



Alternative Prayer Service

THE INVITATION

Taken from Oriah Mountain Dreamer's book: **OPENING THE INVITATION**

LEADER: "I sat down to write at my desk in the dim light of the street lamp outside my window. Since I was a child I have written to understand myself and the world, to find the stories that show me the meaning I can make of my life.....

As the words flowed I recognized the voice that has always been there within me: the voice that passionately seeks life's purpose; the voice of the tired heart that longs for real intimacy and deep rest; the voice that asks me to be fully present with it all – the pain and the joy, the beauty and the sorrow, the inner silence and the noise of the world."

SONG – To Dream the Impossible Dream (Man of La Mancha) - YouTube

To dream the impossible dream
To fight the unbeatable foe
To bear with unbearable sorrow
To run where the brave dare not go

To right the unrightable wrong
To love pure and chaste from afar
To try when your arms are to weary
To reach the unreachable star

This is my quest to follow that star
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far

To fight for the right without question or pause
To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause

And I know if I'll only be true to this glorious quest
That my heart will lie peaceful and calm when I'm laid to my rest

And the world will be better for this
That one man, scorned and covered with scars
Still strove with his last ounce of courage
To reach the unreachable star

This is my quest to follow that star
No matter how hopeless, no matter how far
To fight for the right without question or pause
To be willing to march into hell for a heavenly cause

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THE INVITATION: Read Alternately

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living.
I want to know what you ache for
and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are.
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool

for love
for your dream
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't matter what planets are squaring your moon.
I want to know if you have touched the center of your own sorrow
if you have been opened by life's betrayals
or have become shriveled and closed
from fear of other pain.

I want to know if you can sit with pain
mine or your own
without moving to hide it
or fade it
or fix it.

I want to know if you can be with joy
mine or your own.
If you can dance with wildness
and let the ecstasy fill you to the tips of your fingers and toes
without cautioning us
to be careful
to be realistic
to remember the limitations of being human.

It doesn't matter to me if the story you are telling is true.
I want to know if you can
disappoint another
to be true to yourself.
If you can bear the accusation of betrayal
and not betray your own soul.
If you can be faithful
and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty
even when it is not pretty
everyday.
And if you can source your own life
from its presence.

I want to know if you can live with failure
yours and mine
and still stand at the edge of the lake
and shout to the silver of the full moon,
“YES.”

It doesn't interest me
to know where you live or how much money you have.
I want to know you can get up
after the night of grief and despair
weary and bruised to the bone
and do what needs to be done
to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know
or how you came to be here.
I want to know if you will stand
in the center of a fire
with me
and not shrink back.

It doesn't matter to me where or what or with whom
you have studied.
I want to know what sustains you
from the inside
when all else falls away.

I want to know if you can be alone
with yourself
and if you truly like the company you keep
in the empty moments.

PAUSE to reflect:

What “dreams” do you have for today and beyond?

What gets in the way of fulfilling your dreams?....for yourself, for others, for the world?

What is the biggest challenge for you from The Invitation?

What sustains you and empowers you?

What do you like about yourself when you are “in the company of yourself?”

SHARE your thoughts with each other:

SONG: The Climb (Hannah Montana, Miley Cyrus) – YouTube

I can almost see it
That dream I’m dreaming but
There’s a voice inside my head sayin,
You’ll never reach it.
Every step I’m taken
Every move I make feels
Lost with no direction
My faith is shaking but I
Got to keep trying
Got to keep my head held high

There's always going to be another mountain
I'm always gonna want to make it move
Always gonna be an uphill battle
Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose
Ain't about how fast I get there
Ain't about what's waiting on the other side
It's the climb
The struggles I'm facing
The chances I'm taking
Sometimes might knock me down but
No, I'm not breaking
I may not know it
But these are mountains that
I'm going to remember most, yeah
Just got to keep going
And I,
I got to be strong
Just keep pushing on, cause
There's always going to be another mountain
I'm always gonna want to make it move
Always gonna to be an uphill battle
Sometimes I'm gonna have to lose
Ain't about how fast I get there
Ain't about what's waiting on the other side
It's the climb (yeah)
There's always gonna be another mountain
I'm always gonna wanna make it move
Always gonna be an uphill battle
Sometimes I'm gonna lose
Ain't about how fast I get there
Ain't about what's on the other side
It's the climb (yeah, yeah, yeah)
Keep on moving
Keep on climbing

Keep the faith baby
It's all about
It's all about
The climb
Keep the faith
Keep the faith

CLOSING PRAYER: A Still Place (Prayer from Malling Abbey, Denmark)

ALL: Make me
a still place of light
a still place of love
of you
your light radiating
your love vibrating
your touch and your healing
far flung and near
to the myriads caught
in darkness, in sickness
in lost, in fear
make a heart-center here,
Light of the World. Amen.

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