

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

February 18 2022 | Volume 3, Number 2

1. COVENANT DAY MESSAGE

**“Schoenstatt’s Way:
Authentic Witness to Holiness”**

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Greetings and blessings for this Covenant Day – 18th February. In the liturgical year we are currently in Ordinary Time, although we will soon be approaching Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent.

We might think that during the “Ordinary” time in the Church’s year, nothing much will be happening. But this is not true, just as it is not true that the ordinary times in our own life is a time when nothing special happens. Why do I mention this? Because for most of us, the ordinary things are what make up much of our life and it is during these times that we are asked to be witnesses to holiness.

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As you are already aware, this year our national focus is on looking at how we can live our apostolic life through Schoenstatt, as an “authentic witness to holiness”. However, before we can **witness** to holiness, we need to understand what is meant by “holiness” and specifically, how do we define this in Schoenstatt?

The everyday saint is not defined by extraordinary visions or deeds. The everyday saint lives his/her state in life and fulfils his duties according to the motto, *“Do the ordinary things extraordinarily well out of love for God”* The result will be a saint who is both keenly religious and deeply natural. As Father Kentenich liked to say, *“The most supernatural person must also be the most natural one.”* He contrasted this with the “Sunday sanctity” of Christians who go to church on Sunday but do not allow their faith to affect the rest of their lives.

This is the secret to connecting faith with life at its most basic level. If God is so real and personal to me that I can do everything for him, then everything can be a way to holiness. In Schoenstatt’s experience, this love of God is especially anchored in a practical faith in Divine Providence and in a deep and effective covenant of love with Mary.

Everyday sanctity (or holiness) has many facets. As already mentioned, it can be described as *“doing one’s ordinary duties in an extraordinary way”* or as *“fulfilling the duties of one’s state in life as perfectly as possible.”*

However, both of these descriptions are dependent on doing these “ordinary things” ... out of love for God. In 1932, Father Kentenich gave the following definition:

Everyday sanctity is the God-pleasing harmony between whole-hearted attachment to God, work and fellow-man in every circumstance of life.

In a retreat for Priests in August 1932, Father Kentenich said in speaking about holiness and God’s activity in our lives:

“Everyday sanctity (holiness) keeps the commandment, “Remember to keep the Lord’s Day holy” (Ex 20, 8). But it almost wants to stress even more the words: Remember to sanctify your ordinary life. For the everyday saint, daily prayer and practices are the leaven which penetrates all of life, especially everyday life – holy is the one who lives a holy life, not the one who dreams of holiness or has the great ideal of holiness. What matters is taking the great ideal and using it to shape ordinary actions. The everyday saint is aware of the great chasm between ideal and reality. He is therefore not a preacher of the word but tries to overcome this divide in his own life. (...) What do we actually mean by “holiness”?



Holiness is God's life in us. Or: our sharing in the divine life given to us through Jesus by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Our task is to defend it, foster it, and make it useful. We therefore sense a division of labour at work in our sanctity. The main part, objectively speaking, is taken by God. We are therefore aware of the Triune God as the principle cause of our spiritual life, with Christ as the causa meritoria (meriting cause). But this does not mean that we should just put up our feet and let God do everything. We have a supporting part. We are called to defend, foster and make fruitful this divine life. We defend it against the enemies of divine life through self-denial and the spirit of penance. We increase it through reception of the sacraments and virtuous works. We make it fruitful through apostolic activity and by passing on the gift of life. (...) This corresponds to our subjective need. We moderns have become tired because we have viewed sanctity too much as something self-made. This is why the shift of accent in favour of God's action has been so liberating for us.



May our striving for holiness, make us authentic witnesses through the strength of our Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt.

United in our Covenant,

Shirley Hall





2. 20th January 2022- A day of Surprises and Blessings

On 20th January – the 80th anniversary of the 20th January 1942, a new foundation was laid here in Australia in our Women’s League group when three members of our Sydney group were “implanted” into Father Kentenich’s Mariengarten. This was the first time a community from our Women’s branches here in Australia have made this commitment.

The Mariengarten or “Garden of Mary” is one of the important life streams in Schoenstatt, especially within the women’s communities. It refers to an historical event of Christmas 1941. Although this event took place before January 20, 1942, it is considered to be a concrete realisation and unique embodiment of the spirit of Schoenstatt’s second milestone and the Inscriptio consecration.

Just before Christmas 1941 when Father Kentenich was in prison in Koblenz, one of the Sisters in the nearby Koblenz community wrote a Christmas letter to the Christ Child asking for Father Kentenich’s release from prison. Her name was Sister Mariengard. Her superior sent the letter to Father Kentenich who replied – as the Christ Child - to say that if she and the entire Sisters’ community in Koblenz was to create a “Garden of Mary” (a Mariengarten) through their strivings and sacrifices then father would soon be freed.

