

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

September 18 2022 | Volume 3, Number 9

1. COVENANT DAY MESSAGE

“Schoenstatt’s Way: Authentic Witness to Holiness”

**Dear Schoenstatt Family
and Friends,**

Greetings and blessings for this Covenant Day – 18th September. On Thursday we remembered the death of Father Kentenich on 15th September, 1968.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Jubilee of the death of Father Joseph Kentenich, Father Alexandre Awi Mello, a Schoenstatt Father, reminded us in his sermon, of the words of Bishop Tenhumberg at the funeral service for Father Kentenich. The Bishop had said that "Every great person is a letter from God to his time, a message to us. A letter, written "not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not upon clay tablets, but into living hearts "(2 Cor 3: 1-3). "His book of life is our book of God."

Father Mello continued to say..."but (for me) the most interesting aspect of this unforgettable sermon is that the preacher has not only applied the words of St. Paul to the life of our founder, but also to the book of our own lives.

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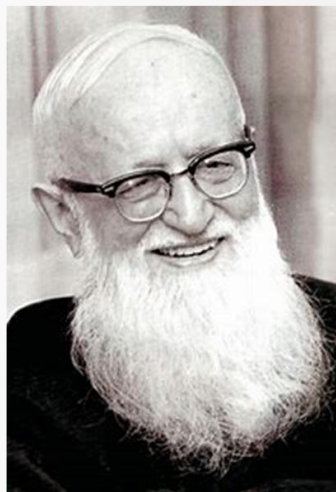
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We are the letter of recommendation for our father and founder! "Our lives will decide what the church will one day say of our father and founder"- so said Bishop Tenhumberg – "The Church will read the letter from God which he wished to be from the way we live it."

How do we live this message, this letter from God, in our lives?



In a conference he gave on the 17th November, 1965 while in Rome, Father Kentenich shared his understanding of a mission as sharing in the mission of Jesus Christ and 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 emphasizes 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.

He said further, that 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.....

Further in this talk he 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 to do more 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.

(From "His Mission, Our Mission", Pp.48-49)

May we continue to live the mission we have been given through our father and founder so that Schoenstatt may be fruitful here in Australia. We do this in the strength of our Covenant of Love with our Blessed MTA and in unity with each other.

Blessings and graces from our Schoenstatt Shrines as we journey towards the celebration of the Foundation Day of Schoenstatt on 18th October.

United in our Covenant,

Shirley Hall



2. Our Uniqueness – its importance

An 'Authentic Mission Consciousness' demands an honest appraisal of our own selves

It is fair to say that you cannot be an authentic witness if your own self is out of kilter. Yes the world is full of ways to calm oneself, trying to recover from the busyness of life, even the meditative practice of yoga exercises fit into this category. Yet these according to Fr. Kentenich who was aware of it as far back as 1912 will not help us one bit if our spiritual life is even slightly out of kilter. The way we have to fix ourselves demands attention to our own uniqueness both in person and mission that God has known for us for all eternity, from the time of our birth. If we have security in God's fatherly heart and move, as was suggested last month, into a childlike understanding of what God designed for us there is only one thing to do, and that is to set up and hold onto the guiding principle that aids a centred spirituality and that is a Personal Ideal. One of the chief challenges to centeredness is hypocrisy. Ask yourself how honest you are with yourself. When I ask something of one of my children/grandchildren am I personally living out what I am asking of them or are they going to turn around look me in the eye and say "you ask that of me but you don't do it yourself!"



There is no one in the world to stand you up and challenge your foibles more than grandchildren! Christ himself criticizes those who "tie up heavy burdens on men's shoulders, but they themselves are unwilling to move them with as much as a finger" (Mt 23:4).

The following story tells something of this concept of 'hypocrisy':

A mother once asked Gandhi to tell her child to stop eating sugar. Gandhi told the mother to go home and to come back in two weeks. Though the mother was perplexed, she came back with her son two weeks later. This time, Gandhi said to the boy: "You should stop eating sugar. It is not good for your health." After the boy agreed, the woman asked Gandhi why he waited two weeks to chastise her son. He replied: "Mother, two weeks ago I was still eating sugar myself."

