

[Opinion](#)

[Guest Voices](#)

Fr. Henri Nouwen poses during a 1996 visit to Guerneville, Calif. He died Sept. 21, 1996. (CNS)

Fr. Henri Nouwen poses during a 1996 visit to Guerneville, Calif. He died Sept. 21, 1996. (CNS/Courtesy John M. Kelly Library/Kevin F. Dwyer)



by John Dear

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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with Robert Jonas about legendary spiritual writer Henri Nouwen, who died 30 years ago on Sept. 21, 1996.

Henri and I corresponded regularly for many years, right up until his death. Much to my surprise, he offered steadfast support for my peace work, especially when he wrote to me every week I was in jail for my plowshares action. I thought it would be wonderful to welcome one of his best friends, Robert Jonas, to speak about Henri's life, teachings and lessons.

Jonas received his doctorate in education from Harvard University and has a master's in theology from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. He is the editor of *The Essential Henri Nouwen* and *Henri Nouwen*, and the author of *Rebecca*. His latest book is *My Dear Far-Nearness: The Holy Trinity as Spiritual Practice*.

"Henri lived in the in-between spaces of academia and the spiritual life," Jonas said. "He was like a spelunker: He wanted to dig down deep beneath the psyche and the soul. He was convinced that we cannot help other people unless we accept our own woundedness.

"When we spoke, we could be honest with each other about our woundedness; we could actually name the wounds to each other. ... He wanted us to take responsibility for the things that are hurting us, to let the spirit come with us, to know that the spirit is with us, that we are never alone, that we are infinitely loved, that we are God's beloved."

Henri's bestsellers include *The Wounded Healer*, *Out of Solitude*, *Reaching Out*, *In the Name of Jesus*, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, *Can You Drink the Cup?*, *Life of the Beloved*, *Our Greatest Gift* and *The Inner Voice of Love*.

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