



SIEBENQUELL

An Easter Reflection

The Blessing of Walking



QUELLENANGABE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN 2014

»My father was a mason. As a child I was often able to watch how, with his help, a house was erected, slowly, patiently, brick by brick, until it finally stood firmly built. Perhaps that is not a bad experience for a bishop. The Church is house built of living stones, it requires patience, a plan, and thoroughness. In the end, there stands a house in which we can live. Yet, then Pope Francis reminds us that we Christians cannot lock ourselves away inside our lovely houses. As important as a house is, a home for faith, we will still have to head out onto the streets in order to encounter people and to be there for them. I am curious to see how we will succeed.«

This was said by Prof. Dr. Peter Kohlgraf on April 18, 2017 in the Cathedral of Mainz, just after his appointment as the new bishop of Mainz, and he is right. Despite the importance of a house and a home in the faith – we belong out on the streets on the way to the people. To head out on the road is a characteristic of us as Christians from the beginning. It is the way Jesus lived! After his baptism he went Galilee and proclaimed the Gospel; he moved through all of Galilee, he headed toward Jerusalem – the story

is always about moving and moving on. Once he said to a person who wished to follow him: »Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.« (Lk 9, 58)

In the course of our lives, we are often tempted to withdraw into our houses at the cost of the street. Yet, in this life, we are always on the road and never completely finished. As soon as we believe we are done, we are taught a hard truth. We love to settle in: externally in our homes and houses, in which we often invest a great deal of money, time and work, as if they were the aim and content of our lives; in our circle of friend and in our hobbies, which have been established for decades and are often very proud of that fact. We also know the interior form of settling in our mindsets and attitudes, which we will not give up. We can settle into our suffering, like a woman, whose husband died approximately five years ago, have nearly reached the age of 80. Since then I have never seen her smile. She is locked into herself, moving between her house near the cemetery and the grave. The neglect of the way, of moving on, always has its price.

That could have happened to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is their going forth that saves them. The mysterious stranger shows himself, step by step, as the one with whom they were on the move for years. They allow themselves to be moved – while walking, while speaking, in their hearts, in the sharing – and then are promptly back on the road again to their friends in Jerusalem.

To be on the way becomes such a characteristic of the early Church, that that first Christians were called the People of the Way.

Peter Kohlgraf is right. »As important as a house is, a home for faith, we will still have to head out onto the streets in order to encounter people and to be there for them.« It is good and important to have a home, a dwelling place. Yet, our life remains a pilgrimage. Let us be vigilant toward ever form of securing ourselves and settling in. Life – this is told to us by all of the Easter experiences – means being on the move, being moved and moving on – until our last breathe.

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April 26, 2017, Vallendar