



SIEBENQUELL

We are set into a broad place.



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This painting has not let go of me for weeks and the more I deal with its creation, the artist and many details about it, the more multifaceted it becomes.

In these days in which the Passion of Jesus comes more and more into our focus, I return to the psalm verse that the artist Lilian Moreno Sánchez puts above her work: »You have set my feet in a broad place«.

I only set a child down if I know that it can stand up. I know his abilities, have observed him and know that I can trust him and not overtax him. Maybe I challenge her, because she needs encouragement, so that she can feel for herself what she can already do and what she may not yet have the confidence to do. But I would never try to put her down if it were not physiologically possible.

The connection of the verse »you have set my feet in a broad place« with precisely this painting is unusual, for Lilian Moreno Sánchez has based her work here on the X-ray image of a foot broken several times. In fact, she used the X-ray of a person who had been injured during the demonstrations in Santiago de Chile in October 2019.

Actually, such an injury is not the basis for a secure stance, but rather for instability and fear! And fear quickly makes us narrow. That is what the rulers in Chile, just as those in Myanmar or Russia or Ukraine, want when they harass and injure those who take to the streets in protest and thereby seek to destroy the stability of the people. The artist counters: »Another world is possible. I want to spread this hope«. She does not cover up the injuries or paint over them. On the contrary, she goes in depth and shows what is not visible on the surface. In this way, she takes reality very seriously - and that is always the first step on the path to healing and reconciliation. Whom does a band aid solution help? Who is strengthened and encouraged when people talk and act as if ruptures and injuries did not exist, when everything is supposed to quickly appear look »normal« again?

Lilian Moreno Sánchez shows the fractures, but embeds the reality in delicate signs of hope, trust and promise. Thus a delicate image has been created that expresses support in fragility and a perspective within the wounding.

Her verse is taken from Psalm 31, in which the prayerful man speaks honestly of the whole range between fear and trust, between powerlessness and confidence, nearness to death and redeemed life:

In you, O Lord, do I take refuge; let me never be put to shame; in your righteousness deliver me! Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily! Be a rock of refuge for me, a strong fortress to save me! For you are my rock and my fortress, and for your name's sake you lead me and guide me; you take me out of the net they have hidden for me, for you are my refuge. Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God. I hate those who pay regard to worthless idols, but I trust in the Lord. I will rejoice and be glad in your steadfast love, because you have seen my affliction; you have known the distress of my soul, **and you have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy; you have set my feet in a broad place.** (*Ps 31, 1-8 ESV*)

The world of enemies who hide nets is small and narrow, even though they have power over us. This power is limited. But the prayerful person, exposed and threatened, knows himself placed by God in his broad space, set on his feet in all his dignity! It is not that he expects it only for the future, but it has already happened: »you have set my feet in a broad place.« Recognizing this in prayer gives him true freedom that no one can take away and leads out of fears. And this is exactly what we celebrate in Jesus' passion. Jesus - in the midst of his accusers and tormentors - knows that he is placed in the infinitely wide place of God. Thus, he is the one who suffers and yet is the one who is inwardly free. He breaks through the narrowness and opens up the vastness to all of us.

And this poses a question to us: Can we let ourselves be told, and trust what is told, that we have long been placed in this wide place of God? Let us feel our way forward, with all our fractures and injuries, straighten ourselves up, go forth and create, and keep in our hearts the Easter message that we will never fall out of this immeasurably wide place of our God.

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