

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

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1. COVENANT DAY

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

I wish you all many graces and blessings from the Shrine on this Covenant day, the 18th December, as we continue our journey through Advent and approach the wonderful season of Christmas.

On the 8th December the Church celebrated the Solemnity of The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This feast honours that Mary was immaculately conceived so that as the mother of Jesus she could hand on to her Son a perfect, sinless humanity.

Like Mary, God chose us in Christ. Just as Mary said her 'yes' in the Annunciation story, so too, God invites us to spend time with Mary and like her, say 'yes' to all the challenges that God sends us in our lives.

This year we have been reflecting on what it means to be authentic witnesses to holiness through our Schoenstatt spirituality. We have come to appreciate that what is important in our witnessing is not so much what we do, but how we do it, not what we say, but how we live it.

With this in mind, I would like to share with you some words from our father and founder, Father Kentenich:

- 1 **Covenant Day Message**
- 2 **Small Steps – Many Creative Resultants**
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"....May the Blessed Mother bless us, may she lift up her Child and bless us with him and may she place this Child deep in our hearts. She wants to give us this Child - who is so great, helpless and full of grace.

To entrust this Child to our arms, to us just as we are, is an exceedingly great and wonderful reward. She is the official Christ-bearer. Through our consecration she wants to see us in a very definite way at her side. We should become like her, the great Mary, the great Christ-bearer. It is as though our Lady is calling out to us today:

See in my Child all that you have heard about true and genuine leadership! If you want to become the leaders of the Family, you must take on the features of the great Leader, you must become inwardly and outwardly like the Leader of the world. He should go before you. You should increasingly bring out his features in yourselves.

So today the Blessed Mother give us her Child so that we can look at him and increasingly become like him, so that through giving ourselves to Christ, the King, we ourselves may increasingly grow into our leadership tasks. "Christ - Lord of the new era!" These are the words our Lady wants to call out to us. You give yourselves to him. As a result you share in his task for our times: Christ should be the Lord of the new era in the whole world."

(From: Christ my Life, P.127)

Your shrine is our **Bethlehem**, pleasing to God through its sunrise.

*There you gave virginal birth to the Lord who chose you as his Bride and Mother.
In your miraculous fruitfulness you brought forth the Sun of Righteousness.*

*You have graciously established Schoenstatt so that our times can see the Eternal Light.
From there you want to go through our dark world
as the Christ-bearer sent by God.*

*Jubilantly place the Lord into my soul anew,
so that, like you, I may perfectly resemble him.
Let me be a Christ-bearer for our times,
that they may shine in the brightest radiance of the sun.*

*Glory be joyfully given to the Father through Christ with Mary, highly praised,
in the Holy Spirit full of splendour from the universe now and in all eternity. Amen*
(From 'Heavenward', Lauds)

Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

May we never take Christmas for granted,

but continue to be filled with child-like wonder as we contemplate what God has done for us by becoming one of us.

He is one with us, in times of darkness and hardship,
in joy and celebration.

As this is our last newsletter for 2022, on behalf of the members of the NCC (National Central Committee) I thank you for your support of our Schoenstatt Family during this year and wish each of you and your families a very happy and joy-filled Christmas season, full of hope, light and God's blessings. May the Blessed Mother and her Son, send you and your family rich blessings and graces from the Shrine, and continue to be with you in the coming year. United in our Covenant of Love

Shirley Hall



2. Small Steps – Many Creative Resultants

The concept 'creative resultant' was first coined by Fr. Kentenich himself in 1914 after giving an 'in-chapel' talk, at a meeting of the Marian Sodality (the boys). Father kept silent about the talk and waited for months to see a result. He wanted to know if a source of grace had really broken through on the 18th October. His 'yard stick', to use a modern phrase, was to see if the spiritual life awakened in the boys, bore signs of 'creative resultants'. He let normal life go on and, in reality, from these 'small beginnings' and the "smallness of the instruments," a "great world-wide Schoenstatt Movement....emerged". (October Newsletter, 2021)

The Camino/Novena project and the 'Camino Walk' in Advent, December this year, have the same overtones of this waiting for 'creative resultants' and the 'smallness of the instruments'. We are only six mothers in the 'Martha and Mary' group, who have been waiting for eight months to see any real sign of life in the 'Camino Walk' project. Our aim has been to gain interest from people not involved in the 'Movement'. It was in the eighth month that we discerned 'creative resultants' as the sign of life that we were waiting for. When some families with children and others stayed after the 11 am Mass in November and participated in the Jesse Tree Project we offered, and also took the crowns, angel wings and the Jesse Tree Project sheets home, along with many other happenings, we knew we were actually seeing 'Creative Resultants'.

