



SIEBENQUELL

»Let all people sense your friendliness.«



Every year in October, the people of Cape Breton in eastern Canada celebrate 'Celtic Colours' – the colours of autumn and the colourful diversity of their Gaelic-Celtic heritage – with a week-long festival. Every visitor gets to enjoy and experience the many different traditions of the ancient language, the craftsmanship and, above all, the music. There are around 50 concerts in 9 days! One of them is recorded every day, much to the delight of many people – including me. One evening, a singer paused to talk a little about how much Cape Breton means to her, having known it for a long time. She spent every summer here during her childhood and has performed frequently at this festival over the last 25 years. And then she said: »I'm basically feeling that every human being needs to come to Cape Breton to learn how to be a fucking good human being. There is a kindness coming from this little island. So thank you for always being so kind. «

Then she posed the rhetorical question to the audience: » How simple is that? « - Really?

Almost everyone on this island knows the stories of their ancestors. They were once driven here by the hardships of their homeland in Scotland or Ireland and had to face unbelievable challenges. They did so and utilised everything they had brought with them: their strength and knowledge, their creativity, their stories and their music. They lived their faith and their communities. Their readiness to work for the »community« remains exemplary to this day. They care for one another, they create and celebrate together, and they gratefully share with one another some of what their ancestors laid the groundwork for. In this way, they have managed not merely to

survive, but to live. Anyone who arrives and faces the hardships of life in this harsh world quickly learns about their great openness, helpfulness and kindness – it's that simple!

However, the well-travelled singer notices this time and again precisely because it is not simple and not at all self-evident for many, many people. Complaining and grumbling seem to be the "mother tongue" for many. People react to each other in a pretentious and snappish manner, the tone is often harsh and curt, and faces appear annoyed and dismissive. Instead of conveying, »Nice to see you! What can I do for you?«, the unspoken message is often, »What do you want? Leave me alone. « How revealing it is when, in unfamiliar surroundings, our greeting during a walk is returned in a friendly manner or the other person passes us by as if we weren't even there.

To experience loving kindness is, indeed, often difficult. I am challenged anew by the words of the songstress, » every human being needs to come to Cape Breton to learn how to be a fucking good human being. There is a kindness coming from this little island«, to live them and fill the world with them.

In his letter to the Philippians (Phil 4:5), Paul says: » Let your gentleness be known to all. The Lord is near. « The Zürcher Bible translates it as: »Let all people sense your friendliness. The Lord is near. « We Christians are called to live out of our relationship with God and His closeness, savouring the joy that comes with it. People on Cape Breton often say to me, »We are blessed«. Yes, we are blessed. We can be a blessing to one another in gratitude, making it tangible and by simply being kind.

When the audience came into view during the live recording of the concert, I spotted Judith in the front row, a woman I had met three years ago and encountered several times since. And I had to cry. Her sister Wanda showed me great kindness at the time, taking me, a stranger, into her home for two weeks so that I could be close to my daughter. She was a wonderfully generous, kind woman and became a friend whom I visited every year since then. A few weeks ago, she went home to God, from whom all kindness flows.

That is why the words of the songstress touch my heart, and I join in her gratitude. I too have enjoyed the kindness shown to me by this woman, and so I am one of those who tell of her as a wonderful example of kindness to everyone who has ever met her.

Rosemarie Monnerjahn

Vallendar, October 23rd, 2025