

For those interested in history and the life of a strong Woman.

Gertraud Von Bullion (1891 – 1930)

*Gertraud was the seed for the whole Women's Movement in Schoenstatt. Father Kentenich (the founder of the Schoenstatt Movement) called her a **"very great woman"**, he also stated the Women's Movement gifted Schoenstatt **"with sheer, endless fruitfulness"**.*



Gertraud came from a noble heritage, however, no task or job was too menial for her – her motto was "to serve". She stated her two passions in life were "one to help all people, each one where it is needed, the other, to see to it, that God is honoured everywhere."



As a Red Cross volunteer she worked in a hospital in Cambrai France (1915-1917), then in Mons, Belgium (1917-1918). It was in these two places that she came into contact with the young Schoenstatt Sodalists.

At that time they were young boys belonging to a minor seminary to be educated and become priests. Fr. Kentenich's role there was to be the Spiritual Director of the young boys. The way the young men talked about the Mother of God, their goals and their attachment to the Shrine and Fr. Kentenich inspired Gertraud.

Gertraud needed to repeat her request to Fr. Kentenich to belong to Schoenstatt; it took her three years before her perseverance paid off.

But Father Kentenich was a Spiritual Director in a minor seminary; it was then no wonder that Fr. Kentenich took time to understand fully Gertraud's request and see it as God opening a door for Schoenstatt to expand beyond the young boys in the minor seminary.

Gertraud and her cousin made their consecration to the Mother Thrice Admirable on December 8th 1920. This is known in the Schoenstatt history as the Foundation Day of Women in Schoenstatt. Gertraud became a blessing for Schoenstatt and her service exemplary; she lived the Schoenstatt mission in a feminine way. With Fr. Kentenich she developed a lay spirituality and way to holiness.

In January 1921 Gertraud became ill, it is thought she contracted TB in Mons. This illness claimed her life 9 years later. Through these years she was bed ridden and hospitalized for weeks and months at a time. Even through this illness, pain and suffering she could recognize God's love and gifts to her.

*She reflected and could see the **"inexhaustible mercy of our good heavenly Father. He constantly surrounded me"**. She died on June 11th, 1930, the feast of Pentecost that year. She was buried on 13th June, and at the funeral she was celebrated as a heroine.*

*When Gertraud made her consecration in the Marian Sodality of Schoenstatt, she had the word **"Servium"** engraved on her medal; this reflected her life and mission. This was not a submissive*

phrase for Gertraud but a phrase of true freedom, courage, initiative and an inner strength that carried her through really difficult times of war and illness.

Gertraud was a woman whose personality and faith was ahead of her time. She personified what Vatican 11 proclaimed many years later as a lay spirituality and ascetism. I want to call her a trail blazer.



(This article was compiled from information gained from Bishop Josef Stimpfle's talk for opening the process of Gertraud's beatification Augsburg Germany 6.9.1991, and talks given by Fr. Birkle & Monsignor Zimmerer 8.9.1991 – translated by Maria Kleimeyer)