



SIEBENQUELL

The Blessing of the Crack



When we entered the forest church at the House of the Family on the first evening of this year's Hearth Course, we were surprised, some of us even irritated. Almost everyone paused briefly at the glass wall separating the entrance area from the church interior. Many of us were familiar with the long crack that had run from top to bottom through the pane in previous years. But now, a path made of many small white marble stones, between which golden glass stones glowed, ran exactly where the crack had been. This white and gold path runs on both sides of the glass, directly above the crack. So it is no longer visible as such, but it is still there. The mosaic path follows its course exactly. No one can overlook it now, but it has been transformed into something beautiful and radiant. Something new shines from and on it. The window serves the same purpose as it did from the beginning, but when it gets dark and the church is only dimly lit, the golden stones reflect the light and ennoble the entire room.

The damaging crack was neither covered over extensively nor did it necessitate the replacement of the entire pane. It is there. It has not been denied. Artistic hands have used it to create something that transcends it and possesses a profound beauty. It took time to get to this point. It required a long, loving contemplation of this 'wound' in the glass. It was large and could not be hidden from anyone. But now it has become a path.

How many things in our lives get cracks! Most of the time, we discard them because they no longer function or are simply no longer beautiful, or we try to repair them so that it is not noticeable.

How many wounds do we carry with us! We keep reopening them or ignoring them – 'Let's forget about it!' – as if nothing had happened.

The white and gold path in the glass pane shows us another, divine possibility: Let something new grow from the crack! Let the light in! Don't deny it! And even more: Create a sign of remembrance!

Genesis 27 tells us how Jacob made his brother his mortal enemy and had to flee. On the run, in this turmoil, he dreamed of the ladder to heaven and God's promise to him. Light shone through the crack in his life and Jacob realised: »Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was unaware of it... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven! Early the next morning, Jacob took the stone that he had placed under his head, and he set it up as a pillar. He poured oil on top of it, and he called that place Bethel.« (Genesis 28:16-19)

In our church on the Ritten, artist Luis Seiwald created a memorial path that tells the story of »the human journey through life«. It is »paved path criss-crossed with curves, detours and narrow passages. A path that winds steadily upwards until it unites with the divine light in the eternal now.« The number of golden stones increases towards the top, representing the divine light that increasingly illuminates our path.

The glass wall has become more beautiful, our understanding richer, our love for this place deeper. None of this would have happened if the pane had been replaced so that everything looked new and intact again.

But that is not how our lives are. Let us accept our cracks and wounds and allow God to transform us through them. May we gently touch the beauty that grows in this way, just as each of us has repeatedly let his fingers glide delicately over the mosaic in the Forest Church. And we can sing with Leonard Cohen:

»There is a crack, a crack in everything / That's how the light gets in.«

Rosemarie Monnerjahn

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