Opinion

Guest Voices



Camaldolese Fr. Cyprian Consiglio, a composer and monk, walks the grounds at the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, Calif., March 16, 2017. (AP/Haven Daley)

by John Dear

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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with Cyprian Consiglio, a well-known composer, musician and Camaldolese monk.

Consiglio is the former prior of the New Camaldoli Hermitage in Big Sur, California, and now the secretary general of Monastic Interfaith Dialogue in Rome, a movement within the Benedictine and Cistercian orders that promotes interfaith dialogue between monastic communities of different religions. He is the author of several books including *Prayer In the Cave of the Heart: The Universal Call to Contemplation* ; *Spirit, Soul, Body: Toward an Integral Christianity Spirituality*; and most recently, *Epiphanies of Nature and Grace*.

"Catholicism and Christianity in general have something vital to learn from other religious traditions," Consiglio said. "The world really depends on dialogue between the world religions. So many of our conflicts are based on our ignorance of other religions."

Recently when someone criticized him for wasting his time on a peripheral issue, he responded that every day the front-page news is full of horrific violence based in Muslim fundamentalism, Jewish Zionism and Christian nationalism. Everyone has a warped understanding of God, he said. Nothing could be more relevant.

"Evil is very gaudy, loud and colorful; building deep bonds of friendship among the religious traditions around the world is quieter and sturdier. It's another aspect of peacemaking," he said.

"One of the most important things we need right now is interreligious dialogue. We all need to find the next step in our maturity in the understanding of God."

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