

Schoenstatt Movement Australia

December 18 2020 | Volume 1, Number 14

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1. Covenant Day Message

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

On this Covenant day - 18th December - I wish you all many graces and blessings from the Shrine. As we continue our journey through Advent and approach the wonderful season of Christmas, we are united with our Blessed Mother and the Christ Child as we hear the words of the shepherds.....

"I BRING YOU NEWS OF GREAT JOY"

This has been an unusual and difficult year and many people are still struggling with the effects that COVID-19 has had on their life or the life of members of their family. As we look towards the coming year and what is being called a 'new normal', I would like to share with you some words from Fr. Kentenich that we might reflect upon as we approach the season of Christmas and the coming new year:

Mary as the way to Christ's re-birth today

Let me tell you one of my favourite ideas. You see, history repeats itself – salvation history. Salvation history began with the birth and the "Yes" of the blessed Mother. If the present-day world wants to find its way back to Christ, Our Lady must give birth to Christ once more. Allow me to presume that you accept this inwardly. But when you think about it, or talk about it, you will have to explain it in a new way and also study it in a new way, otherwise you will never understand the profound depth of Schoenstatt and its covenant of love. The Mother of God wants to create a whole new world, she wants to bring about a new world from here. Christ should be re-born! Here, too, I think you will feel much the same as someone who told me this morning: the more he studies Heavenwards, the more varied are the answers he discovers there. Often just a few words open up a panorama before us. It only takes time to grasp it:

'We thank you for all the gifts which we have received in such abundance: for choosing Schoenstatt as the place of Christ's rebirth' (Heavenwards, p.13).

Do you understand what that means? It is not just in the way Christ is re-born everywhere. Oh, no! You have to see its full impact, the great vision: he must be born again! That is why it is so important for us to uphold what we have wanted from the beginning. What is that? Love for the Mother of God. Our Lady is not just the way to a deep and tender love for the Father, she is also the way by which Christ will be born in our present times, in the new era.

So if we do not believe blindly in our covenant of love, everything is a chimera of the imagination, what we do is just a wild dream. We need to believe deeply that we have to do no more than lead the Mother of God onto the battlefield everywhere, and give her the opportunity to give birth to Christ once more.

(Fr. Joseph Kentenich from a Conference for the Schoenstatt Fathers, 1963, from: "Christ my Life")

Blessed Mother,
in Bethlehem in a poor and little stable
you give birth to the Lord of the world for us all.
Just as you showed him to the shepherds and the magi
and humbly bowed before him in adoration,
let us always be his loving instruments and carry him deeply
into human hearts.

(Heavenwards, Third Joyful Mystery)

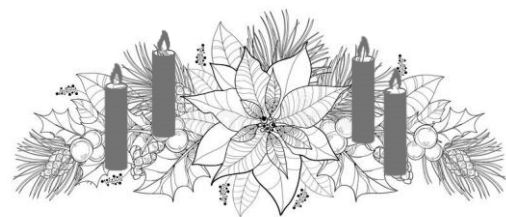
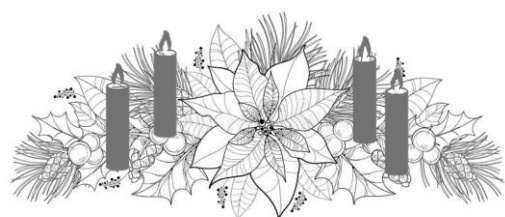
Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. May we never take Christmas for granted but continue to be filled with child-like wonder as we contemplate what God has done for us by becoming one of us.

He is one with us, in times of darkness and hardship, in joy and celebration.

May the Blessed Mother and her Son, send you and your family, rich blessings and graces from the shrine during this Christmas season and continue to be with you in the coming year.

