

Schoenstatt Movement Australia

March 18 2021 | Volume 2, Number 3

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1. Covenant Day Message

Family, be what you are: Domestic Church

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

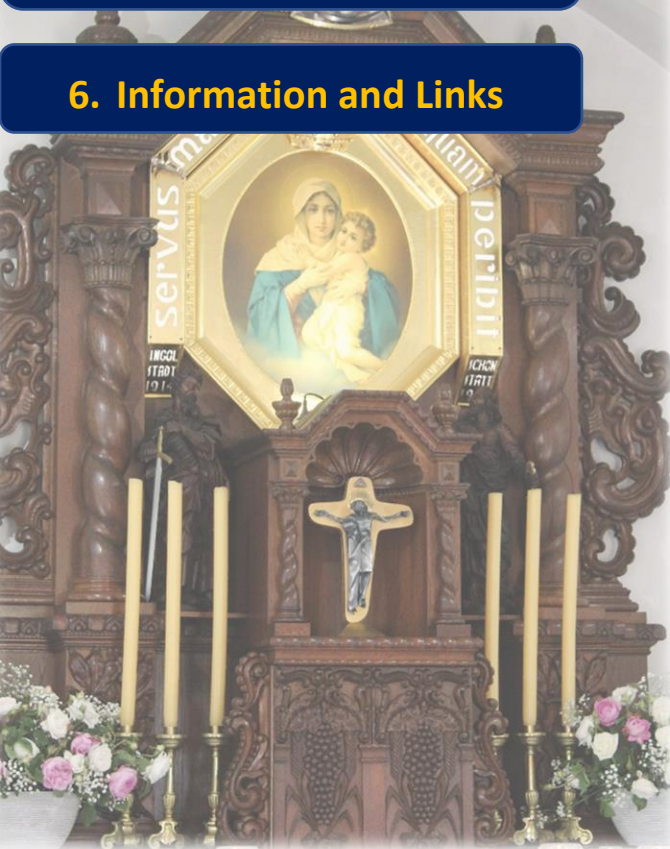
Greetings and blessings for this Covenant day – 18th March. On this special day each month, we join together as Schoenstatt Family around our Blessed Mother and our father and founder, to renew our commitment to our covenant of love and accept once again the task that Our Blessed Mother gives to each one of us from her shrine.

As you would be aware, this year we are exploring what has been one of Schoenstatt's gifts to the church - the church of the home, the "Domestic Church" and its centre, the home shrine. In continuing our focus on the significance of the family, we hope to deepen our understanding of what is meant by "the Domestic Church" and its importance in these times.

We understand that in speaking of Domestic Church it can mean a single person, a family with small children, or a family unit consisting of two or three generations.

During our Covenant Sunday presentations so far this year we focussed in January on the family as the domestic church. Then last month we looked at the Home Shrine as the centre of the Domestic Church.

With this in mind, I would like to offer you some words from Father Kentenich that he spoke during a family's consecration on 2nd October 1966. Father Kentenich said:



“.....You may not ignore the fact that we are living in times of radical change, in times which are said to be the newest times. (...)

When we look into the present-day situation, when we pay attention to what is preached, when we listen to discussions in the work place, we realize the efforts to simply remove the Blessed Mother from these newest times, from this newest Church, so to speak. It seems to me we are justified in saying that the Blessed Mother has established herself in our shrines. What does she want in the shrines? She wants to speak her Fiat for the newest Church on the newest shore.

What task does the Blessed Mother have?She has the task to glorify herself in the newest Church on the newest shore by bestowing graces of transformation wherever people entrust themselves confidently to her. She wants to form this new person who is capable of dealing with the newest times. (...)

