

## 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.

This story reminds me of the narrative in the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John in which a man born blind receives his sight. 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 want to be cured, or even know that they were blind.

“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 others and driving them away (or eliminating them) as a basis of keeping your own status. It’s the acts of expulsion, such as in the practices of racism, prejudices, violence, and injustice to the poor. Humanity has always built community on being over-against someone else. We have been blinded by our self-righteousness and convinced that we are right to do so.

The Christian Trinitarian God is a fountain of love and mercy. Imagine three buckets on a moving waterwheel. Each bucket fills and empties out, then swings back to be filled again. The Father empties into Christ of the universe, nothing held back. Christ empties into the Spirit of God, nothing held back. The Spirit empties fully into the Father. The reason they can empty themselves out is they know they will be filled again. They know that God is infinite love, the ground of our being.

Imagine yourself as a bucket on that divine waterwheel. 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, love – to go around. You can’t risk letting go because you’re not sure you’ll be refilled. If you’re defending your own image and identity, then your ego remains full of itself, which is the opposite of living in the eternal 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 (see the story above). Self-sufficiency makes experiencing God impossible! God’s power comes through humility, all life-giving, and a flow of love.

Blessings as we serve together in the Resurrection of Christ.