

Invitation /ɪnvi'teɪʃən/

ORIGIN late Middle English: from French, or from Latin *invitatio*(n-), from *invitare*

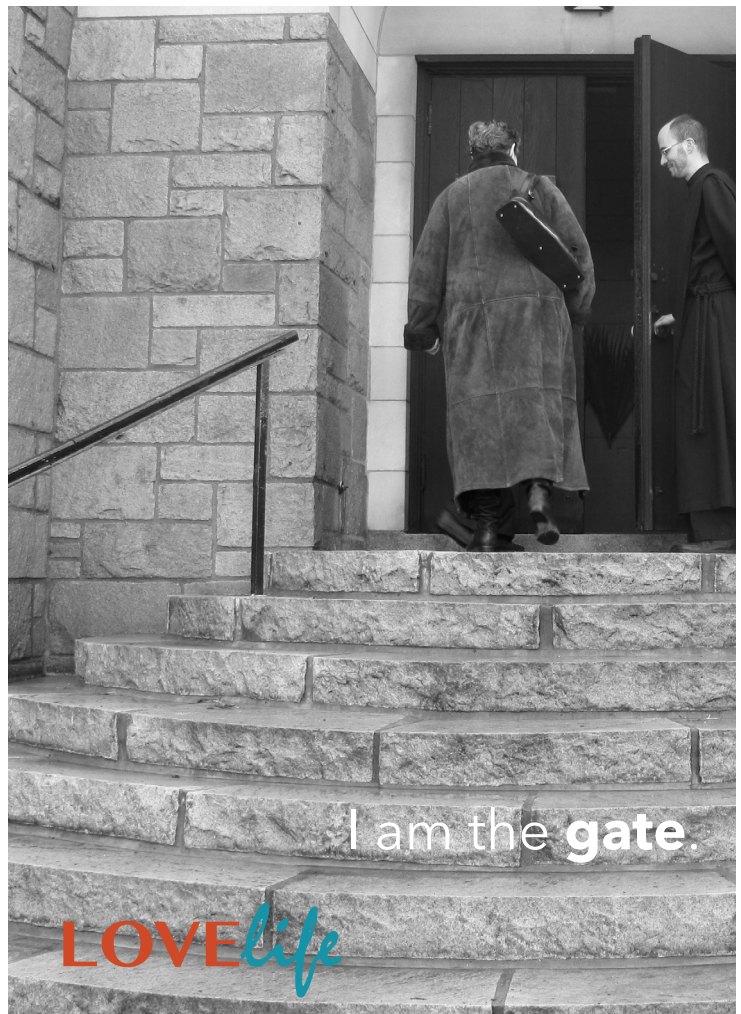
The action of inviting or requesting to come, attend, or take part in something.

In the last days of his life, Jesus gathers his disciples around him and tells them, "I have called you friends." We watch this friendship grow, throughout the pages of John's Gospel, in the very real and challenging love Jesus shares with those friends, from his first invitation that they "Come and see" to his demonstration of love in the washing of their feet at the Last Supper. "I have set you an example," he tells them, "that you also should do as I have done to you." The same love which he shares with the Father, he now shares with them. He asks them in turn to share this love with one another and with the world. "We love," the author of First John tells us, "because he first loved us."

This invitation to intimate relationship crystallizes in John's Gospel around the figure of the "beloved disciple" who appears at the Last Supper, reclining on the breast of Jesus. We find him again later, at the Crucifixion, waiting beside the Cross. Tradition has assumed that this disciple is also the author of the Gospel, John. Whether or not the "disciple whom Jesus loved" is the same person who wrote the Gospel, it is actually most significant that this disciple is never named. Anonymous, the beloved disciple becomes a stand-in for every disciple.

We are all invited to be beloved disciples. Every one of us is invited to step into that privileged place, close to the heart of Jesus, and thus close to the heart of the Father. "For it was you who formed my inward parts," we read in Psalm 139, "you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Knowing ourselves to be beloved by God allows us to share that love with a world in need.

How do we accept this invitation? There is an old story that comes to us from the church at Ephesus, where, legend has it, the beloved disciple lived out his final years. By then he had become quite aged and decrepit, unable even to walk into the church. He had to be carried into the church to preach. And week after week his sermon was one single phrase repeated again and again: "Love one another. Love one another. Love one another." We accept God's invitation to become beloved disciples by the love we share with the world.



I am the gate.

LOVElife

As you pray, allow the image of Jesus as the gate to invite you into discovery: What are the obstacles to abundant life in your experience today? What gates need to be opened? What life still longs to be claimed?

"I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture...I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (John 10:9-10)

Watch the video
Write your answer
www.SSJE.org/lovelife



The Society of Saint John the Evangelist
www.SSJE.org

Invitation 1: Friend

What acts of friendship have you initiated or received this week?

Invitation 5: Intimacy

Sit still until you can hear your heartbeat. What did you experience?

Invitation 2: Beloved

What makes it difficult for you to love?

Share at #lovelife

Comments: [SSJE.org/lovelife](https://www.ssje.org/lovelife)
Facebook: Friends of SSJE
Twitter: #LoveLife #ssje

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Invitation 3: Identity

Can you approach your chores today as a meditation?

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Invitation 4: Play

Be playful today. Write a prayer with a twinkle.

Invitation

The invitation from God is always to come home. To know again just how much God loves you and then to take the risk every day to say, "Lord, here I am. I am yours. I offer my life to you this day. Use me in your service."

- Br. Geoffrey Tristram

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