This life stream spread through the entire Sisters’ community and at the October Week in 1950, Father Kentenich spoke about this to the whole Schoenstatt Family.

As mentioned above, this event is linked to the 20th January, 1942, and as such includes a conscious consecration in the spirit of Inscriptio. The Mariengarten is a garden of Christ-formed and Christ—forming little Marys, who in and with Christ, centre on God the Father. In and through Mary, they strive to fulfil the mission that Father Kentenich was given for Schoenstatt and the Church.



The whole preparation undertaken by Edna Aldana, Agnes Aldana and myself (Shirley) took nearly three years. As this is a “community” consecration, it can only be entered into when all the members feel they are ready to say their ‘yes’. Thankfully Sister Elizabeth who was leading our formation, was very patient.

However, towards the end of last year the Holy Spirit seemed to ‘intervene’ and during one of our formation meetings, we all agreed that it was now time for us to say our “yes”. As we had already been working on what our mission would be in the Mariengarten, it didn’t take us long to formulate this. And again, the Holy Spirit must have been working because simultaneously Edna and I suggested the symbol to represent our mission, which Agnes readily agreed to.

Together with Sr. Elizabeth we carefully made our preparations to be ‘implanted’ into father’s Mariengarten on 20th January this year. We wanted to take this step on that day as it seemed the most appropriate time and it was also the 80th anniversary of the 20th January, 1942.

We had all our preparations organised. We had our Implantation ceremony prepared, our symbols organised and Sr. Elizabeth had asked Sr. Marion in Schoenstatt (Germany) if she would live-stream us (via zoom) from the Founder Chapel where these ceremonies normally take place.

We had invited the members of our women’s group and members of the Mary and Martha Mothers group to join us. We had organised to have a 3 day retreat at Mt. Schoenstatt with the final day to be one of quiet prayer.

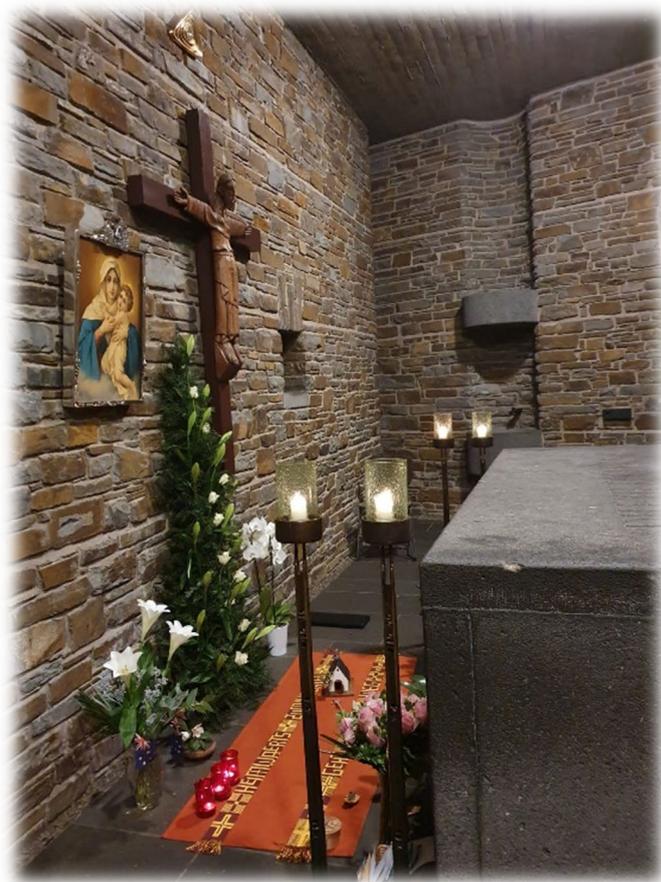
However, the first ‘surprise’ came when God decided that he had a better plan for our commitment ceremony. Just two days before our planned retreat days, we were told that some of the Sisters at Mt. Schoenstatt had COVID. This put all our plans into disarray. We could not have our retreat and celebration as planned at Mt. Schoenstatt.

We were all bitterly disappointed, but after reflection, prayer and discussion, we came to understand that we needed to trust in God as He always knows what is best for us. This was our first lesson in the Inscriptio spirit. It was also a great experience for us when we realised that as soon as we accepted God’s providence and didn’t stress about it, we became interiorly free and calm.



