



1. Covenant Day Message

Walking Together, Loving the Church

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Our Covenant of Love

Here in Australia, we celebrate the Covenant of Love on what we call "Covenant Sunday", that is, the third Sunday of each month. Regardless of when we celebrate our Covenant of Love as a Schoenstatt Family, whether on the 18th of each month, or on the Covenant Sunday, the words of Father Kentenich apply equally about the reason why we should celebrate our Covenant of Love together each month as a Schoenstatt Family and why it is so important for us to renew our Covenant of Love so often.

During a talk to couples in Milwaukee on 25th March 1957, Father Kentenich said:

"It is not as if this renewal were something special for us. We have done it many times in the course of the last years. But there are things, life processes that we cannot repeat often enough. They are all more or less connected with the essence and the individuality of love...."

We do not even want to ask a mother how often she brings it to the awareness of her child (that) she loves him/her. The mother can express it a million times in some way: You belong to me, and I belong to you, and the child never tires of accepting all the expressions of love time and again. It is the same with our covenant of love with our dear Blessed Mother. We can renew it a million times, and yet it is (always) new for us.

1. Covenant Day Message
2. 12th April 1894: a Turning Point in the life of Joseph Kentenich
3. WA Girls and Women's events
4. Palm Sunday at Mulgoa
5. A new initiative for Holy Thursday
6. Stations of the Cross at Mulgoa
7. Good Friday at Mt Richon WA
8. Easter Activities
9. Information and Links



..... *What do we do through our covenant of love? What have we done through our covenant of love? Nothing but recognize the almighty words of the eternal God. Freely we recognized the (Mother of God) as our mother and obliged ourselves to conduct ourselves completely as a child toward her. Therefore, it is appropriate that we renew our covenant of love with her precisely today.*

“Whoever has been given a mission must carry it out. Whoever has been given a mission must be faithful to it and do it justice.

If we carry out our mission with faith and love, the Family will become a blessing with us and through us for countless people”.

(JK 31.5.1949)

Earlier Father Kentenich had said,

“If I want to be a genuine upholder of our Schoenstatt realm, I must be the embodiment of attachment to the shrine.If I want to be someone who upholds the great Movement I will have to be attached to this place with every little fibre of my heart.

Whoever does not love the shrine, whoever only sees the shrine as a symbol of ideas, will never be a support for the Family. They may be interested in the Movement, they may accept the great thoughts gratefully, they may even talk about them with great enthusiasm, but we have to apply them in earnest.... We can't be hangers on. We have to embody attachment to the shrine.”
(10th December, 1933)

Another question we may ask is, why do we need to bring our contributions to the Capital of Grace?

In 1933 Father Kentenich had said:

“Our place of grace (the shrine) is the result of the co-operation between God and ourselves, between the Blessed Mother and ourselves.... A constant imperative is Co-operation! Nothing without me! Nothing in Schoenstatt may happen without me, that is to say, the river of grace may not be increased or directed out from here without me. The concept “contributions to the capital of grace” expresses the same truth. We all have this task....

This is laid down in the Founding Document. Schoenstatt will cease to be a place of pilgrimage, or to carry out its task in the world, unless the capital of grace is increased, or if what is there is used up and nothing new is added....

I am convinced that there are a huge number of very ordinary people in the background without whom Schoenstatt would not exist. The most necessary and most important people are those who constantly care most for the capital of grace, who unite their hearts and bloodstream with the heart and bloodstream of the capital of grace.

Schoenstatt stands or falls with the people who really strive for holiness, and who connect this striving for holiness with our shrine. These are things that have always been there and have always been at work. ...”

(Extracts from “His Mission Our Mission, p.64–68), J. Kentenich; talk during Christmas Conference, Schoenstatt, 28 January 1933)

Therefore, we should not come empty-handed to our shrine. Nor should we leave it with empty hands. Our hands are filled with graces. Why do we bring our sacrifices to the shrine? So that they can become a means to sanctify us. We should not ask for this grace for ourselves alone, but also for others, for the whole world. ‘I sanctify myself for them’ (cf Jn 17,19). We bring our sacrifices and place them on the paten on the altar, so that Our Lady can save and sanctify souls. We should renew this attitude every 18th of the month.
(Monday Evening Talks, vol 1, 18.2.1956)

United in our Covenant of Love,
Shirley Hall



2. 12th April 1894

A Turning Point

In the life of

Joseph Kentenich

Do you remember the day you made your first consecration to our Blessed Mother? Do you remember the details of that day?

For Father Kentenich, Thursday 12th April 1894 was a turning point in his life. On this day Katarina Kentenich, accompanied by Henriette Esser, took her 8½-year-old son to the orphanage in Oberhausen because she could not care for him anymore because of her work.

