



SIEBENQUELL

»A good story is always a journey.«
10 Years of Siebenquell

Placed on the Heart



»History repeats itself« is what some people say when they refer to family or political events. History also repeats itself in terms of God's stories. Although for a very long time I did not understand Erik Riechers' sentence when he said: »We are the stories of God!«, today I experience how true it is.

The beginnings remain alive and so do the paths through the story. On my long journey, which life has given me, I have experienced ups and downs and had both painful and healing experiences. There was a time when I felt trapped within myself and encountered people like Moses who showed me accessible paths upon which to set out. I am no stranger to desert experiences, nor to arriving in the land flowing with milk and honey.

The older I have become, the more beautiful and substantial my journey has become. Especially the last 10 years are for me **like a living and fertile landscape, full of beauty.**

We set out by twos, similar to the time when Jesus told his friends to set out by two by two. Even after all these years, I feel that never being without companions is a great gift. Alone, my journey would never have been as successful, never have become as rich as I am experiencing it. However, I also know the lonely stretches of road on which I talked to myself more than seeking dialogue. And then there are those encounters along the way, those people who have turned my life around.

It happened rather quietly and gradually and the roots are clearly older than 10 years. When I first heard Erik, he was talking about Celtic spirituality and the meaning of the »thin places« where heaven touches earth. I thought, »I know that«. His words struck deep into my heart. He gave a name to my longing and what could be more natural than to follow this trail. Equally surprising and truly moving was my first experience of bibliodrama with Rosemarie. She opened the door to a spiritual world that I had sorely missed until then.

Years before the two of them founded Siebenquell, their living water flowed through the land and began to water the parched ground of my soul.

Being deeply touched gradually made me more courageous and I dared to redirect my own steps. We were already on the way and did not know exactly where the destination was. Only one thing was clear to us: the old world with its inherited interpretation no longer carried us. We had to go further and thus embarked on a journey whose paths were foreign to us and yet warmed and nourished our hearts through lively encounters.

In the end, we now sit together at the table, tell each other the stories and break bread together.

However, let us go back a bit in the story:

The thirst at the beginning of my journey was extremely great and so I sought and found ways to the **sevenfold wells**. Innumerable times we set out for the wells that wanted to give us true vitality.

Like the woman who, in the heat of the day, met the man at the edge of the well who opened her eyes and heart and gave her new life, I searched for the source of living water that could truly quench my thirst. I found this water on the days when we gathered around the well of Siebenquell. Here, to this day, I can quench my thirst with the living water that Rosemarie and Erik bring up from the depths for us to offer to thirsty people.

But there is still more than the days and encounters at wells. On my journey, over time, the spring has become a stream that meanders through my life and I feel and enjoy the life that emanates from it. The ground beneath my feet has become fertile and it invites me to look more closely and perceive the vitality that emanates from the water. My everyday life has gained colour and depth, and so a spring of life gushed out of the Siebenquell, the Centre for Narrative Theology, for us in a completely different place. With it, many stories bubble and flow through the country to this day, are told at tables and shared with each other like fresh bread.

I remember the moment of our journey when I felt the stream begin to expand into a river. There was no stopping it. The stories of God, the stories of the people, present and the past, and my own stories took up more and more space and flowed through my life. If I paused for a long time on my way, it happened at the latest when I sat by the hearth fire that my heart caught fire again and set me in motion. Just as the living water keeps me moving, the embers of longing are still awake in me and want to be nourished. At the hearth fire - high in the South Tyrolean Lichtenstern - truly in the House of the Family - I found the nourishment with which I could cover further distances on my journey and that nourishment which gave my life even more depth.

The **charcoal fire** still glows - both on the shores of the lake and in the hearth of Celtic spirituality, and it is worthwhile every day to sit down and listen to the stories.

Especially during the days of the narrative biblical retreats with Erik, I felt God's invitation to share the centre of my life with me. There I learned to take more and more steps that enabled the unfolding and stretching of my heart. Similar to the experience at the wedding in Cana, the water of everyday life and the toil afterwards tasted unexpectedly and surprisingly of the popular wine from the steep slopes of my home on the Moselle.

It is probably in the nature of the spring that it only reaches its destination when it has reached the expanse of the sea.

Since the years when Erik was our teacher and made us walk the steps and paths to become God's storyteller myself, I have experienced that the river of my life has become wider and deeper. And yes, it feels like it is flowing towards the sea.

Moreover, I do not deny that it is arduous and takes a lot of perseverance and time to search for living springs and to draw their flowing water to quench the thirst of the heart. However, this water is like the water on which Jesus met his friends. It is indeed »walkable«! It enables so much life, in the sense of God's life in abundance, which it is worth every effort.

I thank Rosemarie Monnerjahn and Erik Riechers for their passion
to bring the Stories of God to people's hearts and,
thereby, for making my life a good story.

Sr. M. Josefa Bölinger op

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