These were the first words of Father Joseph

'Creative Resultants' happened in Schoenstatt, Central America in October 2020. Like many countries, including Australia, it was in the thick of shut downs because of Covid. So they got creative, as did we here in Schoenstatt Australia, and found new ways to gather. Writing from Costa Rica, Monica Orlich tells how the Family Branch Retreat was transformed creatively because of Covid. They (like us) started using the medium of Zoom and attendance by those who could manage it. The creative resultants were that the retreat reached more couples and transcended borders – sound familiar? Many communities were able to be involved, not just the Family Branch, and by the medium of Zoom they made it a 'Central America' retreat: achieved because of participation of couples from El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama. See -

(www.schoenstatt.org/en/covenant/2020/10/the-creative-resultant-of-the-pandemic-was-a-retreat-of-marriages-in-central-america)



The Mulgoa October Covenant Day 2022 presented as an 'attendance at the Shrine' and the 'Zoom' event, saw only three of us (representing the Men's and Mother's Branches and PMA), in attendance by Zoom. The 'creative resultant' was that the 'Zoom' members grew more in 'Schoenstatt understanding,' simply by the amount of time we could spend on the same topic. We were a small group from different places in NSW, but we benefitted greatly by the 'smallness of the group' and the 'creative resultants': 'Zoom' enabled.

My personal 'creative resultant' recently, was to come to an understanding of an unusual event that I had down in Sr. Bonitas' Corner on the Mount Schoenstatt property back before Fr. Denis died. Like Fr. Kentenich, Fr. Denis, when I spoke to him about it, didn't give a direct answer, rather he said, 'You need to figure this out for yourself - it's your sign'. 'Waiting...' for an understanding of why you came out of a meditative state in Sr. Bonitas' Corner to an awareness that you are not alone, and then finding yourself looking into the eyes of a fox watching you from only about a metre away, was difficult, and that's possibly an understatement!. Yet finally the answer came when 'tying together' all the 'creative resultants' that have come together as a result of the Camino/Novena Walk Project. It's no coincidence that the 'Walk' started at Sr. Bonitas' grave and ends at Sr. Bonitas' Corner. Once the seed was planted to start at her grave and finish at her corner, she became the inspiration and spirit behind the Walk. Our 'small group' has grown so much stronger and deeper in Schoenstatt working out of both our 'Martha' and 'Mary' charisms, thanks to the time and effort we have put into the Camino Project. All done to imitate and highlight Sr. Bonitas' love of Advent Walks around the Tardun WA property some 70 years ago, as a way to inspire people to know Schoenstatt.

The binding principle throughout this article is: there would be no 'creative resultants' without motivators and builders such as Fr. Kentenich, Sr. Bonitas, Michael who ran the Zoom meeting, Fr Denis as a spiritual director, and the willingness of the 'Martha and Mary' group to learn how to emulate these people who have had so much influence over our lives. We always knew 'Mother would take perfect care' and she has.

Angela



3. Formation Day for Women- Mt. Schoenstatt, Mulgoa

Following a successful Formation Weekend for members of the Mothers Groups and the Single Women's Group in August, it was agreed to have a further formation day before the end of the year. This was held on Saturday 19th November at Mt. Schoenstatt. There were a total of 21 ladies who attended.

The day began with a visit to the Shrine and the Morning Prayer from Heavenwards.

The theme for this formation day, was to look at some of Schoenstatt's history under the aspect of the Four Milestones. It was a day that was not so much about giving presentations or talks, but rather having some input and a lot of questioning and sharing.

We began by looking at what we mean by a milestone. It is some significant event, but what is also important is what leads up to this event / milestone, and what follows as a consequence of the milestone.

As a prelude to the formation day, Sister Elizabeth had sent out some pre-reading which helped those attending to gain some information about what would be discussed. For some of the ladies, much of this was not new, but for others who have only recently joined a mother's group, much of this was new to them. So it was a good mix that enabled a sharing of ideas and thoughts from amongst the group.

