



August 18 2024 | Volume 5, Number 8

1. Covenant Day Message

Walking Together, Loving the Church

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Greetings and blessings from our Schoenstatt Shrines for this Covenant Day – 18th August. Last Thursday we commemorated the Solemnity of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This Feast Day is an affirmation of the dignity of Our Blessed Mother and of all human life. This dignity is reflected especially in the life of Our Lady, in the way in which she always responded to the will of God with a joyful “yes”. In doing this, Mary fulfilled the mission given to her by the Heavenly Father and became a perfect and authentic witness to holiness.

In speaking about how we should see God in our daily life, and respond to his merciful love, Father Kentenich said:

“We should see God behind everything in our daily life, in our joys, and in our sorrows..... We must remember at all times that there is a definite purpose in all that happens to us, even if it hurts us at the time. In all situations, we should keep in mind that God is our loving father, and we should be ready to say, “Yes, Father,” to anything that is in his plan for us, whether it is a cross or joy which he sends. We must put our whole trust in Divine Providence.

We know that God will send only what we are able to carry

1. Covenant Day Message
2. Formation Day for Women, Mulgoa
3. Family Weekend at the Schoenstatt Shrine
4. Pilgrim Mother Apostolate Mid-Year Reflection Day 2024
5. New Approach to Covenant Sunday, Mulgoa
6. Information and Links



..... We know that God will send only what we are able to carry.

If the load is too heavy, he will strengthen us by putting, as it were, his own shoulders under the beams of the cross.

We must learn to love God in a personal manner. He is a loving father....

We want to discuss everything with God and the Blessed Mother because where God is, there is also the Blessed Mother.

She knows what plans are laid out for us. She is truly the servant of the Lord, but she is also his helper.

We can speak to both of them in a very personal manner. We know: the heavenly Father wants us to put our trust in him through the Blessed Mother.

We want to take our covenant of love seriously and give the blank cheque to the Blessed Mother, that is, we want to say 'yes' to everything which the dear God has prepared for us.

..... It is easy to say "Yes, Father, your will be done," if the table is set, and we have a warm home and good health.

Looking into the future, we ask ourselves: Are we able to say, "Yes, Father; yes, Mother," if sudden misfortune comes upon us?

Will we be able to say, "Yes, your will be done."

..... It is easy to say "Yes, Father, your will be done," if the table is set, and we have a warm home and good health.

We do not want to forget to see God behind everything.

He permits suffering for our sanctification."

(22nd January 1956, Fr. J. Kentenich, "On Monday Evenings Vol.1", P91)



During this coming month may our Blessed Mother take us more deeply into the Covenant of Love with her, and help us to see God as a loving, merciful Father who only wants what is best for each one of us in all situations.

Blessed Mother.....

Let us walk like you
through life,
let us mirror you forever,
strong and noble,
meek and mild,
peace and love
be our endeavour.

walk in us through our world,
make it ready for the Lord.
Amen

United in our covenant,

Shirley Hall

2. Formation Day For Women, Mulgoa

Instrumentality

“Instrumentality” was the topic of the Formation Day for Women held at Mt. Schoenstatt, Mulgoa on Saturday 20th July.

*“Our Lady wants to form
'useful instruments' in her
hands for the Mission from the
Shrine”*

(Schoenstatt’s Founding Document,
18/10/1914)

Eighteen ladies from three of the mother’s groups and the single women’s group came together with Sr. Elizabeth to look at what this quote from Schoenstatt’s Founding Document means for us as we strive to be ‘useful instruments’ for our mission from the shrine.

It is always a joy to come together on such occasions and it has become quite noticeable over the last few years that such gatherings have enabled the ladies attending to get to know each other much better, not just the ladies in their own group, but others who are part of our women’s branches here in the greater Sydney area.

This has enabled them to feel comfortable and safe in sharing their experiences and challenges with each other and to enjoy each other’s company.

Challenged to look deeper

These days are also an opportunity for us to be challenged in our Schoenstatt formation and education to look at how we can become more like Mary, our Mother and Educator in our mission from the Shrine.



