



1. Covenant Day Message

United in the Covenant - Pilgrims of Hope

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

As we begin this Holy Easter Season, I wish you many Blessings and greetings from the shrine and pray that you have a hope-filled, joyful and blessed Easter season.

During this year we are striving to become pilgrims of hope through our union with Our Blessed Mother and our Father and founder in our Covenant of Love. Through our Mother Thrice Admirable, may we become pilgrims of hope and be fruitful for our Schoenstatt family, for our own families, our parishes, our work places and the society in which we live.

In this season of Easter I would like to share with you an extract from a sermon that Father Kentenich gave on Easter Sunday 29 March 1964, in St Michael's Parish church in Milwaukee. He said in part:

“.....He has risen, Alleluia, Alleluia! That means not only that Christ has risen from the dead but that through his resurrection and all that he suffered in connection with the resurrection, he has obtained for us the grace that one day our bodies will also rise again and that our souls will have life everlasting. And if we would like to know whether we are interiorly disposed and prepared to take part in this rejoicing of the liturgy, then I think we should picture in our minds the reaction of the men and women at the resurrection.

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They rejoiced at the message of the angel. So we could say – if we have the faith, are as unshakeably faithful as the Mother of God, if we love Christ like St John, and if we make reparation for our sins like St Peter did, then we have the right, every right, today and later to join in the Alleluia, which should never cease in our lives.

If we ponder over Our Lady, is she truly for us an ideal of faith? Did she believe implicitly in all happenings of her life? – Believe in the coming of the Messiah, in the work of the redemption, believe in the divine Person, in his divine mission?

No obstacle was too great for the Mother of God to overcome. It did not matter whether the Saviour had to flee, or for his sake the small children were murdered; or whether she came face to face with his helplessness as an infant as he lay in the manger.

All these things did not stop or hinder her believing. She believed. She believed in his divine Person, in the coming of the Messiah and the messianic task of the Only Begotten.

They rejoiced at the message of the angel

Even now, after Christ had been so cruelly mishandled by his enemies, when the faith of the apostles was shaken – she believed, even as she stood at the foot of the Cross.

We know what the Scriptures mean by the word 'Stabat'. She did not merely stand beside the Crucified physically, but she stood faithfully to the Crucified.

What is the meaning of this? What did the Resurrection mean to her?

It merely confirmed her unshakeable faith. Hence, exultant joy! We take it as a matter of course that after her having participated in his measureless suffering, she also shared in his immeasurable joy.



My dear listeners, am I then correct when I say: If we also believe as the Mother of God did, then we may rejoice with the Church at Easter. We may take part in her rejoicing. In this spirit we wish each other a blessed and joyful Easter. That means, we wish each other first and foremost a growth of an all-embracing and living faith.

Once more, if we really have tried and continue to try, to the best of our ability, to give our hearts to Our Lord, so too we shall take part in the joy of Easter. Therefore, when we wish each other a happy and joyful Easter it means we wish each other a greater love towards Our Saviour."

This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad

(Psalm 117)

Wishing you and your family, many blessings and joys for this Easter Season.

United in our Covenant of Love,

Shirley Hall

If we also believe as the Mother of God did, then we may rejoice with the Church at Easter

2 Covenant of Love Information Session

On Sunday, 9th of March, a Covenant of Love information session was held at Mt Schoenstatt with over 40 people in attendance. The purpose of the session was to introduce the Schoenstatt Covenant of Love with our Mother Thrice Admirable to people in a simple and concise manner, explaining what it is, what it involves, who can make a Covenant of Love and how this can be done. The goal was to provide enough information about the Covenant of Love by the end of the session so that people could discern and decide for themselves if this was a pathway for them, thereby drawing themselves into an ever deeper and more concrete relationship with our Blessed Mother.

During the session, there was also a short video of testimonies shown of people who had already made their Covenant of Love and what it means for them. We were also blessed to have a short live testimony given by Sr. M. Rita, explaining how she came to make her Covenant of Love and how she lives out of this covenant daily as a Schoenstatt Sister of Mary. The session went a little over an hour and was followed by afternoon tea where participants were able to ask further questions in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

For those wishing to make their Covenant of Love, one more follow-up session was held at the end of March.



This briefly provided some more history about the first Covenant of Love made by our father and founder, Father Joseph Kentenich, as well as looking at the concrete practical details of making the Covenant of Love. There are several people interested in following Our Lady's invitation, and the time when they will enter into the Covenant of Love is now being planned.

