

# Blood on the Wreath

It is the 6<sup>th</sup> year now that I have been decorating with my husband John for Christmas. Well, he is decorating and I only have veto rights. He looooves Christmas and is always so excited when we get the decorations out on 1<sup>st</sup> December. The more things and the more colours the better. That is John's approach. I would prefer a simple green and red colour scheme. It is hard to find a compromise between these two.

## Christmas Market Feeling in the Living Room

The first Christmas that we spent in the new house I banned the flashy 70's festoon that we used to put up in John's old apartment. To me that wasn't Christmassy at all. But still, our Christmas decorations are far from being subtle. When we switch on all the lights in the living room it shines as bright as a German Christmas market. Anyway, apart from a few tacky little elements our house is like a wonderful cottage Christmas dream.

## Principles...

I insist on a real Christmas tree every year. I love the smell of it because it reminds me of [Christmas in my childhood](#). John can't live without the Christmas tree hangers he has been collecting since he was a kid. Some of them still contain the original sweets that are older than me by now. It has become our tradition that we buy a new item for the tree together every year.

## ...and Compromises

Instead of delicate Christmas balls following a certain colour scheme, our tree is a collection of things that have personal value to either or both of us. At the bottom we put unbreakable stuff that our 2-year old can take off and play with. The hangers with the 40-years old sweets go to the very

top so that no one gets food poisoning.

## **The Apple doesn't fall far from the Tree**

So neither of us is getting their way. John had to say goodbye to his tinsel and I will never see my green and red colour scheme. I guess that is what marriage is about. We tend to do it differently with the Christmas gifts though. Hopefully everybody is getting what they want in this case.

That said it gave me a huge satisfaction to hear that originally Christmas trees started off with just *red* apples hanging on them. The homily in the church on 3<sup>rd</sup> of Advent was all about where the custom of the Christmas tree comes from. When no one could read or write bible stories were told through little performances. On Christmas Eve a play used to show the story of Adam & Eve. Therefore they needed a tree that was still green in winter. And it is well known that apples played a vital role in it too. So I was intrinsically right about my colour scheme and that is all I needed to know.

## **So where does the Blood on the Wreath come from?**

Anyway, it didn't cause an argument between John and me. So where does the blood on the wreath come from when not from a fight over the Christmas decorations? The wreaths that are put up on the lovely Irish front doors in Advent also have a deeper (Christian) meaning. They originate from the little crown of leaves that the Antique Romans wore on their heads when they came home victorious. After Jesus' crucifixion his followers put it outside their doors as sign of victory over death. No crucifixion without blood. This was symbolised by red berries stuck on the wreath which we now know as the classic Advent wreath. Nowadays often replaced by red ribbons or balls. More common is the symbolism of everlasting life represented by its circular shape and the always green pine leaves.

## Exciting News

I have been going to mass with my husband on a Sunday for quite a while now. Hence I have gone through the liturgy a few times. I still learn something new every week. However this time I felt a bit like a child in school who couldn't wait to get home to share what they have learned. It was just a refreshing piece of information and in contrast to the contents from the weekly readings I didn't have to follow up on it in our son's children's bible.

With these 'enlightening' news I want to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year! Now that you have finished reading this blog post, try to put your phone to the side for a while. This is exactly what I am going to do. I am looking forward to a few enjoyable days with my family.