

You have set my feet in a broad place The power of change

MISEREOR LENTEN VEIL 2021|2022

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The MISEREOR Lenten Veil 2021|2022 "You have set my feet in a broad place" by Lilian Moreno Sánchez © MISEREOR

What would we do without our feet? Our feet support us. They allow us to stand with stability. We march and stamp our feet in protest. When we play and dance, they express our joy; when we go on pilgrimage, they carry us into God's broad expanse: 'You have set my feet in a broad place'

(Psalm 31: 8).

Together with our knees, our feet are the parts of our body that bear the greatest strain. If one foot is injured, we are rendered immobile and helpless.

Let us take a look at the MISEREOR Lenten Veil created by Lilian Moreno Sánchez: 'You have set my feet in a broad place – The power of change'. The artist was born in Chile and has been living in Germany since 1996. The veil is a triptych, in other words, it has three sections. Black lines trace the X-ray image of a foot with multiple fractures. The foot belongs to a person who was seriously injured by the police during a demonstration in Santiago de Chile. Since October 2019, many people have been demonstrating in Santiago's Dignity Square against unjust conditions in the country. Thousands of demonstrators were brutally beaten by security forces and jailed. This foot, with its obvious injuries, represents all places where people are broken and downtrodden.

The image was created in the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic in the artist's studio in the German city of Augsburg. Her native country, Chile, has also been badly hit by the novel coronavirus. Fear for one's livelihood and the very real threat of a health system collapsing under the strain have aggravated existing political and social problems. Lilian Moreno Sánchez grew up during Chile's military dictatorship – a period that the country has never really reappraised or properly come to terms with. But she believes in change, which becomes possible when people face up to past and present experiences of violence.

Lilian Moreno Sánchez's Lenten Veil is almost monochrome and features an unusual canvas: it is painted on three pieces of bed linen from a hospital and a convent in Bavaria, Beuerberg Abbey. In this way, she is highlighting the physical and the mental-spiritual aspects of illness and healing. She collected dust from Dignity Square and rubbed it into the sheets. The bed linen is not pristine and beautifully ironed; it is covered in grey stains and wrinkles. There are multiple layers that are reminiscent of sewing patterns on fabric, deep folds reminiscent of yawning gashes, and delicate golden seams where the pieces of fabric have been sewn back together as if to facilitate healing. The black lines representing the X-ray image, the materials used – charcoal, dust, linseed oil – and the sparse imagery are a reference to the Passion of Christ and human suffering. The gold and the flowers, on the other hand, stand for hope and love. The flowers, which are made of gold leaf, pick up the pattern on the bed linen from the abbey. While the X-ray image shows the full force of pain, these flowers symbolise the strength and beauty of the new life that is unfolding. Despite the serious injury they depict, the black lines also convey a feeling of lightness. They seem to dance: life is a process that goes on. Even when our feet are fractured and prevent us from walking, we have faith in the strength of solidarity.

The title of the Lenten Veil – ‚You have set my feet in a broad place‘ – is taken from Psalm 31. It describes everything that is possible when we have faith. The image of the foot reminds us of new beginnings, movement, change; the image of the ‚broad place‘ gives us space to rest and catch our breath when our feet grow weary. The psalm was composed about 2,500 years ago during the period of Babylonian captivity; in it, the author works through his or her experience of illness, loneliness, oppression, and despair. People have always sought and found refuge in God. From the constriction of their fear, they have looked out into the expanse of spaciousness and drawn courage for a new beginning.

During Lent in particular, we are invited to turn around, to change our ways, to stand up for a good life for all people. The Lenten Veil can touch us, just like Jesus touched his friends at the Last Supper. He washed their feet (John 13: 4) as a sign that they were his and as a call to them to follow in his footsteps and find new ways of reaching people. There is no more powerful expression of the inviolable dignity of each and every human than this.

MISEREOR works for a good life for all people – especially the poor – and the protection of the natural world. We know that we can change things. Let's start a rebellion for life right now!

A different world is possible. I'd like to share this hope.

Lilian Moreno Sánchez

Interview with Lilian Moreno Sánchez

(extract from the Lenten Veil Workbook)

The Lenten Veil was made using bed linen. Why?

Textiles tell stories. People have lived with them and wrapped themselves in them. I took the sheets with me to Chile. I went to Dignity Square in Santiago, where the protests took place. There, I took dust from the ground and rubbed it into the fabric. It carries the suffering in it. However, the stains also remind us of the protest against injustice.

Why do you use X-ray images?

An X-ray image allows us to see everything very accurately. But my image does not focus only on suffering. It expresses how important it is to get up again, to move, to develop. Inside us, we have a strength that makes it possible to liberate ourselves. The Lenten Veil shows us paths into solidarity, love, and hope.

What was it like creating a Lenten Veil during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Crises are always dreadful. But they are also an opening. We get the chance to change course. The image tells us of the strength of change. We have this strength to make the world a more just place. I'd like to share this hope.

For more about Lilian Moreno Sánchez and her work, see the 15-minute film on the DVD that comes with the workbook. Alternatively, it can be downloaded for a fee. Visit www.hungertuch.de to see a trailer. For information on the artist, visit <http://morenosanchez.com>

With this Lenten Veil, MISEREOR and Bread for the World are sending out a message of ecumenism. Parishes of both denominations will use the image and encourage everyone involved to continue building our One World.



Lilian Moreno Sánchez, born in 1968 in Buin (Chile), studied fine art at the University of Chile in Santiago de Chile. After obtaining her diploma, she came to Germany on a DAAD scholarship to continue her studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. She has lived and worked in southern Germany since the mid-1990s.

Her art penetrates the superficialities of life. Processing her experiences under the military dictatorship in Chile, her art revolves around suffering, and defeating it through solidarity. She often works with X-ray images, and produces her drawings on hospital bed linen. Lilian Moreno Sánchez's works do not stop at the Passion – all reality is already eclipsed by the Transfiguration.

For more information, please visit: morenosanchez.com