

National Newsletter Schoenstatt Australia



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1. Covenant Day Message

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Welcome to our first Schoenstatt Movement Newsletter for 2024 – the 18th January. I wish you and your family many blessings and graces from the Shrine for this day and for this year.

I hope that you had a very blessed, happy, and holy Christmas with family and friends, and that you have had a good start to this new year. For those who have been on holidays, (or are still on holidays), I hope that this has been a restful and enjoyable time for you and your family.

2024 Theme

In our Australian Schoenstatt Family this year, our theme is:

Walking together Loving the Church.

During this year we will explore further what this means, both through the Covenant videos, in our covenant discussions (on Covenant Sundays) and hopefully, also in our groups.

This month of January: Second Milestone

This month we also commemorate Schoenstatt's second Milestone, 20th January, 1942. Such is its importance that Father Kentenich often spoke of it as "the axis of Schoenstatt's history" and the "interwovenness" of fates between himself and his Schoenstatt Family.

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“Interwovenness”

This milestone asks us to look at what the Covenant of Love means for us in our life and what responsibility do we take to continue the work of our Father even during difficult and frustrating experiences that may come our way. This year we want to look at how we can ‘walk together’, and what this “interwovenness” of fates means for us as members of Schoenstatt?

“We could ponder, for example, who do we have in mind when we speak of ‘walking together’? For us as members of Schoenstatt, does this mean first and foremost, walking together with Our Blessed Mother and with our Father and Founder in the Covenant of Love. Do we also see it as “walking together” with members of the Schoenstatt group to which we belong (or the Pilgrim Mother Circle), our Schoenstatt Family in our State, or across Australia? This could be something that you might like to ponder yourself or discuss in your group.

“Loving the Church”

This month I would like to focus on the second part of the motto, “Loving the Church” from the viewpoint of Father Kentenich. We know that this was very important to him and that in fact, the sarcophagus in which he is buried, bears these words, “Dilexit Ecclesiam” (He Loved the Church).

Already while in Milwaukee, Fr. Kentenich had indicated the epitaph that he wanted on his tombstone. It was *Dilexit Ecclesiam*. He expressed this wish many times, and his love for the Church was reflected in the way in which he lived his life, especially during his time of exile in Milwaukee



when many accusations were made against his person and against Schoenstatt, and even during the time in Rome before his return to Schoenstatt on Christmas Eve, 1965.

Already in the first days after his return from exile he said:

“It is absolutely clear that we are at the threshold of a new era in our family history (....) More than anything else I would like to write on the coming years, on the door posts of the coming years and decades the words I once wrote for the Holy Office: Dilexit Ecclesiam. (....) I would like to have these words engraved on my tombstone and to know that they will be remembered in the times to come: Dilexit Ecclesiam – he loved the Church, the Church which nailed the family to the cross.

Dilexit Ecclesiam. And what does this love look like, this love for the Church? During these days I have been able to tell you – sometimes one way, sometimes another – what I promised the Holy Father on the occasion of my unexpected audience with him on December 22nd.

In the years to come we want to use every means available, we as a whole family, that is, as the entire family that has been removed from the cross, to help the popes realize the post-conciliar mission of the Church. And again: Truly, Dilexit Ecclesiam! Love for the Church has urged us to call this work into existence, or better: God decided to give us this mission for the Church's well-being.

Dilexit Ecclesiam – love for the Church has urged us even to go the Lord's way of the cross, to accept the cross and crucifixion of Our Lord from [the hands of] the Church. Dilexit Ecclesiam! Dilexit Ecclesiam! Love for the Church now urges us to love with infinite tenderness the same Church which persecuted us, to forget the past, and to now work with all our might so that our family would fulfill its great mission to help the Church victoriously reach the shore of the newest world, that is, to realize the ideal of the new Church, of the Church on the newest shore.”

Talk to the Schoenstatt Family, Schoenstatt, Germany, December 31, 1965. Translation: Fr Jonathan Niehaus.

This Church on the Newest Shore

I believe that it is now up to us during this year to reflect on and discuss what this Church on the newest shore should look like.

For example, do we see it as a Church that is inclusive and welcoming to all, a humble and healing Church, a listening Church, a Church that reaches to the margins, a Church that is renewed in Spirit and prayer. And at the same time, we also want to look at what we can do to see that this Church to which we belong is all these things.

