

Schoenstatt Movement Australia

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1. Covenant Day Message

2. Joseph Engling – A Witness for Schoenstatt

3. International Gathering of Thanksgiving and Re-Crowning

4. Grace and Silence – Mount Richon

5. Information and Links



1. Covenant Day Message

Family, be what you are: Domestic Church

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Blessings and greetings for this Covenant Day – 18th September.

This month we remember and commemorate the anniversary of the death of Father Kentenich on 15th September 1968.

As members of the Schoenstatt family we are challenged to keep his “founding spirit” alive and visible in the Church and society. In accepting this mission, we might ask ourselves how we live this mission and pass it on to others.

Father Kentenich’s understanding of a mission as sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ explains his deeper understanding of the apostolate. This highlights not just the apostolic action, or the valuable service of proclamation and administering the sacrament of baptism; it emphasises the living witness and influence of the apostle based on his or her Christ-likeness. What matters is making Christ increasingly present in our modern world.

In evaluating the various forms of apostolic and missionary activity, the witness of the life and being of the apostle takes first place. This explains the emphasis placed on education and self-education in the Movement. According to our Founder, the grace of apostolic fruitfulness that Schoenstatt expects is not least connected with the Blessed Mother’s education and formation of its members in the shrine, which remains the source of life for the apostolate.

During a Conference in Rome (17 November 1965), Father Kentenich said:

“Today people say: The most important thing is to make Christ present in the world. How are we to make Christ present? First of all through the way we are, through bearing the divine life within ourselves....

We Catholics today have more to do to exemplify and demonstrate this complete way of making Christ present, than to talk about it. That is why we do not

try as in the past to drag others to join us. We have far more respect for the person as a whole. So how can we describe the apostolate? It is, as was often said in the past, the apostolate of exemplifying the fullness of religion. Everything has to be exemplified! I can no longer remember the definition of the apostolate in “Everyday Sanctity” in detail, but it is the overflow of divine life from an inner fullness. So I have to live. I pass on my life. I may also do so through what I say, but the most important thing is the apostolate of what we are.”

FOR REFLECTION:

Can I say of myself that God has given me a great mission in Christ and through the Blessed Mother?

Must I not also learn to say of myself, must I not also educate myself in such a way that I can honestly and truthfully say with full and clear knowledge: I have chosen the better part, I have accepted this mission?

(Quotes from: “His Mission, Our Mission”, ed. Peter Wolf)

Could I ask you to also continue praying 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, comfort them and send them many graces and blessings from her shrine.

May we continue to remain united in Covenant loyalty,

Shirley Hall

Just as your Son healed, stilled hunger
and comforted the sick while here on earth,
go with him quietly through our midst,
giving your blessing and helping us with
the arm of your unlimited motherly power.
(from: Heavenwards, “Prayer in Time of Need”)



2. Joseph Engling – A Witness for Schoenstatt



On 4th October 1918 Joseph Engling died on the battlefield near Cambrai, France. His death, coupled with the total offering of his life on 31st May, 1918 for our Mother Thrice Admirable and for her mission, gave the Schoenstatt Movement its first outstanding witness of our Schoenstatt mission.

We can learn much from the short life of Joseph and the seriousness with which he accepted the mission he had been given.

The axis of his life was a living faithfulness to the Mother Thrice Admirable in her shrine and to the founder. In the relationship of Joseph to his spiritual father it was evident that one could only enter wholly into Schoenstatt, in the way God had designed, by being united with the founder. The offer of the sacrifice of his life to Our Lady, was offered expressly for the Movement founded by his spiritual father.

Joseph Engling had entered deeply into the covenant of love with Our Lady. He had lived the covenant to such a degree that he became, in Father Kentenich's words, "the classic example of the new person in the new community" whom Schoenstatt wanted to fashion.

The offering of his life to the Mother Thrice Admirable, has since become known as "The Joseph Engling Act" and God accepted this sacrifice of his life on the evening of 4th October 1918.

