



SIEBENQUELL

---

## Reflection on Psalm 122

# „May they be secure who love you!“

---



SOURCE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN 2013

When people begin to prepare for Christmas, they have a clear understanding of what that entails, and what not. It should be warm. And comfortable. And peaceful. Especially peaceful! Nearly everyone associates this with Christmas: Peace on earth, and if that is not possible then at least peace within the family. At the same time, there is hardly a time of year in which peace is more elusive. There is tension in the family. Christmas stress exhausts us and hardly makes us more peaceful, while we very quickly notice a lasting discontent.

Advent awakens this yearning for peace and security, but it also does a lot more. It poses the question how we are to manage peace. The Psalms are a school of prayer. They teach us not only to pray for peace, but rather how to do so.

Psalm 122 prays for peace. It is a psalm of ascent, of pilgrimage. That means that it is a prayer for those who are on the way, for people who set out and are in search of something. This is not a prayer for the contentedly settled. Those who re-

main at home and settle into their comfort are in all likelihood going to pray that they might retain the peace they already possess. .

In the first half of the Psalm the joy of the pilgrimage and the uplifting nature of the destination are sung. But then a turning point comes. „Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they be secure who love you!“ (v. 6).

Those who love the city should be secure in her. If I am to pray for peace, for entire city, full of people I do not know, then this request is very important: The request for places where people who love can feel secure.

Are there really many such places? When we love and when we know what and whom we love, where are the places where we can live that out and express it, without fear of being laughed at or belittled? Where are the places of security, where is our Jerusalem, where I can name what I love and whom I love without having to provide explanations, without debate or a need to justify myself? Too many are the places where I cannot speak of that which is precious and valuable to me, without the fear that it is will be talked to death, that so many words will be spilled that my joy begins to pale and my desire begins to fade. Too many are the places, where that which and those whom my soul loves are not simply honoured without utterly unnecessary judgments and commentary. Too many are the places where I cannot pray, “May they be secure who love you!”

We dream of a Christmas where family peace and world peace reign, but how will this ever come to pass, if there are no places where we can feel secure with all that we love? The way of the Psalmist is the way of Advent, for it is a path that prepares something. Many words of contrition, acknowledgement, apology, reconciliation and gratitude will not be spoken; many gestures of tenderness will not be lived out, many signs of love not shown, because we do not trust ourselves. And we do not trust ourselves, because we do not feel secure in the places these words, gestures and signs open up for us. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they be secure who love you!”

**Erik Riechers SAC**

*December 2, 2014, Vallendar*