

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

January 18 2023 | Volume 4, Number 1

1. COVENANT DAY

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

I welcome you to our first Covenant Day of 2023 – the 18th January. I hope you all had a very happy and holy Christmas and a good and safe start to the New Year. As we begin this New Year I also pray that Our Blessed Mother will send you many blessings and graces from the shrine.

This month we not only want to remember and renew our Covenant of Love as one Australian Schoenstatt Family, we also want to reflect on **Schoenstatt's Second Milestone** – the **20th January 1942**. We look back with gratitude and remember the significance of this date which Father Kentenich often spoke of as “the axis of Schoenstatt’s history”.

We know that this was the day on which Fr. Kentenich decided not to use any natural means to avoid possible transportation to the concentration camp. He believed that his freedom would be secured if the Schoenstatt Family took seriously their commitment to the Blank Cheque and Inscriptio. He put his fate in the hands of his Schoenstatt Family.

The 20th January was for Fr. Kentenich the deepening of his Covenant of Love with our MTA, the deepening of the first milestone of 18th October 1914. The 20th January asks each of us to look at what the Covenant of Love means in my life and to decide what responsibility I take to continue the work of our Father even in the midst of difficulties and frustrating experiences.

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Living the spirit of the 20th January means for us walking towards the darkness of obscurity, but with faith and trust in the Covenant of Love and the Providence of God. Father Kentenich called it, “standing in divine confidence”.

In speaking of the 20th January, Father Kentenich said:

“I have to go back again to the Covenant of Love. I personally believed unshakably in the Covenant of Love with our Blessed Mother. This is for me a reality, much more real than perhaps the book or the table. It is a tangible reality. You see, it (the Covenant of Love) must be taken seriously. I took the covenant seriously and the Blessed Mother also took it seriously. And what did she promise? (If we) surrender ourselves completely, then she will take care of the Work (Schoenstatt). Yes, and then I told myself; No, I do not want any more natural means; we have used enough natural means.” (Fr. Kentenich, Talk to Families, 25th June 1955)

FOR REFLECTION:

As we celebrate this Covenant Day and reflect on the importance of the 20th January 1942, Fr. Kentenich challenges us to raise our Covenant of Love to a higher degree of heroic love. How does my Covenant of Love challenge me each day to live in greater trust and confidence in the Blessed Mother?

Through the 20th January 1942 Father Kentenich challenges us to continue the work of Schoenstatt with trust in our covenant and the loving providence of God. Do I believe that I have a mission for Schoenstatt? How do I live this mission in my daily life?

I wish you many blessings and graces on this Covenant Day and for the 20th January. I pray that Our Blessed Mother will be with us all as we continue to live our Schoenstatt mission in Covenant Loyalty as Australian Schoenstatt Family.

One Heart in the Father for the Family of God

Shirley Hall



2. Advent Covenant Sunday at Mt Schoenstatt, Mulgoa

This past year in NSW we have continued to celebrate the Covenant Sundays via zoom and sometimes, happily, with members of our Schoenstatt Family from Perth, Melbourne and Toowoomba. However, we did come together around the Shrine to celebrate Schoenstatt's Foundation Day (18th October). This inspired us to try and renew the practice of coming together around the Shrine to celebrate Covenant Sundays. We decided that the December / Advent Covenant Sunday would be a good time for us to begin coming together again. We wanted not only to celebrate this Covenant Sunday around the Shrine but also to celebrate Advent and our journey towards Christmas as a Schoenstatt family.

To celebrate this Covenant Sunday, all were invited to have lunch together after the 11am Mass. Although there were only about 15 people, there was as usual, lots of food and time for everyone to catch up and enjoy being together again in person.

The Covenant presentation was given by Shirley Hall who had also prepared the Covenant video for December. The topic was Father Kentenich as an authentic witness to holiness. Shirley looked at various aspects of Father Kentenich's life and how we can learn from him in our striving for sanctity through our Schoenstatt spirituality. As she said, who could be a better model for us of living everyday sanctity, than Father Kentenich, the father and founder of Schoenstatt.

After the presentation, we normally break into groups for a discussion. However, as there were not too many of us, we stayed in the one group and discussed what Father Kentenich means for us and how we would describe him. Some of the Sisters gave personal testimonies of their experiences with Father Kentenich. This was much appreciated by everyone as the Sisters shared in particular, some personal examples of how they experienced Father Kentenich's sense of humour

Afterwards we went to the shrine for our Advent / Covenant devotion. It was a real blessing to be able to renew our Covenant together in the Shrine along with others who were visiting the Shrine. As usual, everyone was afterwards invited back to the Family Hall for afternoon tea. It was a wonderful way to end our year by coming together to celebrate around the Shrine.

