

## **KuBus 60 - Committed to Christ**

**00'15"**

Sister Gisela Johanna. A 35 year old woman takes the veil and enters a convent. Every year 200 young men and women in Germany take this step. What moves them to do so is something that they themselves find hard to explain.

**00'31" Original sound, Sister Gisela Johanna**

"I was sort of searching to find out what might be my own way...what could I do, and then in Marburg University I found a pamphlet on the contemplative way of the Dominicans. So I went and spent a week with them and, I don't know, as I was sitting there in the chapel I thought, you know, it could really be that this is it, my place is here."

**01'00"**

But she continued her studies, spent a year in Scotland, completed her course and worked as a psychologist in a clinic but the convent still held her in its grip. She entered the order. For 5 years now her days have begun with morning prayers at 5:45 am.

**01'35"**

In the Dominican monastery in the southern German city of Worms the lights are lit a little later. The monastery is the Novitiate of the Dominicans. For a year those who would enter the order have to examine themselves and are examined in the process. Just before 7 am Brother Robert puts on his robe. He is one of 7 novices. His day begins with half an hour of meditation.

**02'05" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"Prayer means a great deal to me personally, otherwise I wouldn't be here. In the Novitiate prayer means a continuous reconnection with God, the God of the Holy Trinity and occupies a considerable place in the course of the Novitiate."

**02'25"**

Three times a day the young Dominican goes to communal choral prayer.

**02'35" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"I like going down into the church early, with the light streaming in, to join my fellow brothers in singing the Psalms. At first I took a bit of time to overcome my resistance to comprehending these thousand year old prayers.

But in the meantime I think they have come to fit my mood and my attitude to prayer which, early in the morning, in the evening or during the day gives me a feeling of well being."

**03'10"**

While brother Robert and the other Dominicans are at their morning prayers a couple of hundred kilometres further north Sister Gisela Johanna is already in the laundry. A new working place for this qualified psychologist.

**03'22" Original sound, Sister Gisela Johanna**

"Obviously I didn't need to study for this sort of work but I have to say I like it and I am very happy doing the job. It is somehow a part of the Sisterhood's welfare, just a part, but I also really know it means we can go about in normal, clean clothing and I find that is a good thing."

**03'50"**

The nuns administer their own household without any staff. Very rarely do they leave the convent. They live on donations.

**04'08"**

The Dominican order is almost 800 years old. The novices are guided in the spirit and the rules of the life of the order by Father Karl. Some of them had studied theology or some other subject before entering the order, or have acquired an experience of life. Their motives for joining are different but somehow the same, even with the youngest of them, 21 year old Brother Robert.

**04'41" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"One is never too young to try something, especially when one thinks that now there is something here for me."

**04'48" Original sound, Brother Michael**

"In my personal history there were always two things, an interest in relationships and an interest in fraternities. I have often enough tried relationships and never properly tried a fraternity and that cemented my decision to do the decent thing."

**05'00" Original sound, Brother Thomas Gabriel**

"For me it signifies a fraternity of faith and living together."

**05'05"**

The Dominicans follow the works of St Dominic.

**05'09"**

In 1207 as a preacher he founded a monastery with reformed heretics. This was the beginning of the Dominican family.

**05'15"**

The Order was confirmed by the Pope. The main task of the male members is to preach the gospels.

**05'26"**

When St Dominic died in 1221 the Order had established convents in many towns. World wide more than 6,000 Dominicans live in cloisters that are settled in city centres.

**05'52"**

Behind closed doors 4,000 nuns of the Order live out their lives in the spirit of St Dominic. In contrast to brothers of the Order their lives are spent entirely in prayer and silent contemplation.

**06'43"**

The religious silence of the nuns is neither disturbed by the radio nor by table talk. Their entire daily routine, their entire life is dedicated to prayer – a difficult reorientation for newcomers.

**06'58"**

In the monastery in Worms the communal meals are also the occasion for communal dialogue. Brother Robert, the youngest, serves at table. His entry into the Order direct from school has become the exception among German novices, male as well as female.

**07'18" Original sound, Sister Maria Magdalena**

"I think that today the motive is mainly derived from life experiences. From failures and disappointments, perhaps more so here in the western world, from experiencing careers which are supposed to bring such success, both for men and for women, and in fact result in bringing them less than they hoped for, none of that which was promised. Which leaves the question: Is that all?"

**07'59" Original sound, Father Karl**

"One aspect, I should imagine, lies in the social trend that makes it harder for young people to make a meaningful decision. That is indicated in students dropping out, it shows itself in the attempts to find partners and the mounting difficulty of making any sort of a decision about life."

**08'30"**

When Brother Robert goes into the city he does not wear his robe. But he still remains a novice and that means living in poverty. All that he has to spend is 50 Euro a month. That means passing up many bargains.

**08'46" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"St Dominic wanted to preach the faith credibly and authentically. And for me that means that today I do not do without things because I enjoy austerity but rather to show that there is a lot less junk between me and my God than there is with others."

**09'10"**

In a few weeks Brother Robert will take a vow of celibacy along with that of poverty.

**09'17" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"Perhaps it should happen that people sometimes have to go through life alone with their God. When one is conscious of that it is a cause of pain. And if as a member of the Order, as a pastor I have to bring solace to these people then I need to have some idea of what it is like to be alone or, better still, to be an element of isolation itself."

**09'44"**

Under the roof of the Dominicans the novices make their vows first for a period of a few years and then for life. Sister Gisela Johanna does not see her chosen way as being a flight from worldly life.

**09'58" Original sound, Sister Gisela Johanna**

"No I don't think so, I think if I would have left earlier then that I believe would have been a flight. Since I have been here I believe that a lot, psychologically as well, has become deeper than before. I simply have a lot more courage to take a look at things."

**10'28"**

The spiritual journey inwards is one thing, the mirror image, the spiritually fulfilled fraternity is the other ideal of life in the Order. And as the day darkens the Brothers and Sisters go once more to their last prayers.

**11'06"**

God and mankind, to love and respect ones fellowman and fellow woman – that is the aim that should govern life, against every temptation...

**11'20"**

"Be prudent and watchful. Your adversary the Devil goes about like a roaring lion swallowing whoever he can. Resist him with the strength of Faith."

**11'45" Original sound, Brother Robert**

"Music is the evolvment of the culture of the soul and I believe that if you were to take the sound out of music, then only God would be left. And it makes a lot of real pleasure to make a noise. Yes, to clear everything, to play freely, clearly, naturally."

**12'40"**

And in the hours of the night one experiences the youthful fire of Brother Robert, high up, playing the organ. In traditional robes, yet slightly modern at the same time, timeless. Novices in Germany at the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium after Christ.

**13'00" BE**

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