



SIEBENQUELL

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## Reflection for Christmas

# Power – Powerlessness

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SOURCE: R. MÖNNERJAHN 2014

During these days it resounds repeatedly in our ears: »As Jesus was born in the time of King Herod in Bethlehem in Judah...« (Lk 1, 5). Herod the Great was the potentate during the turn of an era in Judah on the eastern edge of the Roman Empire. He wanted this power for himself; he wanted to expand and solidify it, and to this end he shied away from nothing. And he loved to demonstrate his power and greatness with the all the means at his disposal.

At the end of October I received an inkling of this. Together with a group, I climbed a mighty, rounded mountain south of Jerusalem. Having arrived at the top, the remains of an enormous fortress opened itself to us. Its name: Herodium. We climbed down into the depths, discovered baths and great halls which give us an idea of the dimensions of the entire site.

However, what impressed me the most was standing on the walls and to gaze out onto the breadth of the land: over the Judean desert, up to the mountains of Jordan; to the north as far as Jerusalem, where the Mount of Olives can be clearly recognized. In order to gain this view of the capital city, Herod had the mountain raised, before construction began. How great was his need to have everything under control, to show himself as the greatest!

Yet, who paid the price? Who was fleeced by the taxes and fees? Who carried the stones in the searing heat of the Judean hill country? How many left their lives on this mountain of power?

With these questions in my heart, I turned to the west and saw Bethlehem. What a contrast! Here the fortress on this mountain, built by Herod for the ages, obsessed with power and security, on the backs of the people, the small. And there the small village, at whose periphery a child was born, hardly noticed by the world, greeted by the small, the insignificant and the powerless.

He who always strived to be the greatest and to show his greatness, left stones behind, which until this day tell of his hardness and coldness.

He, however, who was born on the margins, was without power, and yet he was full of strength and warmth that yet streams to us and through us, even until the end of days.

**Rosemarie Monnerjahn**

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