In pondering what I could present in this first Covenant article for 2024, and mindful of our theme / motto for this year, I picked a card from the “Father messages” in the hope that it might inspire me. The message from Father Kentenich read:

*“Everything for Schoenstatt!
Schoenstatt for the Church
The Church for the Triune God”*

For me this sums up very succinctly our mission for this year.

So, in the spirit of the 20th January, 1942, with faith in our Covenant of Love, and the loving Providence of God, I wish each of you many blessings and graces from the Shrine for this Covenant Day and throughout the coming month.

United in our covenant,

Shirley Hall



A Schoenstatt Family Group in the Shrine at Mulgoa last month: a living example of “a Church that is inclusive and welcoming to all, a humble and healing Church, a listening Church”. See article on page 5.

2. MTA Crowning Anniversary In Mascot, Sydney Queen of Strength, Hope and Grace

The 6th Crowning Anniversary of our Mother Thrice Admirable (MTA) Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt's picture at St Therese Parish Mascot, took place on 9th December 2023, the actual Crowning date. As discussed with our Parish Priest Father Valentin Mendoza prior to the Crowning Anniversary, it was decided it would be a simple celebration and..... yes, while it was simple, it was also solemn.

Fr Maurizio Petena, the Assistant Priest, celebrated the Eucharist and Crowning Renewal. He dedicated the Mass to our Blessed Mother and the Crowning Anniversary we were celebrating. In his introduction Father spoke about Schoenstatt, beginning with how the young boys and Father Kentenich made their Covenant of Love with our Blessed Mother. He went on to say how Father Kentenich encouraged devotion to our Mother Thrice Admirable and pointing to where the MTA picture hung, he thanked her for all the graces we have received.

In his beautiful Homily, Schoenstatt was again briefly referred to and in the Prayers of the Faithful, there was a petition about Schoenstatt and Our Blessed Mother which was profound. Just before the "Prayer over the Offerings", the hymn, "My Queen, My Mother" was softly played. It was lovely to hear.

Before the Final Blessing, Father again spoke briefly about where Schoenstatt originated and mentioned that there are Shrines all around the world and that the "Sydney" Shrine is situated at Mulgoa, near Penrith.

At the end of the Mass, Father Maurizio walked back towards the Altar where our MTA picture hangs. He venerated and then prayed, with reverence, the Renewal Prayer to our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt, whom we had crowned as Queen of Strength, Hope and Grace. He asked everyone to repeat after him: "Queen of Strength, Hope and Grace, glorify yourself and be victorious. Pausing for a moment, everyone was requested to spiritually crown our Blessed Mother in our hearts.

It was obvious that Father Maurizio had done a great deal of research about Schoenstatt.

Filled with emotions, at the end of the celebration, I could only manage to say: "With Heartfelt thanks, Father"

I thank our Blessed Mother that we are so lucky to have such supportive Parish and Assistant Parish Priests, Valentin Mendoza and Maurizio Petena in this parish.

Zenny Custodio, PMA & Mothers Branch



3. Families enter the Covenant of Love

December 9th, 2023, was a special day for our Family Branch in NSW. For the first time in more than five years, two families entered into the Covenant of Love and one family renewed their Covenant which they had sealed in 2009.

Preparation

The family group to which the families belong spent the year preparing for this day. Each month they looked at different aspects of Schoenstatt's Covenant of Love and spent time discerning God's call to deepen their Baptismal Covenant through entering into a Covenant with our Mother Thrice Admirable of Schoenstatt.

The celebration

During the celebration they responded to the question as to how they intended to live out their consecration:

"Through the Covenant of love with Mary we wish to renew and enliven our baptismal and our marriage covenant. Our whole life as a couple and a family shall be penetrated by a deep spirit of faith. We want to reach out for the Catholic ideal of marriage as outlined by our Popes and placed before us by Fr. Kentenich, our own Father and Founder, and in this way give witness to others of the effectiveness of the covenant of love in our lives, leading us to everyday sanctity."

To a further question about how they see their task and mission the response was:

We believe that our most effective apostolate is the sanctification of our own marriage and family, for in this way we will be contributing towards the renewal of the Church and of society from its very roots, from within the family.



Fr. Pawel Barszczewski OP who accepted their Consecration assured the couples that "through the covenant of love with Our Lady their baptismal and marriage covenant is deepened and renewed". (Rite of Consecration for Associate members of the Family Branch)



The Covenant celebration took place during Holy Mass and members of the other Family Groups joined in solidarity with those entering into the Covenant for the first time.

Following Mass all gathered in the Home of Light to congratulate the couples and to join in fellowship with each other at the end of another fruitful year.



