



SIEBENQUELL

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# Living as a Witness

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CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH: OSTERMORGEN

I have not spoken for a long time - after all, I am getting on in years and live a very secluded life with my children and grandchildren.

But now Johanna has died. Suddenly everything was so vividly before my eyes once again. My heart was moved as it had been over 25 years ago. And now I dream at night of those days and weeks in Jerusalem. During the day I talk quietly with my old friends. Some of them have already passed away - now Johanna has too.

I feel the compulsion to tell the old story once more. How dark was the Passover celebration in that year! We had all made the customary pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast. My eldest son, James, was one of Jesus' closest friends. We women, mothers, sisters, friends, had also followed and had experienced the catastrophe first hand. You know what I am talking about.

The silence that followed on the Sabbath was no ordinary Sabbath rest. It was a deathly silence, almost eerie, everyone kept silent, along with soundless tears again and again.

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The next morning, we women set out to do what women always do: pay one last tribute to the beloved dead and anoint his body. Silently we walked through the alleys out of the city to the garden, just as the first morning light was rising over the Mount of Olives. It lent a warm glow to the stones. Actually, we had no idea how to get into the tomb because of the large rock. Only then - it was open! And we encountered another world, froze and looked down as if dazzled. We heard voices telling us: »Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, but he is risen.« Our dead Master and dearest friend no longer here - that was an unbelievable message! Yes, we could hardly believe it - how could we?! Who had ever heard such a thing? And the messengers reminded us of Jesus' words about his demise and that it would not be an end, but a new beginning, a resurrection.

We turned around. I was so happy that the others were with me. Who would have believed me? We hurried through the brightened city to the others; what we had experienced in the tomb bubbled out of us. But although we all testified, six or seven of us, the men did not believe us. Only Peter set out to make sure. Astonished, he returned to us. How often I have since thought: if it had remained like that, I might have thought at some point that it was a hallucination, too good to be true. But little by little it struck many of us, again and again, unexpectedly but clearly: Our Master, our beloved friend was alive and showed himself. He is alive! In the rising light, we were the first witnesses of the empty tomb and the first listeners to this message of life. And we told it, again and again, and we heard the stories of others, again and again. And the faith grew in me: HE remains with us - forever.

My dear Johanna, you will see him now, you will be with him.

And I will continue to tell the stories as long as I live.

**Rosemarie Monnerjahn**

*Vallendar, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022*