

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

August 18 2022 | Volume 3, Number 8

1. COVENANT DAY MESSAGE

“Schoenstatt’s Way: Authentic Witness to Holiness”

**Dear Schoenstatt Family
and Friends,**

Greetings and blessings for this Covenant Day – 18th August.
During this year we have been focusing on our Schoenstatt spirituality as a way to be authentic witnesses to our faith and so live our apostolate more fully.

On Monday of this week we celebrated the Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 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 for us during our life. This Feast day is also an affirmation of the dignity of all human life. We see this dignity reflected especially in the life of Our Lady and in the way that she always responded to the will of God with a joyful “yes”. Mary fulfilled the mission given to her by the Heavenly Father and became a perfect and authentic witness to holiness.

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In speaking at the blessing of an MTA picture for a Home Shrine of a Schoenstatt Family on 31st May, 1966, Father Kentenich referred to the part that we should play in fulfilling Our Lady's mission from Schoenstatt

"If we consider how Schoenstatt came into existence, I think I may say that it happened analogously to the way our little families become Schoenstatt Families. Expressed simply, we could say that Our Lady has always been aware of her divinely appointed mission for our times. But in carrying out this mission she is dependent on instruments. Although God is almighty and is therefore able to govern the world without mediators, he nevertheless laid down a law which St Augustine expressed in these thoughts: He who created you without your co-operation, will not redeem you without your co-operation.

A great law! This applies to anyone who has a mission in God's Kingdom. It also applies to Our Lady. If she is to give birth to Christ for every generation, the coming generations as well, we may take it for granted that she will not do it without instruments, without human co-operation. Therefore we can imagine to ourselves that in 1914 she went through the world and sought instruments.

While on this search, she, so to speak, got "stuck" at Schoenstatt, descending to the shrine because she wanted to live with us. She wanted to dwell here in order to educate us according to her plans, and then to use us as her instruments in her mission for our times.

(Extract from: "Our Marian Mission", Fr. Joseph Kentenich, 31st May, 1966)

You can't light a fire with an icicle.

Unless I am personally on fire

before God and for God,

how can I set others light for God?

(Fr. Kentenich, 1939)

In this coming month, may you all receive many blessings and graces from our Shrines. We pray for our Schoenstatt family and our own families and friends. Could I ask you to also pray for all those members of our Schoenstatt family who at this time are struggling with illness or in any other ways

United in our Covenant of Love,

Shirley Hall



2. Reflection Day for PMA Coordinators and members



On 9 July 2022 was the Mid-year Reflection day for the Pilgrim Mother Coordinators and members at Mt. Schoenstatt in Mulgoa. The theme for the day was let your light shine...!

The program included a talk by Fr Pawel Barszczewski OP, opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, silent adoration, Holy Mass, rosary prayer, Benediction and fellowship.

Fr Pawel's talk focused on the gospel of Matthew 5 – 14:16

You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Jesus addresses these words to each one of us.

Father Pawel started the talk from the first letter of St John that says: "The world began when God said let there be light. If we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin (1 Jn 1-5:7)".

According to Pope Francis, faith received from God as a supernatural gift, becomes a light for our way, guiding our journey through time. Once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim. Because faith is born of an encounter which takes place in history and lights up our journey through time, it must be passed on in every age. It is through an unbroken chain of witnesses that we come to see the face of Jesus. In order to be effective messengers of God's light, listening to God's word and the Holy Spirit when we pray will enable us to be the light of Christ to others.

The afternoon session led by Sister Luisa Maria reinforced the day's theme - let your light shine. To be effective witnesses we have to be a sign and witness to the presence of God through our actions and deeds.



After his Ascension Christ entrusted us with this light. Love must surround all our actions. This is not possible if we live in darkness, doubt, bitterness and hatred.

Loving God with your whole self is the best way to love yourself. Why? Because we were made for love and communion with God. Forgiveness is the highest form of love...forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us...

We prayed the luminous mysteries in front of lit candles arranged in the form of a rosary. The closing prayer and Benediction followed. Everyone went home very grateful for the blessings of the day.

One of those who came for the first time commented: "Thank you for the awesome Mid-year Reflection Day! I didn't know what to expect. It was very well organised and Father Pawel's talk was great...!"

LOVING GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE SELF IS THE BEST WAY TO LOVE YOURSELF.