Fr Pawel blessing the symbols to be given to each couple making the Covenant of Love: candles, medals, roses.



Each couple came forward to receive their symbols of the Covenant of Love.



The two couples who made the Covenant of Love at the Shrine in Mulgoa, Sydney, with the couple who renewed their Covenant, with Fr Pawel and Sr Elizabeth.

Conviviality in the Home of Light after the Mass with all the families.



4.Christmas celebration In Melbourne

The annual Christmas Nativity play offered by our Schoenstatt Family in Melbourne was held for the first time in the “new home” of our Mother Thrice Admirable at St. Luke’s Parish, Wantirna on December 10.

It was a great joy that so many were able to attend –around 60 people including members from the St. Luke’s Parish Leadership Team and a couple of other parishioners. It was a real honour to have some of the parishioners join us as we are hoping to share our love for Schoenstatt with the members of the parish and, of course, our whole Melbourne population. We trust that our MTA will show us the way.

Our Spanish Community once again prepared the Nativity Play and with great organising skills had adults and children alike involved. Colourful costumes enhanced the presentation as the story of Christ’s birth unfolded. The loyalty of our Spanish speaking Schoenstatters in Melbourne is something we truly cherish and are grateful for. Each year we are surprised anew at the Christmas pageant that is presented.

Fellowship naturally ended the afternoon, and we look forward to hosting many more parishioners from St. Luke’s next year.



5. Christmas Carols at Mt Schoenstatt

A small but enthusiastic group of families and friends of Schoenstatt joined together in the Family Hall, on the evening of 16th December to reflect on Christ's birth and in this way, help them in preparing for Christ's coming at Christmas. The evening proved to be a joyful time and thanks to the Schoenstatt Choir the carol singing lifted everyone's spirits.



Children dressed up for the Christmas pageant to make it more meaningful. Mary and Joseph were brother and sister and we had one angel and one shepherd to enact the Christmas story. A unique feature of the evening was that every person was invited to write their personal Christmas gift for Baby Jesus on a star.



These stars were then placed on the Christmas tree giving a very distinctive decoration to the Christmas tree and no doubt much joy to the Christ Child.



A family-like atmosphere prevailed and following the carol singing all joined in fellowship with a delicious supper – more than enough for all.



6. Schoenstatt Sisters' Apostolic Endeavours

On 7th and 8th December Catholic Youth Sydney (CYS) organised a Conference with the theme: "Purpose".

Archbishop Anthony Fisher invited the youth of the Sydney Archdiocese and anyone interested, to this Conference which was held at Rosebank College, Five Dock. The venue was ideal with a huge auditorium and plenty of other spaces for the varied activities which took place.

The conference was for high school students in the afternoon and in the evening for young adults with approximately a total of 1800 youth in attendance. The days involved talks, workshops, adoration, stalls etc. Two guest speakers from the USA, Matt Fradd and Jason Evert, who unfolded our Catholic teaching re marriage, sex, and gender questions, proved to be a real drawcard. Their talks each day were highlights.

The time of adoration on the first day and Holy Mass celebrated by Archbishop Fisher for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception were both prayerful and remarkable and left a deep impression on the youth.

For the breaks in between the workshops and talks there were plenty of food trucks and stalls available where a variety of communities and organizations could offer things for the young people.

Through the combined efforts of many sisters, Schoenstatt was also present, and the sisters were able to set up a Schoenstatt stall. We sold Schoenstatt merchandise, handed out flyers for upcoming functions and connected with a lot of

people. In the middle of our stall was our dear MTA and the young people were invited to write a petition and place it in the jar. We promised to pray for these intentions. Many were grateful and took this opportunity to entrust their petitions to the blessed Mother, even the Archbishop got involved! In the days prior, many sisters worked together in preparing our free giveaways – a tealight candle with a quote from Fr. Kentenich and an image of a shrine. The young people were very appreciative of this small gesture! A few photos from the two intensive but fruitful and blessed days will hopefully share a little of the atmosphere!

Sr. M. Rita



7. INFORMATION AND LINKS

Shrine Opening Hours

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

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

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

Melbourne: St. Luke's, Wantirna, Divine Mercy Chapel

Opening hours: <http://www.stlukeswantirna.net/>



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

January Baptismal Covenant: foundation of synodality in a lay movement.
<https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia>

December Father's Homecoming from Exile
<https://youtu.be/8m7M1ZQWxvE>

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

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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