

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



Week Nine

***The Covenant of Love
and Everyday Sanctity***

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: on the importance of the shrine in our everyday lives. Through our faith in Divine Providence may we live in such a way that like Christ we can say, "I always do what pleases him" (Jn.8, 29).² May our shrine always be for us *the cradle of our sanctity*.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.

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 World Peace and an end to the Corona Virus Pandemic*

¹ Heavenwards, Morning Prayer. Pgs 15, 17

² Reader Vol.II, P.182

³ Schoenstatt's Founding Document

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

In Schoenstatt everyday sanctity has roots going back to its earliest days. In fact, the integration of faith and everyday life can already be found in the pre-founding document of 1912. The program which Fr. Kentenich proposed in the Pre-Founding document of October 27, 1912 sets the tone: *“Under the protection of Mary, we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities.”*

In particular, the word *“priestly”* signals the integration of faith and life, for just as the mission of every priest is to build the bridge from God to man, the mission of every Christian is to build the bridge from faith to daily life. And the accent on self-education signals that theory is useless unless faith rolls up its sleeves and works to realise the Christian ideal.

With the passing years it became clear how central everyday sanctity was to Schoenstatt’s spirituality. In his capacity as founder, Fr. Kentenich gave voice to this insight by including it among the three main features (the ‘three dimensions’) of the movement’s spirituality:

covenant spirituality,
instrument piety,
everyday sanctity.

Fr. Kentenich seems to have first used the word **everyday sanctity** in 1932. This was the year he gave the retreat

course “Priestly Everyday Sanctity” for priests (August 8-13, 1932 and repeated throughout the 1932-33 retreat cycle). In it he outlined the main features of Schoenstatt’s spirituality from the perspective of sanctity. It was a first attempt to give an all-encompassing view of Schoenstatt’s asceticism. It was a course that he also gave in an adapted form to the young community of the Schoenstatt’s Sisters of Mary (founded in 1926).

As the movement grew significantly in the 1930’s, it became more urgent that the main features of Schoenstatt’s spirituality be put in writing. One fruit of the 1932-33 retreat cycle was for Fr. Kentenich to commission Sr. M. Annette Nailis of the Schoenstatt Sisters to prepare a book based on this retreat. It was a mammoth task that took four years to complete. The first edition was published in Germany in 1937 with the no-nonsense title *Everyday Sanctity*.

To help us grasp what everyday sanctity is, a useful way is to see how rich a diversity of dimensions are captured in it: Everyday sanctity means:

- * To do the ordinary things extraordinarily well out of love for God,
- * To fulfil one’s duties in one’s state in life as perfectly as possible out of a generous love for God,
- * A genuine service to the human person and society, that is, it is genuine Christian humanism,
- * The total informing of the human person, and every aspect of human life, by faith.

Father Kentenich eventually compiled all this into one final definition: “*Everyday Sanctity is the God-pleasing harmony*”

between wholehearted attachment to God, work and fellow man in every circumstance of life".⁴

Everyday Sanctity is the way in which every Christian can live the Gospel in a perfect way, that is, by which he can attain the goal of his life, truly Christian holiness. Everyday sanctity is concerned with finding God, recognising and accepting God's will, and loving God in the ordinary circumstances of our lives, at work, in joy, in suffering. Father Kentenich once defined everyday sanctity very succinctly as "*the answer of life to all the actions of the God of life.*"⁵

At the same time, however, everyday sanctity embraces and regulates our relationships, our love for the people around us, for the creation with which we are surrounded and which has been entrusted to us, as well as for technology and culture.⁶

Everyday sanctity seeks to integrate work, prayer and suffering. In this context Schoenstatt understands work as man's sharing in the creative activity of God, prayer as a dialogue of love with God and suffering as a crucial part of the Christian vocation.⁷

God gives us his divine life through Christ. He merited the grace of redemption for us. Through it we come into

⁴ *Schoenstatt's Everyday Spirituality- Text by Fr. J. Kentenich, Edited by Fr. J. Niehaus*

⁵ *200 Questions about Schoenstatt, Fr. J. Niehaus, p.62*

⁶ *"A Provocative Figure", Fr. E. Monnerjahn, p.45*

⁷ *200 Questions about Schoenstatt, Fr. J. Niehaus, p.62*

intimate union with him, like the vine and its branches. He also exemplifies a life of true holiness in an attractive and captivating way. Thus God plays the leading role; we may not overlook this fact.

Although our activity only plays a secondary role, it still has a role to play. Without it there is no true holiness. For our part we have to protect and increase the divine life within us and bring it to fruition.

True everyday sanctity knows how to distribute the main and supporting roles correctly. Depending upon need and circumstances everyday saints sometimes place greater emphasis on God's activity, and at other times on their own activity. Everyday sanctity sees to it that the mysterious connection with Christ finds expression in practice in both our attitude and life. For everyday saints, their connection with Christ is a constant incentive to become like him in everyday life.

Everyday sanctity has always to be seen and lived in practice as an organic whole: bonding to God, to work and to people.⁸

Pause

Prayer

Father, we believe that you are with us 'from heaven' as you promised. We thank you that in the course of Schoenstatt's history, you have showed us by the example of your life that

⁸ *Kentenich Reader Vol.II, P.177-181)*

you always strove to do the will of the Heavenly Father. Father, go with us into our daily lives and intercede for us the grace to live in “God pleasing harmony between whole-hearted attachment to God, work and people in every circumstance of our life.”⁹

Pray the Third Mystery of Light – Christ’s Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and His Call to Conversion.

We want to selflessly serve your work with steadfast hearts and joyful bearing. To you we leave the care for health and food on our pilgrimage through life.

Implore God’s richest blessing for all those who work and sacrifice for our well-being. Grant them in the difficult paths of life a generous measure of your love and grace.¹⁰

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?

⁹ “200 Questions about Schoenstatt”, p.62

¹⁰ Heavenwards; prayers by J Kentenich; I Praise you Mother; pg. 147,148

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, 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.