



SIEBENQUELL

Human, become essential!



This thought by Angelus Silesius came up again and again during my Advent and I discovered that the path to the essential is hidden in many images that Advent gives us. What, if not this, does it mean if we are not to align the gates with the trivialities of our bustle, but rather make them larger for the essential, the truly meaningful, for GOD? For what other reason should we thresh so that what is found too light flies away and the heavy, nourishing, yes truly glorious, remains? Why else should we pause, contemplate and penetrate to the core?

The treasures of life are not found on the surface, like decorative items, but in the depths - in the deeper layers of a relationship, in the sacred moments of an experience, in the depths of a person's soul, in the depths of our own heart. Deep drilling requires patience and perseverance and is not for people who want to finish quickly. But only such drilling leads us past tinsel and the scent of mulled wine to the centre, to the core that sustains: God himself wants to dwell among us.

At the beginning of the second week of Advent, I had a special encounter. During a walk, I met a woman whom I have known and respected for decades. After a short exchange about family matters - difficult and beautiful - she suddenly said: »With whom can one still talk about essential things, about really deep things?« And if there were opportunities to do so, many

people she knew quickly covered up experiences of illness or loss with even more consumption, often with the words, »I just had to indulge myself now.« This shallowness, she complained, was something she could hardly bear anymore and how deeply it upset her was clearly evident in her voice.

But then her voice changed and the conversation took a different direction when she told me about that morning. She had unlocked the church, as she did every day, and in the half-light of dawn had lit a candle for her third grandchild, who turned one year old that day, but who lives far away, so that visits are rare. On her way out, she bumped into her daughter who was taking her son to the nearby kindergarten. All three now went back into the church and the five-year-old also lit a light for his little cousin. »It was so beautiful«, she enthused about this sacred moment. »It was a real birthday celebration. We felt so connected - without any external celebration; can you understand that?«

I took the »treasure« of my acquaintance's morning hour with me on my way and carry it with me until today, until the Feast of Christmas. Perhaps we love the Christmas narrative of Luke's Gospel for this very reason. Nothing is as the parents-to-be imagined or wished back then on the fringes of the great Roman Empire: an imposed arduous journey towards the end of pregnancy, no room available anywhere at the destination, and finally the birth among the animals and strange shepherds as the first guests. But they, of all people, were open to the specialness of this night. They followed the heavenly voices and discovered God in the stable. God wants to dwell in the midst of our lives - in yours and in mine, in joyful and in painful times, in dissonances and harmonies. That is why this night is holy, because it sanctifies every life. The candle at the dawn of an Advent day connected a family over hundreds of kilometres for the first birthday of the youngest member and made them feel what is essential: love, belonging, connectedness and the (also silent) celebration of life.

I want to become essential and let myself be grasped by the deep, wonderful message of this celebration: No life is too small for God not to want to dwell in the midst of it.

And I recommend to all of us what Reinhold Stecher once said:

God lands quietly.
In all the religions of the earth, silence and stillness are the places where humans encounter the divine.
The unspeakable only emerges in the soul when all that is loud, superficial, ostensible,
irrelevant, and unimportant recedes.
God lands quietly.
Not only in the manger, but also in our hearts.

With this in mind: Blessed Christmas to you all!

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