At the March Formation Day we had the same topic, “instrumentality”, with Sister Elizabeth sharing what it means to be an instrument of God and Our Blessed Mother. For this Formation Day, she challenged us to look deeper and discover what the characteristics of Instrumentality mean for us in our practical, everyday lives as women, mothers, grandmothers, single women, working women, retired women.

Total Detachment

We looked at the characteristics of instrumentality in our Schoenstatt spirituality and how these relate to our lives. For example, what does ‘total detachment’ mean and what does it look like in my life? What do I need to detach myself from and how do I do this?

Total Attachment

What does “total attachment” mean: to whom do I attach myself and how does this help me in my spiritual formation? This opened up a lively conversation and allowed the ladies to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Blank Cheque

Sister Elizabeth further challenged us to look at what it means to make a “blank cheque” consecration. We all know what signing a “blank cheque” means, but how does it apply in our spiritual lives? It means giving our ‘yes’ to God

and being open to accepting his wishes and will at all times, knowing that He only wants what is best for us.

Inscriptio

We then looked at what the “Inscriptio” Consecration means. Sister Elizabeth shared how this consecration came about and explained that it is a willingness to not only accept God’s will in all situations, but to actually ask him for cross and suffering, but only if this is in His plan for us.

It was stressed that this doesn’t mean asking for cross and suffering that God has not planned for us. It means seeing cross and suffering as a loving gift from God who only wants what is best for us and only sends cross and suffering if it is for our good. Father Kentenich stressed that we should not seek cross and suffering for the sake of suffering but to accept all that God the Father sends us, knowing that God, is a merciful, loving Father.

Divine Providence

This then led to a discussion about Divine Providence and how we often need to take time to discern what God is asking of us, especially if there are choices to be made.

We were reminded that “for those who love God, all things work together unto good” (Rom.8:28) but we need to appreciate that sometimes we

might make choices that might not always be the best ones for us. In these cases, we need to ask what God is telling us and what we can learn from these experiences.

After this it was time for a well-earned lunch break. As it was an extremely cold and windy day, we spent the lunch break indoors in the warm air conditioning and enjoyed each other’s company in a more relaxed atmosphere.

At the Shrine

After lunch the members of the Mothers’ branch visited the shrine for a short celebration. At the last Formation Day, Anne Walsh resigned from her role as leader of the Mothers’ Branch after more than 20 years.

Zenny Custodio was elected as the new leader and for the first time a deputy leader was also elected. Ann Panitz accepted this role.

At the shrine today, the mothers took part in a short prayerful celebration, giving thanks for the contribution that Anne has made in her role as leader and prayed for Zenny as the new leader and for Ann as the deputy.

As Ann hadn’t been able to attend the day because of illness, thanks to modern technology, she joined the celebration via zoom.



Single Women's Group

In the meantime, the members of the Single Women's Group met together and when the mothers returned, they also had a short meeting.

Afterwards the whole group came together again for a final session in which Sr. Elizabeth gave us an exercise to do. We were split into groups of two and asked to select one of the Stations of the Cross of God's Instruments from Heavenwards. Each couple was then asked to look at how this reflects instrumentality and what it means for us as God's instruments.

Once again it was a very fruitful and enjoyable day, leaving us with lots of information and many things to reflect upon. Our special thanks go to Sr. M. Elizabeth for sharing with us and encouraging us in our spiritual formation.

One of the ladies who hadn't been to any of the Formation Days previously, generously offered to share her thoughts on her experiences of the day. They are included below:

One participant's thoughts on the day

"I really enjoyed my first formation day held on Saturday 20th July about Instrumentality, one of the main elements of our spirituality.

Sr. Elizabeth offered us such a wonderful day full of rich and engaging discussions about the characteristics of instrumentality that are so relevant to my personal, and professional life.

Throughout the formation day, I reflected on the 'total detachment' characteristic. This characteristic resonated strongly with me because it gave me 'inner peace', allowing me to let go of all my fears, and insecurities in my current and future life's journey. Furthermore, I kept thinking back to Sr. Elizabeth's reference to God's plan, placing trust that he will guide me in the right direction through my choices and decisions, and in accordance with his will.

At the end of the day, I walked away with profound insights and a lot of unanswered questions which I will further explore. I am not as well versed in Schoenstatt and Father Kentenich's teachings as some of the members of the group, but everyone made me feel very welcome.

