



SIEBENQUELL

The Word Will Find Us



When the people left the church on Christmas morning, they flocked to the market square and gathered around the village fountain there. This fountain was famous throughout the region because it was triangular rather than round. It was an old tradition in the village to meet there and wish each other a blessed Christmas. On the way there, the adults spoke in hushed tones of admiration about the sermon they had just heard. The new priest was very young, a highly educated man from the big city, and everyone felt honoured that they, as simple villagers, had the privilege of hearing sermons of this calibre.

Rosita Cordileone was also walking hand in hand with Giovanni, her eldest grandson, to the fountain when he suddenly stopped, looked at his grandmother and said, »Nonna, I didn't understand anything.« No sooner had he uttered these words than Carlotta, the eldest granddaughter of Maria's friend, agreed with him. Eyebrows rose. Foreheads wrinkled. Some voices whispered quietly about the children's remark. However, none of the adults dared to contradict them, because they too had understood nothing of what they had admired a moment before.

When they reached the fountain, Rosita sat down on the edge of the well and the children crowded around her, eagerly awaiting one of Giovanni's grandmother's stories. Once again, she did not disappoint.

»What you heard in church is called the Prologue of John. It's not very easy to understand.« She glanced briefly at the adults and added: »Not even for us adults. And yet, John unfolds a beautiful answer to the very old questions in our hearts: How did this word come to us? How did it find us? It was just as difficult for him to understand as it is for us. But one conviction never left him: the word will find us. I will tell you about it in my simple words.

Now, children, this is the first thing you need to know. From the beginning, God was very talkative. So there has always been a word that simply had to flow out of God. Therefore, from the beginning, there has always been an uplifting word. Thus, God spoke the entire creation into being and wove the worlds with his words. In the first chapter of Genesis, »He said« appears ten times. These are the first Ten Words, the Ten Commandments, of God in the Bible. God was concerned with our becoming long before he was concerned with our behaviour.

Through this word, he wove the entire creation layer by layer. Everything that was, is and will be resonates with the life of this word.

Now, our God is such that this word simply bubbled out of him. With him, there is always an inner fullness that overflows. Later, when the baby Jesus was an adult, people realised that he was the son of his talkative Father. Wherever he appeared, this overflowing abundance was also experienced:

like a wedding with too much wine,
like a net with too many fish,
like the leftovers from an unexpected meal filling 12 baskets,
like a slow waterfall of perfume from an alabaster jar,
whose fragrance filled the whole world.
When this word flows, it creates spaces for life and sheer abundance.

When we now see what flowed into the world from Jesus' word and life,
we can understand John's conviction: The word will find us.

So it became human in this Jesus,
and since then, it has been dwelling and flourishing in what constitutes us, namely in our flesh and blood, in our skin and bones.

Because the Word now dwells within us, God was able to show us a place within ourselves,
beyond all our worries, hunger and achievements,
a place where we, as children of our God,
are allowed to work with the energies of love.

In him, the one word broke into many words,
like a person who takes a loaf of bread
and breaks it and offers it to everyone –
the gift of abundance from which all receive.

And he entered into the dark night of our death,
brother of our fear,
and revealed God's love,

which he had heard at the Father's side,
as you now hear it at my side.

In the end, children, the secret on which the world rests is this:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.«

Rosita paused briefly, almost breathless from her own story. She saw the joy in the eyes of the many children and the tears in the eyes of the adults. Then she continued:

»That means: God wanted to make himself sympathetic to humanity. And he did so to such an extent that three truths remain:

1. Whoever touches humans, touches God,
2. Whoever honours humans, honours God,
3. Whoever despises humans, despises God.«

Many years later, Carlotta returned to her home village, accompanied by a group of her students from the big city. She was now highly educated and well-read, and she wanted to introduce the young people to this place and these people who had shaped her heart long before books and lectures. She sat down by the fountain and told the story of Rosita Cordileone, which she had heard more than thirty years ago on that Christmas morning.

When she had finished telling the story, she took a book out of her bag: »The Book of Embraces« by Eduardo Galeano. She said: »When I think of that story from back then, a story from this book comes to mind. It's called 'Christmas Eve'.« Then she read aloud:

Fernando Silva ran the Children's Hospital in Managua. On Christmas Eve he worked late into the night. Firecrackers were exploding and fireworks lit up the sky when Fernando decided to leave. They were expecting him at home to celebrate the holiday. He took one last look around, checking to see that everything was in order, when he suddenly heard soft footsteps behind him. He turned to find one of the sick children walking after him. In the half-light he recognized the lonely, doomed child. Fernando recognised the face already lined with death and those eyes asking for forgiveness, or perhaps permission. Fernando walked over to him and the boy gave him his hand: »Tell someone...«, « the child whispered. »Tell someone I'm here.«

When she was finished, Carlotta closed the book. She let the silence linger, before she said: »God knows we are here. Wherever we find ourselves existentially, he knows how to meet us again and again. God knows how to recognize our fragile footsteps, the interminable lonely corridors where the night pursues us, the fear that at certain hours one can read in our helpless eyes. God knows. God knows how to decipher the whisper of our voice that abandon us when we need to speak and knows how to gather with love each of the words we leave in silence. The word will find us.«

Then she smiled and asked the students to come closer and kneel in front of the fountain. Only then did they notice that on each side of the triangular fountain, a sentence was carved into each of the three roughly hewn edges.

1. Whoever touches humans, touches God,
2. Whoever honours humans, honours God,
3. Whoever despises humans, despises God.

She explained: »On the evening of Christmas Day, I came back with my childhood friend Giovanni at night, and the two of us carved the three sentences into the stone. And when we are here in the village at Christmas, we meet up and carve the words into the stone again, always on the night of Christmas Day. That way, the words penetrate a little deeper into the stone, just as they have penetrated deeper and deeper into our hearts over the past thirty years.

One student asked very shyly, »Why is the writing so messy, so crooked and so unclear?«

Carlotta looked at her and said, »Because we only ever wrote the words by starlight. «

»All of this is touching me very deeply right now,« said the young woman.

Carlotta looked at her lovingly and said, »The Word will find us.«

And all were silent.

**Dedicated to the grandmothers who tell stories,
who delight my heart,
because their words find the hearts
that sermons could never reach.**

P. Erik Riechers SAC

Vallendar, December 25th, 2025