After much discussion we decided that our celebration should go ahead although in quite a different way to what we had imagined. We had our three day retreat prior to our commitment ceremony via zoom. Sister Elizabeth prepared a beautiful talk for us for each of the days. Then each evening the three of us came together to talk about our reflections from the day. This was our next surprise. We found that in spite of doing everything via zoom, it was truly a time of personal and community spiritual preparation and growth in a way we couldn't have imagined beforehand.

These times together showed us how the seeds were being planted and nourished and cared for and fast growing even before the Implantation in father's Garden.



Our Reflections revealed that although our interior thoughts were quite diverse, they all were pointing in the one direction, 'upward' to the Implantation. Undoubtedly, the Holy Spirit was present, empowering to keep us together in the spirit of joy, unity and knowledge.

Thanks to Divine Providence, Sister Marion one of the English speaking Sisters whom we knew, had been able to organise to be in the Founder Chapel during our celebration. As this is a conscious consecration made with Father Kentenich as the "Gardener" in the Mariengarten, and with Our Blessed Mother, "Queen of the Mariengarten", the ceremony would normally takes place in the Founder Chapel. So for us, our whole focus was able to be in the Founder Chapel spiritually with Father Kentenich.

The next surprise was that we had the Founder Chapel all to ourselves during the time of our commitment ceremony (and for some time afterwards). Thanks to Sister Marion, there were three lit red candles and three white lilies on father's sarcophagus. In the vase with the lilies were two Australian flags. At the end of the ceremony Sister Marion placed each of our candles, one at a time, on the father carpet together with the lilies. Because the whole ceremony took place via zoom, there were some parts of the celebration that we had to change. For example, we couldn't say the prayers, nor sing the hymns together. However we had split up the prayers between us and although we still included our hymns, these had to be sung by just one person with the others humming softly in the background.

For myself, just before the ceremony I got out of my casual at-home clothes, put on good clothes and shoes and although I only had to take a few steps into the next room, it meant I was now in front of my home shrine and when I saw the Founder Chapel in front on me on the screen, I felt that I was truly taking part in a special and blessed event. We each had our home shrines in the background and had lit our special candles.

True, on the day of the celebration, there was a mixed feeling of joy and 'nervousness'. There were some exchanging of text messages amongst us just before the start of the ceremony to check how each one of us was feeling. However, when Sr. Marion let us into the Founder Chapel with the three lit red candles and the three white lilies . . . behold! the atmosphere was delightful and looked divine, awaiting for the three letter word 'YES' to be said together with, 'Yes, Father, everything out of love, through love and for love. Adsum".

We had originally planned to be in our Father Room at Mt. Schoenstatt for this celebration. However, Sr. Elizabeth had the Father Room as the background for her computer, so we were also there via zoom. After the ceremony, Edna, Agnes and myself came together (as always via zoom) with Sr. Elizabeth to reflect on the celebration and what the whole experience meant for us. We were all feeling extremely blessed and bursting with joy. This whole week had been a week of surprises. We have heard it said before that God is a God of Surprises, but this was a definite experience of that.

