

# Schoenstatt Movement

## Australia

August 18 2021 | Volume 2, Number 8

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**Covenant Day  
Message**

### 1. Covenant Day Message

**Family, be what you are: Domestic Church**

2

**Meeting with Ecclesial  
Communities**

**D**ear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

3

**Freedom in Today's  
World**

Blessings and greetings for this Covenant Day – 18th August. This month our Covenant Sunday celebration falls on the 15th August - the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4

**Mothers' Gathering**

This Feast day should be a sign of great hope for us all, because it is a reminder to us that God not only showed his merciful love for Mary throughout her life, but he also shows His merciful love to us during our life.

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**Annual Feast day –  
with a difference!**

With this in mind, I would like to offer you the following words from our father and founder:

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**Information and  
Links**

*We should see God behind everything in our daily life, in our joys, and in our sorrows. ....We must remember at all times that there is a definite purpose in all that happens to us, even if it hurts us at the time. In all situations, we should keep in mind that God is our loving father, and we should be ready to say, "Yes, Father," to anything that is in his plan for us, whether it is a cross or joy which he sends. We must put our whole trust in Divine Providence.*



.....We know that God will send only what we are able to carry. If the load is too heavy, he will strengthen us by putting, as it were, his own shoulders under the beams of the cross.

We must learn to love God in a personal manner. He is a loving father.... We want to discuss everything with God and the Blessed Mother because where God is, there is also the Blessed Mother. She knows what plans are laid out for us. She is truly the servant of the Lord, but she is also his helper. We can speak to both of them in a very personal manner. We know: the heavenly Father wants us to put our trust in him through the Blessed Mother.

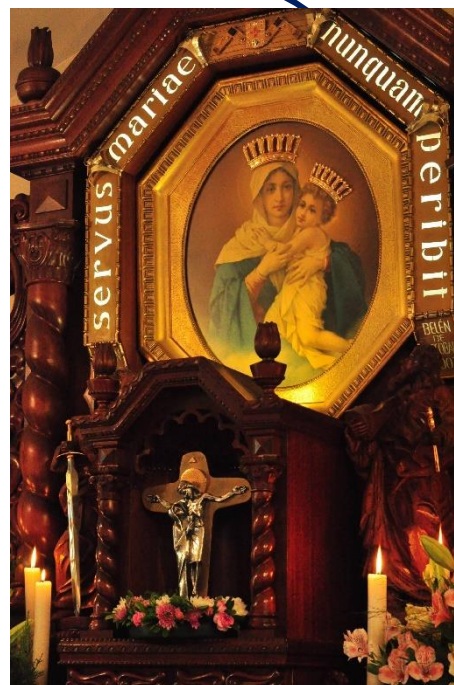
We want to take our covenant of love seriously and give the blank cheque to the Blessed Mother, that is, we want to say 'yes' to everything which the dear God has prepared for us. Looking into the future, we ask ourselves: Are we able to say, "Yes, Father; yes, Mother," if sudden misfortune comes upon us? Will we be able to say, "Yes, your will be done." ..... It is easy to say "Yes, Father, your will be done," if the table is set, and we have a warm home and good health.

We do not want to forget to see God behind everything. He permits suffering for our sanctification."

(22nd January 1956, Fr. J. Kentenich, "On Monday Evenings Vol.1", P91)

Pope Francis said:

"Mary is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain..... As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love. Through her many titles, often linked to her shrines, Mary shares the history of each people which has received the Gospel and she becomes a part of their historic identity..... There, in these many shrines, we can see how Mary brings together her children who with great effort come as pilgrims to see her and to be seen by her. Here they find strength from God to bear the weariness and the suffering in their lives..... Mary offers them maternal comfort and love, and whispers in their ear: 'Let your heart not be troubled..... Am I not here, who am your Mother?'



(From: "The Church of Mercy", by Pope Francis, 2014,



As we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on this August Covenant day, we ask our Blessed Mother to take us deeply into the covenant of love with her, and to lead us to the Triune God so that we too may share more fully in her mission for Schoenstatt and the Church.

Could I ask you to also continue to pray for those members of our Schoenstatt Family who in these difficult times are struggling in any way, especially with illness, either themselves or members of their family. May our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt, send them grace and blessings from her shrine.