We are hoping that during 2023, more people will join us each month in renewing their Covenant of Love in person at the Shrine. It had been the wish of our father and founder that we not only renew our Covenant of Love on the 18th of each month (or the 3rd Sunday of each month as we do), but also that we do this together with Our Blessed Mother in the Shrine, and together as one Schoenstatt Family.

Of course, for those who are unable to be at the Shrine in person for the renewal of the Covenant, there will still be the opportunity to attend via zoom. However we hope that if possible, you will join us whenever you can on the Covenant Sundays in 2023.

Thank you ...

We thank all those who have contributed to the Videos for our Zoom meetings throughout the past year. We invite anyone who would like to present during 2023 to contact:

movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au

The Coordinating Team



3. A Mother's Christmas overtones and reminder

In the busy times of Christmas it is often hard for a mother/grandmother to find some time to fully live up to her 'Personal Ideal' and 'Branch Ideal'. So it was truly lovely to sit outside the front of my house contemplating the huge 'Lilli Pilli' in full flower there. But it wasn't the beauty of the eye that was truly captivating this time. It was the sound coming from the tree as the traffic lulled and other noises settled – I was struck by the sound of 'humming bees'! There was so..... many of them doing their work of fertilising the flowers to make the fruit which will later on turn my lawn to a 'rosy (pink) hew' (from the carol, "When a child is born")



and provide much needed food for the animals and birds around us. When I pasted the photo here, I thought how that tree for me at that moment was the 'Living Monstrance' both in 'look and feel'. Which leads me to think that this is what being a 'Living Monstrance', the ideal of the Mother's Branch, is truly all about.

In the 'Schoenstatt Mother's Branch Wisconsin' article online I read, it expresses the thought above well. "As women and mothers in this time and age, we too want to become a little Mary, a Living Monstrance. We want to imitate our mother in the virtues of prayer, love, joy, kindness, and her many other virtues. She will transform our being and help us become more like her. We look to Mary and follow her example of service to others especially in our own families. We are instruments in the hands of our Mother doing our ordinary work extraordinarily well".

I had been serving my family for three days non-stop and the need to find meditative space was great. "In 1946, Fr. Kentenich gave a talk on the Living Monstrance. In this talk the Schoenstatt Mothers who were present heard words which seemed to be a special call for them. They became inspired to take up the monstrance ideal as their own. They worked spiritually and materially for the monstrance and the monstrance ideal. They strove to become a little Mary, a Living Monstrance. Years later, the Schoenstatt Mothers presented the gift of the beautiful monstrance to the Adoration Sisters for the future Adoration Church in [Schoenstatt,] Germany."

Yes– God gives us the greatest gift of all, our children and grandchildren. We have the task of helping to raise them; we can only do this with the help of Mary, our Mother. She is the great educator who teaches us how to help our children to love God by being kind, gentle, and respectful to[ward them] and others. Our Mother had a great respect, admiration, and love for St. Joseph, her husband; therefore, she also teaches us to care for our husbands as she did, and help them, through our example as wives, to become good fathers to our children. Let us be a vessel of joy and love, a joyful Living Monstrance, a Christ-bearer, Christ-bringer and Christ-server. Let our attitude be like Mary's in our everyday struggles; we want to say a loving yes to what God may ask of us.

You are the Monstrance,
Pure and sublime,
In perfect integrity,
God's holy Shrine,
Who has born Christ, The Lord.

(Father Joseph Kentenich)
<https://bit.ly/3QIxqIS>

Amen: Angela



4. Mt Schoenstatt Camino Walk

Following nine months of short walks, came the wonderful full camino walk
4th December, 2nd Sunday of Advent 2022



For nine months starting April, we never knew how many people to expect after the 11am, 1st Sunday Mass and who would join us in the walk offered. Every month, 40 'invitations' containing much information on the history of the Schoenstatt Movement here in Australia and meditations to do in the Shrine or at the Station itself were placed on the Family Hall seats and more often than not at least 30 went home – a great result in itself.

Momentum built and by November when we offered the 'Jesse Tree Symbol' project we were starting to see the Family Branch with children in tow as well as all of our 'Mary and Martha' Mother's Group.

By the time the big day came, we were on a roll (with 9 finished Jesse Tree decorations), but still had no idea whether people from Mass might take part.

Finally when our hopes and expectations cliqued with the plans of the Holy Spirit, we had an amazing walk from the 'Original Wayside Shrine' all the way down to Sr. Bonitas' Corner with women from the Mother's Branch – two groups represented, the Single Women's Branch (technically the 'Choir'), the Men's branch, a fellow who had come all the way from Melbourne, the Family Branch (two families) and the Sisters along with others who were related or friends.