This was a very difficult decision for Katarina, and she was deeply distressed at having to leave Joseph there. Joseph was also finding it very difficult and cried bitterly at having to be left there. Katarina took Joseph and Henriette to the orphanage chapel. They went up to the statue of the Mother of God and there she prayed and entrusted Joseph to the Mother of God, consecrating him to Mary. She prayed out loud that Mary would care for him in a motherly way, and she should be his mother as Katarina could no longer do it. It seemed that Joseph took in all that was happening. Katarina took the only piece of jewelry she had, her First Communion cross, and placed it around the neck of the statue.

Joseph had indeed taken in what this consecration meant and he never forgot it. This happening in the orphanage chapel was so incisive for him that he came back to it his whole life long. Years later, when he took up his task as spiritual director at the Vallendar boarding school, responsible for the formation of the boys there, he felt immediately urged to tell them something about this event of 12th April 1894 – but without revealing that it was a story about himself. This consecration to Mary became a central experience of his childhood and even the key moment of his whole life.



Later Joseph underlined that his entire life's work was based on this early consecration, in which he personally and deeply participated. He said that since then, Mary took a key role in his life. "She herself personally formed me and educated me from my ninth year of life on."

What was it about this consecration to Mary that touched him so deeply and was able to gain such power over his life? This had been a personal experience of the reality that would determine the direction of his life even more than before: In the midst of the painful separation from his beloved mother, he experienced through Mary the marvelous nearness of God.... This experience was so strong that the impression of it never let go of him, even in times of crisis. Later references show that he had experienced through Mary what God is really like. It was an encounter with the "mercifully loving Father God who cannot do otherwise but love us inconceivably" as he later formulated it.

In January 1955, Fr. Kentenich also spoke about the impact of this event in a letter to Fr. Menningen in which he said: "someday I will tell you a secret about my life which happened to me in my 8th or 9th year. To it I personally trace back the entire Schoenstatt Work, especially its most unique source – the covenant of love between the MTA and Schoenstatt (...). It was not a mystical experience. My personal life was never touched this way, at least if one means anything extraordinary. (...) It was really something quite simple.

(Adapted from "Joseph Kentenich, A Life on the edge of the Volcano, Dorothea M. Schlickmann)

3. WA Girls and Women's events

Beach Day

We began 2024 with a Beach Day for young women, mothers, and daughters on Saturday 17 February. We gathered at Cottesloe Beach early in the morning and were greeted with a delicious breakfast prepared by Laura & Emily at one of the shelters.



After prayer reflecting on Lent, and warming up games organised by Daria, all girls mounted their paddle boards and had a great time in the water while the mums enjoyed chatting ashore.



The next point on our program was Mass at St Patrick's Basilica, Fremantle, where we were surprised to have a festive Mass in honour of the founder of the Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate.

All the fathers living in Perth were gathered at this Mass to renew their vows and celebrate their community feast day.

We were also blessed for the final part of our program: lunch at Leighton Beach BBQ area prepared by Daria, Adriana and families. A breeze brought relief from the heat and we had the BBQ area all to ourselves. In a final reflection each one received a shell with a small silver cross hidden in sand as a reminder that Jesus is the precious pearl of our lives which is often found hidden in what's challenging for us and in the cross where we experience his love for each one of us the most.



Womens Faith Club

On the first Wednesdays of February, March and April, in the Resource Room at CYM (Catholic Youth Ministry), Highgate, as well as on the fourth Sunday at the Shrine, the Womens Faith Club met to discuss Fr. Kentenich's talks and studies contained in the book Everyday Spirituality. It has been a blessing to see a number of young women inviting friends to join our reading sessions. After discussing the challenges of working and studying as Catholic women, we have now begun to read about the fundamental law of love as a basis for all our relationships.

Marian Lenten Retreat



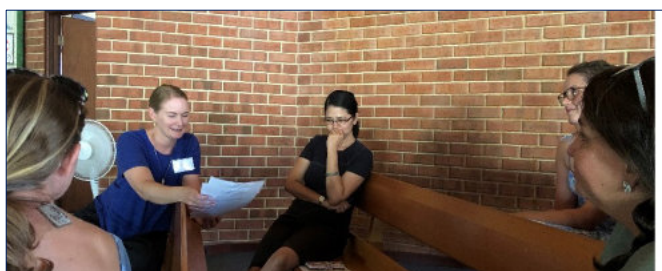
During the Marian Lenten Retreat weekend on the Labour Day long weekend in early March, five

ladies made the Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable on Sunday 3 March at the 2pm Mass in the Shrine.

We met in two preparation groups – one at the Shrine, and one at St Columba Parish, South Perth for our weekly preparation sessions. As a group, we admired Mary’s humility as the vessel of the Holy Spirit, strengthening us with her love and trust, and interceding for us peace and joy. May she be able to use each of us as her instrument to build God’s kingdom wherever we are.

