

National Newsletter

Schoenstatt Australia



February 18 2024 | Volume 5, Number 2

1. Covenant Day Message

Walking Together, Loving the Church

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

I wish you many blessings for this Covenant Day—the 18th February which is also the First Sunday of Lent. Last Wednesday we commemorated Ash Wednesday and began our time of preparation for the great feast of Easter. During Lent we are asked to give special attention to our prayer life, fasting and good deeds.

Today it seems fitting that our first reading focusses on God's covenant with his people. In Genesis 9:8–15 we read how God established a Covenant with Noah and his sons, with his descendants and with every living creature.

Today when we renew our Covenant of Love, we are reminded that Father Kentenich saw the Covenant of Love as not only a covenant of **love**, but also a covenant of **sacrifice**.

He said:

"We have often heard it said that the Blessed Mother had to pay a high price to become our Mother. We also should pay a high price to become her children. We should pray very much to become every-day saints. We have often talked about Sister M. Emilie. One of her favourite prayers was:

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*"We should pray
very much
to become
every-day saints"*
JK

Almighty and eternal God, through the intercession of our Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, make me a great saint and do not spare my weak nature. And help me that I will not spare my poor, weak nature."

This is the connecting bridge between Lent and our covenant of love. There can be no love without sacrifices.

Love is nourished by sacrifice, just as the flame is nourished by the wax of the candle.

Sacrifice nourishes love. On the other hand, sacrifices are also the fruit of love. Lent wants to strengthen us through our sacrifices. It should cost us something.

We should also pray with Sister Emilie:

Almighty God, do not spare me and help me that I will not spare my poor, weak nature.

..... Lent means to let God rule over our nature. We want to pray more during this holy time. To pray means to surrender ourselves to the heavenly Father.

We bring our sacrifices in order to approach the Father in the right manner, not with empty hands."
(J. Kentenich, 13.2.1956 "On Monday Evenings")

Again, on the following Monday evening (20.2.1956), Fr. Kentenich re-emphasised:

"Our covenant is not only a covenant of love, but also a covenant of sacrifice.

We renew the covenant of love and of sacrifice on each 18th. I say, the Blessed Mother loves me, and I also love her.....We want to bring our sacrifices to the shrine each month on the 18th.

Why should we do that? The Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen needs our contributions to the capital of grace."

(JK 20.2.1956 "On Monday Evenings")

Some questions for reflection

1. If I believe that our Covenant of Love, is also a covenant of sacrifice, how do I respond when God sends me crosses and hardships?
2. Can I offer these sacrifices joyfully to our Blessed Mother as contributions to the Capital of Grace?
3. What can I do during this time of Lent to help others so that I can come to the Heavenly Father in the right manner, not with empty hands."

I couldn't think of a better way to conclude this spiritual input than to share with you the words that Father Kentenich used at the end of his talk to the couples on 13th February, 1956:

"I wish you all many blessings and graces from the Shrine during this Lenten season. May Our Blessed Mother be with us all and help us to prepare worthily for the great blessings of Easter."

United in our covenant,
Shirley Hall



2. Welcoming the New Year at our Shrines

Schoenstatt Members and Friends were able to welcome the New Year 2024 with Holy Mass at our Shrines in Mulgoa and Mount Richon.

AT MULGOA - NEW SOUTH WALES

Holy Mass was held at 11pm on New Year's Eve with an emphasis on giving thanks to God and the Blessed Mother for all the blessings received from the Shrine during the past year.

After the Holy Mass in the Family Hall, the close to 200 friends moved to the Shrine, packing the Shrine to capacity because of the rain. Those outside braved the rain till at midnight the Shrine bell rang out and all sang the Te Deum – Holy God we praise your name.

Fr Pawell led us in renewing our Covenant of Love, a very meaningful beginning to the New Year.

AT MT RICHON – WESTERN AUSTRALIA

When the shrine bell rang a 12.00 midnight to welcome the year 2024, the grassed area in front of the shrine was dotted with people sitting and standing expectantly waiting to hear the bell and glimpse the fireworks on the city's skyline thirty kilometres away.

