

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

January 18 2022 | Volume 3, Number 1

1. COVENANT DAY MESSAGE

“Schoenstatt’s Way: Authentic Witness to Holiness”

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Welcome to our first Schoenstatt Movement Newsletter for 2022 – the 18th January. I wish you and your family many blessings and graces from the Shrine for this day and for the coming weeks.

I hope that you have all had a good start to 2022 and for those of you who have been on holidays, (or are still on holidays), I hope that this has been a restful and enjoyable time for you and your family.

As we look back over the past 12 months, it has been for many of us once again a challenging year. I think that after the past two years and the impact that COVID has had on many of our lives, it has been a time when we have come to appreciate once again what is important to us. In particular, many have realised the importance of family and close friends and the desire to stay connected with those who are important in our lives.

And it would seem that we still need to stay alert and be prepared for whatever may come in regard to COVID during this year.

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Over the last year we explored what is one of Schoenstatt's gifts to the church – the lived home shrine, the church of the home, the “Domestic Church”. In the Covenant Sunday presentations we focussed on the importance of our families, trying to deepen our understanding of the Domestic Church and develop a deeper appreciation of the importance of the Home Shrine.

This past year has also given us a stronger sense of community and in particular our national Schoenstatt Family.

Now that we are more conscious of the importance of our Home shrine and the strength we draw from our Home shrines, we want to focus during this year on sharing Schoenstatt and our Catholic faith with others. We want to learn more about what it means to be an evangelising community. Thus, our theme for this year is:

“Schoenstatt’s Way:

Authentic Witness to Holiness”

While we know that Schoenstatt is a Marian movement, it is also an apostolic movement of renewal. One of the graces we receive from the Shrine is the grace of apostolic fruitfulness. This grace of apostolic zeal or fruitfulness enables us to share our faith with others and give witness to it in a way that may not only change our own life, but the lives of others as well.

Schoenstatt’s Call and Mission can be summed up as:

As a chosen work and instrument in the hand of Mary, we wish to work totally and untiringly for the Marian transformation of the world in Christ from Schoenstatt.

This description of Schoenstatt’s mission (already used in the 1920s) indicates both source and aim: Its source is the covenant of love with the MTA, where she has entrusted her work and instruments with a specific task. Its aim is to transform the world in Christ through Mary.

The source of our strength that sustains us to be instruments in the hands of Mary and our apostolic fruitfulness, is the Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable.

During the October Week 1950, Father Kantenich said

“When you see the Schoenstatt Family as a whole you have to say: From the beginning its great mission was to understand itself as an instrument in the hands of the Blessed Mother; it believed that the Blessed Mother wants to carry out her great mission in our present times through us – to an outstanding degree through our Family.

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 best part, I have accepted this mission?

United with our father and founder and in the hands of Our Blessed Mother may we have the courage to say our yes to the mission that God has given to each one of us.

I wish you many graces from our Schoenstatt Shrines, our home shrines and our heart shrines. May we continue to pray with each other, and for each other. We remember especially those of our Schoenstatt Family who are struggling in any way at this time.

In covenant loyalty, may we remain, as Australian Schoenstatt Family:

“One heart in the Father, for the Family of God”

Shirley Hall



2. Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of Schoenstatt's Second Milestone-



This month we also remember the 80th Anniversary of one of the important milestones in our Schoenstatt history - **20th January 1942**.

This event is referred to as Schoenstatt's **Second Milestone** and such is its importance that Father Kentenich often spoke of it as “the axis of Schoenstatt’s history”. Why is it so important?

On 20th January 1942, Father Kentenich, a prisoner of the Nazis in the Gestapo prison in Koblenz, Germany, freely chose on this day not to use an opportunity he had been given to have a medical examination which may have allowed him to be excluded from going to a concentration camp.

After much soul-searching, Fr. Kentenich had concluded that God’s will for him and Schoenstatt was to turn down the offer and freely embrace the concentration camp. In this concrete moment of the family’s history, he saw the urgent need to challenge his followers to trust even more radically in God’s power over human power.

He therefore combined his decision with the declaration of his belief that his freedom would depend on the family committing to the Blank Cheque (total conformity to God’s will) and the Inscriptio (love of the cross). This expressed the “interwovenness of fates”– which was that his well-being would be determined by his family.

He was convinced that in God’s eyes he and his followers were a family. In this faith, he relied on the reality of the supernatural world, the reality of the covenant they had made and the union of destiny among the members themselves. His concern was not about a particularly heroic act. His intention was to open our eyes to the deep dimensions of our connectedness as a spiritual Family created with him and around him. Without being aware of this background, we will not truly understand our father.



Thus the 20th January marked a new stage of growth for Schoenstatt's experience as a family and this connectedness can also be seen in the events that followed – such as Schoenstatt's third milestone (31st May, 1949) and father's exile in Milwaukee for 14 years.

