

Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

A friend of mine told me a powerful story of a young girl who was holding a sign that read, “I am hungry, please give me food.” She stood on a corner while people kept walking by her without stopping. Some people didn’t notice her standing there. Finally, a homeless lady, pushing her cart, gave this youth her bag of lunch. An observer, watching the whole thing, gave the homeless lady \$50.00

This story reminds me of the narrative in which a man born blind receives his sight from Jesus (See John 9:1-41). This narrative is much more than a miracle in which Jesus cures a man of his blindness. It also reveals a blindness that Jesus couldn’t cure in everyone – not if they didn’t realize their own blindness.



“What blindness is that,” you say? It’s insisting that you’re righteous. It’s making a harsh judgement about someone else being unrighteous while insisting that you are completely righteous in every way possible. It’s judging other people and driving them away as a basis of keeping your own status. It’s our acts of expulsion, such as in our practices of racism, prejudices, violence, and other injustices. We have always based our coming together into community on being over-against someone else. We have been blinded by our conviction to be self-righteous.

A second blindness is to not see God among us. Unfortunately, for the vast majority, God is still “the man upstairs,” rather than active in our lives. In my opinion, this misunderstanding is partly responsible for the quick expansion of practical atheism and agnosticism we see in the Western world today. Rational and sincere people wonder, “If God is almighty and all-loving, then why is there so much suffering in the world?” But once you experience God as all-vulnerable, grieving with our grief, then perhaps God stands in solidarity with all pain and suffering in the world, participating in our healing. This doesn’t make sense to the logical mind, but it somehow does to the awakened soul.

If you don’t believe that love is the center of the universe, you live in a scarcity model where there’s not enough – food, money, security, health care, mercy – to go around. You can’t risk letting go because you’re not sure you’ll be refilled which is the opposite of living in the eternal, divine, and generous self-emptying love of God.

As long as you show up with some vulnerability, the Holy Spirit and God in Christ can keep working with you. Self-sufficiency makes experiencing God impossible! God’s power comes through humility, all life-giving, and a flow of love. Perhaps this is why the New Testament shockingly describes Christ Jesus as the “Lamb of God.”

Blessings on all as we Journey through Lent together.