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HELVETIA

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Highlights

- Bruder Klaus
- Lifestory – Joe and Theresa Risi
- Democracy's Decline
- President's report

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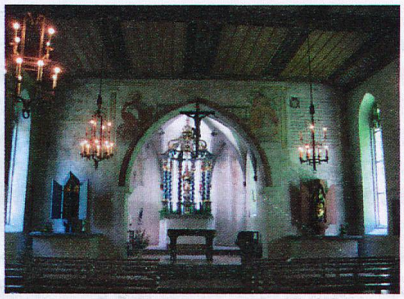
600 Years Celebration of Life of Bruder Klaus



"The name of Jesus be your greeting and we wish you much good and may the Holy Spirit be your last reward"

With these words greets us a mystic and politician who began life 600 years ago and is still revered in Switzerland as peacemaker and saint. His name: Nicholas of Flüe (1417-1487). Till his fiftieth year he lived as a respected member of his village in the canton of Obwalden, taking an active part in the political life of the time. After a deep spiritual crisis he withdraws from public life and spends the remaining 20 years as a hermit, praying and fasting. Men from near and far come to him seeking counsel. They call him lovingly Brother Claus. The mystic becomes more and more a political adviser and his fame spreads over all Europe.

His early life

Nicholas of Flüe, son of Heini of Flüe and Hemma Ruobert, is born in 1417 and baptized in the neighbouring village. Later he says that he could remember his birth and his baptism. Already in his mother's womb he had seen a star which lit up the whole world, as well as a great rock and an oil-jar. This vision recalls Jeremiah 1,5: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you for my own: before you were born I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations." At 16 Nicholas sees a high tower at the place where later his cell and his chapel will stand. Thus from his youth he is prepared to seek a "mystical union with God" ("einig wesen", church book 1488).

Nicholas becomes a farmer. In his youth he is also a soldier, but "he had always loved moderation, punished injustice and in war caused little injury to his enemies but had rather, as far as possible, protected them" (church book 1488).

Switzerland at the time

In the 15th century Switzerland goes through a stormy period of development: wars at home and abroad. Corruption and bribery are rife. The situation in the church is disastrous, foreshadowing the reformation. In Sachseln , Nicholas of Flüe's parish, there is neither priest nor church service from 1415 – 1446. Nor are there any schools in the country. Nicholas of Flüe is a self-educated man, he learns from life. At decisive moments of his life occur dreams and visions revealing to him the inner way and helping him to interpret prophetically the needs of his time.

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