As most of the ladies had already made their Covenant of Love and during that formation had looked at Schoenstatt's first milestone (18th October, 1914), we didn't spend too much time looking at this milestone. Rather we looked at the importance of this milestone in the history of Schoenstatt, and its importance for the Church and society.

We then looked at Schoenstatt's second milestone of 20th January, 1942 focussing on what led up to this and its importance for Father Kentenich and for the whole Schoenstatt Family. We spent time looking at the "Blank Cheque" consecration and the "Inscriptio" consecration and the difference between these two.

One of the consequences of fathers' imprisonment was the initiative of the Sisters in the Koblenz House to work with what Father called, the "Mariengarten". This was a spiritual striving of the Sisters as they worked towards the 'Miracle of the Holy Night' – the freeing of father from prison.

After father did return from prison, what had come alive through the Mariengarten was: an extraordinarily strong reciprocal interweaving of destinies, and an extraordinarily strong sense of responsibility between father and those who are "implanted" in the Mariengarten. This is usually referred to as a vital, deep and effective covenant of love with one another.



The Mariengarten was then shared among the other members of the Sisters' family and eventually through the whole Movement, especially in the women's communities.

Even though the first 'Miracle of the Holy Night' (father returned to Schoenstatt on Pentecost Sunday 20th May, 1945), had already taken place, the Mariengarten continues to have the task for all time to ensure that the gardener of the garden, the father of the family, remains the centre. Only in this way can we as Schoenstatt Family fulfil the mission that God gave to our father and founder. Cor unum in Patre (One Heart in the Father)

In the afternoon we looked briefly at Schoenstatt's Third Milestone (31st May, 1949). Again we looked at what led up to this milestone and its aftermath, which was the exile of Father Kentenich by the Church for fourteen years.

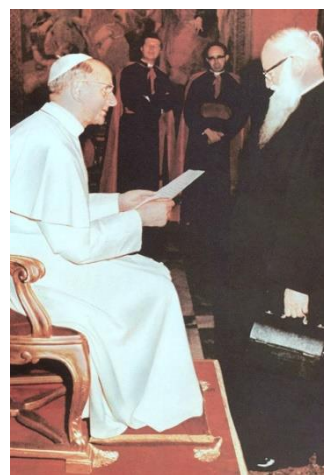
As time was running out, we could only have a brief look at Schoenstatt's Fourth Milestone. This "fourth milestone" refers to the important historical events of 1965 that resulted in Fr. Kentenich's reinstatement and return to his work in Germany on December 24, 1965: the "Second Miracle of the Holy Night". As befits such a day, we concluded with a further time of prayer in the shrine.

One of the benefits of the Formation Weekend, and this Formation Day has been in allowing those in these mother's groups and the women's group to get to know each other better and to feel more comfortable in sharing with each other. For the Mothers it has also allowed them to appreciate that they are not only a member of one Mother's group, but also part of a wider Mother's Branch.

It is hoped that next year there will be further opportunities for more formation with these groups as we all grow in our knowledge and appreciation of our Schoenstatt Spirituality.

MILESTONES OF SCHOENSTATT'S HISTORY

1. 18 October 1914. *Standing in divine light*
2. 20 January 1942. *Standing in divine confidence*
3. 31 May 1949. *Standing in divine strength*
4. 20 and 22 October 1965. *Standing in divine victoriousness*



4. Women's Advent Reflection Day

A good number of women attended the Advent reflection day presented by Sr Mary Louise. A brief overview was given on how the focus of Advent has changed over the centuries. In the time of the Irish monks Advent and Lent being penitential was the focus. However since Vatican 2 there has been a shift to a 3 dimensional focus:

- The coming of Jesus as the human babe of Bethlehem
- The coming of Jesus as the King and Judge at the end of time
- The coming of Jesus into our lives NOW

Advent is preparation for the remembering (anamnesis) of the Incarnation. It is also preparation for the Parousia, the fulfillment of God's Kingdom. And, as St Bernard wrote, the coming of Christ in our personal lives allows us to pass from the first coming to the third coming.

