## A new world

Beloved person,

A unique work of art has recently been installed on the roof of a mountain station in Lech. A shallow layer of water reflects the mountains and the sky. On clear sunny days, this reflection is almost perfect. Mountains, sky, clouds and sometimes people come together in a stunning, inverted image. What makes it so special is that you can become part of the image yourself by stepping into it. Using stepping stones, you can walk out to a rock in the middle of the water and thus become part of that unique perspective.[1]

It reminded me of the question posed in the fourth quarter of our annual theme:

*Am I prepared to broaden my familiar world with other perspectives on what the world of the future will require of me?*

In his poem *Spelende meisjes (Girls at Play),* Willem Wilmink wrote about his gloomy thoughts in a world that was falling apart, and how those thoughts changed when he saw girls from different backgrounds playing together. As he watched this light-heartedness, his dark visions of the future faded. He suddenly saw something else: these girls would carry life forward. I recognise his gloomy thoughts, but I am particularly moved by the reassuring turnaround that follows. While he fears for what will become of the world, when he looks at things differently, a hopeful future unfolds before his eyes.[2]

And so, I wonder what we are equipping young people with to enable them to live – and dare to live – in a new world. From what perspective do we view their future? With a bright or a dark outlook? For we have all been shaped by the stories, beliefs, norms and values of those who lived before us; they were passed down to us.

That is what tradition means: the word comes from the Latin *tradere*, which means to pass on or to entrust. I receive it, live by it and pass it on in what I say, exemplify, and in what I convey, whether it be consciously or unconsciously. What we pass on is therefore more than a gift, an unblemished legacy. In every person, and indeed in every community, love and indifference, doubt and certainty, fear and surrender, harshness and compassion coexist. There are stories that support us and experiences that have caused us pain. Freedom and oppression can be part of the same history.

It helps me to face the whole picture. Even the things that cause friction deserve to be acknowledged. This creates space to discern: what do we want to cherish? What needs to be restored? What does it need to take on a new form? What do we want to exemplify and pass on with love and trust, and what do we want to generously allow the space to grow further?

This requires trust in those who come after us. Trust that they will find their own way, bring different perspectives and discover new things. And perhaps it also requires me to be open to the fact that everyone interprets the same words differently. What does an 11-year-old, a 30-year-old or a 75-year-old hear in the

poem below, which has since also become a beautiful song? Which words resonate with each of them? What world and what future are reflected in it?

*Now we are here, in this wide world,*
*with our abilities, our weaknesses,*
*our doubts, our anxieties,*
*our dreams, our hope,*
*longing, fearing, rejoicing,*
*singing along in a sea of voices*
*that will never fall silent -*
*let us believe.*

*Let us believe, with the courage*
*to shape our world*
*into a home for every one of us,*
*because we are one.*
*Let us believe, with the courage*
*to give the world who we are,*
*to create from out of the power*
*that has created us.*

*Let us believe, with the courage*
*to love, again and again,*
*to embrace each other with our thoughts,*
*because we are one.*
*Let us believe in that power,*
*in the world and in ourselves,*
*in each of us,*
*because that world, that is us*.[3]

That world is us. And it will also be shaped by today's children and young people, together with us and long after we are gone. Let us, young and old alike, give one another the space to play with a light-hearted spirit and to see new perspectives - different and greater than we can imagine today.

With a warm-hearted greeting, gladly your sister,
Nanda Ziere

Conscious attention to young people, all over the world.

[1] See: https://lech-bergbahnen.at/erlebnisse/lech-mountain-mirror/

[2] See a beautiful example via this link: apostolischgenootschap.nl/kleindochters

[3] Marcel Heerink, *Indivisible,* choir song 88 (freely translated)