

Schoenstatt Movement

Australia

December 18 2023 | Volume 4, Number 12

1. Covenant Day Message

“You are our letter” 2 Corinthians 3:2-3

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

On this last Covenant Day for 2023 – 18th December, I wish you all many graces and blessings from the Shrine. As we continue our journey through Advent and approach the wonderful season of Christmas, we are united with our Blessed Mother and the Christ Child as we hear the words spoken to the shepherds.....

“I bring you news of great joy”

I would like to share with you some words from Fr. Kentenich that we might reflect upon as we approach Christmas and the coming new year.

Mary as the way to Christ's re-birth today.

“Let me tell you one of my favourite ideas. You see, history repeats itself – salvation history. Salvation history began with the birth and the “Yes” of the blessed Mother.

If the present-day world wants to find its way back to Christ, Our Lady must give birth to Christ once more. Allow me to presume that you accept this inwardly. But when you think about it, or talk about it, you will have to explain it in a new way and study it in a new way, otherwise you will never understand the profound depth of Schoenstatt and its covenant of love.

The Mother of God wants to create a whole new world, she wants to bring about a new world from here. Christ should be re-born.....:

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"We thank you for all the gifts which we have received in such abundance: or choosing Schoenstatt as the place of Christ's rebirth" (Heavenwards, p.13)



What this means?

Do you understand what that means? It is not just in the way Christ is re-born everywhere. Oh, no! You have to see its full impact, the great vision: He must be born again! That is why it is so important for us to uphold what we have wanted from the beginning. What is that? Love for the Mother of God. Our Lady is not just the way to a deep and tender love for the Father, she is also the way by which Christ will be born in our present times, in the new era. So, if we do not believe blindly in our covenant of love, everything is a figment of the imagination, what we do is just a wild dream.

We need to believe deeply that we have to do no more than lead the Mother of God onto the battlefield everywhere, and give her the opportunity to give birth to Christ once more.

Fr. Joseph Kentenich: from a Conference for the Schoenstatt Fathers, 1963, from: "Christ my Life"



Blessed Mother, in Bethlehem in a poor and little stable you give birth to the Lord of the world for us all. Just as you showed him to the shepherds and the magi and humbly bowed before him in adoration, let us always be his loving instruments and carry him deeply into human hearts.

(Heavenwards, Third Joyful Mystery)

Wonder

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 times of joy and celebration.

Thanks

As this is our last newsletter for 2023, on behalf of all who are involved in preparing these newsletters, I want to thank all members of our Schoenstatt Family for their support during this year and wish each of you a very happy and holy Christmas.

May the Blessed Mother and her Son, send you and your family, rich blessings, and graces from the shrine during this Christmas season and continue to be with you in the coming year.

United in our Covenant,

Shirley Hall

Schoenstatt as the place of Christ's rebirth

2. Fr Kentenich's Letters of Recommendation



The conclusion to Father Kentenich's Christmas Letter of 13 December 1965 (before his return to Schoenstatt) contains words that were relevant for the Schoenstatt Family in 1965, and are still relevant for us today as we strive to fulfil our mission

as members of the Schoenstatt Family:

"When I now send heartfelt wishes for Christmas and the New Year to every member and every branch of the Family, we understand what I mean by it: [I wish] all of us God's blessing in the spirit of the past years and our mission for the future".

Father Kentenich has passed on this mission to every one of us and continually challenges us to fulfil this mission into the future as his letters of recommendation.

Your mission – Our Mission"

3. Gratitude for a Generous Response

Members of our Australian Movement have very generously responded to this request for prayers, contributions to the Capital of Grace and also financial assistance.

We are able to forward an amount of \$1200 to this cause.

Fr. Eduardo has written the following letter of gratitude to the international Schoenstatt Family.

Dear Schoenstatt Family:

As Postulator of the Cause of our father and founder, and also on behalf of Fr. Alexandre Awi Melo and the General Presidium of Schoenstatt, I want to cordially thank all the members of our Schoenstatt Family who generously contributed to the recent fundraising campaign to support independent research into the life, thought and work of Fr. Kentenich.

Special thanks also to the Directors of the Movement, to Kentenich Secretariats, to the Rectors of Schoenstatt Shrines, to the prayer groups and to all those who in different ways and initiatives supported and promoted this campaign.

I believe that this has also been a valuable experience for us to feel united and in solidarity as an international Schoenstatt Family around our father and founder.

I still do not have the definitive information about the total amount that was collected, but so far I can say that about 70,000 euros has been collected.