You see, for these times, too, she wants to act from her shrine. Let me repeat, it does not matter whether we think of the original shrine or of daughter shrines. That's why we are well-advised to respond to the intentions of the Blessed Mother. Naturally, it is not just a matter of establishing a corner for God or a Schoenstatt corner in our homes; we may not be satisfied with offering the Blessed Mother a little spot; on the contrary, we have to allow the Blessed Mother to take care from this home shrine that a religious atmosphere permeates the whole house, that a religious atmosphere unites father and mother, that a religious atmosphere also enters the heart of the children and grandchildren. But the greatest task which the Blessed Mother wants to fulfil in the home shrine is to see to it that slowly a heart shrine will develop in us and that this heart shrine will increasingly influence and permeate all of life.”

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.

(From: Heavenwards, Morning Consecration)

You might like to consider how our Blessed Mother helps you to become “this new *person who is capable of dealing with these newest times*”?

I again wish each of you many graces and blessings from the Shrine on this Covenant day.

United in our covenant,

Shirley Hall



2. Year of St. Joseph



We are probably aware that Pope Francis has called this year a year of St. Joseph, so I want to share a short reflection on St. Joseph and the Holy Family as a blue print for our living.

Joseph was from the House of David, so the prophecies could be fulfilled ... the Messiah came from the House of David. Joseph too was chosen and had a specific mission in the work of redemption.

When reading about Joseph, I actually discovered there is more in the scriptures than I thought. In Matthew's gospel we have:

Mt 1: 20-21, 23 An Angel appeared to Joseph in a dream...Was this his annunciation? ***"Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife"***

Mt 2:13 -15 Again an Angel appeared to Joseph in a dream..."Take the child and his mother to Egypt" and then

Mt. 2: 19-23... For a third time an Angel appeared to Joseph as he slept,

"Rise up, take the child and his mother to the land of Israel...then he took them back to Nazareth"

Here we see St. Joseph as the Protector of his wife and child. But also a Man of faith and listening.

In Luke's gospel we also find Joseph in:

Luke 2: 22, 25... The presentation of Jesus in the temple ... I wonder what Joseph thought when Simeon said to his wife, Mary, "A sword will pierce your own soul". Did they discuss this on the way home or was he respectful and mindful of Mary's special mission?

Luke 2: 42-43, 45-48.... The 12-year-old Jesus at the Passover feast. Mary and Joseph searched for Jesus for 3 days. Mary said to her Son, "Why did you do this to us?" Think about how much your FATHER (Joseph) and I have suffered". This highlights to me the family relationship, Mary and Joseph as a couple, as parents and their shared relationship with their adolescent son.

Luke 2: 51-52... Jesus went home to Nazareth with his parents. "Jesus grew in wisdom and in age and in favour with God and Man". Joseph and Mary continued to teach and educate their son and for sure Jesus and his parents had discussions and he taught his parents as they lived as a family.



In reflecting on these readings, Joseph came alive for me. He was by Mary's side and supported his wife and son in their Missions, he listened and obeyed God and protected his wife and child. He provided for his family and he taught his son his trade of being a carpenter. ***He was a man of faith with a listening and with a trusting heart.*** He responded immediately to what the angel asked him to do and he followed the Law and Customs set down by his religion and culture. ***He was an upright and just man.***

These accounts show us a little about the life of the Holy Family, they followed the laws and customs of the time, they struggled, and many obstacles were put in their path. Joseph served the Word of God and must have been a man of prayer to be attuned to the Angel's directions in his dreams. He was also an obedient man, immediately following the Angel's directions. He protected his wife and child in many situations.

So, the Holy family shows us family life is dictated by the norms and laws of our culture. The political climate can and does impact us, as does our religion. Outside forces affect a family unit. Persons within the family unit have their own vocation and mission and need space to grow and develop. Children need to discover their identity and parents need to let go and trust. It also shows within culture there are prescribed roles. Jesus (although God) had to abide by the times and customs. Jesus, although God, needed to submit....

The Holy Family was a home ***centred on Christ and doing the will of God.*** It was made up of three individuals who had a life of prayer and lived in obedience to their unique missions. They acted when it became apparent to them, what God was asking. Members within a household develop their own relationship with God but as a family they grow together to do God's will.

In our Schoenstatt Spirituality we, like Joseph, are called to "take the child and his mother" into our homes, into the world and into our daily lives. To keep them safe and make them known in the world.