United in our Covenant,

Shirley Hall





2. Second Miracle of the Holy Night ... and the events leading up to it...



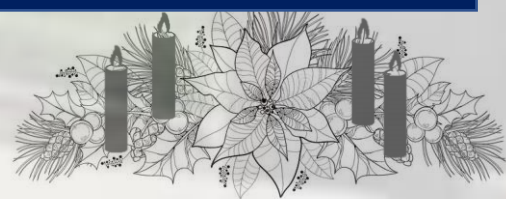
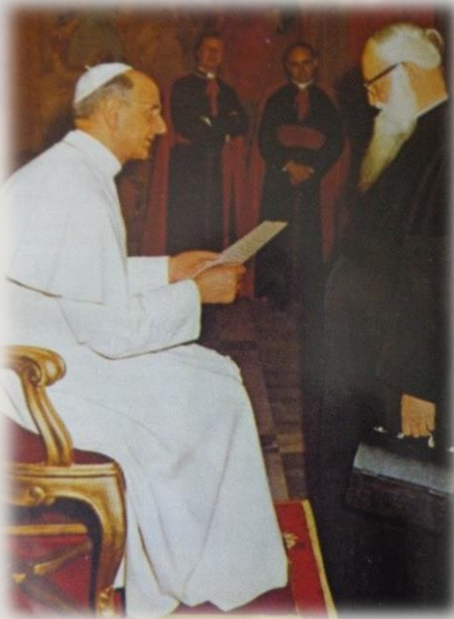
After his exile in Milwaukee, Father Kentenich arrived in Rome on 17th September 1965. On **October 22**, Pope Paul VI signed the decision of the consistory of Cardinals that effectively dropped all decrees against Fr. Kentenich (this day was exactly 14 years after Fr. Kentenich left Germany in 1951 to go into exile in Milwaukee).

On **22nd December** the Holy Father received Father Kentenich in audience. It was a moving moment when Father Kentenich stood upright as ever, in his black soutane and snow-white hair, before the Holy Father. Pope Paul addressed Father Kentenich in a short prepared speech in which he personally expressed his thanks to Fr. Kentenich and confirmed his rehabilitation. Father Kentenich answered in Latin and made the following promise in return: *"In the name of the Schoenstatt Family, I heartily thank you for the good works you have lavished on Schoenstatt to an extraordinary degree, but also that you have reinstated me. In gratitude for everything which your Holiness has done, **we want to diligently work to help realise the unique mission of the post-conciliar Church for our modern times. And all this under the patronage of the Mother of the Church.**"*

At the end of the audience Father Kentenich handed the Pope a chalice for the church which the Holy Father intended to build in honour of Mary, the Mother of the Church to commemorate the Council. (The Pope had blessed a foundation stone for this church during the concluding ceremony of the Council on the 8 December).

On **December 24th**, the eve of the 'Holy Night' - Fr. Kentenich returned to Schoenstatt, after being away for 14 years. Because of this date, his return to Germany after the time of exile is sometimes referred to as the **"second miracle of the Holy Night."**

As soon as he got out of the car in Schoenstatt, Father Kentenich went first to the Original Shrine. He knelt at the altar rail for the first time in 14 years. Fortunately a photo was taken through the shrine window capturing this moment. The depth and inner calm of father's gaze, his upright bearing, his hands folded in prayer, expressed what could not be put into words.





During the day word had gone round that the reunion of father with his whole Family would take place at 6pm in the “Marienschule”, the high school conducted by the Sisters of Mary. There was an air of amazement, joy and eager expectancy. Tears of joy filled many eyes. Father Kantenich slowly climbed the steps to reach the microphone. *“Our Lady is giving me the Family once more; it has, of course, always lived in my heart, but she is placing it back in my hands so that I can form and mould it in the way corresponding somewhat to the plans of eternal Truth, and so that I may then pass over into eternity where I shall continue to guide my life-work in a new way.”*

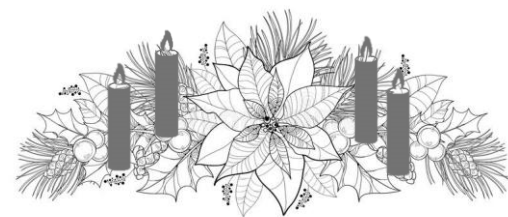
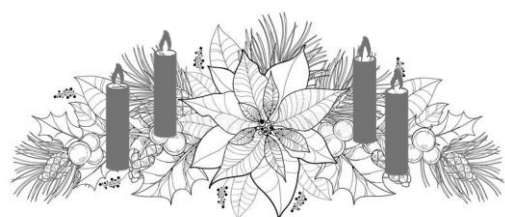
By that he meant ‘to contemplate the heart of God, to try to discover God’s plans, to apply them to our own lives, so that, instructed by what we discover, we can see more clearly into the future.’ In saying this, Father Kantenich not only sketched the theme of his talk to his attentive listeners that Christmas Eve but also outlined his program for the coming years.

Some people felt sorry for him, because they saw what an effort it had been for him to climb the steps to the stage; they thought of the weight of his advanced years. When someone told him of this, he replied with a smile, “Oh, that wasn’t old age, my new shoes were to blame, for they pinched my feet.”

