

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

March 18 2022 | Volume 3, Number 3

1. COVENANT DAY MESSAGE

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

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

In our newsletter last month we looked at what “holiness” means and how we can ‘witness to holiness’ through our Schoenstatt Spirituality. We looked at what it means to be an “everyday saint” who strives to fulfil their duties according to the motto, “Do the ordinary things extraordinarily well out of love for God”

I would like to continue this theme and consider how we know what God asks of us each day and each moment. How do we discern God’s will in our life?

As tomorrow will be the Feast of St. Joseph, I would like to share with you an extract from a sermon given by Fr. Kantenich during a Mass in honour of St. Joseph on 18th March, 1967.

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In this sermon Father Kentenich considers St. Joseph's remarkable attitude to the will of God and hoped that through this example his listeners might be able to gain an insight into what it means to be a true instrument of God.

Father Kentenich said in part:

""To summarize what Sacred Scripture has to say [about St. Joseph] is to admit that little is said in terms of words. We find very little about St. Joseph. In both the Bible and in our souls he stands before us as the man of action. He doesn't talk much—he acts! And if we would want to put his basic attitude in a nutshell, we would probably have to say that his entire life embodies the petition found in the Our Father, "Our Father,... thy Kingdom come," the Kingdom of the Father! "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" Your will, the will of the Father! Not my will, not the will of the tyrants and dictators, no, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven....

I think we would have to admit from our own experience: No words are greater in the mouth and heart of a Christian, and no words are greater in the ear of the eternal Father- God. (...)

And how often do we speak—be it while praying Heavenwards or praying from our hearts—of the plans of the eternal Father!

Ours is but a single great idea: We want to give our yes to the plans of the eternal Father, be it his plans for the entire family or for our personal well-being, for our personality.

"We have but a single longing: Lead us according to your wise plans."

Turn now to Sacred Scripture. We hear about St. Joseph's great dilemma. But a single word from heaven is enough to suddenly resolve the difficulty. Dispelled were all his questions about the honour of his bride, all the doubts he struggled with in his heart. The message from above:

"Do not fear to take Mary, your wife, to yourself" (Mt 1, 20). What followed? He followed! In other words:

"Yes, Father, yes, your will be ever done, whether joy or pain or sorrow from it come."

Your will, your fatherly will, should always be done! In the great difficulties of the Holy Family, Joseph always relied on God's word from above: "Get up, take the Child and his mother, and go to Egypt!" (Mt 2, 13). Here we can sense how clear and yet how difficult it was to carry out this directive. What followed? [He followed!—] "He got up..." (Mt 2, 14). Do you grasp the meaning of this? "God's will, be still!" "Nothing is mere coincidence; everything comes from God's providence!"



And when those who wished to kill Our Lord had died, Joseph was told to return to the land of Israel which he had left behind (cf. Mt 2, 19-21). What followed? He followed!"

What is the meaning of this fundamental attitude of conformity to the will of God as seen in the life of St. Joseph? This is the same as asking what is the meaning of the yes, the joyful, grateful, happy yes to all the things God the eternal Father does and permits in our lives, and to the ways he expresses his wish and will."

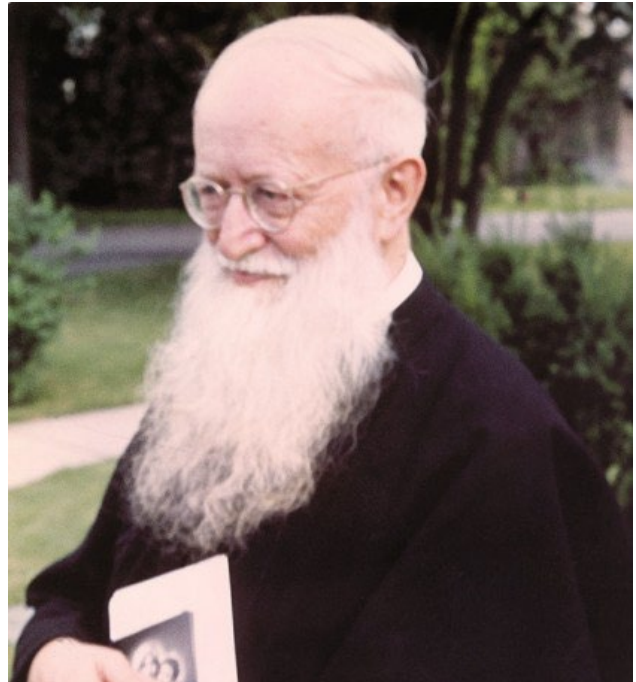
As we journey through this season of Lent, may we contemplate what our fundamental attitude is to conforming to the will of God in our life? May Our Blessed Mother be with us and send us many joys and blessings as we strive to say our "yes Father".