The prayer in which Joseph had offered his life to the Mother Thrice Admirable for the work of his spiritual father, (Fr. Kentenich) read:

"I give myself to you anew as your sacrifice. I offer you everything I am and have, my body and my soul with all its abilities, all my possessions and goods, my freedom, my will. I want to be totally yours. I am yours. Use me and whatever is mine entirely as pleases you. But if it can be reconciled with your plans, let me be a sacrifice for the aims which you have assigned to our sodality. In humility, your unworthy servant, Joseph Engling"

It has long been the conviction of the Schoenstatt Family, that Joseph Engling is the most outstanding of Fr. Kentenich's young co-workers of that earliest period when the Movement was being founded. He sacrificed his life for the Movement and for Schoenstatt's mission.

In Joseph Engling we have a worthy witness for us of one who lived his Schoenstatt mission through his deep devotion to our Mother Thrice Admirable, who continually offered his contributions to the Capital of Grace so that Schoenstatt would flourish and the founder's mission would be fulfilled through his Schoenstatt Family.

**"I offer you
everything I am
and have, my
body and my
soul with all its
abilities, all my
possessions
and goods, my
freedom, my
will."**



3. International Gathering of Thanksgiving and Re-Crowning



We are ready and we dare to start anew, with you today, here and now. "Here in the Shrine we are united ..." With you, life is so much more, Mary.

This was the theme for the international gathering of the Schoenstatt Single Women's Branch on the 13th and 14th August, 2021.

It had been hoped that members of the international Women's Branch would be able to come together for a Congress in 2021 as we had not been able to celebrate together (the Jubilee of 100 years of Women in Schoenstatt) last year. However, after much discussion and the continued pandemic of COVID-19 around the world, it was agreed that this would not be possible either. Instead a gathering was organised to take place this year via Zoom and the webcam from the Original Shrine.

Because in these extraordinary times, which demand heroism and daily faithfulness from us, we can only do this if we are rooted in our covenant of love. Our witness and our sense of mission is needed now more than ever. We need the graces from the Original Shrine to radiate through our Home Shrines and through us into the world in which we live and work.

As a sign of our commitment and readiness to serve our Schoenstatt mission from our home Shrines, we came together (virtually), in Schoenstatt, as a united Single Women's Branch around the world to renew the jubilee crowning that took place last August and the commitment that this symbolises. We also wanted to give thanks for all the blessings and graces we have received from our Blessed Mother through our Home Shrines since the celebrations last year.

We were invited to two events. The first was an evening of prayer and singing in the Founder Chapel around our Father and Founder. The second was a Mass of thanksgiving in the Original Shrine. During this Mass we would renew our crowning in our Home Shrines.



So on Friday evening 13th August, (German time), our Women's Group, along with Sr. M. Elizabeth, joined the other ladies (via Zoom), in the Founder Chapel. Each country participating was given fifteen minutes to use as they wished. They could use this time to sing their own hymns, for praying or as quiet time. The countries taking part were Austria, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Germany, Paraguay, South Africa and USA (Texas).



This prayer time in the Founder Chapel began at 9pm (German time), but thankfully, as we had been given the last time slot (thanks to Sr. Marion, who was organising the event), our time was 8am Saturday morning (Sydney time). Our prayer was based on the prayers which had been used in our Australian Jubilee celebrations last December when members of our Australian women's groups came together for a day of celebration. In this prayer we especially gave thanks for the pioneers of our Women's League who have actively contributed to the building up of Schoenstatt in Australia.

It was wonderful to be with women from other countries and to share in their prayer times, their singing and their delight at being in the Founder Chapel. It was a joy-filled and enriching experience, while at the same time there was a strong sense of not only being united with each other, but also with our father and founder.

