

### **To forgo certainty for a period of time**

**False certainties offer no foundation. There is only the foundation of the heart. This you reach slowly.**

**Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains."**

**John 9,41**

Two young women, Bianca and Angela, have fallen in love with each other. There's only one problem: they are Catholic. For both girls the Christian faith is of primary significance and they want to remain connected to the church. At the same time they are sure of their love and their decision to live in a relationship with each other. Bianca doesn't take the issue lightly. She has begun to study theology. She pursues the questions which press hard upon her: "What is the foundation of the faith in God upon which I would like to build my life? How is it that the church teachings claim certainty in their rejection of lived homosexuality? According to which criteria can I judge moral questions? What does love mean as the centre of the gospels?"

In times of growing uncertainty not only a few people, also the young, want new clarity and security. Neoconservative answers meet this need. Homosexuality, for example, is an illness and it is curable. Many respected moral theologians do not share such views and these views harm people. How much more carefully must we approach these earnest questions! Gay men and lesbians were persecuted and murdered not only in the Middle Ages but also under the national socialist regime. How grateful must we be, also from the point of view of the church, for the progress in our society that same sex couples can live in freedom and respect for their persons!

The prophets and the gospels warn against making quick moralistic judgements. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." From a similar attitude as the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 55,8f) Jesus also warns of false security: ""If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains." (John 9,41). The one who has not yet understood everything commits no mistake. But a mistake is committed by those who believe they have already understood everything.

Simple and quick answers do not suffice in order to arrive at a moral judgement which is based on a deep foundation. Much more, this requires a process which in the face of new times needs to be struggled through. Bianca will not only think through her questions, but also pray through them and suffer through them. She does this as a person of conscience in the church, just like other theologians, bishops, young people and all responsible limbs of the church have to do this together in respectable exploration. Only in this way will we achieve credible conclusions and life decisions in the spirit of Christian love and connection with God.

Lent demands spiritual humility. The humility to forgo certainty for a period of time; to endure leaving challenging questions truly open; to listen within and to each other in order to ask the heart for the criteria which supports life.