When well-known carols were heard, all were ready to begin the year with Holy Mass celebrated by Monsignor Corcoran. Well known carols had been chosen, so no books were needed, and no words needed to be on a screen.

However, this year, what was happening in the shrine, could be seen on the large area above the shrine door, by all outside.



The loudspeakers were excellent, so the Mass was marked by quietness and reverence. Many received Holy Communion so additional help was there with the local parish deacon, Patrick Moore assisting.



It was said later, that the crowd probably exceeded three hundred. Many stayed for supper, in the meeting room and veranda and enjoyed fellowship at the beginning of this New Year.



3. "Life with a Purpose" New Year's Get-away Retreat for Young Women

Sr M Luka Juenemann

On Friday 12 January, eight young women and I journeyed to Pemberton, a 3-4 hour drive south of Perth, for a weekend retreat, six of us leaving from the Shrine at midday. We stayed at Karriholm God's Sanctuary Retreat Centre.



Our sessions were about finding and pursuing one's unique mission, including introductory sessions on the temperaments and fundamental passion, as well as self-education and letting ourselves be used as instruments in Mary's hands.



We were able to have some of our discussions in the beautiful nature surrounding us such as the Cascades and Big Brook Dam.

Seven of the young women are part of the monthly women's faith club meetings either at the Shrine or at CYM, Highgate.



We concluded the retreat on Sunday 14 January afternoon at a bay in Bunbury (half way back to Perth) with messages of appreciation and a prayer reflection.



4. "My little piece of Heaven!"

Retreat for Young Women

At Mulgoa

"My little piece of heaven" was the title given to the young women's retreat held in the Home of Light in Mulgoa on 12th-14th January, 2024. Five young women decided to take time away from their busy schedules and set time apart for God and for themselves. Three of the young women utilized this weekend retreat as their final preparation for their Home Shrine Dedication.

The young women arrived on Friday evening and were able to settle in and meet or catch up with one another. Sr. M. Rita presented the topics and schedule for the weekend and gave a short introduction. The evening concluded with evening prayer in the Shrine where a profound prayerful atmosphere was observed amongst the participants. The following morning was filled with input sessions on how we can connect our lives with heaven and how we can experience a little piece of heaven here on earth in the Schoenstatt Shrine. In the afternoon the young women were invited to make their own personal candle and attempt to encapsulate what they learnt into a symbol or image on their candle.

The highlight of the retreat was the Home Shrine dedication in the shrine on Saturday afternoon. During holy mass Fr Pawel blessed and handed over to the three young women their own personal cross and MTA image for their Home Shrine. After the homily the young women prayed and invited the blessed Mother to truly come and be present in their rooms and transform them into a shrine.



On Sunday the beautiful sunny weather invited us once again to the shrine where we sat outside on a park bench and prayed the rosary in all our intentions. We were able to experience what we had learned – truly a little piece of heaven! Following that we attended Sunday Holy Mass in the Family Hall where through divine providence Fr. Peter in his homily underlined some of the points that we had covered in the retreat already.

We concluded the retreat after lunch with the closing prayers at the Wayside Shrine which was a request of one of the participants. Although it was only a short time each of the young women agreed that this retreat was a very fruitful and prayerful experience where they gained many new insights and impulses for their daily lives.



5. Women/Mothers, Groups, Breakfasts and Fr. Kentenich

Groups

In NSW we have now run a couple of successful 'Women's Breakfasts' and it seems many enjoy these days for the community, learning and camaraderie aspects.

Fr. Kentenich (herein Father), in a lecture in 1950 which I will quote from frequently, spoke about the characteristics of groups and how education is especially important today, given the prevailing and increasingly destructive influences which damage those essential qualities beloved by God. We are now 73 years further on and these words are still most relevant for today.

Women's Breakfast days

The 'Women's Breakfast days' are of the lecture kind that Father gave in 1950 with the added benefit of a meal. Women come from all over in small groups or on their own to search for and listen to what Father calls "internal work". When we attend these days and break into small groups we are mainly looking for "spiritual formation for our person or personality" (to help us grow in everyday sanctity).