Michelle Davis



3. Upcoming Feast Days

March 19- Solemnity of St Joseph

On 19th March we celebrate the Solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Letter “*Patris corde*” (“With a Father’s Heart”), describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, and a working father who teaches the value, dignity and joy of work. He spoke of St. Joseph as a father in the shadows who knew how to love with extraordinary freedom. He never made himself the centre of things. He did not think of himself but focussed instead on the lives of Mary and Jesus. In this way he exemplified true fatherhood which is so often lacking in today’s society.

The Holy Father said that he wrote this letter against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us to see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble St. Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

He further said that the contemporary world required examples of true fatherhood. “Our world today needs fathers. It has no use for tyrants who would domineer others as a means of compensating for their own needs,” he wrote. “It rejects those who confuse authority with authoritarianism, service with servility, discussion with oppression, charity with a welfare mentality, power with destruction.”



The pope added: “In every exercise of our fatherhood, we should always keep in mind that it has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a ‘sign’ pointing to a greater fatherhood. In a way, we are all like Joseph: a shadow of the heavenly Father, who ‘makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust’ (Matthew 5:45). And a shadow that follows his Son.”

At the conclusion of his Letter, Pope Francis added a prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To you God entrusted his only Son; in
you Mary placed her trust;

with you Christ became man.

Blessed Joseph, to us too, show
yourself a father

and guide us in the path of life.

Obtain for us grace, mercy, and
courage, and defend us from every
evil.

Amen.





25th March - The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

At the great moment of the Annunciation, Mary spoke her humble, *Ecce ancilla Domini*, and she never withdrew it. She served selflessly from the first to the last moment of her life. In order to serve she hastened over the mountains. She wanted to serve at the marriage at Cana. Her quiet life at Nazareth was loving service and self-surrender. She served her Child, her royal Child, the eternal God. She did not ask what her heart desired, she did not serve herself. She, the great Queen, served the great God as the little, simple handmaid. Thus her life was a royal service and we want to share in this royal service.

(From: 'Sign of Light for the World', Fr. J. Kentenich)

March 19 - Name Day of Father Joseph Kentenich

On 19th March we also remember the name day of our father and founder – Father Joseph Kentenich. Perhaps as a special gift to him on this day we could say a prayer for his beatification:

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 Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt,

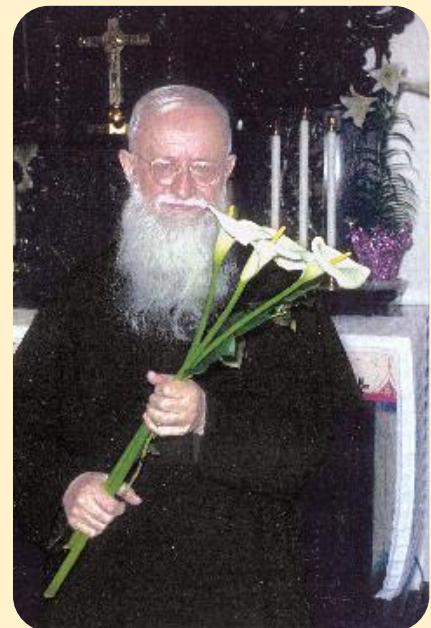
give him what he asks on our behalf and grant that he may

soon be raised to the honours of the altar,

so that he may work even more fruitfully

than while on earth for you and your kingdom.

Amen



Holy Week and Easter

At the end of March we celebrate Holy Week, with the Good Friday ceremonies of the Lord's Passion (**2nd April**) and the celebration of the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday (**4th April**)



With these ceremonies in mind, I would like to share with you an extract from a sermon that Father Kentenich gave on Easter Sunday (18th April 1965) in St Michael's Parish church in Milwaukee. In that sermon he said:

"As we have done each year, so this year we again wish one another a richly blessed feast of Easter. So what do we wish one another? Easter joys, which are mainly rooted in the fact that we become inwardly aware that Christ is present as the transfigured, as the risen Lord in our own hearts, but also in the hearts of our children, of our relations, in human hearts in general....."

