

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

Many of you know that I enjoy the practices of contemplative prayer. This prayer is also known as meditation or centering prayer. Contemplation is simply openness to God's loving presence in "what is" right in front of you. One approach to contemplative prayer is writing about your present moment.

Let me show you an example of writing about the present moment. This written reflection took place after Mother's Day when I was serving a faith community in Hoopeston, Illinois.

Two weeks before Mother's Day, Marian and I purchased five "Cardinal Red" Geraniums from a local flower shop. We carefully preserved these plants by giving them sunlight and water every day until the chances of frost, hail, and severe thunderstorms left the area. Above all else, we are loved by God and we are loveable which can be learned by our words and actions.

I dragged out various small garden tools and a bag of planting soil. Then I dug five shallow holes, under the bay window, in about the same places as last year. They were the same places because the locations were concaved and contained fragments of last year's potting soil. Marian said, "Now the plants will grow to be even more beautiful in the ground."



As I carefully held the root-ball of each plant, I realized that God is in these plants just as God's Spirit is within me. I imagine God saying, "I'm so touched you want to spend this time with me. Really, I am! It just means the world to me. The thing is, I just can't bear how much I love you. It's too much! And so, at a certain point, I rush into these plants because I want to know what it feels like to be held by you."

Yes, the interruption is the presence of God who comes to us disguised as the presence of our very lives. I begin to recognize the preserving of plants, digging in soil, covering the roots with planting soil, watering the plants ... all of it, as the startling stunning infusion of infinite love colliding into the small shape of my finite and ordinary reality. There, at the intersection of everything, is God with us ... wanting to be touched, noticed, nurtured ... held by us. All we have to do is behold.

I cannot love God perfectly or show God anything perfectly. But I will always let God see me for who I truly am, and will hold sacred the gift of seeing God for all eternity. As I am aware of God's presence, I am truly, deeply, being seen by God. Now it's your turn to behold God in your writings.

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