In Covenant unity,

Shirley Hall



On 19th March we remember the name day of our father and founder – Father Joseph Kentenich. Perhaps as a gift to him on this day we could say a prayer for his beatification and at the same time implore his help, in union with Our Blessed Mother, for the present crisis in our world:



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

2. Name Day of Father Joseph Kentenich – March 19

For world peace:

Mother, take us caringly beneath your mantle,
that we may always live as citizens of heaven.
Preserve us from bombs and shells and fire
Preserve us who turn to you in time of dire need.

Speak to your Son as you once did on earth
when he came to our aid in need and distress—
“Lord, they have no wine and no food”—
then he will certainly hear our prayer....

In union with your Son you have been entrusted
with giving us the lost life of grace
and with protecting us from many earthly sorrows—
soothing the pain they cause and transforming them
into our salvation.





Unfold today the richness of your motherly heart
wherever diabolical forces are powerfully at work.
Reveal the fullest extent of your might and kindness
as the Helpmate of the Lord.

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....

United with your Son, be the one who rescues us
from the fury of hell and the tempests of our times.
We want to gratefully and eternally praise you in
every way we know
as the great Mother of the nations.

We want to courageously spread your name
and lead all people to your shrine,
so that, with you, they jubilantly and lovingly
worship the Triune God
both here and high in heaven above.

Amen. (Heavenwards, Pp.132-134)

3. “Become a child of longing and confidence” - Fr. J. Kentenich

This saying of Fr. Kentenich's printed on one of my 'Telephone Cards' (sayings from him), points to a topic that Father loved to preach about and used a lot as a theme for retreats: “Unless you become like children you shall not enter the kingdom of God”. He brought to the fore, the reality of how far humanity is away from this concept stating that “To reconquer the sense of childlikeness is the greatest blessing we can give to humanity today”.

Father, who saw himself as a child of God and whose feast day is on the 19th March, gave a retreat which actually became a whole book with the title: ‘Childlikeness before God’(CLBG here on in). The explanation here will only brush the surface of a topic that actually shouldn't be separated from the concept of ‘Belief in Divine Providence’.

How many of us can say “I know I was called by God when I was a child”? Father Kentenich was clear in his mind that God called him – believing his vocation was desired by God. Similarly, our vocation, if we truly understand who is guiding, is also desired by God. The question is do you feel yours is “Extraordinary, easily recognizable, and effective”? – Father believed his was.



Why was Father so certain that childlikeness was the driving spirit? Father had a great understanding of the distinctions between primitive and enlightened childlikeness. This article focuses on the value of developing ‘enlightened childlikeness’, because it is what drives the value of being apostolic in our lives. “Childlikeness is the way to heaven..., the way to overcoming the crises of our times and thirdly it is the way to live a holy life.”

If we re-take, “on the likeness of a child,” we re-learn how to trust in God and completely depend on his power alone. When we are hurt – physically, emotionally, mentally, or spiritually - we can turn to the most trustworthy physician, psychologist, lover and spiritual director. We have to believe that because he created us, he knows us better than anyone on the planet. All we have to do is go to Him (adapted from M.Gross: Radiant Magazine 2019).



Fr. Jonathan Niehaus (CLBG: P.viii) says of Father Kantenich, "That he survived, and helped countless others to spiritually grow in the "Hell of Dachau" is a first class endorsement of the true strength of 'spiritual childhood' even in the face of some of the greatest indignities known to human history."

