

# Reflecting on the Gift of Presence

*ENVIRONMENT: Chairs in a circle; table with copies of poetry books, news articles, selected art pieces, songs.  
Quiet reflective music in the background as participants gather.*



## Introduction

*(Invite participants to quiet themselves and be aware of surroundings. Ask each participant to share one thing or person they are most aware of in the room since entering.)*

*Allow time for sharing.*

## Readings and Sharing

### READER 1) EMBODYING PRESENCE

*by Damian Charboneau, OSM*

The gift of being present to others seems to be a lost art in our modern day society. Have you ever noticed during your daily rounds that the attention span of persons in positions of service is often shorter than that of a sparrow?

*Allow time for participants to respond to the question from their own experience.*

### READER 2) EMBODYING PRESENCE (continued)

What is missing in all of these encounters is presence? Presence can be liberating, revealing, quieting, disturbing. It is worth striving after as we learn to become more fully aware of the other in our lives. If we are to embody presence, we need to accept the gift of being in the moment, entirely and gratefully.

*Allow time for sharing on experiences of being in the present moment and of gifts received from others who have been fully present to them.*



### READER 3) EMBODYING PRESENCE (continued)

To be present, to be fully alive, requires time and space for reflection to allow the inner self to expand. Encountering another person freely and openly is like saying to another, “change your life.”

In similar fashion, when we meet the thoughts and emotions of another be it in stimulating conversation, art, music, poetry or literature, we are urged to change our life, to refrain from standing still. Encounters with the word of God in the bible and in the liturgy remind us that we cannot remain the same. Something happens when we choose to live in the presence of God. We are transformed.

Another way of experiencing presence is found in the “thereness” of things and people.

*Invite participants to look at materials provided on the table and choose a poem, an art piece, a news article, a song that speaks to them of the gift of presence.  
(Allow 5 minutes or more.)*

*Invite participants to share what they have chosen.*

### Prayer (All)

The light of God surrounds us;  
The love of God enfolds us;  
The power of God protects us;  
The presence of God watches over us.  
Wherever we are, God is.  
And all is well.

*unity church - closing prayer for protection (World Prayers)*

### READER 4) SCRIPTURE (Luke 5:12-13)

Now there was a man full of leprosy in one of the towns where Jesus was; and when he saw Jesus, he fell prostrate, pleaded with him, and said, “Lord, if you wish, you can make me

clean.” Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, “I do will it. Be made clean.”  
And the leprosy left him immediately.



**READER 5) EMBODYING  
PRESENCE** *(continued)*

Jesus and Mary  
are luminous, radiant  
presences. Jesus’ mission  
was to reveal the Father,  
and Mary had this one work  
to do, as the poet noted,  
“to let God’s glory through.”

Mary’s quiet, abiding presence reminds us of her  
“fiat,” let it be: Simply trust in her Son.

*Invite participants to share a favorite story  
of Jesus’ presence to them or others*

**Closing Prayer** *(together)*

Dear Jesus, help us to spread your fragrance  
everywhere we go.

Flood our souls with your spirit and life.  
Penetrate and possess our whole being so utterly  
that our lives may only be a radiance of yours.

Shine through us and be so in us  
that every soul we come in contact with  
may feel your presence in our soul.  
Let them look up and see no longer us, but only Jesus.

Stay with us and then  
we shall begin to shine as you shine,  
so to shine as to be light to others.  
The light, O Jesus, will be all from you.

None of it will be ours.  
It will be you shining on others through us.  
Let us thus praise you in the way you love best  
by shining on those around us.

Let us preach you  
without preaching,  
not by words,  
but by our example;  
by the catching force -  
the sympathetic influence  
of what we do,  
the evident fullness of the  
love our hearts bear to you.

Amen.

*prayer of mother teresa  
(World Prayers)*



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