Mothers and Daughters

On Saturday 16 March we had our first parish session for mothers and daughters this year speaking about suffering, and imitating Mary’s virtues in the sorrowful moments of her life. For the first time, we were able to gather at All Saints Parish, Greenwood. We began the afternoon with ice breakers and afternoon tea, and then had separate mother and daughter sessions finishing with a prayer in the church.



Many thanks to Laura for facilitating the mothers’ session for the first time, and Emma for her assistance with the girls’ session. After a game about offering up small and large sufferings, and a discussion, the girls made a cross key ring using beads and wire. It is a wonderful blessing that we could welcome three new families to the event.

Holy Week Retreat

Finally, on Sunday 24 March the Holy Week retreat for women was held. After introducing each other and an opening prayer where we offered our intentions for the day in the symbol of wheat ears to God, we heard a thought-provoking talk from Sharne about suffering and its purpose in our lives based on Fr Kentenich’s thoughts on suffering as an essential element of the Christian life together with work and prayer.

It also became clear that it is love that enables us to endure suffering. We then prayed the outdoor stations of the cross on the hill behind the Shrine and had quiet reflection time.



At lunch we were gifted by one another with a wonderful assortment of dishes.

The discussion groups then revealed to us how it is important to always focus on God, and trust in the hope for eternal life lying before us, as well as the grace we already receive now.



Our final prayer in the Shrine with reflections on the sorrowful mysteries of the rosary showed us how Mary is both our example and guide on life’s journey focusing on the light even when it is dark.

It was a great experience to begin Holy Week in this way and be enriched by one another’s experience of faith.



4. Palm Sunday At Mulgoa

Here are just some impressions of the Palm Sunday celebrations at Mulgoa this year. Many sisters helped to decorate and prepare for the liturgy as well as the palms and the palm crosses, which were enjoyed by many of the pilgrims.

We began the Palm Sunday liturgy in front of the Shrine with everyone trying to find a space in the shade as the sun was shining brightly. Following Father Jazick OP and the acolyte, we then proceeded to the Family Hall to continue the liturgy. When all were seated, with all the chairs inside and outside being occupied while many pilgrims still participating in the holy mass were standing outside.



As there were a couple of other groups here the area around the shrine was full of life, family and children well into the afternoon. It was a great and blessed start to the Holy Week ceremonies.



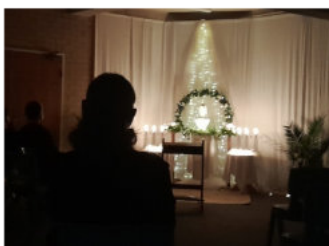
5. Seven Church Pilgrimage

Inspired by an article in the Catholic Weekly Newspaper four Sisters, Sr. Luisa Maria, Sr. M. Rebecca, Sr. M. Cristina and Sr. M. Rita went on the "Seven Church Pilgrimage" on Holy Thursday evening. We decided that we would include the House Chapel in Bethany and Province House and end in the Shrine. We began the pilgrimage visiting the first two tabernacles individually and at 7pm we attended the Holy Thursday Liturgy at our local parish in Luddenham (where we were also involved in the choir). After the liturgy we spent ten minutes in adoration at the altar of repose there. As we had to drive the sisters back home, we made a small, short stop at Mulgoa and then continued our pilgrimage.



We visited Padro Pio Parish at Glenmore Park. Initially we thought it might have been already closed as the front car park gates were locked, only to realise that adoration was actually in the garden. There was a

small 'altar' set up under a tree where our Lord was lit up by a spotlight and candles all around. There was a very peaceful atmosphere, and many other adorers were either standing or kneeling in the surrounding area. A violinist played a few traditional adoration hymns – very beautiful.



The next church on this pilgrimage was Saint Nicholas of Myra in Penrith. There the altar of repose was in the parish meeting room beside the

church. The altar of repose was beautifully decorated with material and fairy-lights. Soft instrumental music was playing in the background and all around the edges of the rooms were lots of candles. It was surprising to see how many young people were there in adoration.

The last church that we visited was St Joseph's at Kingswood. The altar was set a little forward to the right of the altar. On either side of the Lord there were two large candle stands with multiple candles. Here the adoration was held in complete silence.



Our pilgrimage concluded in our Shrine. We prayed for our Sisters and for all who visit the Shrine and bring their intentions to Our Lord and our Mother and Queen. Following our pilgrimage the Shrine was cleared out. All the flowers and altar cloths etc. were removed and the Shrine was prepared for Good Friday.



6. Stations of the Cross At Mulgoa

Approximately 1,500 people were in attendance at this year's annual Stations of the Cross on Good Friday at Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa. With various groups arriving already as early as 7am to do their own private pilgrimage, many people stayed the whole day to enjoy the beautiful grounds and the prayerful atmosphere at Mount Schoenstatt.

