

Listening and Talking . . . by Rev. Tom Cici

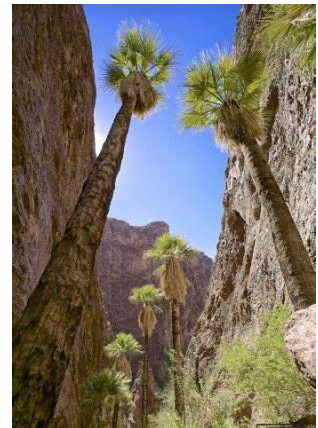
Recently, I read about a lady who was uprooted from one continent back to the United States of America. She is struggling to “bloom” where God has planted her. She writes, “I’m trying to do just that – ‘bloom where I’m planted’ ... in a way it feels weird – like I don’t know what God has in store ... so my ‘blooming’ is coming in baby steps, day by day. I’m trying to find the balance between not rushing and not stagnating.”

So how do we *bloom where we are planted*? How do we find a balance between “not rushing and not stagnating?”

Coincidentally, I read an article about palm trees that grow from the granite sides of a 2,500-foot canyon in the Kofa Mountains of Arizona. These are the only native palms in the entire state. For years, botanists have wondered how these tropical plants could flourish on the dark, almost perpendicular sides of this narrow gorge, especially since the sun reaches them only 2 hours a day. They finally concluded that the stone walls of the canyon reflect sufficient light and store enough warmth throughout the day to enable these trees to thrive in such a hostile environment.

Like these palm trees, those who walk daily in a close relationship with God can survive and thrive even in hard and hostile soil. In all circumstances, those who delight in God are “like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit each season, and their leaves do not wither. In all they do, they prosper” (Psalm 1:3).

The following five invitations have served me as reliable guides to living a life of integrity with all sorts of transitions and crises.



- 1.) Don’t wait. [Step fully into life. Be present with the Presence.]
- 2.) Welcome everything, push away nothing, [include turning toward your suffering].
- 3.) Bring your whole self to the experience. [Your True Self is your union with God.]
- 4.) Find a place of rest in the middle of things. [Try meditation.]
- 5.) Practice a beginner’s openness, curiosity, and humility. [Cultivate “don’t know” mind.]

We don’t always understand, and we certainly cannot control the soil into which God chooses to plant us. But we can choose to keep blooming in the soil which God has planted us by doing what Christ requires of us: “Do to others as you would have them do to you. ... Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. ... Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge ... do not condemn ... Forgive ... give, and it will be given to you” (Luke 6:31-38).

Blessings on all as we share and live in the One Spirit together!