

## Aligning Ourselves with God's Heart

[Center for Action and Contemplation](#) Daily Meditation for Tuesday, October 18th, 2022

The real contemplative takes the whole world in and shelters it, reveres it, and protects it with a body made of the steely substance of a justice that springs from love. —Joan Chittister, *Illuminated Life*

*Like Father Richard, Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister connects contemplation with the pursuit of justice:*

The contemplative responds to the divine in everyone. God wills the care of the poor as well as the reward of the rich; so, therefore, must the true contemplative. God wills the end of oppressors who stand with the heel in the neck of the weak; so, therefore, does the true contemplative. God wills the liberation of all human beings; so, therefore, must the true contemplative. God desires the dignity and full development of all human beings. Thus, God takes the side of the defenseless. And, thus, therefore, must the true contemplative; otherwise, that contemplation is not real, cannot be real, will never be real, because to contemplate the God of justice is to be committed to justice. The true contemplative, the truly spiritual person, then, must do justice, must speak justice, must insist on justice, and they do, and they always have, and they are.

Thomas Merton spoke out from a cloister in Kentucky against the Vietnam War. Catherine of Siena walked the streets of the city when women were not permitted to walk the streets of the city feeding the poor. Hildegard of Bingen preached the word of justice to emperors and to popes. . . . A spiritual path that does not lead to a living commitment to the coming will of God, to the present Reign of God, to the Kingdom of God within and around us everywhere for everyone, is no path at all. . . .

From contemplation comes not only the consciousness of the universal connectedness of life, but the courage to model it as well. Those who have no flame in their hearts for justice, no consciousness of personal responsibility for the Reign of God, no raging commitment to human community may, indeed, be seeking God, but make no mistake, God is still at best only an idea to them, not a living reality.

Indeed, contemplation, you see, is a very dangerous activity. It not only brings us face to face with God, it brings us, as well, face to face with the world, and then it brings us face to face with the self; and then, of course, something must be done . . . because nothing stays the same once we have found the God within. We become new people, and in the doing, see everything around us newly too. We become connected to everything, to everyone. We carry the whole world in our hearts, the oppression of all peoples, the suffering of our friends, the burdens of our enemies, the raping of the earth, the hunger of the starving, the joyous expectation every laughing child has a right to. Then, the zeal for justice consumes us. Then, action and prayer are one.

**Reference:** Adapted from Joan Chittister and Richard Rohr, *Prophets Then, Prophets Now* (Albuquerque, NM: Center for Action and Contemplation, 2006). Available as MP3 download.

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