



SIEBENQUELL

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## »Between the Years«

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The exhilaration of Christmas seemed to keep going during my childhood - and on a special scale. The days after Christmas lived from the glamour of the feast. They were lifted out of »normal« time and filled in their own special way.

There was the Christmas room, whose magic remained and gave us a new childlike joy every morning to enter and play there. The Christmas tree and the manger had changed our living room in a lasting way. But this was not only the case for us. During these days, visits were also made to relatives and friends in the neighbourhood. I loved that very much - this mutual opening and marvelling at each other's Christmas homes. How wonderful it was to know times, rooms and people in which and with whom the joy of this celebration could be prolonged and savoured. A year came to an end and before the new year began with its challenges, we lived in this »in-between« time in which even the days of the week did not matter.

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Nothing but nostalgia? A glorification of childhood? Well, even in our youth, my family cultivated these visits and I enjoyed them in a different way, such as the adults' conversations, in which I increasingly participated with interest. To this day, I remember the joy and amazement of the atmosphere of the Christmas houses even in those years. The days »between the years« remained highlighted, the Christmas joy prolonged.

Today, on December 26th, children tell me that Christmas is over. Really? The world they experience, which shapes them, makes them believe this - who is surprised? What are we modelling for them? For weeks the glow of lights is everywhere, then Christmas Eve comes with its own dynamic - and that's it! The first bare Christmas trees lie by the roadside after just a few days. A man spoke of this regretfully in a radio report with the theme: »What remains in the end - The time between the years«. Precious and intense times are those in which time does not matter. Life simply happens - incarnation happens. In addition, becoming human unfolds, wants to be »unpacked«. However, this cannot happen in the same way as one tears open a parcel: we want to quickly see what is hidden under the paper and then put it down.

The gift of the Holy Night cannot be grasped in this way. For it is a newborn child, needy, tender and fragile. And this totally dependent child is God. The divine child needs to be nurtured and cared for, looked after and protected so that it can grow up. It needs love and tenderness, open hearts and helping hands, space and time. »What is left at the end - The time between the years« can become an invitation to get involved like a child in the magic of these days, so that at the end there are not empty boxes and empty faces left, but the joy of the child to whom we may give everything and from whom we may receive everything. »For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord« - I like to marvel at »this day« again and again during these days, so that it becomes and remains a reality.

*Rosemarie Monnerjahn*

*Vallendar, December 29th, 2022*