United in Covenant Loyalty,  
Shirley Hall



*Blessed Mother.....*

*Let us walk like you through life,  
let us mirror you forever,  
strong and noble, meek and mild,  
peace and love be our endeavour.  
Walk in us through our world,  
make it ready for the Lord. Amen*



It was important for Schoenstatt to participate in a Zoom meeting organised by the ACBC's Bishop's Commission for Evangelisation, Laity, and Ministry on 20th July. 87 computers were involved in this first meeting of its kind. Archbishop Christopher Prowse (Canberra-Goulburn), chair of BCELM, and Archbishop Julian Porteous (Hobart) and about three from the office of the Commission participated with representatives from ecclesial communities around Australia.



## 2. Meeting with Ecclesial Communities

20 July 2021

It was not possible to determine all the communities which were represented nor from which States. In one report it was said that there were 50 communities present. The communities which I noted included: Emmanuel Community; Servants of Jesus, Focolare, Marriage Encounter, Knights of the Southern Cross, Catalyst for Renewal; Latin Mass (a strong representation from Perth), Charismatic Renewal, Verbum Dei, Fraternas, Schoenstatt...

The meeting was opened with a reflection on the parable of the Sower and the seed and some words of introduction by Archbishop Prowse. He said that he was hoping to build "relationships between the bishops and the various ecclesial movements, and through this we'll be able to work closer together, more in harmony with one another and together advance the life and mission of the Church in Australia".

The aim of the meeting was to enable representatives from the various ecclesial communities active in Australia to engage in conversation with the Bishops. With this in mind the question which was the focus for the first hour of the conversation was: **"How can the Bishops' Commission nurture and support your life and mission?"**





A representative from the Verbum Dei community was invited to give an answer to this question from their perspective. They introduced their community which consists of priests, consecrated laity and families. They offer retreats, seminars etc, to help the faithful understand and live the Gospel. **The main point in direct answer to the question was that the Bishops need to know us and our charisms; how we work and what we have to offer the Church.**

We then moved into breakout groups – I was in a group of 5 computers (7 people): The leader of the Emmanuel Community in Brisbane, and then the rest of us were from Sydney: Two consecrated women from Verbum Dei (one of whom had given the input), a woman from Catalyst for Renewal (Bondi), a couple from the Servants of Jesus (Seven Hills) and myself.



In addition to sharing a little about our communities our main point was a confirmation of what had been presented concerning the need for the Bishops to **charisms. An additional point** to it that the **priests are also contribution that ecclesial parish or diocese. It was felt effort to try to eliminate to embrace the good works was acknowledged that towards their own formation tension between the parishes it was pointed out that the formation and events to help support**

*"An additional point was that the Bishops should see to it that the priests are also informed about the value of and contribution that ecclesial communities can make within a parish or diocese."*

get to know the **communities and our** was that the Bishops should see informed about the value of and communities can make within a that this was important in an the hesitation of many priests of the various communities. It many communities are directed and that there is sometimes and the communities. However, communities are also offering the wider Church.



Four of the about 17 groups reported after the small breakout group discussions with basically the same result: **the Bishops need to know, acknowledge and accept the ecclesial communities, their charismas and the valuable contributions they are making to the life of the Church.**

The second hour focussed on the question: **How can we support each other so as to enhance the life and impact of the ecclesial communities?**

Shayne Bennett from the Emmanuel Community was invited to respond to this question. Apart from the importance of acknowledging the good in the other communities and accepting and appreciating each other's charisms Shayne pointed to the possibility of doing mission work with each other. He stressed three points which the Charismatic Renewal are working towards:

1. *Spiritual renewal*
2. *Mission to the poor*
3. *Ecumenism – unity*

The same format was used in this second hour as in the first – breakout groups and reporting from four groups.

After the reporting from the second round of discussions, Keith Linard, who has been actively involved in Focolare for years, was invited to respond. The following proposals were among what Keith offered:

1. It is important to have a national and diocesan directory of ecclesial communities.
2. It would be helpful if the local ordinary would affirm the ecclesial communities in his diocese. However, he also pointed out that this affirmation should be mutual – the ecclesial communities should also affirm their bishop.
3. An annual movement expo, sponsored by the Bishops, could aid understanding and information to our local churches regarding ecclesial communities. Having such an Expo sponsored by the Bishops would encourage all movements to participate.