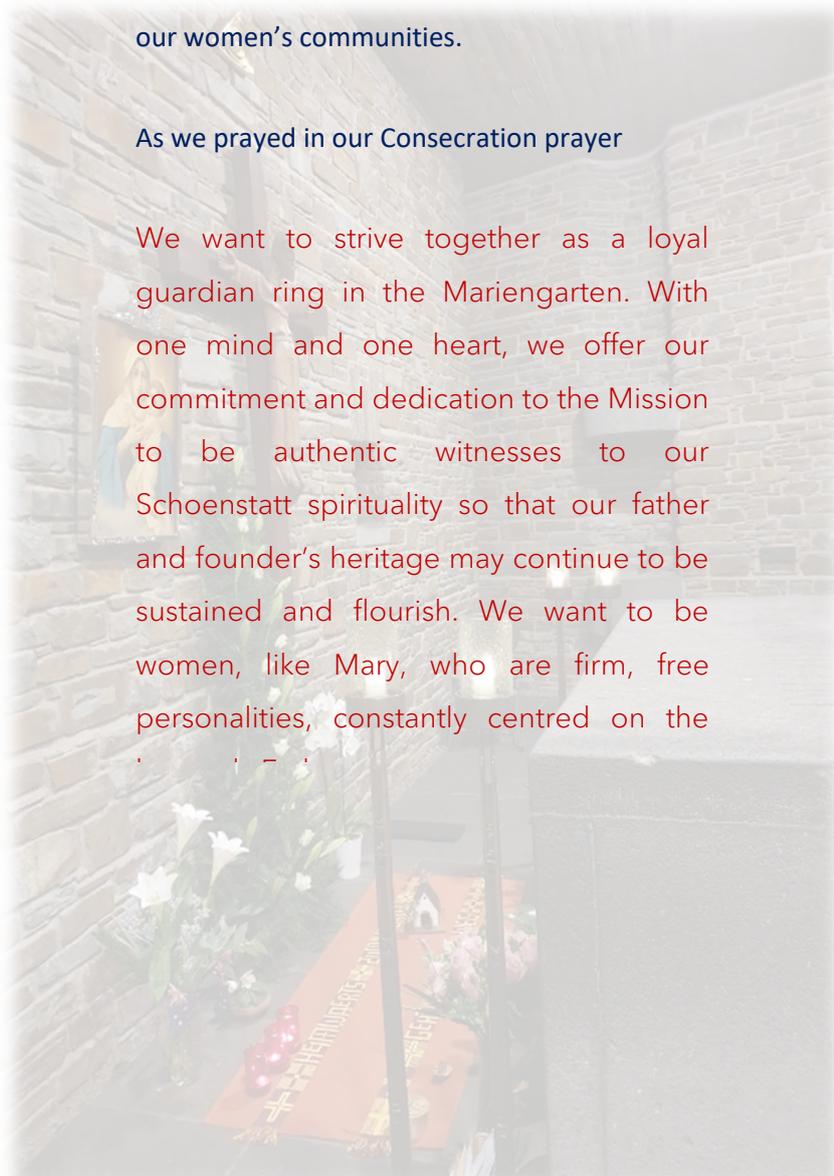
And although some of the surprises were not ones we wanted, there were others that were also mixed with many blessings and joys.

It proved to us that if we do indeed trust in God, then all things work out for the best. His plans are always the best ones, even if we can't see it at the time. He is truly a Father and a God of Love.

However, as Father Kentenich often said, every gift is a task and we know that we now have the task to see that the mission we have been given in father's Mariengarten is fulfilled to the best of our abilities. We need to see that father's Garden is nourished and comes to full bloom, especially here in Australia, and particularly in our women's communities.

As we prayed in our Consecration prayer

We want to strive together as a loyal guardian ring in the Mariengarten. With one mind and one heart, we offer our commitment and dedication to the Mission to be authentic witnesses to our Schoenstatt spirituality so that our father and founder's heritage may continue to be sustained and flourish. We want to be women, like Mary, who are firm, free personalities, constantly centred on the



We know that if we want to become authentic witnesses to our Schoenstatt spirituality especially here in Australia, we need to strive to live the Inscriptio spirit in our daily lives. To do this we know that we have the help of our father (as the Gardener) and Our Blessed Mother as the Queen of the Mariengarten.

In this spirit we had prayed:

Mother and Queen.....We fervently ask you: teach us to comprehend the spirit of the 20th January, 1942 and to live out of it; for only in this way can we sustain and make fruitful our mission in the Mariengarten, and help our father to fulfil his mission as a blessing for the Church.

Another special surprise and delight was the spiritual support we had received. The women we had invited to join us for our celebration were with us spiritually. Some spent this hour in front of their home shrines, another went to our Shrine to pray. There were also Masses said for us. The Sisters at Mulgoa had offered their prayers and Masses for us and each had a candle lit for us in the shrine during the week. So we indeed felt truly blessed.

It made us appreciate once again that we are indeed part of a Schoenstatt FAMILY and that together, around our Home Shrines, we can be a powerful force for each other and for our Schoenstatt mission.

Our special thanks and our prayers go to all who have supported us on this journey, which we realise we are only just beginning.

Our very special thanks and prayers go to Sister Elizabeth who has supported us throughout this whole journey. We thank her for the formation she has given us in preparing us for this commitment, her patience and perseverance throughout the whole journey, her praying with us and for us and for all that she did to help make our Implantation into the Mariengarten such a blessed event for each of us.

“Love for love, loyalty for loyalty, Adsum”

Shirley Hall, Edna Aldana, Agnes Aldana



3. Thank You and Update – Typhoon Rai, Philippines

The Sisters in the Philippines would like to thank all who are praying for them and our Schoenstatt Family in the Philippines in this time of natural disaster. They are also very grateful for the financial support.

By the middle of January electricity was restored which was a great help. However, we have moved into February and phone and internet services are still lacking. This is making communication extremely difficult.

While insurance will cover some of the repairs needed, there is still a huge shortfall. An estimated \$60,000 is required for repairs to the Spirituality Center and Shrine. This does not include the grounds, the streetlights on the property, the perimeter fence which was badly damaged in a couple of places and is necessary for the security of the Center as well as the help given to the families of our sisters' and members of the movement who have suffered significant damage. Fresh water and food packages belong to the help offered, especially to neighbours and members of the surrounding parishes.