The women who come

The women who attend these days are often, in their own parish, involved in what Father calls

"external work" which includes "service projects, apostolic work, parish work or any other 'life' group which affects the life of the church or community."

For those women who come to the days from already established Schoenstatt groups particularly a "Mothers Group" or "Women's Group", the day provides for them internal work in the same way as during their group meetings.

Most of them are heavily involved in the day either through organisation or food preparation (all donated) in the external work that goes into providing an "Internal Work" day for others to help others from their own group or larger lecture group in forming what Father calls "the new person (internal) or the new community (external)".

Leadership Circles

So, the groups Father envisaged 'being built' as a resultant from these days are "small, select, leadership circles who get together to work on their spiritual education and formation" so that internal work and external work is of a more regular kind.

*"the new person (internal) or
the new community (external)"*
JK

Women's Breakfast's may look at the same principles in a brief way, but Schoenstatt groups are a way of continuously working on what is the 'Essence' of a group, hence why mothers gather with other mothers, and single women gather the same in kind.



❖ Creativity ❖ Inner life ❖ High goals ❖ Conquering (winning over) the world

Four essential aspects feature in Schoenstatt groups and there is not enough room in the newsletter to deal with these in full so what follows is a brief introduction. The full article “Characteristics of a Schoenstatt Community” can be read or downloaded [here](#).

• **Creativity:** The group must “exercise creative faithfulness as the first Christians did”, and as Christians of all times have been required to do, either when persecuted or compelled to give an answer for the times.

• **Inner life:** “Think of the inner life that both the educator and the priest must have’. We too must attach great importance to being both instruments and educators. This includes the consciousness of being attached to the Lord, to being betrothed with the divine force of the Lord. Father Kentenich intended that this deep inner life develop out of group experience.

Our groups should work to develop a deep inner life, using the Spiritual Daily Order and regular spiritual direction. If we believe we have a special mission, it requires cultivation of a vital inner life. Spiritual reading, praying and meditation are our ways of making our inner life grow. One of the illnesses of education and society today is that man believes in himself and his own human methods above all else. We no longer understand the power of the Holy Spirit's breath and therefore don't have the simplicity, innocence, and childlike confidence of the children of God. This simplicity has always existed within us but must be stimulated.

• **High Goals** “Establish the highest goal. Do it without staggering and you will be astonished of the results” (Dom. J.B. Chauchard). We have to establish high goals without assigning them as a “must,” but as an “if you freely choose to”. In other words, the goals must be internally generated, and constitute an internal imperative. Life enkindles life, inner life enkindles inner life.

• **Conquering the world:** Another specific feature of the Schoenstatt groups is the eagerness to renew or win over the world. We have to care that our groups, our families do not become isolated.

We, in a Schoenstatt group seek sanctity for the sake of others and not for itself. On the contrary, it is moved to help others achieve a greater everyday sanctity – an excellence in servant leadership.

If you want more than ‘lectures’, try forming a Schoenstatt Mothers or Women’s group because “Where 2 or 3 are gathered in my name – I am there with them’.”

Angela (with Fr. Kentenich’s help) a Schoenstatt Mother of 32 years.



6. Girls' Summer Camp Mulgoa, January 2024

With all the bunks in the Home of Light filled and two girls coming just for the day – 26 girls from the ages 11–16 and 5 leaders enjoyed the Girls Summer Camp 2024. The girls were invited from Monday 15th till Wednesday 17th to Schoenstatt, Mulgoa to spend time together with new or old friends singing, praying, and learning more about Schoenstatt, the shrine, and our dear MTA.

Although the weather was rainy at times, we managed to get to the shrine every day as planned and were blessed that during those exact times it did not rain! The walking up and down the mountain to the shrine was actually a highlight for some of the girls at the camp. During the closing prayer the girls were invited to bring their thanks for what they enjoyed most, and some responses included:

- “I loved the sessions; they were so fun!
- “It was great to see my old friends again and to also make new friends. “
- “My favorite thing was going to mass in the morning with the sisters.”
- “I really liked that in the craft session that we could build our own shrine!”
- “I really enjoyed being in and singing in the Shrine.”