Advent is also the season of QUIET that calls us to reflect on past blessings, joys and challenges. God always breaks through human history and our own personal history. John the Baptist we know, calls us to action: "Prepare the Way". We listen to God through the scripture readings and in the people that we encounter in the circumstances of our daily lives.

We were invited to reflect on the second reading of the 1st Sunday of Advent (Romans 13:11-14) and ask ourselves the following questions:

- How is St Paul's message of conversion suitable for the season of Advent?
- Why is the imagery of Jesus as armour important to this passage?
- What practical ways can we apply St Paul's advice in this passage to our own lives?

Sr. Mary Louise provided us with ten tips that could be helpful in channelling our focus from the commercial to the spiritual:

- 1 Read some sort of short, daily devotion
- 2 Get some quiet time
- 3 It's okay to say NO
- 4 Don't forget the Advent music
- 5 Decorate even a little
- 6 Light an Advent wreath
- 7 Christmas stories/videos
- 8 Support an organization that works for social justice
- 9 Consider the sacrament of Reconciliation
- 10 Reflect on "the three comings of the Lord"

During the morning there was the opportunity for Reconciliation and the Rosary. Holy Mass was celebrated by Fr. Giovanni Gauria.

It was a day in which to reflect on ways in which we can appreciate the season of Advent as not just a preparation for Christmas but as a time of conversion.

Conversion is Christ being born in our hearts.

Jenny Hogan



5. Advent Journey- Sunday 27 November

On the first Sunday of Advent we held an event 'Advent Journey' for young women. Meeting on the verandah of the Joseph Kentenich House at 10.30am, 5 participants as well as Sr Luisa Maria and I waited a little for the remaining participants to arrive, only to hear that they were unable to come. Driving to the Rocks in a few cars, we began with a reflection at the Rocks Look Out, before making our way towards Riley's Look Out, about a 5 kilometre walk on a winding track, through the bush. The entire journey was in silence, with 6 short stops to listen to short reflections. The day was cloudy and we could take in the beautiful nature surroundings more consciously as our journey was in silence.

Arriving at Riley's Look Out a magnificent view awaited us! After a last reflection we ended the silence with singing the Our Father and taking memorable photos before we began our walk back. Together we prayed a rosary, then leisurely enjoyed one another's company before driving back to Bethany for a light lunch.

As lunch was a little late in coming, we began with cold drinks and an ice cream. Following lunch we met Fr Peter Kruk OP in front of the Shrine, who gave us a short introduction to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as we sat under the shade of a tree. Proceeding to the Shrine we prayed songs and prayers appropriate to Advent before the Blessed Sacrament. The young women were invited to a time of silent adoration with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



To conclude our time of prayer, each of the young women received a little Baby Jesus and some purple flowers, as they were invited to prepare their hearts as a manger for the Infant King through an act of prayer and or penitence throughout the Advent season. With a Eucharistic blessing given by Fr Peter, the young women returned home happy to have begun Advent with Our Lady at the Shrine, in such a meaningful way.



We hope this is the first of such events for young women aged 20-35 years, here at our Shrine.

Here are some echoes from the day:

'Well prepared and thought of reflections; unique Advent Retreat experience; what a beautiful time walking in nature. The silent time was not long enough and I would love to do this for longer next time.' Christine

'It was wonderful to take time to reflect on the past year, the future and the interior, all amongst God's creation! Christening advent through this retreat was so blessed and gave me something to strive towards - making my heart a manger for the baby Jesus!' Caroline

Sr M Rebecca



6. Information and Links

➤ **Shrine Opening Hours:**

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

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. Open daily: 7am – 8pm

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

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

➤ For Christmas and New Year Masses and Functions - see

Australian website: <http://www.schoenstatt.org.au> and

WA website: <http://schoenstattwa.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 December Covenant Sunday – Father Kentenich: Authentic Witness to Holiness

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

Recent videos on this Channel:

Video for November Covenant Sunday – Ministries in Evangelisation

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

Video for October Covenant Sunday – Nothing without you, nothing without us

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

Video for September Covenant Sunday – Holiness in relationship to evangelisation

<https://youtu.be/C5G4v7satUQ>

Video for August Covenant Sunday – Freedom and Evangelisation

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1GePnTc22k

➤ **Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome.**

Please send to movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au before the beginning of each month.

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