***Unexpected Visitor,* Ilya Repin (1884)**
***Adagio and Rondo Concertante in F Major,* Franz Schubert**

Try to remember the last time you were surprised. What was it that surprised you? In what circumstances? How did you react? And, how often does this happen to you?

Christ comes to us in every moment and every circumstance. He wants to show us things that we have never seen before--and that we never knew were possible. We wants to constantly reawaken us (every day!). The problem is with us: we are very rarely surprised. We suffer from a 1) lack of awareness; and 2) lack of openness. In our lack of awareness, we are so distracted by busyness, projects, worries, phones, etc. to see what is really happening--what Christ is unfolding in front of our eyes. In our lack of openness, we are reactive to the things that happen to us. We are not open to surprise, because we are obsessed with our own plans and expectations. When Christ surprises us, we either miss it completely, or get upset when it does not correspond to our own plans. We are stuck!

How do we overcome this--become unstuck? Reflect upon the face of a child that you know. Recall how he looks at the world--wide eyed, curious, free from serious expectations. Think about this child now as he goes through his day. He is continually confronted by new things--new experiences. He accepts these things with curiosity and openness. Even when he falls and scrapes his knee, it is still a wondrous experience for him--and he does not cry for long! Emulate this posture! ...Lord, give me the heart of a child--a simple and curious heart!

Take a moment now and carefully observe the painting. Pay close attention to the faces of the children compared to the faces of the adults. Who is this man who is entering the house? Listen to the piece of music--how does it correspond to the painting? How does the music surprise you? As it progresses, how does it change the dynamic and emotion of the painting?

Ask yourself:

When was the last time I was surprised? How often does it happen?

How open am I to change?

Am I stuck?

What are my plans? In what ways do they drown out the way that Christ comes to me?

What is distracting me now?

When is the last time I laughed out loud--until it hurt my cheeks and stomach?