In the future, we hope to run these information sessions again and on a regular basis in order to make the Covenant of Love better known and more accessible to those who would like to learn more about the core of Schoenstatt's spirituality. Please keep these participants in your prayers and feel free to encourage others to attend these sessions in the future if you know of someone who might be interested.

All for the greater glory of God through Mary!

Sr. M. Olivia



3 Women's Lenten Reflection Day

"HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT"

The theme for our first Reflection Day this year was very appropriate as we are all Pilgrims of Hope celebrating this Jubilee Year. There were 54 ladies who attended so it was a busy time with sharing our thoughts on how we see Hope in our daily lives.

Being Lent in this Jubilee year added a deeper dimension, as seen in our theme for the day. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was offered as well as Holy Mass in which we prayed for our Holy Father, these being the three conditions to be able to receive a plenary Indulgence at one of the Jubilee Sites – our Schoenstatt Shrine being one of the three designated Jubilee Sites in the Parramatta Diocese.

After lunch, we discussed ways we can seize Hope in our Lenten activities:

1. Get rid of the lazy addiction to evil.
2. Do something that hurts
3. Don't remain indifferent
4. Pray: Make our hearts like yours.
5. Take part in the sacraments
6. Prayers
7. Fasting
8. Almsgiving
9. Help the poor
10. Evangelize

Before our day finished, Sister provided us with some quotes for Reflection. The quote which stood out to me was from Fr. Kentenich "Prayer is a heart-to heart dialog between God and his creature. A dialog of love."

One point which remains with me is that nothing can separate us from God's Love and prayer can open the door to Hope. Sometimes though we may question God when things go wrong in our lives, we still have the expectation that good things will come to us from God. Hope is a wonderful gift from God. We know and understand that with Hope we shall be with God one day.



Some other echoes from the day:

'I really enjoyed Sr. Mary Louise's women's reflection day about Hope. It made me think about what 'hope' means to me in my everyday life, and the decisions that I make.

I realized that my entire existence is driven by hope. When I hit crossroads in my life, 'hope' keeps me motivated despite life's disappointments.

My key takeaway from the reflection day is knowing that 'hope' is certainty in God's will, and that whatever happens in my life I must never give up, I 'must keep going'.

"I always enjoy walking into the family hall at Mt Schoenstatt and seeing so many faces I know from our Women's League and also a few new women. The theme for the Reflection Day was "Hope Does not Disappoint". We talked about Hope and the painting of George Watt's artwork, Hope. We also spoke about Lent being a journey and that nothing can separate us from God's Love."

"As always, the atmosphere was uplifting and joyful and through the inputs we were given food for thought to help us in our spiritual striving."

"For many years we have had mothers and daughters who come together and this year we had a family of three generations."

“The Holy Father calls on Catholics not to be satisfied with having Hope, we must radiate Hope’. In the times of quiet prayer and in the inputs, Sr. Mary Louise inspired us in new ways to prepare our Hearts to strive through this Lenten season. The day also made us more aware of this being a special jubilee year.

Our Shrine is a gift of Hope from our Lady and as women we are called in a special way to be Christ bearers, bringing hope to our families and World. I am looking forward to our May reflection day and I know many of the other women also enjoy these special days together. In this special Jubilee year, maybe we can reach out and bring someone new to the reflection day, to visit the Shrine and also make them aware of the gift offered during this Jubilee year.”



Thank You to Sister Mary-Louise for the lovely day and for sending us all home with our hearts full of Hope.

Anne, Michelle, Ann and Sheila.

4. Testimony from Fr Avi Mello Schoenstatt Father

Pope Francis and his Marian vision of the Church An outstanding personality and love for Our Lady

It is with great joy that I present this testimony in gratitude to Pope Francis, with whom I have had the honour of maintaining a relationship since 2007. I had the grace of working alongside him at the Aparecida Conference, an experience that profoundly marked my life, especially because of his humility, depth of thought and ecclesial spirit. At the time, I never imagined that he would one day become Pope.

From the beginning, his personality and religious spirit impressed me, as did his love for Our Lady. In Aparecida, we had meaningful conversations about the importance of Mary’s presence in the final document of the Conference and how Mary’s example and intercession should permeate all dimensions of the Church’s life, especially in the life of the Latin American people, evangelized through the hands of Our Lady. The Marian history of our American continent has deep roots. Evangelization took place in a Marian,

Guadalupan way and, in South America, the presence of Mary accompanied the evangelizers, who brought the cross of Christ together with an image of Our Lady. Pope Francis bears the legacy of this tradition.

