

The rooms of the soul

New freedom and creativity emerges where people open rooms of the soul for each other. With whom do I experience this happiness?

**That you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.
John 10,38c**

"With rapture I will see the soul of my soul, the heart of my heart, filled with happiness! Since 2007 this aria from Antonio Vivaldi's Opera "Il Giustino" can be heard in an enchanting interpretation from the countertenor Philippe Jaroussky ("Heroes" EMI). In a melancholy b-minor the sparsely orchestrated suite of string instruments creates a sensitive landscape through which the glass clear soprano voice radiates in order to evolve into the longing mood of "Vedrò con mio diletto". With its characteristic quart and quint leaps the melody builds emotional depth and tension, which is not dissolved by the consequential, contrasting calm lines. But rather it steps through these, through the great intervals opened rooms in an exciting calm. The text for the aria stands at the centre in a wonderful ringing Italian "l'alma del'alma mia" – "The soul of my soul, the heart of my heart" -- that person with whom the speaker feels filled, the person who opens up his inner rooms and in whose heart his own heart knows itself to be protected. Vivaldi composed this aria in 1724 at the age of 36. His music reveals exceptionally deep human experience. Was he thinking of his favourite singer Anna Girò with whom it is said he was bound in a friendship over many years? Antonio Vivaldi was a catholic priest. And so it is not surprising that a spiritual dimension shines through in his masterly expression of human passion.

Jesus speaks about the mutual opening of rooms of the soul and heart in many variations when he tries to communicate "that the father is in me and I am in the father." This language – the language of mutuality and immanence as it is formulated by the specialists for the New Testament -- which is typical of the writings of John, has its roots in the Old Testament as well as in the spiritual currents of Greek antiquity such as the platonic philosophy and the Gnostics. What is characteristic of John's imminence claim is that Jesus obtains a freedom of action which is convincing and credible because he is at home "in the Father". Whoever doesn't believe in him should at least believe in what he does, such is his argument to his critics. Complete in God, protected, understood and accepted is quasi the place where Jesus lives – a room of creativity, a room of freedom where something new and unimagined can develop.

Antonio Vivaldi and John the evangelist mirror a basic human experience which is realized anew in every deep relationship. Parents who are awoken by crying in the middle of the night and are nonetheless happy about the life of their child experience this, just as do heartfelt friends who are confident of their mutual attention also in times of distance.

In which hearts do I feel at home? Who arises in my thoughts and my impressions? Who lives in the rooms of my soul?