Calls and invitations are complex exchanges. Think a minute about your cell phone. By looking at the screen, you know who is calling you before you answer or, if you do not know who is calling, you can choose not to answer. We can filter out what we don't welcome; we can decide at a distance whether we will listen to a call or an invitation.

It wasn't too long ago, when I was a teenager - okay, which WAS a long time ago – I desperately wanted to know who was calling before I answered the telephone! I wanted to get my "game voice" on, you know the one that goes deeper with a crafted nonchalance that so often signals vulnerability to everyone except the one using it.

Calls, interruptions, are commonly misunderstood, it seems. There are always expectations that come with interruptions. But, what if we saw interruptions as invitations?

Our culture has allowed us to insulate ourselves from interruptions and unwanted requests. The benefit of that freedom from intrusions in our lives is self-evident.

But, something is lost. The freedom for other-centered activity is lessened; the openness to surprise is atrophied. It is a common misunderstanding, it seems to me, to expect that calls and invitations come as interruptions. Indeed, scripture suggests that the most important calls and invitations - especially those from God - are difficult to say the least and life-changing very often. Think of Jeremiah, Isaiah, and, today, Samuel. Think of Mary of Nazareth. Think of the disciples in John's gospel today.

What does it mean for us to answer God's invitation, God's wake-up call, as Samuel finally does? "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." Not hearing only but listening and responding.
We get a clue of what it means in today's gospel reading from John. When the Baptizer points to Jesus and says, "There is the Lamb of God," a couple of seekers are intrigued. Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of them. When these two are interrupted by Jesus question, "What are you looking for?" they fumble an answer, one that like the awkward, insecure teenager saves face but reveals much more than they intend.

They respond to Jesus' interruption with, "Where do you live?" In their fumbling response, replying to a question with a question, they inadvertently reveal their deepest desires. They want to be invited to God's house, God's real presence. They sense something of that in the person of Jesus.

By all accounts, the disciples Jesus called by interruption were a chancy lot! While not exactly reluctant to follow the call, it seems they didn't know what they were getting into. The subsequent doubts and down-right skin-saving cowardice confirms that they too suffered from doubts about the invitation to follow. Yet God sticks with them; God keeps inviting. In the long run, they learn not the narrow view of self-protection, but compassion and other-centeredness. They learn the hard lesson of not being a doormat to all interruptions but to be surprised by interruption as invitation to life in the presence of God.

What implications can the invitation to "come and see" hold in store for us? What does this reorientation and desire to dwell with God mean in practical terms? Like St. Paul, can we learn something about our bodies and the gift of sexuality? How do we want to use and relish such gifts? What kind of interruptions did Hollywood movie moguls make with vulnerable women and men? How about politicians on the right and on the left? How might we help each other invite, protect, and nurture our DACA students and those made vulnerable by our culture's anger and self-absorption? What interruptions and invitations should we be making?

When we take the time to learn where God lives and how God invites us home so that we will invite others to our home with God, we are living God's invitation. We become the eyes, the heart, and the hands of God. Come and see.