



2024 Christmas Message

This changes everything!

Dear sisters and brothers,

A few days ago, I received an email from a friend. »A word of encouragement through the Christmas message« was the subject line. The message itself consisted of just one sentence, a quote from the US-American Franciscan priest Richard Rohr:

*»Remember, God is always present in reality **as it is**, not merely as it should be.«*

That's what Christmas is all about: In Jesus God comes to us. He comes into our lives as they are. He comes into our world as it is. Right in the middle of it! He comes close to us. He shares our life with all its beautiful and happy aspects. But he also shares our lives with all the dark, wounded, broken and abysmal dimensions. He also enters situations that we can hardly bear: the never-ending suffering in Ukraine, the incomprehensible path of horror and death in Magdeburg and the immeasurable suffering of people in many other places in our world. He comes into our reality as it is. It is precisely this, his coming into this reality, that changes everything!

Our reality does not have to remain as it is at present. The dynamic of God's closeness and the irresistible power of his love begin to transform it. At first small and inconspicuous – just as at Christmas where only a baby in a manger is visible. Then strong and promising – as later with the man from Nazareth, who opened the door to a new life for people. Finally, perfect and wonderful – at the end of time, when everything will be sheltered in God's love.

*»Remember, God is always present in reality **as it is**, not merely as it should be.«* With these words of encouragement, I wish everyone a happy, hopeful and blessed Christmas.

Bishop Harald Rückert

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