He also said, *"He saw the values which stand out in a child - total trust, the ability to live in the moment, innocence and simplicity, amazement at even the littlest things in life - were the key to cultivating a fruitful relationship with God in times which numb the soul with overstimulation, materialism and the demand to have control over every aspect of life".*

Looking at the picture of the MTA and the Christ Child do you ever wonder who Christ is looking at? Mary is definitely looking at us (you) but ask yourself who are Christ's sights set on? Christ could be looking at his Father in Heaven and wishes that you would turn to look and see Him too. By reflecting on Christ's position in the picture, we may be inspired to imitate the features of Christ, the child.

The following quote from Pope Francis may assist our reflection: "The humility of the childlike is that of somebody who walks in the presence of the Lord, does not speak badly about others, looks only at serving and feels that he or she is the smallest." (Vatican City, Nov 29, 2016).

All we need to do now is "Become a child of longing and confidence," and childlike.

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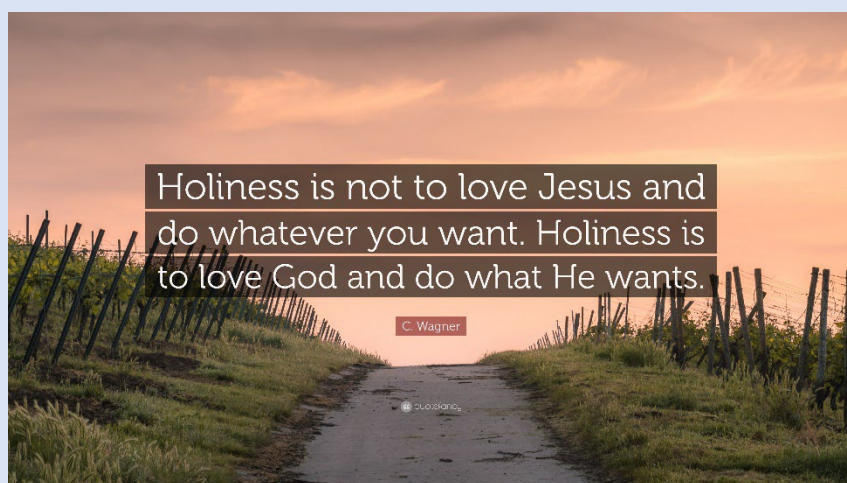


4. Retreats on Witnessing to Holiness

Over two weekends in February, the Women in NSW and the Melbourne Schoenstatt Family spent time on Zoom reflecting on what it means to be an “Authentic Witness to Holiness” as a means of evangelising. Altogether, close to forty people participated and were motivated to recognise that the call to holiness is universal and that striving for holiness belongs to our everyday lives. It is rooted in our Baptismal Covenant and through our Schoenstatt Covenant of Love we open ourselves to the help of the Blessed Mother as we seek to live out this Covenant each day.

Apart from two major inputs looking at “Evangelisation and Witnessing to Holiness” and “Leadership in the light of Schoenstatt’s Way, Authentic Witness to Holiness”,

all were enriched by short presentations of ten members of our Schoenstatt Family reflecting on how they see holiness in their everyday lives. An activity challenged every participant to reflect on what they understand under the word ‘holiness’. Some of the results of this activity may inspire you to reflect on what authentic holiness means to you.



HOLINESS IN ACTIVITY

Or have you ever let your imagination pull as many meanings as you can from one reality like

Holiness is.....starting anew each day

and Holiness is.....reflecting on the day

and Holiness is... having a positive attitude

but it can also be...offering our challenges to God and leaving them in God's hands; trusting in God.

and sometimes it can mean...accepting suffering

because Holiness...is a life's journey and task.

and many times it involves...trusting in God's providence and guidance; sacrifice.

so that Holiness...requires constant striving...requires selfless service...a constant effort.

and it also.....demands courage and perseverance

for Holiness...is the mission and task of the Christian person... it is love.

