

# Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

This coming Sunday is our second Sunday in our Epiphany series, “Heaven on Earth.” Epiphany is the celebration of the divine manifestation of the divine nature of Jesus Christ to the whole world as represented by the Magi. “Epiphany” is the manifestation or appearance or perception of a divine being, such as Christ, in a person’s life.

We see this in Apostle Paul’s experience where Paul’s conversion initially takes place after hearing Jesus say, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” (See Acts 9:1-9). At first, Paul defends himself as if to say, ‘Jesus, I wasn’t persecuting you; just these other people.’ Ultimately, Paul comes up with this wonderful image of the mystical body of Christ in which there is a union or communion between Jesus and God’s people. What you do to one, you do to the whole. Until we understand that, we don’t understand Paul at the ground level (nor do we understand the Gospels). Everything proceeds from that.

God had not expelled or eliminated Paul’s former egotistical (false and fabricated) self, but instead “incorporated” him into the Christ Self creating Paul into a new self. Jesus grafted him into the Wholeness of God who welcomes and loves all creation. This is the total basis of Paul’s joyful hope, love, and daring self-confidence to proclaim the good news so that everyone else may experience the same transformation and ecstasy.



I would like you to look at your own spiritual autobiography and see how you were formed. Where were you, and how were you led when God showed God’s face to you? It’s at that level that you know God is attached to you, guiding and encouraging you, and you are living in God’s loving and merciful life – and you know that you know.

Personally, I believe that Jesus Christ has come to transform the entire world. By looking at the breakthroughs of medicine, the epiphany of God’s attachment to the world is shown through the healing presence of Christ. Before Jesus came to reveal the Kingdom of God – fully welcoming, loving and merciful – most everyone believed illness was caused by cruel gods, and those who healed others practiced evil witchcraft. But today men and women are encouraged to learn about the human body and help God heal others.

Discussions of racism and gender are still touchy in some circles of conversation. But there are new winds of truth blowing through the world. Institutional racism and sexism are breaking down. There’s not enough room here to discuss this fully right now. But the Good News is that Christ comes not just to take away these old shelters, but to offer us a new one: to abide in Christ Self – to abide in God’s love and let God abide in each one of us. This is the gracious invitation that is always before us.

Blessings on all as we Journey together in Epiphany.