Love is contagious, and must consume all we are and everything we do. Our obedience and perseverance will be tested as we move closer to God.

At the conclusion of Sr. Luisa Maria's talk we were reminded to be God's light to the world, by listening to God and the Holy Spirit when we pray. There is nothing more loving to do for others than to act as a bridge between God and them. Committing our self to a wholehearted love of God and his Blessed Mother can allow his love to overflow and be poured out to those we encounter.

Thank you to all who made this PMA Reflection Day possible. It was wonderful to be able to come together after two years of COVID restrictions.

Crystal D' Souza



3. "The littleness, the wonder at that small child"

This message was outlined in Pope Francis' Christmas address in 2021, in which he highlighted the importance of "littleness" to the public reminding them to value the little things and to embrace their own vulnerabilities. In his homily he continued, "Let us stop pining for a grandeur that is not ours to have," he said. "The littleness, the wonder at that small child – this is the message." He also stated "Jesus is born in order to serve, and we spend a lifetime pursuing success. God does not seek power and might; he asks for tender love and interior littleness." (CNN Philippines published 25th Dec 2021).

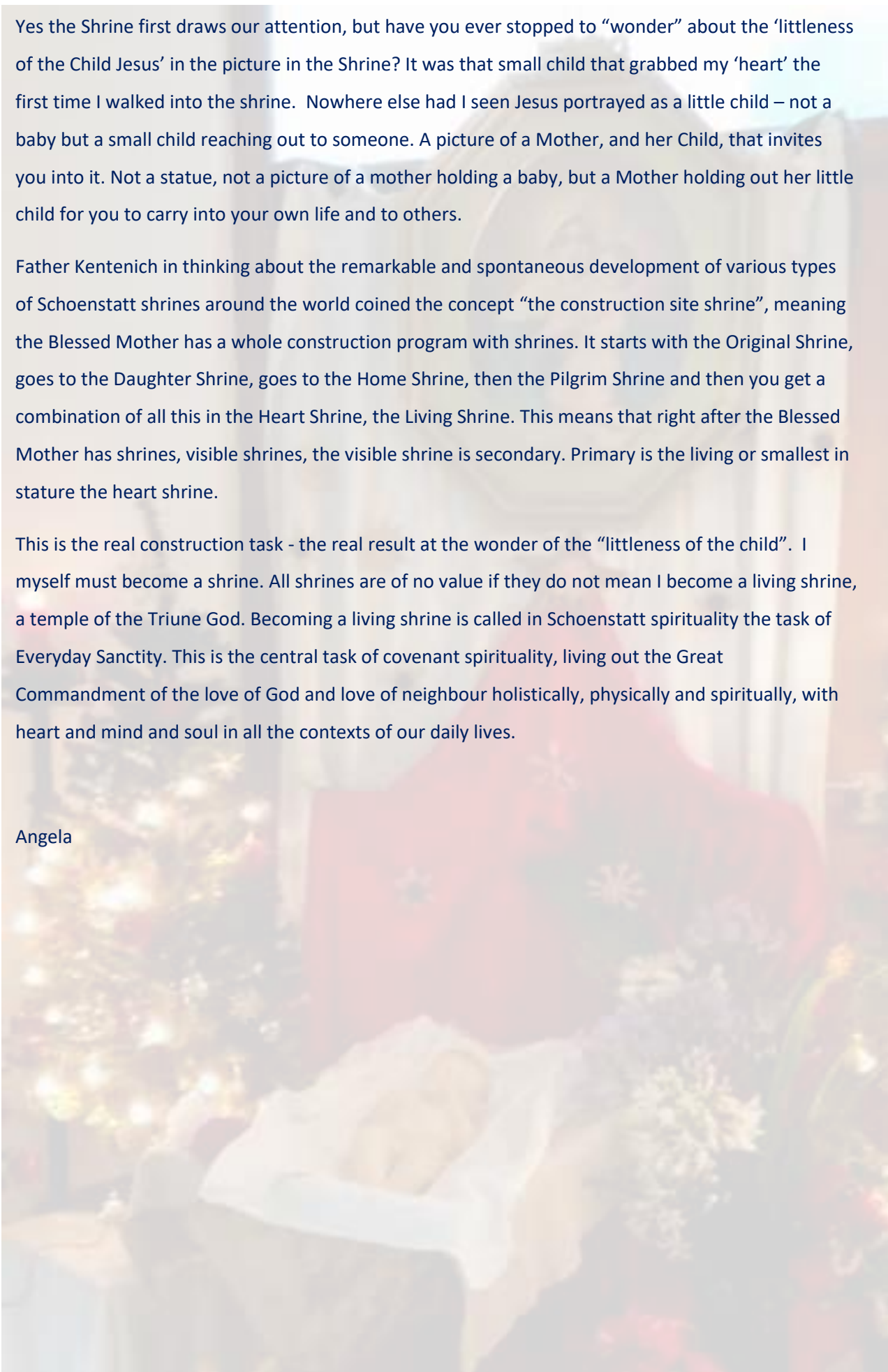
Having just finished writing an article for our Probus Newsletter for which I write as the 'Welfare Officer', I thought about how I am a small cog in the working of our club but it is the small things I do that give me and God great pleasure and also the ones who receive them. A card, a meal, a phone-call, a text are all small ways of 'loving my neighbour'. Earlier on I dropped off the Pilgrim Mother to the person due to have Her and it was the text from the person receiving her who made my heart warm – "Thank you for bringing my Mother to me I was just out walking" – I had left her at the door knowing I would hear from her and the small pleasure I got and gave to God, from that statement was all I needed to make my day feel 'holistic'.

