



SIEBENQUELL

Easter Column

What the Emptiness tells us



SOURCE: ROSEMARIE MÖNNERJAHN 2014

The earthly path of Jesus ended in Jerusalem, the city of the Lord, the city of David, over which the Temple of Herod towered. The heart of Jerusalem's temple was the Holy of Holies. Here, once a year, the High Priest had access on the feast of Jom Kippur. A curtain veiled this most holy room. Yet, this room was empty! Everything in the Temple was precisely organized: how far each person was allowed to move, what was to be done...

However, the Holy of Holies was empty. Ark of the Covenant was once preserved in this room in the Temple of Solomon, flanked by two golden cherubim. Since the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians, this no longer was possible. Thus the Holy of Holies remained empty in the second temple. Yet, as it happens so often in life, the most important element was soon increasingly obscured by hierarchical structures, by busyness and regulations, by rites and performance. We know this appalled Jesus, how he resisted the narrowness, the administration and the closing in on itself: »The house of my father should be a house of prayer for all peoples!« - that was his heart's desire. For this he was willing to die. It is written, that as

he died on the cross: »Then the temple veil was torn in two, from top to bottom.« Now the emptiness is revealed. And it shows HIM, God, who cannot be grasped, who does not dwell within the confined spaces of a room, but rather in everything that lives. The emptiness demonstrates what is written in the Scriptures, that his name is »I am there«. It shows what the Torah tells again and again, that the God of Israel walks with his people, lives among his people. The emptiness confirms the truth and the breadth of the message of Jesus.

Now, however, Jesus ends up in a tomb and everything that was life and hope for those who belonged to him, seemed to be buried. Yet, as they come to honour the deceased, they discover an empty tomb. Confused, appalled and full of fear, they react to what they see with irritation.

But not Mary Magdalene! Weeping she bends into the empty tomb. Through her tears she sees the angels. Weeping, she expresses all of her pain: »They have taken away my Lord, I do not know where they have laid him.« Then she turns around and with the empty tomb behind her she encounters HIM, who lives.

The God, who is not to be cultivated in the Holy of Holies does not leave his son in a burial chamber.

The empty tomb says to us for all time, that our God is a God of life. .

The Swiss theologian Kurt Marti expresses it this way:

One grave reaches
deeper
than the graves
dig

for enormous
is death's lead

the deepest
reach
is of the grave, that itself
buried death

for enormous
is life's lead

Rosemarie Monnerjahn

Vallendar, Easter 2015