This two hour encounter with the bishops was concluded with some words of encouragement by Archbishop Porteous followed by a prayer and his blessing. It was obvious that the Archbishop was a supporter of the ecclesial movements and it will be good for Schoenstatt to keep in touch with further discussions at this level of exchange with the Bishop's Commission for Evangelisation, Laity, and Ministry.

- Sr. M. Elizabeth



Our Women's Group had planned to come together for a formation day on Saturday 17th July. However, as has happened on a number of occasions over the past 12 months, this event had to be changed due to COVID restrictions here in the Greater Sydney Area. So, instead of sharing a day together, we had to re-think and in a spirit of flexibility, decided to have a three hour study afternoon via Zoom

### 3. Women's Group Study Afternoon – "Freedom in Today's World"

The topic seemed to be particularly relevant at this time – it related to Schoenstatt's idea of Freedom and how we experience it in today's world.

We began by looking at Schoenstatt's Pre-Founding Document where Father Kentenich laid out his program for himself and the boys: "Under the protection of Mary we want to learn how to educate ourselves to become firm, free and priestly characters." He later said that at the time the emphasis was on "freedom" and is a program of self-education according to the ideal of the person who is truly and inwardly free. However, the program also indicates that the boys (and we now) want to educate ourselves, we want to take the initiative in our education. Self-education, therefore, means that we are not prepared to surrender ourselves to the crowd. We want to personally take responsibility for ourselves and our decisions.



Father Kentenich said on a number of occasions that over the years this program had never changed. It has only been expressed in different words here and there and it is still totally relevant for us today as 'self-education' is even more important in these difficult times.

At this time when we are restricted in where we can go and what we can do, we looked at what 'freedom' means for us. Are we able to feel a sense of 'freedom' in spite of the restrictions that are imposed on us at this time?

Many people today are complaining because they believe their right to unrestrained freedom has been taken away from them. So, what do we mean by freedom? Can we be 'free' even if we are asked to seriously restrict what we can do and where we can go? Do we have the right attitude to be able to say 'yes', I am inwardly free, in spite of the restrictions around me. We only have to look at Father Kentenich during his time in Dachau.



He said that he was always interiorly free because whatever restrictions were placed on him, he accepted in the spirit of inner freedom and with the knowledge that they were part of God's plan (belief in Divine Providence). Can we also see that whatever is asked of us is part of God's plan for us?

We discussed how in taking responsibility for ourselves and the decisions we make, we need to foster the right attitude and practice it in all situations. We need to be convinced that what we are doing is right and we are comfortable with our decisions in spite of what others around us may be doing, or may be saying.

We spoke about this in the light of the workplace where it may sometimes be difficult to do what we know and believe is right, when we are told to act in a way in which we are not comfortable. For example we may be asked to 'play the game', or 'toe the line'.



What do we do if this doesn't fit with what we personally believe? How do we reconcile this with our freedom to choose for ourselves what we believe is right, even if it might mean that we are overlooked for a promotion or not well thought of by those higher up in the organisation? Am I able to practice what I preach? True inner freedom means being true to oneself, knowing who I am (my weaknesses/strengths, gifts and talents). We recognised that it can sometimes be difficult to be true to oneself and to freely choose what we believe is right and not do something just because others are doing it or it is what we know is expected of us in the workplace. This can take courage and a strong sense of our own worth and personal beliefs. It means knowing what God is asking of us – our belief in Divine Providence – and having the courage to accept it.

This can happen of course, not just in the workplace. It can happen with our friends, in social situations, even with family members etc. where we don't feel comfortable in 'following the crowd' or doing things just because others are doing them, or we feel that we will be singled out if we say 'no'.

*"We recognised that it can sometimes be difficult to be true to oneself and to freely choose what we believe is right and not do something just because others are doing it ... This can take courage ... It means knowing what God is asking of us – our belief in Divine Providence – and having the courage to accept it."*





We also discussed how freedom should not be seen as a burden. We need to be people of joy and find joy in our lives. This might mean that we need to find joy in the sacrifices we are asked to make. We reminded ourselves that we have a loving Father and we can go to him and ask for his help when things get difficult and we find it hard to say 'yes' in true inner freedom.