Talking about Shrines have you ever stopped to think in terms of its 'littleness' and how the original little Shrine in Vallendar which like all its replicas, holds about 25 people and yet has grown into a vast Movement of replica Shrines and miniature shrines that 'move', all around the world into people's homes and hearts?



Father Kentenich was not looking for grandeur like building a Cathedral he was looking to grow a Movement that would honour a young small woman who birthed the Messiah and who would take charge of our education and lives. "For nearly thirty years there was only this one little Shrine, the original Mother Shrine in Schoenstatt, Germany. In the course of time, in the ever-expanding circle of physical and spiritual outreach of Schoenstatt communities around the globe, we see the necessary practical adaptations and changes for Schoenstatt's covenant spirituality effectively to be shared on a global scale. In 1943 the first little daughter or filial shrine, built after the pattern of the original, was constructed in Uruguay. Then, gradually, Schoenstatt Shrines of various kinds, all sharing fully in the graces and life stream of the original Shrine, began popping up around the globe" (<https://www.theschoenstattcloud.com/schoenstatt-shrine> and here on in).





Yes the Shrine first draws our attention, but have you ever stopped to “wonder” about the ‘littleness of the Child Jesus’ in the picture in the Shrine? It was that small child that grabbed my ‘heart’ the first time I walked into the shrine. Nowhere else had I seen Jesus portrayed as a little child – not a baby but a small child reaching out to someone. A picture of a Mother, and her Child, that invites you into it. Not a statue, not a picture of a mother holding a baby, but a Mother holding out her little child for you to carry into your own life and to others.

Father Kentenich in thinking about the remarkable and spontaneous development of various types of Schoenstatt shrines around the world coined the concept “the construction site shrine”, meaning the Blessed Mother has a whole construction program with shrines. It starts with the Original Shrine, goes to the Daughter Shrine, goes to the Home Shrine, then the Pilgrim Shrine and then you get a combination of all this in the Heart Shrine, the Living Shrine. This means that right after the Blessed Mother has shrines, visible shrines, the visible shrine is secondary. Primary is the living or smallest in stature the heart shrine.

This is the real construction task - the real result at the wonder of the “littleness of the child”. I myself must become a shrine. All shrines are of no value if they do not mean I become a living shrine, a temple of the Triune God. Becoming a living shrine is called in Schoenstatt spirituality the task of Everyday Sanctity. This is the central task of covenant spirituality, living out the Great Commandment of the love of God and love of neighbour holistically, physically and spiritually, with heart and mind and soul in all the contexts of our daily lives.

Angela



4. Weekend for Families.

"Holiness in the Family" was the theme for the Family Weekend held at Mount Schoenstatt 22-24 July. Below is a reflection from one of the couples who attended.

One of the things that primarily draws me to Schoenstatt is its everyday, practical and human approach to family life. Rather than preaching separate and meditative paths to holiness for mums, dads and children, it instead focuses on a path to holiness that we can travel together.

That sense of togetherness is what has always drawn us in. The striving we make is something we do with each other, and we become stronger from that sense of togetherness.

