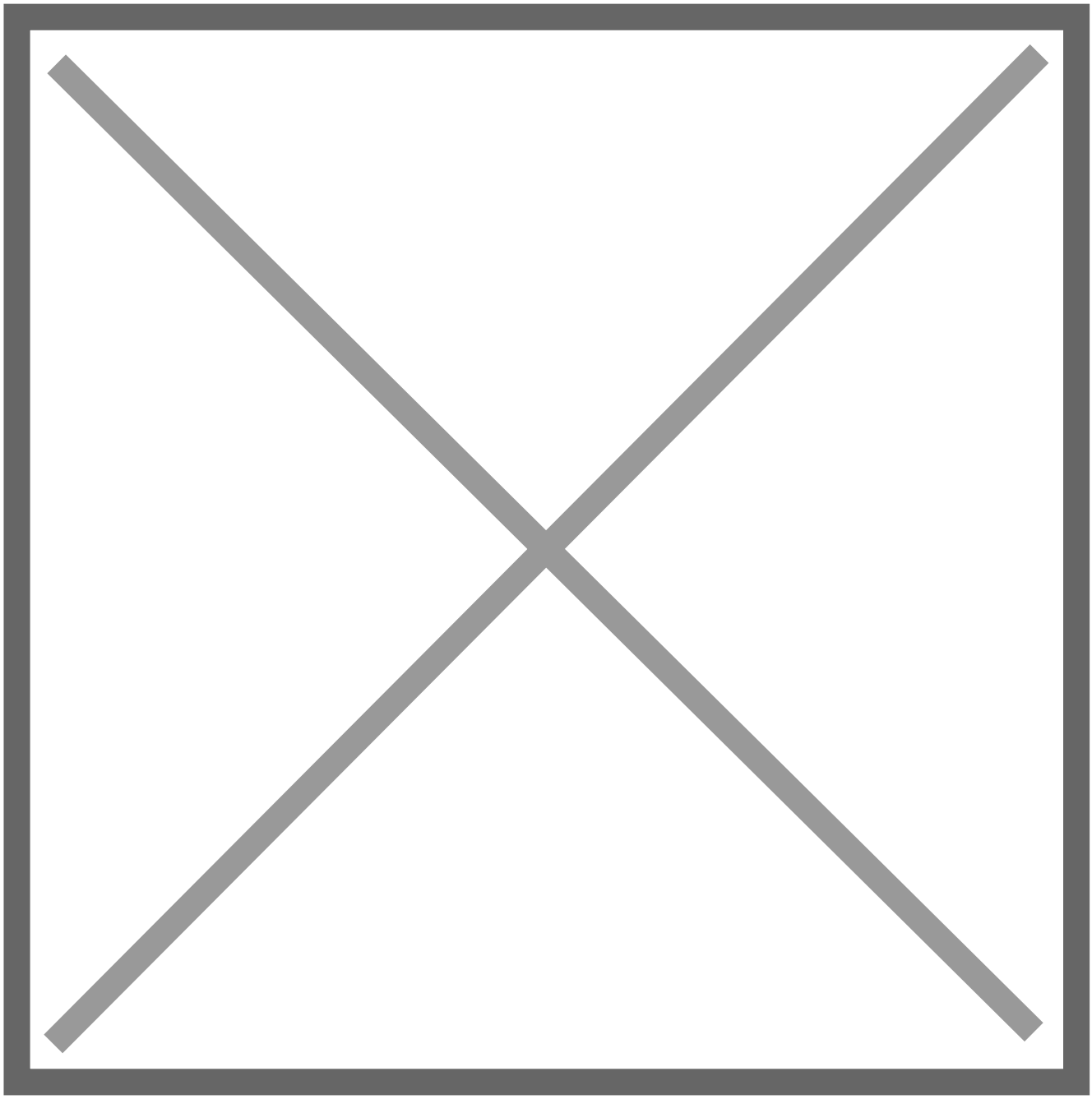
Columns
Social Justice



(Unsplash/Dave Hoefler)



by Magda Bennásar

Contributor

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Aren't we called to be prophetic? Aren't we invited to be peacemakers since this is what God's children do? Aren't we all immersed in a process of discipleship in which the Master spent long nights in prayer, synchronizing his heart with his Abba's heart?