We concluded by reminding ourselves that the program proposed by Father Kantenich in the Pre-Founding Document began with "under the protection of Mary, we want to educate ourselves....." We are not alone in our striving. We find strength in our union with Our Blessed Mother in the Covenant of Love. Our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt is not only our Mother and Queen, but also our Educator. She will help us learn how to be firm, free women, with clear principles, and become strong, independent personalities who are able to live in joy and security in today's world. "Nothing without you MTA, nothing without us".

We were also reminded that through our striving together as a group and through our unity in our Covenant of Love we also have the support of each other.



As many of us in our group live alone, we appreciate the times when we can come together face to face. These times not only give us the opportunity to support each other by sharing our thoughts and ideas, they also give us an opportunity to share together as a community, in a spirit of joy and friendship. Unfortunately we were not able to do this on this occasion. However, we did get an opportunity to share our thoughts and experiences on this topic which is so relevant today. What I have presented is only a few of the many thoughts and ideas that were shared during our discussions. I believe we all gained a lot from the day, thanks to the enthusiastic participation of all our group and the leadership of Sr. M. Elizabeth.

- Shirley Hall



## 4. Mothers' Branch Gathering

Twenty four mothers gathered online on the 24 July for a much anticipated mothers' branch meeting. Whilst we were looking forward to a face-to-face meeting we were blessed that Sr Elizabeth arranged for the meeting to be held via Zoom.

Anne Walsh, leader of the mothers' branch, led us in the opening prayer as we placed ourselves spiritually in the Shrine and asked the Blessed Mother to intercede for us the Holy Spirit and the needs of the many people experiencing loneliness and those suffering from the consequences of the Covid lockdown.

For those new to Schoenstatt Sr Elizabeth presented a brief overview of the foundation of Schoenstatt, its structure as a Movement and history of the mothers' branch. These basics were appreciated by all participants.



### History

The history of the Mother's Branch starts with the year 1940 when, on Christmas Eve, Fr Kantenich encouraged the married Schoenstatt women and mothers to form their own branch. After many retreats, thoughts and discussions held with great difficulty during the war, the mothers discovered what their crowning gift to the Blessed Mother (our MTA was crowned in the original Shrine on 10.12.1939) would be and also the ideal of their Branch.

The gift: A Monstrance

The ideal: To be like Mary, "a Living Monstrance"

The gift of a Monstrance was made by sacrificing their jewellery, gold and diamonds after 1945, including the wedding rings of thirty-three mothers' whose husbands were killed in the war. What an incredible sacrifice!

The first Mothers' Group in Australia formed on 6th April 1967 with eight mothers in Mt Druitt and a second group of 17 mothers had their first meeting on 17th April. By 1968 there were about six groups with approximately 10 mothers in each.

In 1974, when the Schoenstatt Family crowned the Blessed Mother in the foyer of the Josph Kentenich House, the mothers' branch gave the gift of a newly designed Monstrance as their crowning gift.

In their prayer that give thanks to our Mother Thrice Admirable for having being called to be a "Living Monstrance" they gave themselves unreservedly in a renewed Covenant of Love.

Angela Benson, Zenny Custodio and Jenny Hogan gave short testimonials on what it means to them to belong to a Schoenstatt mothers' group.

Angela recalled that in the late 1980's her Menai parish priest, Fr Denis Foley, a Schoenstatt diocesan priest and brother of Sr Elizabeth, suggested she might enjoy being in a mothers' group. They met fortnightly in the home of one of the mothers with Sr. Angrit patiently guiding them in Schoenstatt thinking in the midst of active children.

## *To be like Mary, "a Living Monstrance"*

Over time it became a cohesive group learning about Mary from a Schoenstatt perspective, the mothers' "10 minutes" (spent each day with the Lord and our Blessed Mother), spiritual daily order and Covenant of Love. Whilst this group is no longer active the bonds formed remain and the benefit of being a group formed locally is that the mothers still see and connect with one another at Mass and other places.

Zenny shared that being in a mothers' group she experiences the feeling of belonging, shared values and motivation where we learn from one another, relating our life experiences through the lens of Fr Kentenich. She was very grateful for the support she received recently when her daughter-in-law gave birth to a daughter with a hole in her heart. The members of her mothers' group were at the Shrine and sent her text messages assuring her of their prayers. How the Blessed Mother sends graces from the Shrine!