I have been informed that in several countries they are still receiving donations in the accounts that have been destined to the campaign, as well as through "donorbox". This is important because, although we are very grateful for the significant amount that has already been raised, we still have to cover the costs of the work of the research team (especially salaries) for another 2 years. Thanking you once again for your generosity and support for the cause of our father and founder, we greet and bless you from Schoenstatt, wishing you a fruitful Advent time.

Please keep up the prayers and contributions to the Capital of Grace.

4. Advent Reflection Day for Women

On 25 November Sr Mary Louise gave a Reflection Day in preparation for Advent, with the emphasis on Mary.

The following will give you a little idea of the reflective thoughts which were presented by Sr. Mary Louise and Fr. Jack Elkazzi (Greystanes Parish).

Sr. Mary Louise reminded us that we have few words that were spoken by Mary and little is written about her in the Bible, but Luke's Gospel does give a voice to Mary.

She is often considered to be so perfect, that people have difficulty identifying with her. Mary is linked to holiness and we as Baptised people are called to this same holiness. Mary saw discipleship as following and listening to Jesus. We are called to do the same.

Father Jack, in his homily, said that Mary was a woman of prayer and meditation. She knew what the prophets were speaking of about the coming of the Messiah. She was waiting for Him, as were all the people. That Mary knew the Scriptures is borne out in her response to Elizabeth when Mary went to meet her before the birth of John the Baptist.

Mary became the Ark of the Covenant, carrying Christ to the people. We are the Ark of the Covenant when we bear Christ in our lives and bring Him to others. We do this when we listen to the Word and receive Communion, as Christ is in both.

Father spoke of Mary as: the Daughter of the Father; the Mother of the Son; and the Bride of the Holy Spirit.

*Mary was a woman of prayer
and meditation*



During Advent we are asked to:

- Get our sense of self in order.
- Accept God's love – know Christ.
- Experience our brokenness.
- Trust in God's coming. If we truly believe in the Resurrection, we would be more joyful.
- Advent is a time of joy and trust.

During the day there was time for quiet reflection and personal prayer. We were invited to join in saying the Rosary, Fr Jack was available for Reconciliation and we were able to attend Mass, the prayers of which came from the Mass of Mary, Cause of our Joy.

Following lunch Sr. Mary Louise gave a second session where we broke into groups and shared on the meaning of Joy, Hope and Prayer in Advent. We then shared our responses with the larger group.

Afterwards we decorated Advent candles which we were encouraged to take home as a reminder to reflect on what we had heard during the day and the meaning of Advent as it leads us to Christmas.



The day was a prayerful and joyful one and the energy of the group grew as the day progressed. We left eager to prepare our hearts for Jesus' coming at Christmas and the second coming.

Therese Fuller

5. Pilgrim Mother Circle celebrates 35th Anniversary

On Saturday 29th October 1988, the Pilgrim Mother Shrine Number XVIII was commissioned at the Shrine at Mulgoa, by Fr Denis Foley. Through his Parish of Holy Family Menai, the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate Image of our Mother Thrice Admirable and Child, together with wooden Rosary Beads, was sent out to a number of participating families, to share the presence of the image and rosary in their homes. They continued to do this each month.

On Sunday 29th October 2023, the image for Pilgrim Mother Circle XVIII, returned once again to the Shrine at Mulgoa, to acknowledge the 35th anniversary of its inauguration.

This Circle has undergone a few changes since its inception during the 35 years, as one would expect, but three of the original families from 1988, are still participating in its monthly roster. The Circle currently has nine families involved, with the newest family joining just over ten years ago, on 1st November 2013. It has had three Parish Coordinators, with the current coordinator being in the role, for over thirty years.

The Pilgrim Mother circle has been wonderfully supported through the members of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate, and by several of the Schoenstatt Sisters over the 35 years, specifically with Sr Loretta being the initial Moderator of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate, when the Apostolate was formed in 1988. This role was then filled by Sr Myrna, and then till the present, by Sr Luisa Maria. Mementos for the 35th anniversary were struck by the Coordinator to be given to each of the member families of the Pilgrim Mother Circle. The mementos consist of a small image of Our Blessed Lady that adorns our Pilgrim Mother image, and these, together with the original image, were brought to the Shrine at Mulgoa, on the



anniversary day, for Mass and for placement in the Shrine, to commemorate the milestone date. A memento was also created for Sr Luisa Maria, to share the occasion.

"A touch of sadness on the anniversary day at Mulgoa, was that Fr Denis Foley had left us just over five years ago in October 2018, but he was very much included and remembered for all he was, and all he had done, for the Pilgrims Mother Apostolate, for his Parish at Menai, and for those in Pilgrim Mother Circle XVIII. "

Pilgrim Mother Coordinator of Circle XVIII.