I want to say: Yes, I am. We all are.

Images of war loom everywhere. In the center and the heart of Europe, a war that — if it expands, like a huge wave or a tsunami — could permeate the whole planet.

As consecrated women, I dare to say that with our hearts synchronized with Jesus' heart we can, like Gandhi and others, stop the drumbeats of war.

No more world wars and Holocausts, no more Vietnam or Central Africa or Central America, or Iraq or Afghanistan wars.

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We are peacemakers, we are God's people, we are God's children; our conversations with our Abba should be more effective than all the other conversations, those most probably tainted by interest and power: the Satan in Jesus' life and ours.

Jesus goes to the desert to confront those powers that could prevent him from becoming God’s child. And in the desert, according to the Gospel of Mark 1: 12-14, there are no specific temptations: There is only "the tempter" — the big ego, the thirst for power, success and control that can change the face of the world in minutes.

This is the huge shadow that is expressed as "the night or darkness" in the Gospels. And it is precisely when Jesus experiences darkness and confusion that he goes on retreat. And he remains there until the new dawn, until there is inner light again.

Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist monk and pacifist, died recently in Vietnam, his home country.

His death has brought his legacy to the front page of many papers, screens and minds. He was a pacifist during the Vietnam War, and for this reason was exiled in France, near Bordeaux, at Plum Village, until a few years ago. He defines mindfulness as "the energy of being aware and awake to the present moment."

Many people from around the world are trying to live consciously awake. This monk, along with many others — like Trappist Fr. Thomas Keating in our Christian tradition — offers a process or method to help us awake, to become aware, to live in the present.

It all begins by simply concentrating on our breathing: breathing in and breathing out and let our whole being do the rest.

With this Zen-inspired practice, which helps us to be present and awake, many of us believe we can change the world by changing ourselves. If we all connect, through meditation, with the beat of the cosmos and with each other's, balance returns to everything and to everyone.

Years ago, I was participating in a very difficult Chapter with my former congregation. Due to the intensity and tension created by different views, it was difficult for the participants to be still even during prayer time.

I was one of them, anxious and tired of discussions. Suddenly, I saw a French sister, sitting in our common chapel, in total stillness. And I did the same, by simply concentrating on my breathing and sitting position.

After a while I noticed a deep quiet, a different quality of silence around me. I opened my eyes, and the whole group of more than 40 women had become still and prayerful.

Our world had changed in a matter of minutes. Our minds became awake and calm. Our faces were relaxed and when we finally continued our conversations, our minds had been "processed" by the Spirit to another level of awareness. Dialogue was

possible again.

It was a total gift. I know that many sisters do this type of meditation. In mentioning this, I simply try to convey my deep concern for the immense war that has started, I have the conviction that we can help to change the quality of the conversations by uniting all our energies and mindfully focus on Shalom, Wholeness, Peace.

To conclude, for those of us that might prefer a different style of contemplation, I offer a sculpture from Rodin for enlightenment: Cristo y Magdalena needs no translation, or perhaps only interpretation by each contemplative heart. That's what art does; it allows the contemplative eye to transform and embody what is contemplated.

To me, this sculpture encapsulates our vows: Let his head and face rest on our shoulder, let his heartbeat be listened to in an embrace of total love for his body — a body made real in today's suffering people. Let our whole being embrace the pain with the love of the Lover.

I am sure that if we all synchronize our hearts with the Christ's heart, we can change the negative and dark energy which overshadows us, into peace and light.

Christ's body is the Earth body, and the body of each human being threatened by the drums of war.

Let's synchronize all our hearts for peace.

This story appears in the **Lent** feature series. View the full series.