“She is my Mother”: Testimonies of the Pope’s Marian devotion

I would like to share some stories about the Pope’s relationship with Mary. I had the privilege of interviewing him on this subject, which resulted in the book “She is my Mother” (Pope Francis’ Encounters with Mary, 2014).

As a member of the Schoenstatt Movement, I always felt the link that the Pope drew between me and Our Lady. During World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro (2013), when I was his interpreter, he gave me Marian items as a gift. Realizing that I didn’t have a present for him, I remembered an image of the Pilgrim Mother that a Schoenstatt

Sister of Mary had given me to have the Pope bless.

Looking at the image, I felt it was the perfect gift. When I gave it to him, he hugged it, kissed it and asked me to bless it, which surprised me. Then he said: "I often give away the gifts I receive, but this one I will keep" Since then, the image has accompanied him, at his bedside, on his bedside table.



In 2014, he shared with the Schoenstatt Family: "Some time ago, a Schoenstatt Father gave me an image of the Mother. And I have it on the table next to my bed. And every morning, when I get up, I touch it and pray. It's a secret I wanted to share with you"

He also emphasized the importance of Mary as our mother, leaving beautiful messages for the Schoenstatt Family: "We have no right to have an orphan mentality. That is to say, the Christian has no right 'to feel like an orphan'. You have a Mother. We have a Mother. (...) She is a Mother not only because she gives us life, but also because she educates us in the faith. It is very different to seek and grow in the faith without the help of Mary. It is something else. It is like growing in faith, yes, but in a Church that feels like an orphanage. A Church without Mary is an orphanage. Above all, she educates us, helps us to grow, accompanies us, awakens our conscience. She knows how to stir our conscience to bring about repentance".

Mary and the culture of encounter and covenant

Pope Francis highlights the importance of Mary as the one who helps us to live the culture of



centre of Schoenstatt spirituality. "The culture of encounter is the culture of the covenant. And that brings about solidarity. (...) It means creating bonds, not destroying bonds. And today, we are living in this culture, in this culture of the provisional, which is a culture which destroys bonds. (...) " So, a culture of encounter, which creates genuine unity, and it is the unity of holiness, do you understand? Which leads to the culture of encounter.

A Marian church: firmness, tenderness and mercy

The Pope's vision of Our Lady is that of a mother who is always present in the midst of her people, a disciple and missionary of Jesus. For him, when we speak of Mary, we are also speaking of the Church.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis teaches that everything we say about Mary should be applied to the Church and to every baptized person, quoting a text by Isaac of Stella.

A Church that should be a mother like Mary, firm, strong and tender, capable of living the revolution of tenderness. A missionary Church, with open doors, that welcomes, cares for and embraces all those in need, especially those who are on the peripheries of society. A Church like a field hospital, offering first aid, welcoming and caring.

Pope Francis wants a Church with Mary's maternal care. His 12 years of pontificate have shown us this, with the declaration of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and the synodal spirit, seeking that "everyone, everyone, everyone" be welcomed into the bosom of the Church, feeling at home, regardless of their moral history. The Church invites us to the fullness of the theological virtues

fundamental value, but the starting point is always openness, welcoming and listening.

The Pope hopes that we can turn the Church into a maternal Church, with the traits of Mary, a Marian Church.

Fr. Alexandre Awi Mello, Isch.

Currently, he is the superior general of the Secular Institute of the Schoenstatt Fathers. Masters in theology at the Higher School of Philosophy and Theology in Vallendar, Germany. Doctor in Mariology from the University of Dayton, USA. He was professor of Pastoral Theology and Systematic Theology at the Paulo VI Institute in

Londrina (PR); at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, Londrina; at UNISAL, of the Salesians; and at the São Bento Faculty of Philosophy and Theology. He collaborated with Cardinal Bergoglio during the Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops' Council held in Aparecida and accompanied the Pontiff on the occasion of the XXVIII World Youth Day, in 2013, in Rio de Janeiro. He was secretary of the Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life and advisor to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

Source: formacao.cancaonova.com

Translation: Maribel Acaron (From: Schoenstatt.com)