I really loved the spiritual community bonding, and the perspectives shared by everyone through their own personal experiences, in this safe, supportive, and deeply spiritual environment, which I will always refer to as my 'happy place'".

If you are interested in attending one of the Formation Days next year or the Women's Retreat Weekend early in 2025, please contact me on movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au and I will ensure you receive an invitation to these days and/ or the retreat weekend. You do not have to be a member of any of the women's groups, but simply someone who is interested in learning more about Schoenstatt.

Shirley Hall, Member Single Women's Group.



3. Family Weekend At the Shrine

Come July and the much-awaited school holidays arrive; more so, for an extra sleep in, on a cold winter morning. However, the Family weekend at Schoenstatt, is also something that my family looks forward to; at least for the past 3 years, ever since our family decided to join the Family group at Schoenstatt.

One would wonder what a family weekend at the Shrine would look like... Precisely my thoughts, when we attended our first in 2022.

Would there be talks and a schedule packed back-to-back? Will my kid like it? What were the kids going to do, while the adults sat through the talks? Lots and lots of question ...

I must admit that I was in for a surprise. The organising team had a well charted schedule, which included talks around the Theme of the weekend. The kids were kept occupied and were well taken care of, by amazing volunteers. Family activities included games, bush dancing, bush walking and sumptuous meals and time at the Shrine. The one thing that stood out for me was, the Schoenstatt hour, where spouses spend a one-on-one time, with each other.

Every year, the organising committee decides on the Theme of the weekend. This year our family weekend took place from 12-14th July and the theme was around Education and Formation in the family.

While living in America, Fr Joseph Kentenich spoke to the couples in Milwaukee, about the dignity of the father and mother in the family. He urged them to think of God as the President and parents as his Ambassadors. Parents are the first representative, oldest representative and most important representative of God.

Father Kentenich also recognised the helplessness that parents encounter, mostly due to generational differences between each generation. Often parents are compelled to parent their kids,



precisely the way they were parented. This leads to more helplessness. Father emphasised education as being a constant living contact. As parents we must strive to know our children, learn about their interests and be involved in their interests, while still being a figure of authority.

Education also means, to embody the child's ideals and be a lighthouse constantly giving directions to the children. Education should be directed towards creating a will in the child, rather than commanding them. As parents it's easy to tell your child... "Put on your sweater", "Do the dishes", "Fold your clothes". Creating a will is somewhat taking the long road. It sounds like this... "A sweater would keep you nice and warm. You don't want to fall sick, do you?". It is in our parental nature and the hustle-bustle of daily life, that we tend to resort to quick orders. However, by creating a will, the child understands the underlying concern of the parent.

Father Kentenich was a man who possessed a wealth of knowledge. We ended the weekend with some food for thought, lots of happy memories and the determination to be better educators in the family.

Nitasha Fernandes, Schoenstatt Family Group.





4. Pilgrim Mother Apostolate Mid-Year Reflection Day

Lord teach us to pray

The PMA Mid-Year Reflection Day was held in Mulgoa on Saturday 13 July. The program started with a talk given by Father Pawel Barszczewski OP. The theme was "Lord teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).

Prayer



Father described prayer as a loving communication with God, who speaks to us through the Bible. Prayer keeps us connected to God our only source of help. Father emphasized the importance of perseverance in prayer, using the acronym PUSH – pray until something happens.

He added: "We should pray to him more consistently, pour out our hearts to him earnestly, tell him about our burdens and then cast every single one of them upon Him because he cares for us. The longer we are out of prayer, the more we feel out of fellowship with him".

PUSH
pray until something happens.

Covenant of Love

As some of us were making our Covenant of Love with the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt we were reminded about the significance and terms of a covenant. Through this Covenant of Love with Mary we can live our baptismal covenant in union with God.

We were reminded of the first Schoenstatt Covenant of Love which took place on 18 October 1914 in the Original Shrine with the founder Fr Joseph Kentenich and the founding generation. Through our covenant of love we are able to surrender our hearts to Mary and receive her heart in return. Mary leads us securely into the heart of God.



After the talk we had a morning tea followed by Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and then Holy Mass.