Zenny also shared the emotional experience of being chosen to be one of the mothers to carry the Monstrance from the pilgrim church to the Original Shrine in Germany during the 100 years celebration of Schoenstatt in 2014.

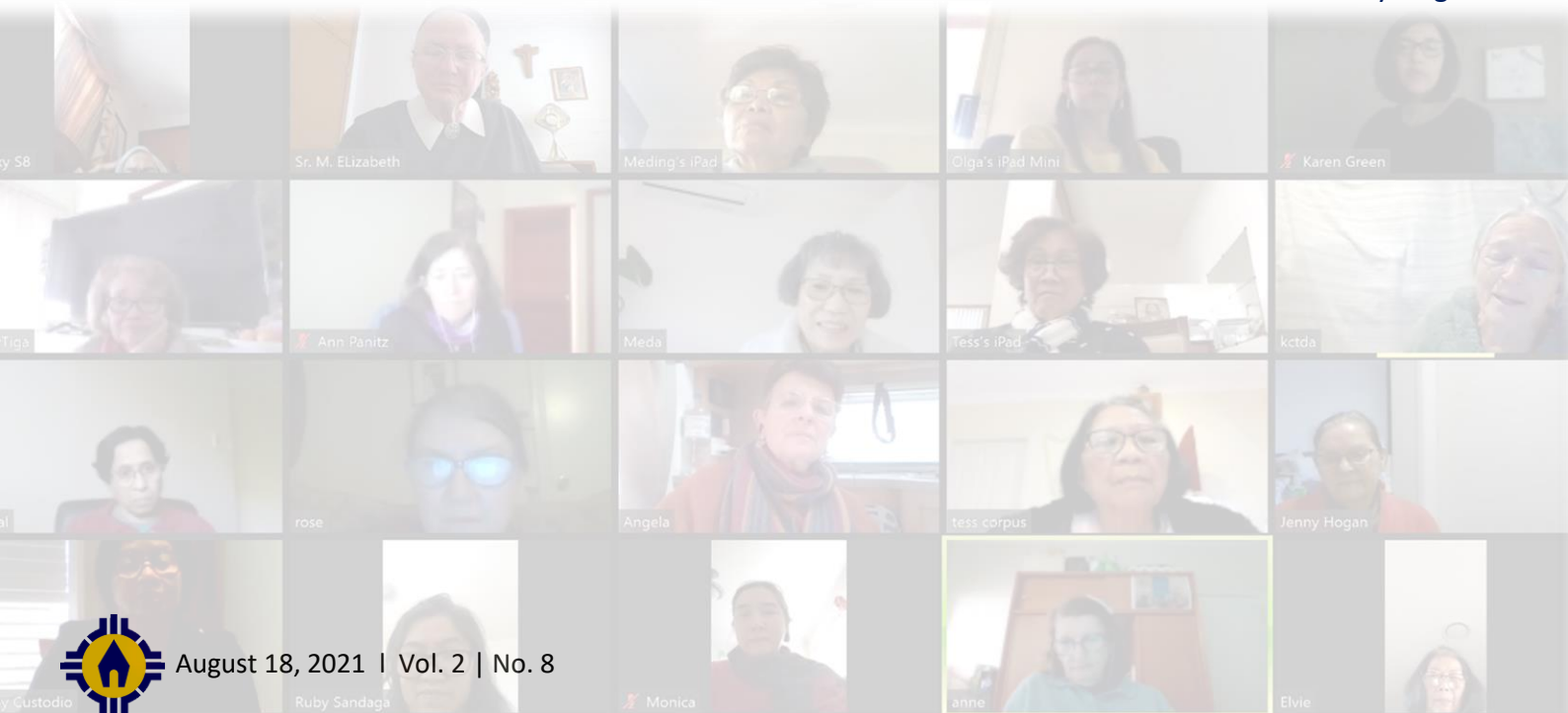
Jenny shared that her personal connection to Schoenstatt started by attending reflection days, retreat weekends then extending to formation days and ultimately making the Covenant of Love, all foundation stones.