At midnight he celebrated the first of the three Masses of Christmas in the original shrine. The ‘Second Miracle of the Holy Night’ which he had often spoken of, that is, the freedom of Schoenstatt’s father and founder, the undoing of his fetters, had become a reality and had occurred exactly on time.



(From: ‘A Father to Many’, Fr. Esteban uriburu)



3. Continuing Father Kentenich's Mission into the Future...

The conclusion to Father Kentenich's Christmas Letter which he sent on 13 December 1965 (before his return to Schoenstatt) contains words that were relevant for the Schoenstatt Family in 1965, and are still relevant for us today as we strive to fulfil our mission as members of the Schoenstatt Family: *"When I now send heartfelt wishes for Christmas and the New Year to every member and every branch of the Family, we understand what I mean by it:*

[I wish] all of us God's blessing in the spirit of the past years and our mission for the future".

Father Kentenich has passed on this mission to each and every one of us and continually challenges us to fulfil this mission into the future.

On this December Covenant Day we might reflect what his words mean for us today as we look back on what has been for most of us a very difficult year and contemplate the future and what it might look like for us individually, for our own family and for the Australian Schoenstatt Family.

In the light of the discussion at our October Mini Conference we agreed that for the coming year we would focus our striving specifically on:

Family, be what you are: Domestic Church.

(Note: "family" may include not just the natural family or our particular family circumstances at the moment but also our Schoenstatt Family.)

In this coming year we want to deepen our understanding of the Domestic Church. We are also challenged to find new ways of sharing the richness of Schoenstatt and not be fearful about taking new initiatives. We want to work on developing a deeper sense of community and revitalizing our Home Shrines. We want to:

- Go where we are needed
- Take Our Lady with us and
- Trust blindly in Divine Providence.

We are a Family of Mary

With our helplessness and limitations, we are a family of Mary.

With our abilities and possibilities, we are a family of Mary.

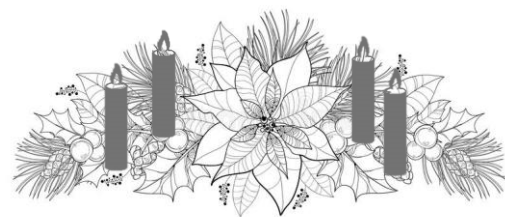
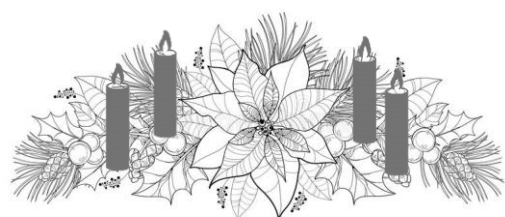
With our diversity of background and longings, we are a family of Mary.