Holiness is ... Personal relationship with God; a reflection of God's love

And holiness is ... Relationship with your neighbour; a way of life

And holiness is ... Positively living the faith; the fullness of Christian life; living out our baptismal covenant; being united in prayer; having a childlike relationship; leadership

But it can also be ... Your behaviour; living out the demands of the Gospel

And sometimes Challenging; It hurts; is time consuming

Because holiness is Having an open mind,

And many times We come to crossroads

So that holiness.... Is a way of life

And it also ...Makes us live an authentic life

For holiness is A gift

A few echoes from participants:

- *Many thanks for a beautiful and meaningful Retreat. We appreciate all the hard work and contribution to make it successful.*
- *Thank you very much for a very reflective retreat and for all the work put into the organisation and presentation of the topics. It was very much enjoyed by all.*





A few echoes from participants:

- Thank you and the team for a beautiful retreat. Zoom poses its own challenges. However, the strategy worked well. Breakout groups were a great way of recapping what was covered. Contributions from participants indicated everyone was learning more about Schoenstatt. Participants are always willing to contribute to a discussion and ask questions in small groups. Bringing the information back to the main room was helpful for everyone. Thanks once again.*
- One of the focal points that came out of the discussions was the realisation of the participants that we should all strive for holiness in our everyday lives. It is something that we can all achieve, it is not something for just a few, because through our Baptism we are all called to be saints (everyday saints) in the way we witness to God's love in our lives.*



5. Did Fr Kentenich read Dostoevsky?



Well, I don't really know whether he did or not, but something in an article I read recently piqued my interest in this wild thought. The article deals with Dostoevsky's books and particularly his book 'The Brothers Karamazov', a story that is generally acclaimed to be one of the best literary works ever written.

The article is in a magazine called Evangelisation & Culture and is titled 'The Everyday Miracle' by Gary Morson, Professor of the Arts and Humanities at Northwestern University in Illinois, USA. We need not be concerned about the historical details, interesting though they are, but a quote caught my eye. One of the characters in the story is a Russian Orthodox priest called Fr Zossima, and he recounts an old Russian folk story concerning an onion.



'A wicked old woman dies and is thrown into the lake of fire. Pitying her, her guardian angel reminds God that the old woman did one good deed in her lifetime; she gave an onion to a beggar. Very well, says God, you take that onion and pull her out of hell with it. The delighted angel holds out the onion, the old woman grabs onto it and the angel, afraid that the onion will break, slowly and carefully begins to lift her out from the lake. Seeing her escape, other sinners hold onto her legs so they can escape with her, but the old woman kicks them away: "It's my onion, not yours!" she shouts. At that moment, the onion breaks, and she has been rotting in hell ever since.'



Prof. Morson considers that there are two morals here. To begin with, we always have the power to redefine our lives, as the old woman could have done by acting generously to the other sinners. Still more important, the act that matters, the good deed that could have saved her, was not some grand gesture but a gift of something almost worthless. This is the sort of good deed we can always perform. This lesson occurs throughout the book in various guises and clearly led to the title of the article.

For me, this story is remarkably evocative of Everyday Sanctity, one of the three main dimensions (pillars) of our spirituality, where we do the ordinary things in life extraordinarily well out of love for God. Hence the thought that Fr Kentenich might have read the book!

The book was published in 1880, I think, or at least thereabouts, while the ideas about this facet of the spirituality were developed by Fr Kentenich in the early 1930's and published in 1937 in the book written by Sr Nailis - so the timeline fits. Mind you, I imagine it's more likely that St Therese of Lisieux's 'The Little Way' – expressing a similar idea of advancing towards personal sanctity, and published around the 1900's - would have impressed him more. I am sure, wherever the actual impulse came from, he was a brilliant man and would have been extremely well read, so it's at least a possibility!

If you have read Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation Gaudete Et Exsultate, you would know that he also covers this very point. (14 and on), so it should be well known among Catholics. OK, but the point is that this is not so. Of course, our priests and teachers know it (or should), but possibly think it a rather specialised thing, being confined to the Carmelite or Schoenstatt spiritualities. Maybe they don't read encyclicals very well. I don't know.

What I do think, however, is that this provides us with a huge opportunity for evangelising through Schoenstatt. We all know that Everyday Sanctity is a great big factor in our Schoenstatt faith life, and we should be

SHOUTING IT FROM THE ROOFTOPS.

Terry Pate



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

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

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC open for individual visits 9 am – 5 pm

➤ 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 March Covenant Sunday –

www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia - ‘Slow’ evangelisation.

Recent videos on this Channel:

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

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F628pW_M45k

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.

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