

June 5, 2007

Dear Dominicans,

I hope that by now mosquito bites have stopped itching, bruises are healing, and that you are relishing rich memories of our adventure in Dominica. As you settle back home it is my hope that you settle differently from before you undertook this project. I offer some suggestions for reflection to help you profit from your experience.

Each of us experienced something during our trip. Some of those experiences were fun, some pleasant, some challenging, some unpleasant. I encourage you to take the time to remember those experiences in the formal sense of “remembering,” i.e. to re-experience them through your memory. As you re-experience them, reflect on them. This is active participation in what Teilhard de Chardin calls “ontogenesis,” our response to God’s invitation to join him in the loving act of creation. Experiences result from the interaction between ourselves and the outside world. What did you learn from them? How would you like to grow? How would you like the world to grow? How will you “cultivate” the world through culture? How would you like the world to “cultivate” you? How do you need to die to practices or conceptions which inhibit your growth? Consider your experiences from two perspectives: what did the outside world do to you and what did you/would you like to do to the outside world? The following questions may help in your reflection.

- First from the experience of what the world did to you:
 - Did they confirm some insight about yourself which you’d like to encourage and pursue?
 - Did they reveal something about yourself which you didn’t know previously and which you’d like to encourage or to change?
 - Did they challenge you to change something about yourself?
 - Did they reveal a weakness in yourself which you simply must accept because you cannot change it?
 - How did living in a different way of cultivating people challenge you
 - to be open to something new?
 - to wish to change something about yourself?
 - to confirm something about yourself?
 - Ask these same questions regarding living in our little Le Moyne community together for ten days.
 - Where did you find God accompanying and reaching out to you?

- How would you like to respond?
 - Where did you reject God's accompaniment and friendship?
 - How would you like to change?
- Second from the experience of what did you/would you like to do to the outside world:
 - How did you succeed in promoting human culture by your work and presence?
 - What frustrations did you experience in your attempt to promote human culture?
 - What did you learn about your capacity and gifts to improve the world?
 - How did living in a different way of cultivating people challenge you
 - to be open to doing things in a new way?
 - to confirm the way you have been doing things?

After you reflect on your experience, consider what you'd like to do with yourself and our world here and now as well as in the long run. Be real and realistic while at the same time dare to think creatively and unconventionally.

I hope that the comfort and even opulence which American culture affords will strike you. We have many tools and opportunities for development here in contrast with those in Dominica. We can use them for cultivation or for decadence. We can use them for the promotion of creation or for selfish self-destruction. How will you use the world which God gives us?

Enjoy the summer. I look forward to a reunion in the fall.



"Wait a minute! ... Andrew, you fool!
This isn't what I said to bring!"

P.S. I enclose a sheet which enumerates our expenses. You'll note that we spent \$1680.29 more than we raised. Please try to get more donations before I forward the total to Todd Sloan.