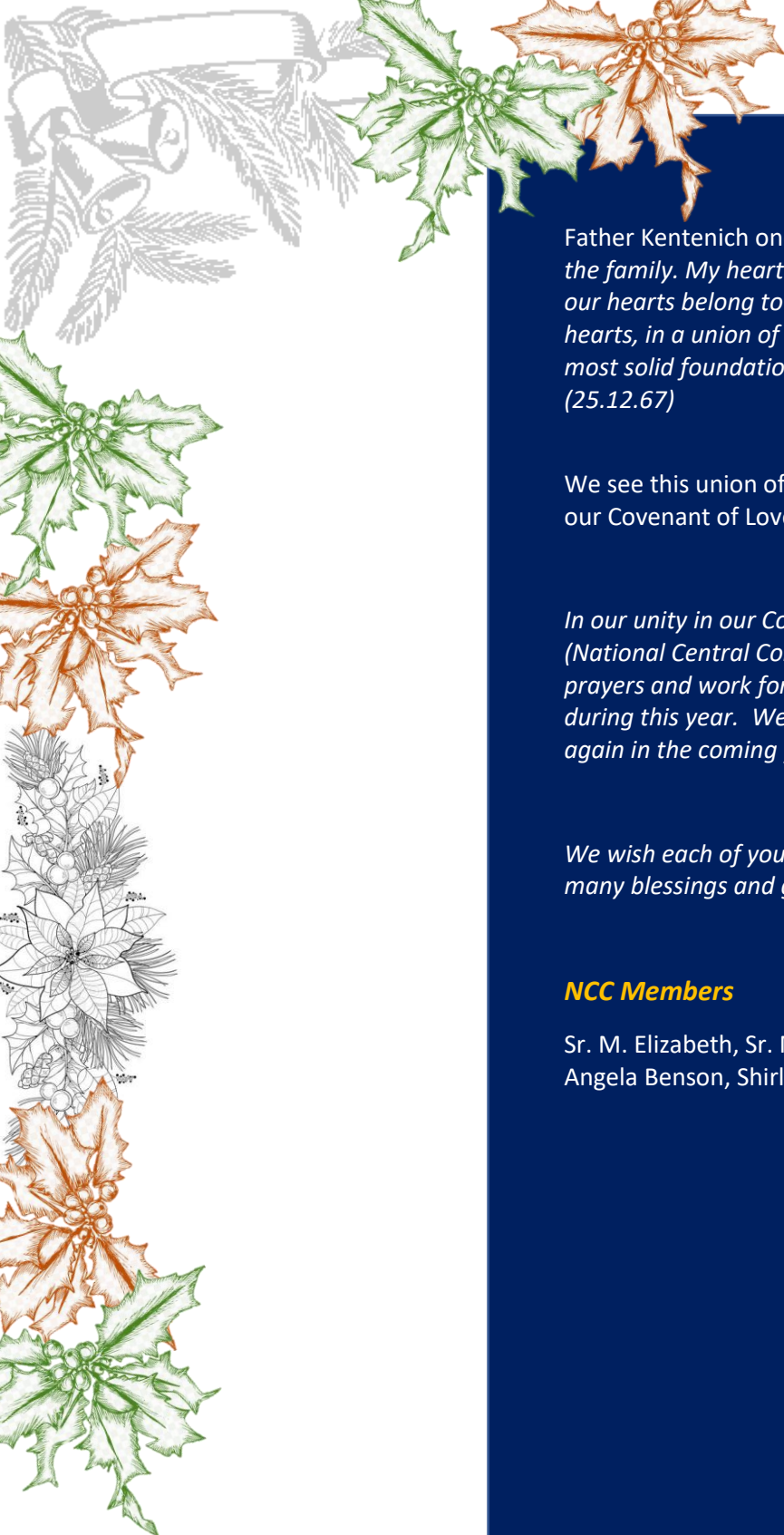
With our mission – great and small, we are a family of Mary.

With the Shrine as our home fire and our lighthouse, we are a family of Mary.

With one another and with all our hearts, we are a family of Mary.

(Fr. Jonathan Niehaus – Preparatory pray for 2011 National Conference)





Father Kentenich once said; *"Our hearts belong to all the members of the family. My heart belongs to you, your hearts belong to me, and our hearts belong to one another. If we are thus a community of hearts, in a union of hearts with God the Father, then we have the most solid foundation for the history of the family in times to come... (25.12.67)*

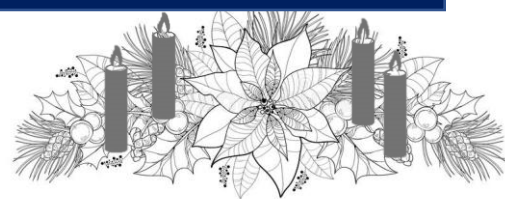
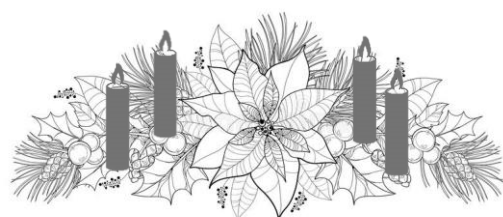
We see this union of hearts most appropriately expressed through our Covenant of Love.

In our unity in our Covenant of Love, the members of the NCC (National Central Committee) thank you for your continued support, prayers and work for the mission of Schoenstatt here in Australia during this year. We look forward to working together with you again in the coming year.

We wish each of you a very happy and holy Christmas season and many blessings and graces from the Shrine.

NCC Members

Sr. M. Elizabeth, Sr. M. Thomasine, Sr. M. Isabell, Sr. Luisa Maria, Angela Benson, Shirley Hall, Michael King, Pat & Terry Pate





4. New Members of Our Covenant Family

Families in W.A.

On Sunday 18th of October at the Schoenstatt Shrine in Armadale (Perth Metro – WA), some young couples of our Family group sealed their Covenant of Love with Our Lady. Our group has been in preparation for more than a year and we felt really blessed to enter into the Covenant on Schoenstatt's Foundation Day. It was also a blessing that we had so many people from different Schoenstatt groups joining us in the Shrine area. The current restrictions in WA allowed us to do such gathering so we felt it was really meant to be.

