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One week after day of global prayer

Thomas C. Fox | Sep. 14, 2013 NCR Today

Along with countless others, I pray for divine intercession.

When I have a personal intention, I pray. When someone asks me for prayers, I pray for them. When someone in our worshipping community offers a prayer request, I prayer with them.

I do this not having a clue about how "intercession" prayer works and not knowing why some prayers seem to get answered and others do not.

One week ago today I joined countless others around the world in a day of fasting and prayer for peace, beginning with Syria. Millions implored the heavens for what seemed to be the impossible at the time. We prayed along with Pope Francis, who called for the day of prayer, that the war in Syria would not enlarge, that somehow some kind of negotiation might stop the forward movement of what seemed at the time the almost certainty of military strikes in Syria, with totally unpredictable consequences.

One week ago, even as I prayed and fasted, I could not imagine the U.S. march to war could be stopped. I imagine many felt as I did.

Exactly one week later I read this still almost unbelievable breaking news CNN headline: ?Secretary of State John Kerry said Saturday that the United States and Russia have agreed on a framework that, if fully implemented, could mean the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons, following talks with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Geneva, Switzerland.?

As widely reported, the framework for these negotiations appeared on the diplomatic scene following what appeared to be a factitious remark by Kerry, a Catholic, who answered a reporter?s question saying the only way a widened war could be averted would be if the Syrian government turned over all its chemical weapons to international inspectors and did it immediately. The Russian government, headed by President Vladimir Putin, responded, saying it would attempt to arrange just such an action.

One week after the global prayer day for peace in Syria, for the first time there appears slight signs some form of an international negotiation just might begin a movement out of the Syrian nightmare.

As I wrote, I don?t know how prayer works. But I think it wise we continue to pray for world peace.

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