During a four-week Tertianship in Brazil in 1952 Father Kentenich said in referring to the 20th January 1942:

"Seen in a supernatural light, we are a real family: I and my followers -- my followers and I. If we are a real family in God's plans, then our destiny is interwoven, our destiny is interconnected in the supernatural sense. Practically speaking, the sacrifices my followers make on my behalf are really for my person; I count on this reality, and it has proven effective. By the same token, the sacrifices I offer on behalf of the Family are a means to save the Family. This offers a much greater security than if I had the whole Gestapo on my side.

Seen within the framework of the whole Founding Document and the covenant of love, it had to be taken for granted that the condition [for my freedom] was the Inscriptio made by the whole family.

My Inscriptio protected Schoenstatt, and the Inscriptio of the Family gave me back my freedom. This is a classic example of spiritual interconnectedness, of mutual interwovenness. Here you see the new person in the new community, not only talked about but exemplified and lived."

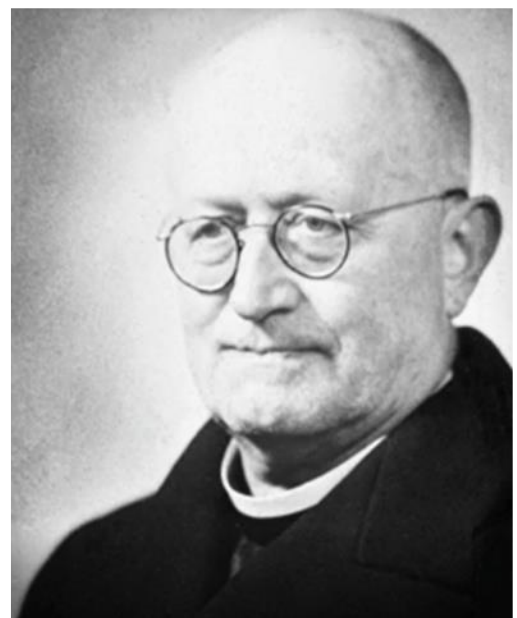
("In Union with the Father" – JK Brazil, 1952)

From the 20th January 1942 came the awareness for the Schoenstatt Family that father's mission was also our mission. It was an expression of deep loyalty to our founder, and to our Blessed Mother and loyalty to our Covenant of Love. For Fr. Kentenich, the 20th January 1942 was a deepening of his Covenant of Love with our MTA, the deepening of the first milestone of 18th October 1914.

Now on this **80th Anniversary** of the 20th January, 1942, we might reflect upon the momentous decision that Father Kentenich made on this day and the reasons for his decision.

We can ask ourselves:

- * What does the Covenant of Love mean in my life?
- * What responsibility do I now take to ensure that I get to know our father and founder better?
- * What sense of responsibility do I have for the mission that Father Kentenich has left us in Schoenstatt?
- * Do I have a sense of responsibility in particular for our Australian Schoenstatt mission that unites us as a national Family: "One Heart in the Father for the Family of God"?



3. Christmas Celebration via Zoom

Our Victorian Schoenstatt Family was able to offer their Christmas celebration via Zoom since the Shrine in Melbourne, where the celebration usually takes place, is still only open for individual visitors.

This celebration was a real joy with all participants, especially for the families gathered together. Being muted, they were able to sing along with the Carols in their own homes knowing they were united with the other Schoenstatters around Melbourne. Along with the Carols in English a couple of Carols in Spanish were also shared. This recognition of the different cultural backgrounds of our Melbourne Schoenstatt Family is always greatly appreciated.

One family presented a nativity play and with the technical help of one of the members of the family all were able to watch the play on their screen and were drawn once again into the mystery of Christmas.



Our celebration culminated with the prayer from Fr. Kentenich:

"Mother, give me your little Child. Do not take the cold, bare stable for His cradle; take my heart instead. My heart is prepared a little. It is longing for your Child. My heart shall be His cradle, Mother. Please give all of us your Child today and we promise to love and welcome Him as you did..."

A resounding "We wish you a merry Christmas ... Feliz Navidad" was then followed by greetings all round and thanks to the Team who had organised such a unique celebration.



4. New Year at our Shrines



WA SHRINE NEW YEAR'S EVE MASS

Just after 10.00 pm on New Year's Eve people began to drive into the Shrine property at Mount Richon, and patiently wait in the grounds for the Shrine door to be opened. Half an hour later Sr M Lisette unlocked the door to welcome them inside, where the Child Jesus lay in a crib in front of the altar, surrounded by Christmas lights.

Around 11.00 pm the Blessed Sacrament was exposed and more and more people arrived in the Shrine as well as outside to join in prayerful, silent adoration.

Following this time of prayer, everyone joined in singing Christmas carols, interspersed by short reflections on Mary, the Mother of God, whose feast we would be celebrating. This was prayerfully led by the Poppin family, Kevin, Maria and their 16-year-old daughter.

Just before midnight everyone in unison counted down the seconds into the New Year, when Sr M Lisette loudly rang the Shrine bell amid loud cheers and claps from the now over 200 people present. The sound of fireworks from the city of Perth was heard as those present moved outside to view the colourful display.



NEW YEAR AT OUR MULGOA SHRINE.

In spite of Covid cases rapidly increasing in NSW, about 70 pilgrims ventured to the Shrine at Mulgoa on New Year's Eve to welcome in the New Year.

