

Kräuterpfarrer Künzle traditional wisdom for modern times

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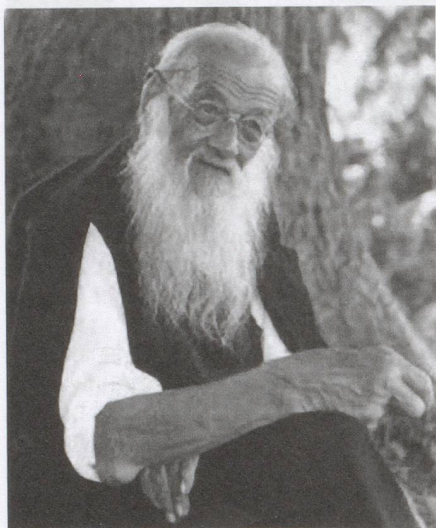
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Health Corner

Kräuterpfarrer Künzle Traditional Wisdom for Modern Times



“Happiness and joy are two of the most important remedies and no man can gain lasting health without them” ... Kräuterpfarrer Künzle

Johann Künzle was born in 1857 in Hinterespen near St.Gallen and grew up on a small farmlet. His father also worked as a gardener and this gave Johann a first introduction into the world and love of plants and nature. After his father's death in 1870, his brothers supported and encouraged Johann on a path of study. He embarked on a Matura at the Abbey of Einsiedeln, where he studied botany, followed by study in theology and philosophy at the University of Loewen. He supplemented his study allowance with writing, teaching piano and church services. In 1881 he was ordained as a priest at the seminary of St. Gallen and for the next 30 years, he worked in sometimes very remote areas of Eastern Switzerland, including Mels, Buchs, Herisau and Wangs. Initially, he wrote religious and philosophical essays which were read in his own country as well as in Germany and Austria. As the priest was often sought out for help by people with ill health in his parish, Johann deepened his knowledge of medicinal herbs and their application. Available resources of ancient herbals such as the *Tabernaemontana* (written in 1591 and now being translated into English by our Dunedin herbalist Sandra Clair), as well as a deep respect for nature and the power of the supernatural (i.e. God) formed the basis of Pfr. Kuenzle's teachings. In 1911, he wrote his famous booklet "Chrut und Uchrut" (herbs and weeds)

which served to give people tools to find herbs locally and use them in the right way in the pursuit of their own health. This little booklet has been translated into several languages and has been published in over 2 million copies, and has been revised 43 times.

In 1921, Pfr. Künzle moved to Zizers in the canton of Grisons, where he worked exclusively as a herbalist. Medical practitioners in the Grisons protested against his practices and this resulted in a referendum in 1922, which would grant him the right to practice "(herbal) medicine without poison", but not before he successfully passed a rigorous exam to prove his knowledge of human biology and pharmacy before the Medical Council. His practice, the "Chalet Helios", became a highly sought-after centre where he prescribed his teas and pills to hundreds of patients. He also gave a lot of advice on how people could help themselves with simple methods like poultices, diet and lifestyle changes, and how to gather their own herbs. His teachings in wild crafting of herbs to the farmers around the region resulted in about a hundred suppliers of herbs for his dispensary. From 1935, the dispensary was run by professional pharmacists.

In 1939, the company Kräuterpfarrer Künzle AG was formally registered and in 1954 moved to Minusio near Locarno.

In 1980, the company changed to a trust and all profits are used to support charitable organisations. In 1944, he published "Das Grosse Kräuterheilmittel" (the Great Herbal Healing Book), a book with advice on general health for the whole family. More than 200,000 prints have been published of this book. Pfr. Kuenzle died in 1945. "Chrut und Uchrut" was one of the first books I ever laid my hands on, around the age of 7 or 8, and it was in this book that I found a deep love of plants and the art of healing. The gift he gave to the people in his parish and beyond is indispensable, as the folk medicines are such a valuable and empowering tool, and enforce the fact that we all need to take responsibility for our own wellbeing. His guiding principle was that we must always work with nature and never against it. When verifying his diagnoses as well as prescriptions, he often used his pocket watch as a pendulum, a remarkable and somewhat controversial habit for a person of the clergy.

To commemorate his remarkable work, a room called the "Pfr. Künzle Stube" has been recreated in the historic Pharmacy at the open-air museum Ballenberg, where the history of natural medicine in Switzerland is portrayed. Visit it next time you spend time in the old homeland.

By Trudi Fill-Weidmann

From the booklet "Chrut und Uchrut" which is available at www.narayana-verlag.de

Some tips from Pfr. Künzle

Some of Pfr. Künzle's advice came across uncompromising and clear-cut such as his saying that "a mother who gives her infant chocolate is a murderer".

Central to his healing practices is the **cleansing** process. Many of his tea formulations are designed with that in mind – for example, the Nettle detox tea. Infuse a handful of dried nettle leaves in 1 ½ lt of water only for 1-2 minutes to avoid undesirable substances to spoil the goodness of it. Drain and drink this throughout the day. Drink small quantities often when suffering from kidney disease.

To cool down a fever with "vinegar socks": mix tepid cool water with some vinegar in a bowl, soak a cotton sock or towel in it, wring it out and wrap it over feet and calves. Leave it on until it warms up, about 8-10 minutes, and repeat, until the body has cooled down. This can be applied on injuries or inflamed joints. Vinegar can be replaced with Arnica.

To avoid colds and flu: keep head cool and feet warm.

Hot potato pack is useful for backache, bladder problems, bronchitis and rheumatic pains. Cook 4-6 potatoes whole, skin on, until soft. Place them between two damp cloths, press until flat and as soon as the potatoes have cooled down enough to be bearable place on the affected area and leave for 1-2 hours. Cover the pack with a warm woollen jumper or blanket. After the pack is removed, keep the area warm (in other words stay in bed)... It will stimulate the blood circulation to the area, remove phlegm and relieve inflammation and stiffness.