On the Saturday evening (German time), the Thanksgiving Mass was held in the Original Shrine. During this Mass, the crowning in our Home Shrines was renewed and further signatures were placed in the tabernacle along with those that had been placed there last year.

The signatures of Therese Fuller and Anne Rewhorn which were not included last year, were now placed in the tabernacle during this Mass.



All these signatures in the tabernacle in the Original Shrine, are a symbol of our crowning in our Home Shrines and a sign that we are ready and willing to dare anew to be living Tabernacles after the example of our Blessed Mother. In renewing our crowning we prayed from the Crowning Prayer:

"Show us, Queen, where our commitment to you is needed today. We are ready and we dare to start anew, with you today, here and now. "Here in the Shrine we are united ..." With you, life is so much more, Mary. We offer you our home shrine as a throne room. From there, work through us and with us. Accept this crown as a sign of gratitude and as a petition. Take possession of our Home Shrines, of our hearts. Be Queen of the women around the world, especially now in these challenging times. Use us as your instrument so that we can be "Marian hotspots" sending out waves of grace, of faith into the world: Waves of being at home, of inner transformation and of mission consciousness."

Mary, let us be like you

I would also like to share with you some reflections from fellow members of our Women's group who took part in these celebrations:

Therese:

"The only good to come from lockdown and zoom meetings is the ability to join a meeting with a group of people who share the same ideals and who live across the world."

"On Friday evening I was able to join in prayer and solidarity with Schoenstatt women from across the globe for the Jubilee Re-Crowning celebrations. I would never have been able to do this if Zoom had not become part of being in lockdown."



Therese: (continued...)

To “be in” the Founder Chapel, and in my case, to see my name, along with that of Anne Rewhorn who was a member of our Group and who sadly died on 12 May this year, placed with the names of many other women on the altar, was a wonderful experience.

It is great to realise that although we are separated by distance, we are united in the Covenant and part of a group of women who have faith in these hard times and continue to be strong in their belief and support of each other.”



Sheila

Attending my first Jubilee celebration prayers (virtually) in the Founder chapel on 14th August, was a surreal experience. To date, I have only seen pictures of the founder chapel in Germany, so viewing the chapel via ‘live’ video, and participating in my first prayer readings was truly amazing. The Jubilee prayers were attended by women from all over the world, women of all ages, and cultural backgrounds, and women who were as spiritually connected to Schoenstatt as I was. Being part of this diverse group of women exemplified my spiritual formation with Schoenstatt while moving me one step closer to Mother Mary.”

Agnes

It was just before 8 o'clock on a Saturday morning on the 14th of August 2021 when I ‘zoomed in’ for the Prayer Gathering to celebrate the Women's Jubilee at the Founder Chapel in Schoenstatt in Germany. Seeing that we were gathered in the Founder Chapel, I quickly wound back to another time about 7 years ago on the 15.10.14 when our Australian pilgrimage group had gathered in the Founder Chapel for a very special ceremony. On that night, I remember touching Father's tomb. It was a joyful moment in my life! Obviously, we couldn't do the same on this Saturday morning because of the pandemic. I could only see and hear the ongoing activity in the chapel ‘via technology’. I could not touch the tomb physically so I reflected deeply and spiritually to reach out to Father's tomb so that the ‘spirit of loyalty to him, may keep burning like a fire in our hearts.’ It was a beautiful experience, though ‘distances can keep us apart, we unite with Mary, in the spirit of Schoenstatt.’

I can only re-iterate what we prayed as Schoenstatt women from around the world, that united in our Covenant of Love, with Our Blessed Mother, with our Father and Founder, and with each other, we may have the strength, faith and trust to take seriously what we prayed in our Crowning prayer: *Mary, let us be like you*”

Shirley Hall

(On behalf of our Single Women's Group, NSW)





4. Grace and Silence - Mount Richon

Silent Retreat Days for Young Women

Grace & Silence is a four-part retreat series to give young women an opportunity to discern their God willed vocation to either marriage and family, single life or consecrated life. The attendance of all four retreats at the Mt Richon Shrine, surrounded by natural beauty and peaceful atmosphere, is highly recommended.