Holy Mass, in honour of Mary, the Mother of God, was celebrated at 11pm in the Family Hall. Our parish priest, Fr. Giovanni, gratefully accepted the invitation to celebrate the Mass and in his homily shared with us the importance of beginning a New Year with Our Lady. She is the one who leads us to Christ and the heavenly Father.

Following Holy Mass all present were invited to pray silently in front of the Shrine as we waited for the clock to tick over the minutes and seconds till midnight. While we all sang the Te Deum (Holy God, we praise your name) in thanksgiving for the past year and in anticipation for God's gifts in 2022, Sr. Luisa Maria enthusiastically rang the Shrine bell as other more 'worldly' sounds of car horns and fireworks drifted through to us. Then we entrusted all our intentions and wishes for the New Year to the intercession of our Blessed Mother as we prayed for all gathered at the Shrine, for all friends, relatives and benefactors who have either asked for prayers at the Shrine or for whom we had promised our prayers.

There was a beautiful family-like atmosphere around the Shrine as everyone wished each other all the best for the New Year. It was then time to take turns to enter the Shrine to pray personally, mindful of keeping the social distancing.



The following morning, on New Year's Day, Fr. Peter, one of our Dominican priests who so faithfully serve our community at Mount Schoenstatt, celebrated Holy Mass for around 100 people – a noticeably smaller gathering than usual, due to the current restrictions because of Covid and the concern for a 'safe' New Year.

The Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary wish all our readers in all the States of Australia where Schoenstatt is known and lived, a very blessed, safe and happy New Year.



5. Challenges following devastating Typhoon in Cebu.

The recent super typhoon Rai which hit Cebu on 16th December, severely damaged our Schoenstatt Sisters Centre and property along with the homes of many other Filipinos. We are asking for your prayers and any possible assistance, as the challenge of clearing, repairing and re-building begins.

Because electricity and phone lines have been down – and in some cases are still not working - it has been extremely difficult for us to be in contact with our sisters. The sisters still do not have internet and our limited contact with them has only been through social media when the signal is strong enough to send a message.

The existing generator at our Centre supplied electricity for a few days enabling our sisters to continue to pump fresh water. Unfortunately, the generator broke down, was fixed once but then was irreparable. It took some days to procure a small temporary generator as a replacement.

There have been long lines (up to 8 hours waiting) for people to get petrol and water and only those shops with generators could open because cash registers and online banking etc. need electricity!!





The families of five of our Filipino Sisters have had their homes either totally or partially destroyed. Moving to evacuation centres was in question because of the danger of contracting Covid. Wherever possible our sisters have helped their families and others with food and water. However, in some cases where homes have been completely destroyed it will be a long-term process before these people can again have their own homes. One of our sisters writing of her own family home wrote: “Our house has a little part of the roof left just enough for them (her mother and sister) to have shelter, to be protected from rain and from the heat of the sun, where they can also sleep.” Her sister wrote to her: “Please pray that it will not rain, or else everything will get wet.”

The Schoenstatt Centre itself has experienced considerable damage. Fortunately, the Shrine has only its gutter damaged in one section. The grounds are in a total mess with trees uprooted and debris everywhere. The bridge connecting the Sisters’ house to the house where our working girls are accommodated has had its roof totally destroyed.



What can we do?

1. **PRAY** - Please include in your prayers all those affected by this typhoon and all those trying to help them.
2. **GIVE** - Our Schoenstatt Movement in Australia is seeking to reach out in solidarity to help our sisters, their families and movement members in Cebu, as well as the Schoenstatt property itself. If you are in a position to give to this cause, please use the “Donate” button on our website, www.schoenstatt.org.au. Our efforts will be directed to our “Schoenstatt Family” in need in Cebu and the surrounding islands.

Thank you in advance for anything you can do – no matter how small.

United in the Covenant of Love.



6. Information and Links

Shrine Opening Hours:

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. Open daily: 8am- 7pm (QR Code and Face Masks Essential)

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

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

Covenant Days in 2022:

During this year we will continue to offer an online celebration for the renewal of the Covenant of Love, every 3rd Sunday of the month, 1.30 – 2.30pm AEDT. Please note the change in time. Those who wish to renew the Covenant in person will be welcome to do so at our Shrines at the same time. The videos for these celebrations will follow the theme: “Schoenstatt’s Way – Authentic Witness to Holiness”. If you are not yet on the data base to receive the link each month and wish to participate, please register at movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au

Links:

Official Schoenstatt Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.com>

Schoenstatt Australian Website

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

Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel

www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia

Video for January Covenant Sunday – Apostolic Fruitfulness from our Shrines

<http://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia>

Recent videos on this Channel

Video for December Covenant Sunday – Longing for God – Christmas

https://youtu.be/H_mSJYIQs8

Video for November Covenant Sunday – The Domestic Church & Advent Customs

<https://youtu.be/FnU5o-IMwqM>

Video for October Covenant Sunday - The covenant of Love and the Home Shrine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n09dT8kxtc>

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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