

On Working Against War

By Elsa Sabath

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Someone told me tonight—someone who has been working on the formation of conscience about war but wanting to turn to something else—"It's your vocation but it isn't mine." Not an angry statement, just a matter of fact viewpoint. It's eating on me.

I don't want to deal with wars. I want to work on a book of spiritual reflections. I want to take nature photos. I want to praise God. I'd enjoy learning how to be a clicker trainer for service dogs if I had the health. Those are my *vocations*. War stuff is not a vocation; it is a draft. And it is a draft for everybody. Manmade, like global warming, another draft. Because everybody helps cause it—not like works of mercy for accidents and sickness and old age and natural famines. Or if one is Christocentric, and I am a Christocentric agnostic that lives into this awesome relationship with all my heart, it is a draft because Jesus said so, or for others, wherever one looks for this kind of compelling relationship.

I'm grateful there is a peculiar joy for me in trying to stop wars, but that's not because it is a vocation, it's because I need to be useful and I'm halfway good at it. It was never intended to be a vocation for anyone. We can do without wars and never miss them. I don't want to miss sleep because my government sets kids on fire. I can't get that vision out of my head because last spring a young friend of mine, a 17 year old girl, was set on fire and died—God, I hope it was the other way around—in a roll and burn car crash as a passenger on a lovely green East Texas hillside county road. And her life, filled with meaning anyway, now has more meaning, because I got it. I really *got* what we do when we drop cluster bombs and mortars onto communities and families.