

Dear Queers,

Dear Allies and Friends

It's been an incredible seven years since we founded Khur Pride back then. That makes it all the more thrilling for me to be here with you today. And that's the theme for today: together with you. With you lesbians,

gay men, trans and inter siblings, bis, pans, and polys—with you queers, non-binary people, with you incredibly amazing people! Look around, look to the right, look to the left—you're not alone, because this is your family! And our family is huge; it knows no boundaries of time or space.

We exist today, we existed in the past, and we will always exist. Even if we sometimes feel alone and lonely, queers are everywhere—because there is no safe haven. Yet we still face difficulties.

Recently, a gay friend of mine was beaten up simply because he “looked gay”. In many countries, being queer is illegal. Even in Switzerland, we are not yet legally on equal footing with straight people. We all know about the recent attack on the queer community: the horrific assault during the CSD in Berlin, where a family member died. I would like to honor her memory with a brief moment of silence.

___ In a cruel world where heteronormativity and queerphobia are the norm, family becomes all the more important.

A look back at our family's history shows: before us, there were courageous queer people, strong

Black trans women, and a community that fought tenaciously for its rights and did not shy away from being perceived as “difficult.” Because in a broken system, being “difficult” is often the only thing that isn't broken. These queer ancestors paved the way for us to walk today. That is why

I would like to dedicate every step we took today during the parade to them. In memory of our queer ancestors, whose struggle is now over, I would like to quote the Black poet Maya Angelou with a slight modification: “Today we enjoy the gifts of our ancestors. For we are their dreams and hopes.”

The horrific attack in Berlin is already being exploited politically to

stoke resentment against the Muslim community. But we must not fall into the trap of fighting hate crimes with hate crimes or discrimination with discrimination. Anti-queer bigotry has nothing to do with skin color and nothing to do with one's passport. In every religion, there are both queer-hostile and queer-friendly believers. It does us no good to give in to resentment, because it does not do justice to this complex reality. It does us no good to give in to resentment, because it leads to division and mistrust. Through division and mistrust, a community is deliberately weakened; our family can only be strong if we stand together. It does us no good to give in to resentment, because it is deliberately stoked for political gain to make us emotional, to capitalize politically on hate. Yet a politics built on hate is always a misanthropic politics.

So what must our response be to this misanthropic hate? My dear queers, allies, and friends, it may sound trite, but I am firmly convinced that our response must be a humane, benevolent, egalitarian, critical, democratic, anti-capitalist, sustainable politics of love. We have already realized that we can—and indeed must—break the cruel and violent social norms! We have broken free from the restrictive social straitjacket and can lead free, fulfilled lives. Unfortunately, however, there are still people, both within and outside our family, who remain trapped in this straitjacket.

I'll slowly wrap up with a thought from the legendary Black, gay writer James Baldwin. In the 1960s, he wrote a letter to his young Black nephew. In it, he explains the structure of racism in the U.S. He writes: "Know where you come from. If you know where you come from, there is truly no limit to where you can go. The details and symbols of your life have been deliberately constructed to make you believe what people say about you. Please try not to forget: everything they believe and make you suffer says nothing about your inadequacy, but everything about their inhumanity and fear." He wants to make it clear to his nephew that the discrimination and hatred he faces in society are not sign of your own weakness or inferiority. Instead, they reflect

the moral decay and inhumanity of those who perpetuate this system.

Baldwin goes on to write: “You have no reason to become like white people, and there is not the slightest basis for their brazen assumption that they must accept you. The terrible truth is, my boy: You must accept them, and with love. There is no other hope for these innocent people. They are still trapped in a history they do not understand; and as long as they do not understand it, they cannot free themselves from it.”

Baldwin does not mean by this that we should simply accept oppression. Rather, he calls

on us to see and accept as human beings those who are trapped in hatred and a misanthropic history. Only through this radical, conscious love and acceptance can the cycle of hatred be broken

and a shared future be built.

In this spirit, dear family, in keeping with the motto of this year’s Khur Pride, “Flurir ensemen”—meaning “Blooming Together”—let us work toward a politics built on love, toward a social future in which we can all bloom together. Happy Khur Pride!