The retreat days have been offered since 2014, and over the years a number of young women have participated, eager to experience a retreat immersed in silence, personal reflection and prayer. Usually the young women arrive to enjoy a home-made morning tea, as they get to know one another. Following a welcome and an introduction to the day's program, the participants are invited to freely relinquish their devices for the day, to learn to listen to God in silence and prayer. The day begins with a talk on Our Lady with the theme on vocations. A song to Our Lady and a prayer to the Holy Spirit in the Shrine initiates the time of personal silence. Lunch too occurs in silence, as we share a home cooked meal amidst background music. Throughout the day the young women are encouraged to journal their thoughts, reflecting on the vocation God is calling them to embrace. Appropriate reading material and many opportunities to enjoy cups of tea, coffee and an occasional sweet treat makes the day simply fly! During the final hour everyone gathers in the Shrine for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, group rosary, songs and prayers.

Saturday June 19

This year's series began with 14 young women attending. Five of these young women were returning to attend the series a second time. Why were they returning? They are keen to continue to discover their vocation and as one young woman put it: 'I now love the prayerful silence!' Nine of the young women came for the first time, and 6 had heard it from past participants who highly recommended they attend. One young woman really felt she received an answer to her questions when she began reading and praying a youth novena to Fr Kentenich. She strongly recommended the novena to everyone present. Already by the end of the day, all the young women were eager to return and commit to the entire series.

Saturday July 10

Just short of our snap lockdown here in WA, we decided to go ahead with the event, asking all participants to come wearing masks. Despite this, a few last minute registrations increased our numbers to 19. Already before the event, there was a great sense of expectation, with a number of young women saying they could not wait to attend. According to the feedback which was given at the end of the day, many received personal insights and a number of graces. What was most evident is that Our Lady spoilt them with great weather. Just the day before it was grey, dreary and cold, raining non-stop and on the event itself there was so much sunshine that participants could sit and warm themselves in the sun! It was incredible!





PHOTO: The group of 19 young women who attended Grace & Silence in July

Saturday August 21

The third part of the series saw some last minute cancellations and 14 participants eagerly arrived to hear a young wife and mother share her journey towards the vocation of marriage and family. Many of the young women were grateful to have heard her story, with one commenting: 'To hear from someone else that their journey to find their vocation was not an easy one, gives me the hope to keep going until I find mine.' Another young woman said: 'I really love the group prayer time in the Shrine. It seems to me that we are all singing and praying from the heart.' One young woman texted 'Personally, this retreat is worth more than what I have paid for.' And one said to me: 'When I attend other retreats, I hear so many new thoughts and great ideas from different speakers that I usually come away feeling so overwhelmed. But I love the fact that I can come to this retreat and reflect on where I am now in my life. And each Grace & Silence experience is different.' Some young women have asked me to spiritually accompany them on their vocation journey, while some have either found or are praying for a spiritual director or someone who will accompany them.

They are all on their way to discovering God's plan of love for their lives. May we keep these young women and all who are prayerfully discerning their vocations in our prayers.

Sr. M. Rebecca



5. Information and Links

➤ Shrine Opening Hours:

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. During Lockdown – closed

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

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC 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

➤ National Conference

The annual Schoenstatt National Conference will take place as a Zoom Conference over three days: 18 & 19 September and 2 October.

Movement members are encouraged to register with their State Team or Group Leaders.

➤ Links:

Official Schoenstatt Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.com>

Schoenstatt Australian Website

www.schoenstatt.org.au

➤ Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel:

Video for September Covenant Sunday

www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia

Recent Videos on this Channel

Video for August Covenant Sunday – Marian Attributes for and Inscriptio Way of Life

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsubmcDWM4>

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

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

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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