We started our celebration with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by the Rosary. We had a beautiful rite presided by Fr Mark Baumgarten with the support of David and Philomena, who were the organisers, and the wonderful participation of our enlightened pianist Margaret. After the Covenant rite and blessing of the Medals, the couples placed their Covenant prayers in the urn as their contribution to the Capital of Grace.

Later, the Schoenstatt family prepared for us a delicious afternoon tea at Emilie House with a beautiful cake. We could feel the love, care and attention coming from the Schoenstatt family of WA to all of us. We had an amazing and peaceful day, filled with happiness, love, joy, graces, and blessings from our Shrine.

Barbara & Guilherme Dias



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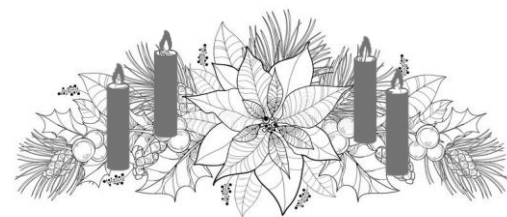
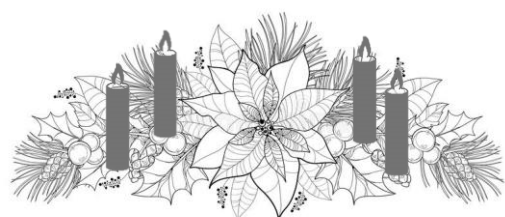
Fr. Pawel O.P. in NSW

Congratulations to Father Pawel Barszczewski OP (Father Paul) on his Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt in the Shrine at Mulgoa.

Father Pawel, a member of the community of Polish Dominicans, has been serving our Schoenstatt Family at Mulgoa for the past seven years and

has now joined in the Covenant of Love.

Father Terry Bell, from the Schoenstatt Priests' League, accepted his Consecration on 8th December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Representatives from our Schoenstatt Women's League and Mothers' Branch were happy to be present and, with the Sisters, welcomed Father Paul into our Schoenstatt Family!



5. 100 Years Women in Schoenstatt Celebration at the National Shrine



In our September Newsletter we shared about the celebrations in Germany marking 100 years since women began participating in our Schoenstatt Mission. Since the actual date of the Covenant of Love of the first women was 8th December 1920, Holy Mass was

offered at Mount Schoenstatt on that date, for all those who have participated in any way with our women's branches in Australia and their intentions. The following was included in the prayers of the faithful:

Today we pray in thanksgiving for the many women who, since 1951, have worked to spread the mission of our MTA and her Shrine here in Australia. We pray in silence for the needs and intentions of these women ... we pray too for the souls of those women who have gone before us. Lord hear us.

Leading up to this memorial date an "e-celebration" was held via Facebook and our National Schoenstatt Webpage (www.schoenstatt.org.au). Memories of the past and articles sharing about significant celebrations in our Schoenstatt History were shared via these digital means. We hope that those who could follow the posts enjoyed this way of celebrating.

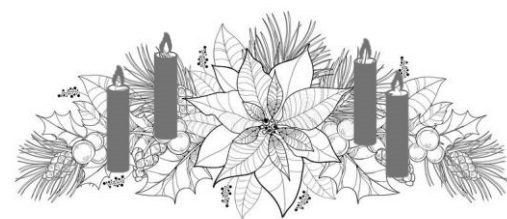


On Saturday 12th December, a small group of representatives of the Women's Branches (due to the COVID restrictions, these women came from groups that are presently meeting) celebrated the centennial at the National Shrine in Mulgoa. After an introduction from Michelle Davis, highlighting the importance of Gertraud von Bullion, the first woman to enter into the Covenant of Love, those present were led by Sr. Mary Louise into a reflection about the Covenant of Love and the blessings we receive when we follow Mary's direction to the waiters at the Wedding at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you".

Fr. Bell, who has been the Schoenstatt Moderator for the Mothers' Branch over many, many years, said Mass and encouraged us to "Go and set the world on fire", a message he had "received" from Fr. Kentenich back in 1977 when he was in Schoenstatt, Germany.

For some time after lunch, we shared about the history of our Women's Branches in NSW and other memories of those present. It was wonderful to have three representatives from our youngest women's group who shared how they have tried to keep in contact during these COVID times via Zoom, even with members of their group who are in Tasmania and Toowoomba.

