The INVITATION was given, we walk it as best we can with our humanity. When we reach the top of God's Mountain (total union with him) we feel that we have

arrived and we will be with him forever. But, this is not His Goal for us. We are sent back down the Mountain, to the world we came from to be His Presence among each other and lead others as companions on their journey.

In closing I ask you to reflect on:

....What have you done after saying YES to His Invitation?

----Did you continue to walk with Him to the Mountain of God?

...Did you bring His gifts to others on your way?

...Or did you decide not to accept the Invitation?

Psalm 42-43

As the hind longs for the running waters,

so my soul longs for you, O God.

A thirst is my soul for God, the living God.

When shall I go and behold the fact of God.

Send forth your light and your fidelity;

they shall lead me on,

And bring me to your holy mountain

to your dwelling place.

Then will I go to the altar of God,

The God of my gladness and joy;

Then will I give you thanks upon the harp

O God, my God.