Fr Pawel celebrated Mass in the Shrine on the last day and reiterated that the joy that we experienced at this camp is the joy of being a Christian and of being a child of Mary and that we should continue to spread this joy to everyone that we meet.

Once again, this year all the parents pitched in to cater for lunch, dinner, and dessert. So, we had plenty of delicious food and also plenty of leftovers! What was also great to see is that the leaders also enjoyed the camp themselves and pleasantly interacted with the younger ones. This was a very blessed and enjoyable camp with many leaving with the words: “Bye, see you next time!”.

Sr. M. Rita



7. 24 Hours For the Lord

The “24 Hours for the Lord” event, an annual Lenten initiative of prayer and reconciliation introduced by Pope Francis, is set to mark its 11th edition this year. As in previous years, this event will be celebrated in dioceses around the world on the eve of the fourth Sunday of Lent, from Friday, March 8 to Saturday, March 9, 2024.

The theme chosen by the Holy Father for this year is drawn from a verse in the Letter to the Romans: “Walking in a new life” (Romans 6:4) 1. It’s a beautiful reminder to reflect on renewal, transformation, and the journey toward a deeper connection with our faith.

During these 24 hours, believers are encouraged to engage in prayer, reflection, and acts of reconciliation. It’s a time to seek God’s presence, embrace our shared humanity, and trust in His guidance as we walk this path of faith.



SCHOENSTATT AUSTRALIA

**6pm Friday 8th March to
5pm Saturday 9th March 2024**

24hr for our Lord

**“Walking in a new life”
(Romans 6:4)**

- Commit to an Hour with our Lord and his mother.
- 6pm mass on Friday followed by reconciliation
- Reconciliation before 5pm mass on Saturday evening
- Tea and coffee/ snacks available to purchase

02 4773 8338
**MT SCHOENSTATT
230 FAIRLIGHT RD
MULGOA**

This year Pope Francis has also inaugurated a Year of Prayer ahead of the 2025 Jubilee, calling on the faithful “to intensify prayer to prepare us to live well this event of grace and to experience the power of God’s hope.” The Year of Prayer, the Holy Father explained, is dedicated “to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer, prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church, prayer in the world”.

Following from this, the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary will have their annual “24 hours for the Lord” event, held at the National Shrine in Mulgoa. It begins with Mass at 6pm on Friday the 8th of March followed by the opportunity for reconciliation and finishes with Mass on Saturday 9th March at 5pm.

May this special event be a source of spiritual renewal and grace for all who participate.

8. Schoenstatt's WhatsApp Initiative

Would you like to be surprised by God in your everyday life? Would you like to be reminded that you are loved?

Would you like to receive a picture of the Mother Thrice Admirable (MTA) from Schoenstatt? Would you like a word of encouragement and inspiration from Fr. Joseph Kentenich?

If you have answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then the "Schoenstatt WhatsApp Initiative" is exactly what you need!

On special feast days and on every 18th of the month (in remembrance of the founding of Schoenstatt on 18/10/1914) a picture of the MTA from Schoenstatt with a quote from the founder Fr. Kentenich will be sent out via WhatsApp.



Follow the steps below to register to receive your monthly WhatsApp picture from Schoenstatt:

- Download the WhatsApp App if you have not already done so.
- Save this number into you contacts:
0493 926 628
- Send to this number via WhatsApp the message:
"Schoenstatt WhatsApp Initiative."
- If you no longer wish to receive these messages send:
"STOP" to this number via WhatsApp and you will be removed.

9. 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

February	An inclusive and welcoming Church https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
January	Baptismal Covenant: foundation of synodality in a lay movement. https://youtu.be/TuctlCpVByE
December	Father's Homecoming from Exile https://youtu.be/8m7M1ZQWxvE
November	Sr Emilie Engel https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-2NXknzV3c

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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