Christ, the Lord, carried out the work of our redemption – and hence the most perfect glorification of the Father – through the paschal mystery, that is, through the Easter mystery. Our Lord carried out the work of redemption through his glorious suffering, through his resurrection from the dead and through his ascension.... We should remember that not just the cross, the suffering of our Lord, but also his glorious resurrection should be an example for our lives... We should see Easter as a mystery, as a life-process, that has become a reality in us at baptism. Baptism should be a reflection of the Easter mystery."

May the blessings and joys of the Easter Season be with you and your family.



4. Women's Lenten Retreat (12th – 14th February 2021)



With so many things lost to us in 2020 due to Covid-19 restrictions, the opportunity for a community gathering for our annual Women's Lenten Retreat, even with limited numbers was a real blessing.

Friday evening Sr. Elizabeth gave an introduction on the retreat theme, "Domestic Church Be What You Are", followed by night prayer and animated catch ups over supper.

Saturday dawned with a wonderful surprise of nature, a misty foggy morning reminding me of the early mornings during our time in Germany 2014 for the 100 years celebrations with our global family.

Our First Session, "Domestic Church and the Home Shrine", presented by Sr. Isabell explored three topics:

1. The family – Church in miniature

Perhaps the most endangered institution in today's society and most necessary as the pandemic has shown. In 1952 Fr. Kentenich said "the effectiveness of Christianity will tomorrow and the day after depend more strongly than otherwise on individual personalities and families". As I live on my own I hadn't realized the notion of being family by myself and my home as a domestic church.

2. The centre place (home shrine) of the Domestic Church

"To know who you are, you must have a place to come from"

(C. McCullers, a Nobel prize winner).

We need a sense of belonging.

3. From the Home Shrine – participation in the Church's mission

To reach out to those who are less fortunate than ourselves with 'Marian qualities' of contemplation, gratitude, vulnerability and generosity.



The messages imbued formation, encouragement, inspiration and challenges. The necessity for our relationship with God, vertical position, being in balance with the horizontal position, our relationship with others, really struck me.

- * My personal ideal is a complete image that God has of me, and my purpose in my life, that is to be truly who I am and use what gifts I have been given and can share with others.
- * Education is to draw out what is already in a person.
- * Heart speaks to Heart
(Cardinal Newman) so God wants to speak to us Heart to Heart.

Conviviality: the living together, not the living one with another, living beside each other, but the living together.



Session two, "Lent in the Domestic Church".

Sr. Elizabeth commented on the concept of Lent in the past for those who could remember, that as a child we focused on giving up such things as sweets. But in Lent we are called to prayer, self-denial and almsgiving. Through prayer we can ask for the strength and courage in self-denial and offer this as a sacrifice for others. Almsgiving, simply put, leads us to helping others in need.

Sister then looked at the six verses of Home Song, which is one of the prayers in Heavenwards written by Fr. Kentenich in Dachau. Sr. Elizabeth suggested that the six verses can give us inspiration for our striving during Lent. Having read and re-read the commentaries on these I can see them as blueprints for my personal growth.

- Verse one advocating **LOVE** which should offer shelter to each other.
- Verse 2 **PURITY**. Connects purity with God, with goodness which reaches out to "ease hurt and pain" in others, and lastly with the importance of prayer.
- Verse 3 is **FREEDOM**. Is what I am choosing pleasing to me or God and the importance of decision making in accordance with the law of love.
- Verse 4 is **JOY** in the overflowing richness of God's gifts, even when cross and sufferings pierce our hearts.
- Verse 5 **TRUTHFULNESS** a genuine striving to be honest with oneself and others in all situations, but also a longing for Jesus himself who called himself "the way, the TRUTH and the life".
- Verse 6 **VICTORY** encourages us to trust in the Covenant of Love because with Our Lady as our covenant partner we can be sure of victory.



Session Three: Living with the Home Shrine, Shirley Hall, Daphne Loughlin, Angela Benson

A short video with Marge and Michael Fenelon, an American couple, who had known Fr. Kentenich personally as children, detailed the significant impact that the Home Shrine has had on their lives as children, parents and now grandparents.

