



SIEBENQUELL

» Respond to the call of your gift and the courage to follow its path « John O`Donohue



SOURCE: R. MÖNNERJAHN 2014

In the last week of May we encountered on our pilgrimage through the west of Ireland two people who deeply impressed me.

On a tiny hill in the moor landscape of Connemara, Dearbhail and Charly have lived for nearly 20 years in a small village. They call this place »Cnoc Suain«; that is Gallic and means »peaceful hill«. Indeed: the peace and simplicity of the landscape immediately took hold of me, sparse and yet not uninviting, gently hilly and wide, silent and yet it spoke to me. On a hill, a few cottages, thatch roofed old buildings.

In front of them Charly greeted us in an open and heartfelt manner and invited into one of the buildings. Here he told us and showed us of what this landscape is composed and how he learned to use it as generations of Gallic ancestors before him had, by digging turf in such a way that the landscape is preserved. Charly is a geologist; he could work anywhere – yet, exploring, using and preserving this piece of home for the future is his heart's desire. That is strenuous – yet, I saw in his eyes enthusiasm, joy and deep connectedness.

Then we were invited to a cottage that lay higher up. Dearbhaill, Charlys wife, welcomed us and took us into a large room in front of a turf fireplace. During the next half hour she, a teacher and musician, told us in loving and lively fashion of the life in this world, that she has known from her childhood, since she was born into a Gaelic-speaking family. The love of the culture of her homeland is rooted deeply within her; she showed us, among other things, how to prepare simple soda bread. Then she touched our hearts as she recited a poem in Gaelic and then sang one verse of it in the Irish singing style known as »Sean nós«. She recounted stories of families with many children, of poverty, immigration and of loyalty to home.

Bit by bit it became clear to me: Here are two people, deeply rooted in the heritage of their ancestors, in the land, in the language, the music and the traditions.

Already as young people they shared a vision, a dream, namely, to find a place in which they could fashion and form that which they had received and valued, and could preserve it for the future and pass it on to other people. Roughly 20 years ago, a chance arose to buy this land with its half-crumbling cottages. Courageously and with heart they took this step and first built a house for their family of three school-aged daughters. Thereafter, bit by bit, they pursued the building up of their project, the fashioning of their dream.

It was wearisome and laborious; it repeatedly required a renewal of their vision and dedication. Only in this way did they remain true to their life.

For my part, I perceived in each of them a harmony between their soul and their life. They belong there, not only in this place, but in its history and its stories. They belong to each other in the manner in which they each bring their gifts to bear and draw joy and strength from them. They also belong to the future, the people who come to them to listen to the stories and who often also stay for a few days.

Music, too, belongs to the wild beauty of such a life – it lured us in the end and we clapped to the accordion and the flute and sang along and danced an old group dance – how great a joy in living!

Dearbhaill and Charly had a vision, followed their inner voice, dedicated themselves entirely with their gifts and showed me far more than the old Irish culture: namely, they showed me how life can be brought forth from that which is within me and how it can become fullness and a gift for others. And I recount the story to you, in order to show you what it means when John O'Donohue, in his book »Anam Cara«, states: »Respond to the call of your gift and the courage to follow its path.«

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