

„You are all heroes! Really.“

Workshop „Das Feuer der Kleinen Christlichen Gemeinschaften – Eine Inspiration für die Kirche vor Ort im Bistum Limburg?“ with Marita Nazareth from Mumbai. An inspiring evening for 15 participants.

On Friday, we organized a workshop with a guest from India, all of this on very short notice. But what a success! Marita Nazareth from Mumbai in India is an extraordinary person: she loves, she inspires, motivates, convices, and at the same time she lets love, motivation, inspiration and conviction grow. After the experience of having spent time with Marita, we can imagine how many fires she has ignited in India for a new way to be church, to implant church. In fact, on Friday, we heard the creaking sound of a raising fire.

Marita told the story of how everything began some 30 years ago. At the time, Bishop Bosco by challenging a group of people hit right into their hearts. Marita explained this transforming experience with a model of a church that can be swung open. From the outside, the model of the church is very nice. Just like the churches were in India at the time. Both, Sundays and during the week, the services were well attended, the church could not seat all who wanted to participate. Then, Marita opened the model and out came a skeleton, unfolding as the model of the church opened.

Bishop Bosco told the people to the face: your church is dead. Nobody understood his sermon at the time, since the churches were full. But Bosco explained to Marita that 99% of the people that worshiped did not really participate in constituting church. „Give me! Help me! Serve me!“ – was the attitude of many coming to church. Expecting activity of the priest, of the professional people working, from the laymen helping in the church.

And then, Bosco called all together to start a process to think about what to change: „Everybody is responsible for church. You can help, you are summoned and you are gifted to participate.“ Those were the sentence that deeply touched Marita and changed her life.

Meanwhile, church in Mumbai has changed. A large number of communities exist, and Marita often does little but to bring people together, to give and to take. And there are many ways to renew church, not only in small christian communities and not only by sharing the bible.

We in Oberursel/Steinbach cannot expect to be given fixed solutions, also not by Marita. There are no successive measures that will inevitably lead to success in the end. It is as simple as this: Marita wants to encourage us to believe in ourselves, in our dreams, our passions, in the transforming power of our belief. She wishes to support those of our talents that are creative, spiritual and that we believe in our potential. And Marita supported us with unconventional methods that we do not wish to reveal here. Suffice to say that we laughed a lot this Friday night.

She asks us: What, if our church was lively, truly lively? There is a lot, what this questions could mean and imply. And then we talked about the barriers to block our visions to come true. And also there are a lot of different aspects; too many for one workshop, too much for too short a time, as to be able to discuss all of it. But we realized that already after four hours, we began to transform. Our passion became

stronger, and our doubts smaller. In the group, we shared more mutual trust than at the beginning of the workshop. We talked about these ideas one-to-one, and this intensive discussions catalysed our understanding on how to implement some of the ideas here in Oberursel/Steinbach.

„You are all heroes! Really.“ This is what Marita told all of those who work to make God come to us. „Do not focus on what is not yet perfect but realize what you have already achieved and what is in you. – „Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has,“ a quote by Margaret Mead that motivates Marita.

Marita, however, did not end before we all thought about the next small steps. And in fact, some have ideas how to move on. Already on our way home, in the parking lot, we knew: the next small step is a next workshop, together with Jacqueline Schlesinger, who is responsible in our diocese for the development of local churches and small christian communities. Mark your calendar, more to come.

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(Translation by Harald Schwalbe)