

Fall 2005

Dear Friend of Our Lady of the Canyon,

I have been contemplating this letter of introduction to sjbes' website and an explanation for why I'll be living at **sjbes'** sanctuary – *Our Lady of Victory's Desert Solitaire* – for approximately 10 months for "...making something beautiful for God" as Mother Teresa of Calcutta would say. The sanctuary is located at Cross Canyon at Montezuma Creek, in San Juan County, Utah (by Hatch Trading Post or Hovenweep National Park) and it is here that I hope to be busy turning 10 acres of semi-desert into a usable resource of sjbes' community school(s) and support programs.

I have had to breathe and remind myself that all good things do come through God, not man, for those who are willing to wait. It is only through patience, prayer and penance that God's Plan will manifest. How many times have I forced the "square peg into the round hole" by making the world out to be my way, only to end up with anxiety, illness, and/or extreme exhaustion? Now, I am seeking God's World, not man's, with all my strength.

As you continue to read on, you may feel a bit uncomfortable or squeamish due to the nature of the subject, but I encourage you to keep reading. As an educator, I know that it is in a state of disequilibrium that we best learn our lessons, so I will not apologize.

This writing challenge has tested my every fiber of my being. I had hoped a person like my mother would show up and help me carry out this task. As any human being, I struggle with others finding fault with what I am doing. During this project, I wanted to reach out for someone or something so that I could pass on the blame and shame. I can see why our history is full of victims who innocently have fallen prey to taking on the role of scapegoat (taking the rape). We all at some time or another have needed a scapegoat to take the rape for our true intentions of behaviors. We don't want to reveal our true self for fear it be crucified. Unfortunately since our fall from paradise, the one we tend to blame most is our mothers or that woman in our lives. "Oh! It was my mother who made me do it."

So if you are shaking your head, thinking that this is totally crazy, not normal, or totally wrong...I will chuckle as I respond back, "Go talk with My Holy Mother, My Queen of Heaven and Earth, My Lady of Victory, Our Blessed Virgin Mary." I promise you, She'll reveal to you Her purpose for why I am doing what I am doing.

Writing leaves a person so naked, and committed. It leaves the writer open for criticism and judgment by the society at large, as well as by her friends and peers. It is scary to make a commitment through writing...there is a high probability that the audience will judge this writer and therefore lose the point of the message. Or greater yet, abandon this writer. Just like Jesus Christ, we lost the message. He came in the Name of the Lord, to free us from our sins so that we could re-enter the Kingdom of God. He came to show us the way back to God, and we crucified HIM. I can so relate as I write this letter of

introduction. It is scary to be so vulnerable (like a sitting duck on the first day of duck season.) It is a risk for I'm afraid I'll lose your love and respect in my expressing of my intent for manifesting Our Lady's sanctuary, a space for healing the mind, body and soul. It must have been real scary for Her Son, Jesus, for He knew what was going to happen, and yet He still followed through with God's Will. Yet through Our Holy Mother, we will know Her Son, and no longer have to be afraid...just listen to HIM.

"Stick with it until it is done, or you'll not be able to go out and play," I would disappointedly hear my mother, Loretta, say to me as a child struggling with my studies. So...now, I am sticking with it, that you my friends will know me and know that what I am doing is hopefully for the Glory of God...not mine, but HIS.

As a friend, I wanted you to have the freedom to be a part of Our Lady's mission and purpose, but only on the condition that you choose to do it out of love. It is love that we are here. The consequence for choosing God may result in the loss of friendships here on earth. Yet, I know that living with Our Lord and Our Lady, the Holy Family, All the Holy Angels, the Apostles and the Holy Saints, will be my eternal consolation. Jesus died for me, so that I may know and feel the real and passionate love of a true friend Who will never abandon me...now, in return, I don't want to abandon HIM... no matter what the cost.

I appreciate all your patience, kindness and love that you have given unconditionally during this period of my life. I am so-ever-amazed by all the love that has come from friends like you. In all honesty, I too feel the feelings of doubt and judgments like "Is she crazy!!!" I too have placed it upon myself. I only can imagine what you've been feeling about this new phase of my life. Please rejoice with me for I've come to accept with great zeal this challenge (which, hopefully, does not make me a zealot ☺). At times I too begin to get weak behind the knees as I form little beads of sweat upon my nose in the realization of what's truly happening. This is when I turn to prayer.

A power much greater is present for all this would be impossible. For all those of you who are climbers, or just learning to climb, you'll be able to relate with not looking down while unconditionally trusting in the belay system. I trust in you, My Lord, My God.