



SIEBENQUELL

The Glacier Buttercup



In his book, »Der Gletscherhahnenfuss: Hoffnung und Ermutigung durch eine kleine Blume« (The glacier buttercup: hope and encouragement through a small flower), Reinhold Stecher describes why this inconspicuous mountain flower is his favourite among the Alpine flora. »It has neither the brilliant glow of the edelweiss nor the deep blue of the gentian nor the flaming red of the alpine rose. But the glacier buttercup demonstrates a vitality of which we should all be a little aware.« (p. 11)

The author sees this flower as »an admirable survival artist«. It blossoms and thrives in mountain heights where other mountain flowers cannot survive. It can cope with icy and hard winters, deep snow cover, storms and hail.

It's secret? »Even though the large-scale climate is very unfavourable and harsh, extreme plants such as the glacier buttercup take advantage of a microclimate which, when exposed to intensive sunlight, develops in the immediate vicinity of the ground between boulders and in fine cracks and stones, and which - in the narrowest areas - can develop almost tropical heat values. This tiny zone of high temperatures is exploited by our glacier buttercup. This is why it can also blossom during shortened summer days. The large-scale climate does not keep it down. It is an unswerving defiant bloomer in the microclimate.« (p.11)

The large-scale climate in the world, in the society and in the church is often harsh and uncomfortable. Whether it is terrorism in the marketplaces, the drowning of asylum seekers in the Mediterranean, the horror scenarios in refugee camps like Moria, abuse scandals in the church or the devastating effects of the pandemic throughout the world, we very often feel threatened and helpless, merely at the mercy of others.

Then resignation follows. I see it enough these days. Because it has become more difficult to manage life in the lockdown, some people withdraw completely from life. I am not talking here about people who are careful and cautious with direct contacts with others, but about people who reject every form of help, every possibility and chance life has to offer, even in the midst of deep crisis. No matter what they are offered, no matter what is suggested, they veto and reject everything as insufficient. They only seem able to live when the conditions are optimal.

What response should we give to this resignation? Reinhold Stecher lets the glacier buttercup speak for itself. And so I hand over the last word of my reflection to a mountain flower.

»No, you must blossom into the adverse world. The wind I am exposed to is not a caresser of flowers either. But I get my share of light and sunshine - and I take advantage of a microclimate of my immediate surroundings and seize the chances for life that present themselves, thus defeating the cold breath of the heights. I have never been defeated by a climate fluctuation.« (p. 14)

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