<https://thetablet.org/the-need-for-authentic-witnesses>



Gandhi and Fr. Kentenich both understood the need to have a Personal Ideal. As ethical teachers and authentic witnesses they could not preach and do what they did themselves without a deep understanding of ‘practising what you preach’, and neither should we. So to keep us on the straight and narrow spiritually we need to find, like them, a ‘Personal Ideal’. Building on those natural desires as suggested above ‘staying calm’, slowing down from our busyness, and meditating can all help to lay the

by the wind of the Holy Spirit. Translating this to a Personal Ideal means being balanced, courageous, creative, and patient and fighting against the many weaknesses in yourself that threaten to “blow you over in the wind”. You can find a list of those weaknesses as well as strengths at:

<https://www.theschoenstattcloud.com/formation/formation-of-ideal>

One thing is for sure only you can sort it out by much prayer and reading that leads you to be

“THE ONLY THING DECISIVE FOR YOU IS YOUR PERSONAL IDEAL.”

groundwork of the “unique and original image and personal mission in life God has known for us from all eternity”. (Fr Kentenich, 1912) Now the operative words are ‘our own uniqueness’ and ‘our own Personal Ideal’ that truly help us go out to be authentic witnesses. From personal experience one place you could start is to look at the most annoying part of yourself that upsets others and turn it into a challenge to work on. Early in my Schoenstatt life by way of example I was particularly taken with a reading about sunflowers. I liked the principle of how they are ‘heliotropic’ meaning they follow the sun around from dawn to dusk.

Fr. Kentenich understood this principle and in the ‘Heavenwards’ prayer book likened it to following Christ all day, doing his will, listening for God’s Providence and being driven

able to cope spiritually with your life.

Schoenstatt’s method of education is to ‘get oneself in order before going out and preaching to others and the “Covenant of Love” is the surest way to hold you to the straight and narrow path although Father also believes, “The only thing decisive for you is your personal ideal. Then you will remain the carefree child at the hand of our heavenly Mother that you were before. Mater Habitat Curam” 6/10/1920 in: Fatherly Care in letters: quoted in “Security in a challenging world – Pendulum Security talk given by Sr. M. Elizabeth August 2022.

Angela Benson



3. Joseph Engling – An outstanding Witness for Schoenstatt

Joseph Engling, was a member of the founding generation of Schoenstatt. He came from a remote village in Eastern Prussia (then Germany, now Poland) and was a student at the Pallottine's School in Schoenstatt.

Although Joseph was not present in the Shrine on the 18th of October 1914, he entered deeply into the covenant of love with Our Lady and made Schoenstatt his life. His diary notes and letters are a pure and profound reflection of the impulses given by Father Kentenich.

Soon after the founding of Schoenstatt the first sodalists from the “Marian Sodality” were drafted into military service; from the school benches and the security of the little chapel near the House of Studies into the war. Thus, with the other soldier-sodalists in the barracks and at the front, Schoenstatt grew beyond the walls of the House of Studies in Vallendar.

Joseph offered his physical limitations, successes and vast experiences of unsuccessful apostolic commitment, his self-education, and the hardships of his life as a soldier on the battlefields of World War I for the growth and spread of Schoenstatt. On May 31, 1918, he offered his life for this intention. This consecration has now become known as the “Joseph Engling Act”.



