



SIEBENQUELL

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# Who longs for whom?

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Behind the hedge lies the nursery playground. There are only a few children outside this afternoon. Every now and then I hear laughter, the sound of individual voices, and sometimes loud shouts. Then a child's voice reaches me: »Leon!« The boy being called does not seem to respond. Then, from the depths of the child's soul, comes the question: »Leon, are you my friend?« I can hear the longing for a »Yes!« It resonates openly. As I walk on, I cannot hear the answer, and I pray that it may be a clear »Yes«.

Children may raise their voices in supplication: 'Do you love me?' What father, what grandmother, what friend is not familiar with this tone - their whole heart lies in this question. It is not the head that demands a matter-of-fact 'yes' or 'no'. The child's inquiring heart is full of love and longs to receive a loving response. How great is the pain when the other person remains silent or evades the question! Children's eyes cannot hide their disappointment, for they have poured all their longing fervently into this question.

How existential this question is for us as well, when a distance opens up between us and the person we love, when they remain silent and owe us an answer. The entirety of life lies in this question.

This question, which the risen Jesus put to Simon Peter by the Sea of Tiberias, was also close to his heart: »Simon, Son of John, do you love me?« (Jn 21)

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The child's voice from behind the hedge allows me to hear Jesus' question differently than before. How might it have sounded to Simon? What tone did Jesus' voice have? What did his eyes reveal? Was it divine longing that reached Simon's heart? Did Simon hear and see something of this boundless love that drove Jesus and radiated from him? A love that longed for nothing other than a response of love?

At the beginning of the Gospel of John, Jesus says to Nicodemus at night: »God so loved the world« - this thought takes on a new resonance for me. His love comes alive for me, takes on colour and melody, speaks to me with great gentleness and urgency. It flows out into the question: »Do you love me?« and strikes right at the heart of my being. May I live out an authentic response every day!

For is it not as Fr Ermes Ronchi writes in his book »The Naked Questions of the Gospel«:

»It is moving to see how human Jesus is: even after the Resurrection, he asks for love – human love. He can depart when he is certain that he is loved. He does not ask: 'Simon, son of John, have you understood my message?' Have you understood my life?' - Rather, it is as if he were saying: 'I entrust everything to love; I rely entirely on it and not on any projects. I must go, and I leave you with a question: 'Have I awakened love within you?'«

***Rosemarie Monnerjahn***

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