The Stations of the Cross procession began at 10am with the pilgrims gathering in the valley around the large wooden cross. The cross was then carried up the mountain on the shoulders of a few participants alternating between the different stations. The final fourteenth station was



prayed in front of the Shrine. At the conclusion Fr Pawel OP gave the final blessing and afterwards a queue to enter the Shrine was spontaneously formed as everyone wanted to visit the Blessed Mother.



Pilgrims were led in prayer and song allowing everyone to be immersed in the Good Friday atmosphere. United as a pilgrim Church together we went the Way of the Cross with Christ and his mother Mary reflecting on his passion and death. For many families the Stations of the Cross at Mount Schoenstatt has become part of their regular Easter Triduum tradition. They are also very keen and excited to bring new families and friends along. It was particularly impressive to see numerous young families pushing their strollers, as well as many elderly with their walking sticks and even someone in a wheelchair participating in the procession. The pilgrims came from all parts of the Sydney and Parramatta Dioceses with some even travelling from as far as the Central Coast to be involved in the celebrations.



7. Good Friday at Mt Richon WA



Every year our parish, St Francis Xavier in Armadale, WA invites the parishioners to walk the Way of the Cross at our Schoenstatt Centre. At the same time, the parish offers the possibility to walk with Jesus his Way of the Cross in the Parish Church as well as in St Kevin's, Serpentine. We are truly grateful to our parish priest Fr. Mark and Deacon Patrick for making it possible that the Stations of the Cross can also be prayed at our centre.

It is a rugged and dusty path up the hill to the 12th station, to Golgotha, where Jesus died. A symbol of our life that can and will be at times rather rugged and tough.



Currently, the hill is bare, devoid of any life in this fifth month of not a drop of rain. Broken branches under the trees, rocks that have made their way from below to the surface, sand appearing where once there was grass, and the sun continues to beat down from blue skies.

Parishioners and friends from the surroundings have gathered already before 10.00 am in front of the shrine to begin their walk together with Jesus, ready to experience "Jesus' pain which will lead us to a transformation of ourselves and shape in us a new person in Jesus' likeness" (Introductory Prayer).



There were actors who visualized Jesus's way of the cross, beginning with the Agony in the Garden and his arrest, the denial of Peter, Jesus' condemnation to death and carrying his cross to Golgotha. Silence and a prayerful atmosphere accompanied the seriousness of the hour.



Many people braved the burning sun, many searched out the few shady spots. We all must have understood a little more what Jesus took upon himself just for you and me, once and for all.



The last people had just left when a truck pulled in with about 500 chairs to accommodate at least half of the more than 1000 people from the parish of the syro malabar speaking Indians and their friends. They have come to our Centre already for a few years to go the Way of the Cross and to celebrate the Good Friday services.

Cars filled every available spot of the lower part of our property and many parked even along the road. After the services the people received a simple meal, thanked us for the opportunity to pray at our centre and left the place as they found it.



The setting sun cast its golden glow over our centre: a sign of the stillness of the tomb, wrapped in the golden glow of the victory to come



8. Easter Activities

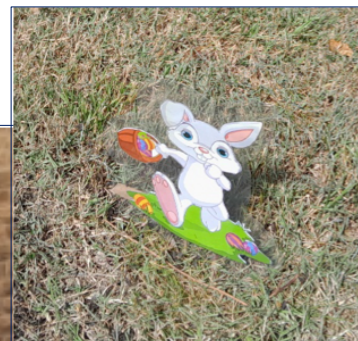
This year pilgrims, visitors and children of all ages were invited to join in the various Easter activities offered at Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa. As of Easter Sunday for the whole week a white board with signs and instructions were placed in front of the Shrine.

On one poster was an explanation of what and why we celebrate Easter as well as the history of Easter eggs etc. Another poster had the invitation firstly to write your name and the names of your loved ones on the white board so that the sisters can pray for all these people and the second invitation was for the Easter Egg hunt.

In the area between the Shrine and the Father Room various laminated easter eggs, bunnies and chickens were scattered on the grass and in the trees.

The children could pick up an activity worksheet which included a quiz, find-a-word and a colour-in activity to complete. The answers to the quiz and real chocolate eggs were on offer in the Father Room which encouraged all families to make a visit there.

Within the first days the whiteboard was completely full back and front with names and the basket of chocolate Easter eggs needed to be filled up a number of times throughout the week. If the number of worksheets taken are anything to go by there were over 130 children visiting the Easter Egg Hunt activities this year at Mount Schoenstatt!



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

April	A Listening Church https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
March	A humble and healing Church https://youtu.be/4DBfVXL6GAs
February	An inclusive and welcoming Church https://youtu.be/qfGr5DBMnc
January	Baptismal Covenant: foundation of synodality in a lay movement. https://youtu.be/TuctlCpVByE

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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