

**Novena in Preparation
for our
Annual Feast Day**



Week Seven

The Covenant of Love in its Depth

Prayer

We are united in the shrine
where the flames of our hearts
beat for our Mother Thrice Admirable
who, through us, wants to build your kingdom.

Let us glow like brands of fire
and joyfully go forth to the nations,
giving witness to redemption
and jubilantly leading all people to the Triune God.¹

Reflection

We spiritually visit our Shrine, our cherished place, with hearts full of gratitude as we reflect:

All the great and valuable things which we have received in this holy place over the years can be directly traced to our Mother and Queen of Schoenstatt.² The Covenant of Love with her is the freely chosen and freely willed declaration of our special childlike and knightly attachment to her for all eternity but at the same time it is the freely chosen and freely willed declaration of her special motherly and queenly attachment to us for all eternity.³

To remind us of our unity and as a symbol of the light that Christ brings to all as the risen Lord, let us join together and **light a candle in our altars or Home Shrines** as we pray for each other and our community.

¹ Heavenwards, Morning Prayer. Pgs 15, 17

² The Second Founding Document, October 18 1939; pg 45

³ Ibid. pg 46

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, we stand in the light of this candle representing our nine week novena. *This week we entrust to your special care our personal intentions.*

May we always stand in the light of the Covenant of Love, which our founder and the founding generation, made with you, more than a hundred years ago.

Reading

A week after the feast of the Assumption - our annual celebration - the Church celebrates the feast of the Queenship of Mary (August 22). 'The purpose of the feast is that all may recognize more clearly and venerate more devoutly the merciful and motherly sovereignty of her who bore God in her womb.'⁴

The Virgin Mary's Queenship is rooted in Scripture. At the Annunciation the angel Gabriel announced that Mary's Son would receive the throne of David and rule forever. All the mysteries of Mary's life are closely associated with Jesus. 'If Christ is the King of the world, the Blessed Mother has to be the Queen of the world.'⁵ Mary's Queenship is therefore a share in Christ's Kingship.

As early as the fourth century St Ephraim called the Virgin Mary *Queen* and later Church fathers and doctors continued to confer upon her this title.

Hymns from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries address her with the words: *Hail, Holy Queen* and *Queen of Heaven*.

⁴ Encyclical Ad Coeli Reginam, Pius XII

⁵ St Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373)

The rosary and invocations in the Litany of Loreto acknowledge her queenship.

Why do we give the Virgin Mary a Crown? *The idea of crowning the Blessed Mother was very common in the Middle Ages.*⁶ There is a special place in Schoenstatt for Mary's title as Queen, based on the personal experience of many individuals, families and communities that she truly uses her queenly power to assist, protect and lead us. This finds expression in the crowning of her image in many Shrines⁷; Home Shrines and Pilgrim Shrines. How was the first crowning a deepening of the Covenant of Love?

In 1933 Hitler came to power. A climate hostile to the Church developed in Germany. Soon circumstances came to a head, particularly for Schoenstatt in 1939, when the Pallottine College was confiscated by the Nazis and turned into a teacher's training college to propagate the Nazi ideology. Hitler's politics clearly showed he was steering Germany into another war.⁸

*We had the feeling that the battle was beginning in earnest between National Socialism and Schoenstatt. In this situation we recalled our Covenant of Love. We recalled that the Blessed Mother promised to lead the entire Family from here. And what do we want? To surrender ourselves to her and to have limitless confidence that she will lead the Family through thick and thin. So in 1939 we did two things:*⁹ Firstly, we gave the Blessed

⁶ Kentenich Reader II - Studying Our Founder; pg 125

⁷ 200 Questions About Schoenstatt; J Niehaus; No. 81

⁸ Kentenich Reader III Following Our Prophet; pg 119

⁹ Brushstrokes Volume 3 Tested By Fire; pg 31

Mother our deepened surrender in the spirit of the Blank Cheque. *We simply said to her: Blessed Mother, you can do whatever you want with us, with the Shrine, with the Work.*¹⁰ The act of consecration in the spirit of the Blank Cheque was solemnly undertaken on October 18, 1939. ¹¹

Secondly, we placed a crown upon her brow. What does it mean to crown the Blessed Mother? By this *we wanted to say to her: You have taken over the responsibility for our Work, and we trust that in spite of everything you will save the Work from the Nazis.* ¹²

When did the first crowning take place? The picture in the Original Shrine was crowned as Mother Thrice Admirable and *Queen of Schoenstatt* on December 10, 1939. The Blessed Mother was no longer invoked only as Mother and Educator, but also as our Protector.¹³ The crown was a gift of the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary. Fr Kentenich himself undertook the crowning act. ¹⁴ From then on, Mary's title was expanded to *Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt.*¹⁵

The Mother Thrice Admirable *has become our Mother and Queen. The captivating power of her love, kindness and care have made it easy for us to elevate her again and again, freely and willingly, to the throne of our family and of our hearts. Thus she*

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Kentenich Brushstrokes Volume 3 Tested By Fire; pg 31

¹² Reader III Following Our Prophet; pg 119

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ 200 Questions About Schoenstatt; J Niehaus; No. 54

¹⁵ Ibid. No. 12

*rules in the world of Schoenstatt with sovereign freedom and generosity.*¹⁶

The crowning gave visual expression to the Blank Cheque dedication of October 18, 1939. It was the beginning of what would later become the crowning stream in Schoenstatt,¹⁷ a stream which continues unabated to this present day.

*If I crown her, it is a freely chosen and freely willed crowning. I have worked for my crown and through it I want to acknowledge her dignity.*¹⁸

Pause

Prayer

Father, we believe that you are with us 'from heaven' as you promised. We thank you for the depth of the Covenant of Love in the Blank Cheque surrender. We thank you that our Mother Thrice Admirable reigns in the Original Shrine and in all the forms of our Shrines, as Queen. Father, go with us into our daily lives and intercede for us the grace to again and again, freely choose our Mother Thrice Admirable as our Queen.

Pray the Fifth Glorious Mystery - The Coronation

Mary, you reign now in heaven as Queen and dwell in bliss with the Triune God. With your Son you govern the world: he has chosen you to be its Mother.

¹⁶ Schoenstatt The Founding Documents; pg 45

¹⁷ Ibid. No. 176

¹⁸ Kentenich Reader II - Studying Our Founder; pg 126

We longingly lift our heart and hands and voices: lead us safely into the eternal Schoenstatt Land. ¹⁹

Our Father ...

Hail Mary (ten times) ...

Glory Be ...

RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT OF LOVE

Before we renew our Covenant of Love and exchange our hearts with that of our Mother Thrice Admirable, let us prepare inwardly and ask ourselves:

Whom do I wish to entrust to our Mother Thrice Admirable in this coming week?

Which spiritual gift can I bring as my gift of love (such as a prayer; a sacrifice or a good deed), which will help me prepare for our Annual Feast Day and make the Covenant of Love more real and practical in my life?

Pause

United with all those who will take part in our Celebration we renew our Covenant of Love:

My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears my mouth, my heart, myself without reserve. As I am your own,

¹⁹ Heavenwards; prayers by J Kentenich; Rosary of God's Instruments pg 100

my good Mother, guard and defend me as your property and your possession. Amen.

We pray for the beatification of our father and founder:

Eternal Triune God, for love of you and your holy Church, Schoenstatt's founder always strove to do your will and win many hearts for you. Through the intercession of Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt we pray that he may soon be raised to the honour of the altar so that he may work even more fruitfully than while on earth for you and your kingdom. Amen.