Following a devotion and Benediction in the Family Hall, during which each participant offered to Our Lady their 'promise' for the future and received a memorial candle in return, we went in silence to the Shrine. Since we could not go into the Shrine, we formed a circle around it. Here we renewed our Covenant of Love by singing our consecration prayer. Afternoon tea and the cutting of a Jubilee cake could not be missing to complete this 'mini' memorable celebration. Special thanks to all involved in bringing it about – in spite of the difficult COVID times.



6. Flores de Immaculada

A lovely service was held at our Shrine at Mt Richon, Western Australia on Sunday 6th December 2020, to honour Our Lady for her Feast Day on 8th December. This was organised by Sr Lisette, Maria Filamor from the Maida Vale Parish and the Legion of Mary from Armadale.

In view of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, we wanted to honour Our Lady in a special way. As there is only one Mother of God who wants all of us to love her Son Jesus just as much as she does, and who wants to give us a home in her Shrine and to shelter us all, we invited people of many nations to come and honour Our Lady in their own cultural way.

Twelve different images of Our Lady from different countries were brought to the Shrine. A person representing each group would come up and explain about their statue or image of Our Lady and what it means to them. They then led us in part of the Rosary in their native language.

The groups were:-

1. The Pieta, from Rome, Italy
2. Our Lady of Good Health, Velankanni, India
3. Schoenstatt Pilgrim Mother, led by the Young Mothers Group from our Shrine
4. Legion of Mary, Armadale
5. Madonna Assunta Castellace, Italy
6. Our Lady of Akita, Japan
7. Our Lady of Penafrancia, Philippines
8. Our Lady of Africa – Kenya
9. Our Lady of the Rule, Mactan, Cebu
10. Our Lady of Good Counsel, Zambia
11. Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, France
12. Our Lady of Fatima, Couples for Christ, Philippines





The Pieta from St. Peter's Basilica was presented by a Schoenstatt couple who in a very beautiful way brought our father's love for the Church into their presentation, encouraging everyone to imitate his 'Dilexit Ecclesiam'.

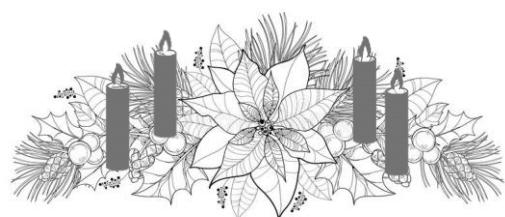
Deacon Patrick Moore from the Armadale Parish volunteered enthusiastically to recite part of the Rosary in French as he could say the 'Hail Mary'. His remark at the end of the celebration was: "Sister. see you again next year...." Around 150 people attended.

After the Rosary, we had Benediction, led by Deacon Patrick. A group of young musicians led us in singing hymns. Afterwards we had fellowship and sharing of many national dishes and more singing in the carpark in front of Emilie House.

The atmosphere felt was due to all being children of one Mother. Due to the new COVID restrictions, everyone had to register for the event on arrival, and it was all held outside.

It was a lovely event and brought many new people to the Shrine. One 'First timer' came the next day with 7 others to share her experience with them. The Shrine becoming a home had become a reality for her.

Philomena Theseira WA



7. Information and Links

Shrine Opening Hours:

Please check the websites for updated opening times of the Shrine.

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW

<https://schoenstatt.org.au> (opening times have changed)

Mt Richon / Armadale Shrine, WA

<https://schoenstattwa.org.au>

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC

is open for individual visits from 7 am – 5 pm daily.

Links:

Official Schoenstatt Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.com>

Schoenstatt Australian Website

www.schoenstatt.org.au

1. **Sr. M. Isabell** features in this Website. She is one of the 100 Women portrayed as part of the celebration of **100 years of Women in Schoenstatt**.
2. On Schoenstatt International's Facebook and YouTube pages on **December 20** an international **Christmas concert** will be offered. At 8pm German time, that is, **6am (AEST)** Links are as follows:
www.schoenstatt.com
<https://www.facebook.com/schoenstattinternational>
<https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattinternational>
<https://www.instagram.com/schoenstattinternational>

Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel:

www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia

Video for December Covenant Sunday - Christmas Carols with the Sisters

Recent videos on this Channel

Advent reflections for each Sunday of Advent
The Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

The Sisters singing the consecration prayer may be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O29tXet2DQQ>

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