*We should pray to him
more consistently,
pour out our hearts to him
earnestly,
tell him about our burdens
and then
cast every single one of them
upon Him
because he cares for us.*

*The longer we are out of prayer,
the more we feel
out of fellowship with him*

Next, we proceeded to the Shrine where members of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate, St Ives parish Broken Bay Diocese made their Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable for the first time. They were Petty Bahramali, Joyce Hew and Mirani Kailainathan. Janice Ware joined them while Crystal D'Souza, who is the main Coordinator at St Ives, and Max Shipway renewed their Covenant.

At lunch everyone enjoyed catching up with friends. This was followed by the cutting of the cake by the ones who had made the Covenant of Love. We then prayed the rosary with a beautiful meditation on each mystery.



The day's celebration ended with a Closing Devotion and Benediction in the shrine. Afterwards we were invited to an Afternoon Tea where we enjoyed a slice of the Covenant of Love cake.

Sentiments expressed by a couple of members

Sentiments expressed by a couple of members who made their Covenant of Love, follow: It was indeed a very memorable moment in my life. I was extremely happy to have been called by the Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt to make this covenant of love with her. I was moved when I prayed the consecration prayer and offered my whole being to Our Lady and requested her to give me a home in her heart.

The officiating priest Father Pawel Barszczewski OP spiritually nourished us and in his homily, he gave us a clear insight into the meaning and significance of the covenant of love.



He further gave us a wonderful explanation about the important aspects of prayer.

Another person added: I was deeply touched by Father Pawel's presentation on the day. I learned a lot from him. It really deepened my knowledge about prayer. I will devote more time to prayer and give myself entirely to our Mother Thrice Admirable Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt to intercede for me with God.

We thank Father Pawel for his talk and presence, Sister Luisa Maria for preparing us for the Covenant of Love, Agnes together with her sister for organizing the day and all those who contributed to the success of the day.

Crystal D' Souza and Sr Luisa Maria

5. NEW APPROACH TO COVENANT SUNDAY, MULGOA

In our June Newsletter we announced that there would be a new approach to the celebration of Covenant Sundays at our Shrine in Mulgoa. The reason for the new approach is to try and include the many pilgrims to the Shrine as being part of our Schoenstatt Family. Each month we have proceeded to the Shrine following Mass to renew the Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother, but the question has been whether our pilgrims really understand the “secret” of the Shrine – that is, that the blessed Mother has sealed a Covenant of Love with us and this covenant “demands” a two-way agreement: “Nothing without you, Nothing without us”. We want to be able to share what this Covenant is all about and explain the fruitfulness of the Shrine – the many blessings experienced by those who visit.

Well, our first “new look” took place on the Covenant Sunday in July, and we were truly blessed to have so many people join us for a procession to the Shrine.



This was led by our Schoenstatt Flag as well as our Australian Flag. We prayed the rosary as we processed with the Jar carrying our “contributions” to the Blessed Mother – the congregation had been given time after Communion to write what they wished to offer Our Lady on newly designed slips of paper which express the Covenant concept: Mother Thrice Admirable: “I offer you...” and then “I ask you...”. The Covenant Book containing the names of all who have entered into the original Covenant of 18th October 1914 was also part of the procession.

At the Shrine we renewed our Covenant of Love with the Blessed Mother and were grateful for beautiful weather as we stood gathered in and outside the Shrine.



Everyone was then invited to share a Barbeque – donated – which had been set up close to the Father Statue. There were so many people who accepted the invitation that we ran out of sausages (150 were simply not enough!!) – but there was a great atmosphere, and we will be better prepared next month



The Zoom meeting for those who cannot come to the Shrine will continue each 18th of the month from 7–8pm so that, as Schoenstatt Family, we may meet together and renew our Covenant of Love.

We look forward to seeing many of you, either at the Shrine on Covenant Sunday or via Zoom on the 18th of each month.

6. 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

Video for August A Church that reaches to the margins

<https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia>

Video for July A Church renewed In Spirit and Prayer (audio only)

<https://youtu.be/swBzwVZnK0Q>

Video for June Conversation in the Spirit

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m4XSpqOHrgk>

Text for May 31st May 1949 - 75 Years of Schoenstatt's Third Milestone
(no video this month - text available upon request)

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.

ISSN 2652-6875