The photos show the 'before' and 'after' of the house of one of our sisters. Her family is very grateful for the support they received which has enabled them to at least restore the roof to their house.

Thank you to all who have helped. So far \$7,600 has been raised. Any further assistance is greatly appreciated.



4. What does “MTA” mean”?

In this article I would like to share some reflections about the meaning of “MTA”. . While MTA as an abbreviation stands for Mother Thrice Admirable’ as an anagram it actually produces commentary (by definition) on, ‘Why for instance Mary is three times admirable’ or ‘Where did the term three times admirable come from and is it a church endorsed term?’



The Catholic Catechism, 963 interprets ‘Mother Thrice Admirable’ as ‘Mother of God, of the Redeemer, of the Redeemed’. The three times ‘Thrice’ implies a superlative beyond count. Admirable implies someone we can look up to i.e. admire but she is also someone we can count on i.e. look to for help.

‘MTA’ is in many ways a term of endearment. Formerly revered as ‘Mother Most Admirable’, Mary became ‘Thrice Admirable’ when the title was prayed three times in a litany. It became a term of affection when Father Kentenich’s students caught onto the idea of self-education and apostolate. Added on later was her capacity as Queen and Victress. Therefore her full title in Schoenstatt is “Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt”.

Father Kentenich interpreted the title on many occasions so as to highlight important features of Mary herself and her mission. Therefore, she is ‘Mother Thrice’:

- a. Admirable as Mother of God, the Redeemer, and the Redeemed.
- b. Admirable in her power, her kindness and her faithfulness.
- c. Admirable as daughter of the Father, Mother and bride of the eternal word, and vessel and shrine of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Admirable in her faith, love and hope.





In our Schoenstatt Mother's group discussion on this topic recently we all made comment on how the term 'Victress' was adopted. We felt this development is definitely shown in the way the Schoenstatt movement has grown because of her desire for it, despite two World Wars ability to try to thwart her plans. The founding generation inspired the title, "Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt" in 1915. The crowning of her in the Original Shrine in 1939 saw it expanded to "Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt".

Fr. Kentenich himself saw the need to acknowledge her many victories, particularly to do with his exile, and he solemnly presented the addition of 'Victress' on the 2nd June 1966.

I wonder is it possible that every time a new person is drawn to her picture when introduced to the Pilgrim Mother Shrine that this too is a victory. As a Pilgrim Mother Co-ordinator as well as a Schoenstatt Mother, I have witnessed the joy the MTA (Mary) brings to homes and see this as Her Victory not mine. Perhaps it's because her gaze invites and says "Come take a moment and rest in my gaze" ("A Piece of Heaven on Earth", a prayer booklet found in the Shrine.) Most of the discussion our group had on "MTA" centred on "200 Questions" (Q11-14) by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus,

which if you don't have a copy, you can find online at :

<https://www.theschoenstattcloud.com/schoenstatt/200-question>

Angela

5. 24 Hours for the Lord – Save the Date

Did you know that since 2016 in Lent the Schoenstatt Shrine in Mulgoa, Sydney, has held a '24 Hours for the Lord'? This initiative of evangelisation is organized world-wide by the 'Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization' from the Vatican. It is held annually on the Friday and Saturday preceding the fourth Sunday of Lent.

Begun by Pope Francis in 2016 every diocese is encouraged to participate with just a few hours, or even all 24, given over to reflection and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Through '24 Hours' Schoenstatt welcomes and encourages both individuals and groups - parish groups come with prayers and song - to encounter Jesus and Mary in our Schoenstatt Shrine, for that is why our Shrines exist.

This year's '24 Hours' will commence with Mass at 6pm on Friday 25th March, followed by Reconciliation, and finish with Mass at 5pm on Saturday 26th March. Most hours begin with a guided reflection followed by silence. So come for an hour, and 'Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak' (Mk 14:38). Inquiries: mensbranch@schoenstatt.com.au



Do you want to organise a "24 Hours" in your parish, or come to Mt Schoenstatt with a group? Sydney Archdiocese has many resources to help at <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/about-us/archdiocesan-events/24-hours-for-the-lord/> or use the QR code below.



6. Information and Links

➤ Shrine Opening Hours:

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

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

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

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC is 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

Recent videos on this Channel:

Video for February Covenant Sunday – Baptism, our Call to Evangelisation.

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

Video for January Covenant Sunday- Apostolic Fruitfulness from our Shrines

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GMoWcH6BJU>

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.

ISSN 2652-6875