That's not to say this is always the perfect journey. Family life often tends towards a sense of chaos, and while chaos is hardly our aspiration, it is something we live with. Therefore, it was all the more special when the family branch gathered at Mount Schoenstatt on the last weekend in July. We spent a weekend in fellowship, learning and prayer. Our group was not just the established family group, which has been connected since 2016. It also included some new families embarking on that same journey today. Like many face-to-face gatherings, it is more precious now after the desert of those seemingly endless Zoom meetings over the past two years.

We spent a weekend in fellowship, learning and prayer.

We were assisted by the wonderful and much-appreciated dedication of our volunteers - Miguel, Kat, Theresa, Ella and Daniella. As they looked after the children, Sister M. Elizabeth worked with us parents on equally serious matters in faith and life. It's perhaps one of those most remarkable blessings to learn like that, as both new and established family groups. As parents, how often have we wanted to study our Schoenstatt readers, only to be interrupted by one thing or another?





As I reflect on the weekend, it is not just about thinking of what we do but also what we don't do. The Schoenstatt pedagogy does not criticize our failures but instead encourages our graces. To consider, to learn and then to strive. Topping it off were some crafting sessions where we discovered new things to do with tissue, glue, balloons and the flowers the sisters had painstakingly dried for us. We made lanterns for our home shrines. And, of course, for everyone, family games and a sing-song in the conference room at night.

To those who live in metropolitan areas, much appreciated is the silence we felt in Mulgoa, especially after dark. Yes, it is a place of grace, and grace is all around if only you go and let it flow through you. That is the feeling I hold onto the most because, amidst the noise of the family chaos mentioned earlier, it is not always easy to hear and respond to the other things that are perhaps equally important. Those quiet things may not necessarily speak as loudly, but they are still valuable. For this reason, a chance to learn, pray and dwell at Mount Schoenstatt remains unforgettable, no matter how many times you go.

Paul and Ramani Regis



5. First Vows of Br. Isaac Webb



After celebrating the ordination of Fr. Nathan in June, the Webb Family were once again together on July 30 to witness the first vows of another sibling, Isaac. Following is a reflection from Br. Isaac himself.

"For the praise and glory of the Most Holy Trinity..."

So began the vows formula for the Capuchin Friars Minor that I professed in front of my family and new brothers in religion on July 30th in Guardian Angel's Church in Brisbane. On this day, I received the name Br Isaac Seraphin OFM Cap.

It was a blessing to share my profession day with family and friends - those who gave me the gift of faith and supported my formation.

My parents - Paul and Fiona Webb - have been exceptional examples of fidelity and love, inspiring and supporting my vocation. The Marian mantle under which I grew up has also shaped my "fiat", and I am grateful to the community of the Schoenstatt movement for supporting my family and me in this faith.

I took the name Seraphin after St Seraphin of Montegranaro, one of the earliest Capuchin brothers. He was a simple lay brother who could neither read nor write throughout his whole life. He is an example for me of how to love God in simplicity and share this love with the world in humility. Seraphin means 'fiery one' and comes from the name of the choir of angels closest to God, the Seraphim. It will constantly remind me to be on fire with God's love and ignite those around me in the same way.

Br Isaac Seraphin OFM Cap



I have spent this last year of my formation in the novitiate in Santa Ynez, California. Now, after a few short weeks' holidays with my family, I'm off to St Anthony's Capuchin Church in Melbourne to begin my studies and ministry as a student friar. I look forward to continuing my formation to, as our vows say, "constantly strive for the fullness of love in the service of God, of the Church, and of all people."



Pax

Br Isaac Seraphin OFM Cap



“CONSTANTLY STRIVE FOR THE FULLNESS OF LOVE IN THE
SERVICE OF GOD, OF THE CHURCH, AND OF ALL PEOPLE.”



7. Information and Links

➤ Shrine Opening Hours:

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. Open for Private prayer outside the Shrine 8 am – 7 pm

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

The Kew Shrine, Melbourne, VIC is open for individual visits 9am -5pm.

➤ 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 August Covenant Sunday – Freedom and Evangelisation

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

Recent videos on this Channel

Video for July Covenant Sunday – Evangelisers loving the Church

<https://youtu.be/vbrIT5xBUgg>

Video for June Covenant Sunday – Authentic Evangeliser

<https://youtu.be/97TWrwok2UY>

Video for May Covenant Sunday – Mary, Star of Evangelisation.

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

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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