Her faith has been enriched and strengthened, originally as a member of the women's group and later as a member of a newly formed mothers group. She spoke of the priceless benefits of committing to regular meetings: "The opportunity to look at the life of Fr Kentenich and to grow in the spirituality of his teachings and discussing how these might relate to our own daily lives as mothers, grandmothers and women is a real blessing."

These testimonies were thoroughly enjoyed by mothers who had more recently joined groups. It gave them inspiration and incentive to continue their journey, together with other like-minded women, who wish to live their faith to the fullest and be supported in their endeavours to become like Mary, a living monstrance, who bears Christ, brings Christ and serves Christ in today's world.

Sr Elizabeth issued a challenge for us to update the mothers' branch chronicle so that future groups can be inspired by the rich history.

Jenny Hogan





## 5. Annual Feast Day – with a difference!

For the past 22 years we, as Melbourne Schoenstatt Family have celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother into heaven (15 August) as our special feastday.

On this feast in 1999 our small Schoenstatt Family gathered at the Shrine in Kew and invited the Blessed Mother to once again take possession of the Shrine as a Schoenstatt Shrine. For the previous 35 years, because there were no active members of Schoenstatt bringing their contributions to the Capital of Grace, the Shrine had ceased to be the place of grace which we have again experienced in these past 22 years.

It took the conscious apostolic endeavours of Vince and Emily Dawson and the increasing number of Melbournians involved in the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate to once again “remind” the Blessed Mother of the Covenant of Love sealed on 11 May 1952 when the Shrine was blessed. Vince and Emily had been regularly visiting the Shrine around the 18th of the month since 1994, bringing their contributions to Our Lady and asking her to be spiritually present in the Shrine again for the people of Melbourne. Vince, who had become ill in the April of 1999, also offered his life for the fruitfulness of the Shrine.



**AUGUST FEAST -2012  
PROCESSION FROM THE  
CARMELITE CHAPEL**





Our Lady accepted his offer just over 3 weeks after the celebration and 'reconquering' of the Shrine. The feast in 1999 was prepared by a nine-week novena which, since then, has become a tradition for our Melbourne Schoenstatt Family. The Pilgrim Mother Coordinators also renew their annual commitment to the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate on this day ensuring that the Blessed Mother continues her visits to the homes of many, bringing them the graces she intercedes for us in her Schoenstatt Shrines. A rosary procession from the nearby Carmelite Chapel to the Shrine has also become an annual feature of the Feastday.



Last year, and again this year, the novena has been prayed in our homes as access to the Shrine has not been possible because of the pandemic. The feast itself, once again falling on a Sunday, will be celebrated via Zoom as the Shrine at Kew is closed at this time. We invite everyone to spiritually unite with us to thank the Blessed Mother for her many blessings from the Kew Shrine, to pray for an end to the pandemic and for growth of our Schoenstatt Family in Melbourne.

The Melbourne Schoenstatt Family





## 6. Information and Links

### ➤ Shrine Opening Hours:

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. During Lockdown – closed. With no lockdown: Open daily 7am- 7pm.

Prayer inside the Shrine limited to 10 persons.

Mt Richon / Armadale Shrine, WA. Open daily 7am – 7pm.

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC is closed until further notice.

### ➤ 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.**

If you wish to participate in the Zoom meeting on Covenant Sundays (3-4pm AEST) please register at [movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au](mailto:movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au)

### ➤ National Conference

This is planned for 17-19 September. However, because of covid restrictions, new plans need to be formulated which will involve Zoom meetings. More via email.

### ➤ Links:

#### Official Schoenstatt Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.com>

#### Schoenstatt Australian Website

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

#### Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel

Video for August Covenant Sunday may be viewed on:

[www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia](http://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia)

#### Recent videos on this Channel:

Video for July Covenant Sunday – The Domestic Church, a believing and evangelizing Community

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrhV3VM2NNU&pp=sAQA>

Video for June Covenant Sunday – Prayer Life in the Domestic Church

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kq1R04mpuG8&t=383s>

Video for May Covenant Sunday - The Domestic Church and Education II – religious support

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kefc6XoxCE>

Video for April Covenant Sunday - The Domestic Church and Education

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xVhbKqUn6M>.

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](mailto:movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au) before the beginning of each month.

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