I recalled reading recently Fr Kentenich told couples “Let your home be your kingdom, where the father rules as a kind - but not ruthless - king, and the mother rules as the queen, the heart of the home. Learn that love rules”. In 1966 Fr Kentenich said The Home Shrine is a symbol of “forming your own family into a shrine”.

In this session, Shirley Hall shared the importance of her Home Shrine for her daily life. She showed us a picture of her Home Shrine and described some of the additional items and what they meant to her: a pottery plate with the symbol and the ideal of her women’s group, a miniature model hat like Fr Kentenich’s where she “collects” her contributions to the Capital of Grace, and Holy Spirit image among others.



Angela Benson showed us several Willow Tree figurines and explained their significance in her Home Shrine. Through Baptism we make a Covenant with God and in Schoenstatt our Covenant of Love with Mary helps us to live our baptismal covenant in our daily lives. We were also able to listen to a prepared presentation from Daphne Loughlin who shared the importance of the Home Shrine for her family, especially in the liturgical seasons of the Church’s year and on significant family occasions.

As individuals we are unique and so too are our Home Shrines. This retreat for me has instilled a real longing and motivation to prepare to have my home and Home Shrine dedicated this year and I have even now chosen a name.

Final Session: A Schoenstatt / Lenten Challenge presented by Michelle Davis

Our final session for the retreat began with Michelle sharing several scripture passages highlighting some of the qualities of St Joseph – see her article in this Newsletter reflecting on the Year of St. Joseph.

Michelle then unfolded a brief history of the domestic church and challenged us to live out the demands of our Covenant of Love striving daily to bring greater contributions to the capital of grace. She gave us something to think about with the following questions:

“We call ourselves a Schoenstatt Family as we have a common Mother, father and home. But how do we love one another?



Do I invite family, friends or parishioners to the Shrine or my home shrine and share our love and enthusiasm for Mary and the Schoenstatt Mission? If I live out my Covenant fully, I also live by the expectations listed in the founding document:

1. Prove first that you take the Covenant of Love seriously'
2. Strive for self-sanctification
3. Place demands on yourself
4. Faithful fulfillment of your duties
5. Cultivate a life of prayer
6. Diligently bring me contributions to the treasury of grace.

What I ask myself is how do I live out APOSTOLIC ACTIVITY in my daily and work life?"

I am so grateful for this retreat and the new incentives it has given me to take seriously MY Domestic Church as the place where I may live and nurture my faith and from where I may reach out to others, helping to bring Christ's love into this world.

Jenny Hogan



5. Zoom Retreat - Melbourne Schoenstatt Family

The Melbourne Schoenstatt family have been coming together to enjoy a weekend of Retreat in February, every year for the last 25 years or somewhere thereabouts. We have enjoyed wonderful programs delivered by both Sr. Elizabeth and Sr. Isabell, Fr Ivanhoe, Fr Marcello and Fr Prabhu. The retreat came in various forms, mostly where we hired a venue for the weekend, but over the last few years the Retreat was conducted over two days at Kew. This year was different, as the retreat was held via Zoom on Saturday, the 20th and Sunday, the 21st of February. The number of people attending was few, just 10, but the discussion was rich and fruitful.

Sister Elizabeth led the discussion with enthusiasm and passion as we explored the topic of the Domestic Church and the Home Shrine. We were honoured to be joined by our guest speaker on the Saturday, namely Sr. Isabell. It was wonderful for the people of Melbourne to see and hear Sr. Isabell again after such a long time and, as always, Sr. Isabell's message was most riveting, and we gained so much from it.