We read, we prayed, we sang our hearts out, we decorated Sr. Bonitas' Garden and felt so fulfilled. Repeat next year?





There are many people to thank for their support but none as much as Shirley who did all the document editing, Michelle who put it all on the Schoenstatt Australia website and it's all still there, Sr. Elizabeth for all her support as well as Sr. Myrna who was tickled pink with the people's response to the 'uncovering' of the 'Joseph Engling Memorial'.

We always said "In as much as we did it for one we were doing it for Our Lord and Our Mother' and 'Mother did take Perfect Care' right down to a fine day with no rain!

'The Mary and Martha' Mother's Group.



5. Carols at Mt Schoenstatt

Many of our Shrine-Pilgrims were looking forward to having our traditional Carol-singing this year again in front of the Shrine instead of the Family hall. Yet no-one would have dared to believe that it was almost as cold as in front of the original Shrine in Schoenstatt and only some of the people arriving had really prepared for the chilly weather.

The Schoenstatt Choir under the leadership of Elmer and Edna were eager and punctual at the left of the Shrine, and Elizabeth and her little actors for the nativity story were excited about their parts, except St. Joseph was missing and no child was volunteering for this honoured task until an adult turned up to give it a go. But he was in shorts, an outfit which one normally would not expect for biblical figures and even the husband of Mary, yet he did it all professionally, keeping an eye not only on the newborn baby and his dear mother, but also the angels, the sole little shepherd and the three wise men around him.

They had all come in at the appropriate time of the biblical and meditative text and fitting Carols and sat down nicely on the red carpet from the Shrine, which was lit up, the truly perfect background of Bethlehem.



Carol Singing
in front of the Shrine on 17.12.2022

When the 3 Kings had presented their precious presents, small slips of paper were being distributed to everyone to write down their personal gifts or petitions to Baby Jesus, who accepted them inside the Shrine through the hands of his dear Mother.

After singing enthusiastically the "Feliz Navidad" people could wish for their own favourite Carol, and that finished with the "I wanna wish You a merry Christmas..." After this People seemed to quickly head for their own cosy warm homes and supper, yet happy and grateful about this "Carol Singing in front of the Shrine."



6. Christmas Celebration at the Kew Shrine

Our Christmas Celebration this year began in glorious weather about 1pm on Sunday 4th December. About 50 participated and close to 20 of these dressed up, ready to take part in our Nativity play.

Fr. Pat, the Pallottine Father who has been very helpful at our functions during the year, was once again very accommodating and for the first time we had the nativity play within the Mass – after the Gospel reading. Children as well as adults participated in the play. We even had a real baby, a little boy, the grandchild of one of our coordinators.

The play was accompanied by music – Christmas carols eg. Hark the Herald, While Shepherds watched their flocks, We Three Kings and the Drummer Boy – and the narration was in Spanish and English.

Our final hymn at the end of the Mass was Joy to the World and Fr. Pat enjoyed the celebration so much that he began singing “Feliz Navidad”, even though we were at the beginning of Advent.

To the joy of very excited children Santa arrived and handed out bags of chocolate.

We then enjoyed a shared afternoon tea and each family, or individuals made their private visits to the Shrine to bring their petitions and thanksgiving to our Mother Thrice Admirable. We were also happy to be able to present to Fr. Pat a Christmas Hamper in gratitude for all he has done for our Schoenstatt Family in Melbourne throughout the year.

We are very grateful to our Blessed Mother for all the blessings she has interceded for us throughout the year and especially for being able to have our Christmas Celebration still at the Shrine. As many of you will know, the property on which the Shrine stands is up for sale and we are not sure of the future of the Shrine at this stage. So, a very special thank you to all who are praying for a God-willed solution to the future of the Shrine and please keep up the prayers for this very important intention.

Many thanks,

The Victorian Schoenstatt Family.



7. Information and Links

Shrine Opening Hours

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

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

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

Links

Official Schoenstatt Website	http://www.schoenstatt.com
Schoenstatt Australian Website	http://www.schoenstatt.org.au
Schoenstatt Australia YouTube Channel	www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
Western Australia Website	http://schoenstattwa.org.au

Videos for Covenant Sundays

January 2023	Letters of Recommendation https://bit.ly/3XITtAM
December	Father Kentenich: Authentic Witness to Holiness https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgroRmVrDP0
November	Ministries in Evangelisation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iF-ftully8w
October	Nothing without you, nothing without us https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkkiArLqA-k&t=11s
September	Holiness in relationship to evangelisation https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5G4v7satUQ

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.