"It was a privilege to meet the Coordinator of the Pilgrim Mother shrine No. 18 (XVIII) and his wife on Sunday 29 October. I thank our Lord and our Mother Thrice Admirable for his faithfulness. I was humbled to receive the little PM shrine as a memento of this great milestone – 35 years of loyalty. Every time I see this shrine I remember and pray for him, his wife, his family, and all Pilgrim Mother coordinators and members of PM shrine XVIII.



We are also greatly indebted to Father Denis Foley who started the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate at Holy Family parish, Menai."

Sr Luisa Maria

6. Schoenstatt Advent Afternoon For Families In W.A.

On Sunday, 3rd December, eight adults and 10 children took part in our Advent Afternoon at Mt Richon WA. The program began with some icebreaker activities so that everyone could get to know each other.

The adults then went for a presentation on the four weeks of Advent, which was represented by the candles of the Advent Wreath. Sr Luka, Guil, Philomena and Regine spoke about Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love, which included a small personal testimony.



The two oldest children aged 14 & 16 made an Advent Calendar relevant to their age.



The children were well looked after by 4 young adults in the main room of Emilie House.

Seven children aged between 6 and 12 made a lovely circular Advent Calendar suitable for their age and one toddler was kept entertained by one of the young adults.



After the input, the adults returned to the main room with the children to make a different type of Advent Calendar using a gift bag and 15 small bags.

The idea was that they put something special into the bags for their husband/wife. This will begin on 10th of December till the 24th of December, giving them time to prepare a little gift or note to their spouse each day. They also received quotes from Fr Kentenich which they could include each day.

To conclude the afternoon, we went to the Shrine, where the children gave a performance. This was a song that Sr. Luka had taught them, called “light a candle”, which included hand actions.



Our Family Devotions followed, praying, and singing hymns and with each one writing a petition to Our Blessed Mother. We concluded with the children singing their song once more.

For afternoon tea we returned to Emilie House where we heard positive echoes, with some of the adults commenting on the beautiful work their children had done and that they really liked the Gift Bag idea. They are looking forward to making something nice for their spouse.

We thanked the young adults for helping us during the afternoon. They were happy to have been able to help the children create something special for Advent.

Philomena Theseira – Family branch Leader



7. *A Prayer Star* *in* *the Original Shrine*

The initiative “A star for you” takes place each year in Schoenstatt throughout Advent. Participating is very simple, even from a distance. You can send your name and prayer request through the online form. Just fill out the form, indicating your name, e-mail address, location (city, country), the name you want to put on the star and your petition for this Advent.

You can also offer the star for another person, indicating their name, and the prayer request for him/her. You can send as many prayer requests as you wish. You will just need to click on the link each time.

This is a special initiative each year where we want to cultivate the network of Shrines (daughter shrines, home shrines, heart shrines) to which we



So why not send a prayer and let them know that we in Australia also want to be present in the Original shrine this Advent. It is not too late.

May the Original Shrine be present in many, many places!

To fill out your details simply click [here](#) and follow the link. You will then receive an email to let you know that your prayer request has been received.

*to cultivate the network of
Shrines -
daughter, home, heart Shrines*



8. *Save the date* *24 Hours for* *the Lord*

24 Hours began as an initiative of Pope Francis during Lent in the 2016 Jubilee Year of Mercy.

It marks the half-way point through Lent when the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered in the context of Eucharistic adoration. 24 Hours has been held every year around the world since and Mt Schoenstatt Mulgoa has joined in this every year, except for the 2021 COVID year.

This is a great opportunity for all of us to make a contribution to the Capital of Grace, in the spirit of "Nothing without you, nothing without us".



Next year 24 Hours for the Lord will be held on 8-9th March 2024 at the Shrine at Mt. Schoenstatt, Mulgoa. Friday night will start with Mass at 6pm in the Shrine. This will be followed by Reconciliation. People come to the Shrine every hour until 5pm Mass on the Saturday.

Come and spend some time with our Lord at the Shrine.

For more information contact Paul and Ramani Regis at paulandramani@gmail.com



9. INFORMATION AND LINKS

Shrine Opening Hours

Mulgoa Shrine, NSW. Open daily: 7am – 7.30pm

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

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



Links

Official Schoenstatt Website	https://www.schoenstatt.com
Schoenstatt Australian Website	https://www.schoenstatt.org.au
Our YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
Western Australia Website	https://schoenstattwa.org.au
Schoenstatt Men Website	https://bit.ly/47x72n1

Videos for Covenant Sundays

December	Father's Homecoming from Exile http://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
November	Sr Emilie Engel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-2NXknzV3c
October	Fr Carl Boes and Covenant Days https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_PgSa4OGi2g
September	Fr John Evans and the Melbourne Shrine https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sxvdk-SHHRQ

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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