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’*

Joseph had a constant dialogue with the Blessed Mother in the shrine and with his “Pater Spiritual” (Fr. Kentenich). In a letter to Father Kentenich, 20th May, 1918, Joseph wrote:

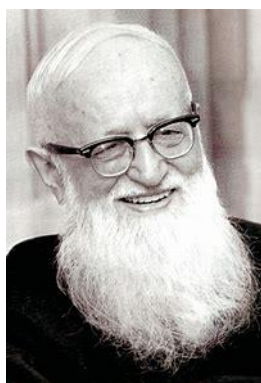


"A few days ago when the grenades were exploding near me to the left and to the right, I prayed as usual to my little Mother and placed myself in our chapel. There I felt so close to my beloved little Mother as never before – a great longing for her shrine, for you and the beloved fellow students often comes over me"

On 30th July, 1918 Joseph was in Schoenstatt for a few days before he had to leave again. When leaving, his Spiritual Director (Fr. Kentenich) accompanied him part of the way.

A memorial stone now marks the place to which Fr. Kentenich usually accompanied the sodalists after their visits to Schoenstatt to return to their barracks or to travel to the front. He went along with them, exteriorly only part of the way, but interiorly he accompanied them further.

It was Joseph's last visit to Schoenstatt... On 4th October, 1918 he died 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.



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.



4. Women's Formation Weekend, 5 – 7 August 2022

This gathering comprised members of the Mothers' and Single Women's Groups. The topic was: *"Security in a Challenging World – A Schoenstatt Perspective"*

and it was the first time for a couple of years since we had been able to gather for a Formation Weekend to learn more about Fr Kentenich, his spirituality and Schoenstatt.

Although there were some of us who have been with Schoenstatt for a number of years, there were also new members of the Mothers' Groups. It was great to be able to talk, discuss our experience of Schoenstatt and generally meet and greet each other.

Naturally we commenced the weekend with prayer in the Shrine on Friday evening. The theme focussed on Father Kentenich and some of his experiences of trust and faith in a loving God.

On Saturday, Sr. Elizabeth began proceedings with a talk on Security in a challenging world – Pendulum Security. This led us to realise that there is both insecurity and security in our world and life swings like a pendulum. Although this pendulum is not secured at the bottom, it is held in the firm grasp of our Heavenly Father at the top. No matter which way the pendulum swings, it is always steady at the top and returns to the centre.

Where is the place/s we find God?

Fr Kentenich knew security and insecurity throughout his life. He placed his trust in his Heavenly Father and Mary, his Mother. Through sealing the Covenant of Love with Mary, he had childlike trust and sovereign calm in his life.

Following this input, Shirley gave a talk on Finding God in my Life. Using Sister Emilie as an example of someone who found God throughout her life in her trials and tribulations and good times, we were asked: Where is the place/s we find God? It could be in the rainbow, flowers in the field, in another person, the difficulties we experience. Do we recognise this meeting with God when it occurs?





In the afternoon six of our members presented a short talk (and I mean short! They were timed by Sr. Elizabeth to the minute!!!!) on How does Schoenstatt's Spirituality help us to gain unshakeable trust.



Saturday evening was a time of fun, laughter and song. A number of activities were organised, in which we used our brains, laughed much and enjoyed the company of everyone. I don't think any of us had laughed so much for quite a long time!

Sunday was a time of reflection on Father Kentenich. For those new to Schoenstatt, it introduced them to our founder, and I think even those of us who have been in Schoenstatt for a while learnt something.



The comments following reflect what the weekend meant to those present. It was a time of learning, spiritual growth and the forming of friendships.

Therese Fuller



- My favourite session was the first one on Pendulum Security, which is a simple but profound perspective on life's challenges and our positive response to such challenges. It corresponds with our dependence on Divine Providence and surrender to God's will. It is another way of knowing that we'll not be given a cross we cannot bear / carry.

This concept is particularly relevant in our current situation, following two years of COVID, this year's Ukraine War, inflation, weather changes etc...