Another highlight of our Retreat was our second guest speaker, Shirley Hall, who shared with us her personal story of living with her Home Shrine. Florida Nugara also shared with us her story of her life with her Home Shrine and it was clear to all just how personal and unique the experience is of each person who embarks on having a Home Shrine in their home. The stories were beautiful and encouraging, and a clear reflection of people taking their Schoenstatt spirituality very seriously and offering their contributions daily to the

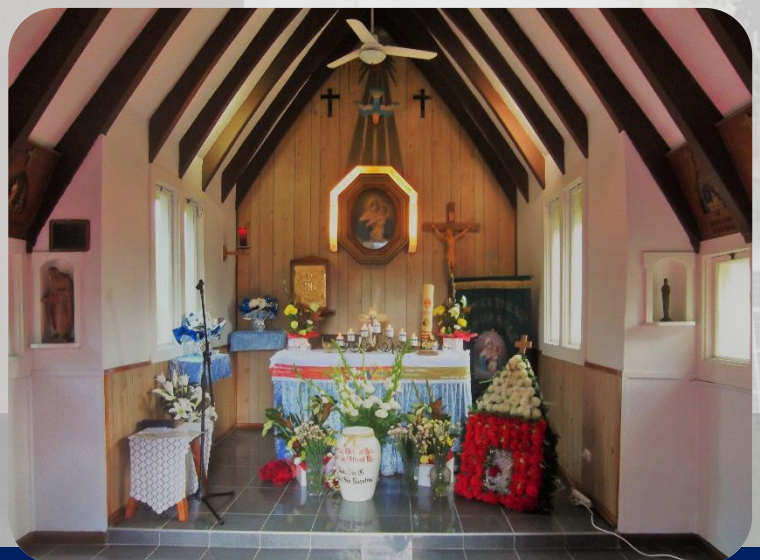
Capital of Grace. The fruitfulness of the Home Shrine was very clear as Shirley and Florida spoke of what it means to them respectively and their sharing of their personal symbols, reflecting their individual experiences living with their Home Shrines.

We made a study too of the 'Home Song' from Heavenwards, and how this prayer may be meditated upon during each week of Lent.

Sister Elizabeth shared her vast knowledge, particularly around the history of Schoenstatt in Australia and the relevance of the Kew Shrine being the first on Australian soil. Sister Elizabeth reminded us of the rich legacy of the Shrine at Kew and it was particularly pertinent to study and revisit the letter sent by Fr. Kentenich for the blessing of the Kew Shrine on 11/5/1952. The words of our Founder made a great impression on us as we reflected on the huge task Father has entrusted us with, in sharing in Our Lady's work from Kew.

The use of Zoom to connect with each other and still be able to have our Retreat was very inspiring. The important messages were still able to be conveyed, and during this time of COVID restrictions, it was encouraging to know that we may still connect with each other albeit via technology. We thank Sr Elizabeth and all our guest speakers for giving us this opportunity, and for setting the tone and direction for our striving during this year, 2021.

Karin Southgate



6. Information and Links

➤ **Shrine Opening Hours:**

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW - **Opening times have changed.** (<https://schoenstatt.org.au>)

Mt Richon / Armadale Shrine, WA (<https://schoenstattwa.org.au>)

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC is open for individual visits from 7am – 5pm daily.

➤ **Covenant Days in 2021**

To enable as many people as possible to participate in the renewal of the Covenant each month, a video (**see link below**) will be made for each Covenant Sunday covering a theme connected with our motto for the year: **Family, be what you are – Domestic Church**. Questions for reflection (if you are unable to attend in person) or for discussion (if you can join the Covenant Sunday renewal at one of our Shrines) will be included. In this way we are hoping to foster a unified Australian Schoenstatt Family, according to our mission: One Heart in the Father for the Family of God.

➤ **Links:**

Official Schoenstatt Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.com>

Schoenstatt Australian Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.org.au>

Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel

Video for March Covenant Sunday may be viewed on:

www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia

Recent videos on this Channel

Video for January Covenant Sunday - The Family- Church in Miniature

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qb4rpUPIF4o&t=124s>

Video for February Covenant Sunday – Centre place of the Domestic Church - the Home Shrine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bt7d1-5jRj8&t=3s>

The Sisters singing the consecration prayer may be viewed at:

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

➤ **Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome.**

Please send to movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au before the beginning of each month.

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