- I enjoyed knowing more about various aspects of Schoenstatt's spirituality from the six members who shared their own understanding and experiences about their respective aspect.
- This Weekend has provided me food for thoughts & fuel for actions. Well done! Grace
- This was the first time that I attended a full week-end at Schoenstatt. I felt welcomed, relieved and comfortable the moment Shirley knocked on my door and invited me to join the others in the common / tea room.
- The programme on Saturday was most informative. I now realise that the Covenant of Love is just the basis on the path to holiness. Learning the different aspects of spirituality helped me gain so much insight how to be a better Christian. Now, I'm trying to put what I've learnt into action.
- Saturday's relaxation night was most enjoyable and fun. I can't remember the last time I laughed so hard. Thank you. Meda
- This was my first formation retreat and the experience was spiritually enlightening to me. Personally, I cannot find faults on the topics presented as they were very informative and helpful. Special thank you to Sr Elizabeth for the hard work she did to ensure that the weekend went well. I was also delighted and felt comfortable with the group of ladies as everyone was friendly and easy to get along with. Olga
- The most fulfilling weekend spiritually and naturally in a long time. Angela
- My personal relationship with God became stronger and taught me to be childlike in all my needs. Through this retreat God taught me how to pray to attain sanctity of holiness. Very worth my while in time and effort.
- A most fruitful weekend. Grew spiritually – my insecurity turns secured.
- I think it was a wonderful grace-filled weekend. Hope we can have lots more.



5. Marian Apostles Dedication WA

Covenant Sunday, 21 August 2022

It was with great joy that Taylah and Holly, Daniella, Isabella and Anna made their Marian Apostles Dedication in the Shrine on August Covenant Sunday. The girls, with their leaders Shelby and Tina, were involved in six months preparation for this day. What made it even more special was that we have not had a Marian Apostles Dedication in WA for a long time. The dedication became a highlight after the Covenant Sunday Devotion, in which Monica from the families and the leaders officiated, and I could be present on 'live stream' via Skype, to pray with everyone from Mulgoa, NSW. Now we have five girls who have consecrated themselves to Our Lady as the Mother Thrice Admirable, and who invited her to form them more and more into her image and likeness, into a little Mary.

Afterwards the girls and their families participated in a celebration afternoon-tea, with the Schoenstatt family members. Huge thank you and applause to Monica and the leaders for all their efforts for our Mother Thrice Admirable! Here are just some of the echoes from the day:

Yesterday was such a grace-filled joyful day for our Schoenstatt Family with the dedication of 5 girls as Marian Apostles, their mums plus their dads came to support them which was special, and we connected with Sr M Rebecca so she was 'present' also, that was special too. The Schoenstatt Family was well-represented - Sisters, Pilgrims, Mothers Branch, Family Branch, and some people sat outside on benches. A good crowd, and I was very grateful.





But the most amazing tribute goes to Taylah and Holly's parents. Their car needed repairs and was not ready for use yesterday. They travelled 75 kilometres on public transport, by bus and train, with their five children to be there. They were NOT going to miss the day through inconvenience. We planned to meet at 2:30 pm and they were there at 2:25 pm. And this on a Sunday timetable! If you have ever travelled on public transport on a Sunday, you will know exactly what I mean. WOW! We salute you Mum and Dad of 5! Thank you for reminding us what courage is. When others complain of the distance and of inconvenience, I will think of you, and I will think of yesterday!

Monica



Congratulations to you and Sr M Rebecca on an excellent effort and result. Pleasing to see the Demberger, Watteau, Chacon and Yang parents supporting their kids. Peter and Margaret

It was a beautiful ceremony last Sunday. Everyone felt the presence of Our Lord and Our Lady. We have to thank you very much Sr M Rebecca for staying faithful to us and seeing it through.

Danielle's Mum

Yes it was a very special day, even my dad came. The leaders did such a great job in preparation and on the day itself.

Taylah and Holly's Mum



7. Information and Links

➤ **Shrine Opening Hours:**

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW open is daily 8 am – 7.30 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 September Covenant Sunday – Holiness in relationship to evangelisation

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

Recent videos on this Channel:

Video for August Covenant Sunday – Freedom and Evangelisation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1GePnTc22k&t=3s>

Video for July Covenant Sunday – Evangelisers loving the Church

<https://youtu.be/vbrlT5xBUgg>

Video for June Covenant Sunday – Authentic Evangeliser

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

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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