5. Jubilee Pilgrimage - Ryde Region

22 March 2025 was such a grace-filled, blessed day and joyful trip to Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa. Together with the PMA coordinators, Schoenstatt Members and Schoenstatt friends from the Ryde region we made a Jubilee Year Pilgrimage to the Shrine. I reflected on the theme 'Let us journey together in hope'. We were about 28 'pilgrims of hope' who travelled by coach and at least 17 came with private vehicles. Yes, as Pope Francis said, 'Lent is a time to confront both personal and collective struggles with faith and compassion'. Similarly, we compared our journey to the Israelites' exodus from slavery in Egypt. The pilgrims were inspired that on the day of pilgrimage, all were on time, and it appeared that nobody wanted to be late. Our coach driver was polite and hospitable. We started with the Exorcism prayer and recitation of the Holy Rosary, followed by Schoenstatt information and logistics. As we travelled along the motorway a light shower of rain and clouds followed us, but it did not last, and the sun came out again.

We arrived in Mulgoa and were welcomed warmly by the Sisters Elizabeth, Myrna, Rita and Olivia. The pilgrims were so glad to meet the Sisters and felt at home. Our program as follows: Introduction talk by Sr Elizabeth, Personal prayer and the possibility of Reconciliation with Fr. Pawel, Holy Mass in the Shrine and the sealing of the



Covenant of Love by Grace Chan followed by lunch. After lunch, we continued our personal prayer in the Shrine and reconciliation followed by Devotional Prayer led by Sr Rita and final prayers. The Reconciliation came alive spiritually. Furthermore, the pilgrims visited the Father Room with take-home inspirations. We departed Mulgoa by 2.30pm. The pilgrims were overwhelmingly inspired, 'on fire', joyful and some were quiet and reflective, appearing blessed and glowing, 'Hallowed'. As we reflected on the day, thoughts of 'am I really on a journey? ...' or I am standing

still or not moving or immobilized by hopelessness/fear or reluctant to move out of my comfort zone?' May we realize and hope that all of us called to conversion are pilgrims in this life. It was such a rewarding experience.

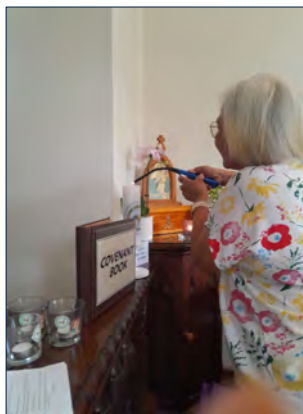
Some insights from the pilgrims are as follows.

'Mulgoa is a magical place; I am glad I finally got here. The picture of Mother Mary above the altar is enchanting. I could look at it for hours. I brought her light and love home with me. I hope it works its best on (name). My mother was always very devoted to Mary. Thank you for a great day today. The Sisters were wonderful.'



'It was a very nice day, organized, special and spiritual. The Nuns were fantastic, and I will go again when I have the chance. Thank you'

'Let's plan another day'



'The most serene and calming day shared at Schoenstatt on Saturday. A sense of love and belonging. God bless you all'

'Number one coordination, the talk very good and excellent'

'Such a wonderful day'

48 hours after, the pilgrims were still on fire, joyful and peaceful...talking about it.

One pilgrim said 'she placed all her worries and struggles in the jar.... despite writing too long' Another pilgrim said, 'I hope soon my brother will open his heart also'. And still others:

'We were very happy'

'We were all very blessed ...thank you for organizing the pilgrimage'

Edna Aldana



6. Twenty Four Hours for the Lord at Mt Schoenstatt

“24 Hours for the Lord” is now in its 12th year. It was begun by Pope Francis in 2014 as a Lenten initiative. The universal Church was encouraged to offer “24 Hours for the Lord” centred on the sacrament of confession in the context of Eucharistic adoration.

Churches around the world have been encouraged to participate, staying open for prayer and with priests available to hear confessions for 24 hours on the eve of the fourth Sunday of Lent.

At Mount Schoenstatt this initiative has been taken up every year and this year from March 28–29 it was special because participants were also able to receive the plenary indulgence being offered by the Church in this Jubilee Year. Since Bishop Vincent, the Bishop of our local diocese announced that the Schoenstatt Shrine at Mulgoa would be one of three places in the Parramatta Diocese where pilgrims would be able to receive the plenary indulgence with the usual conditions, we were keen to make people in the diocese aware of the “24 Hours for the Lord” and invitations were sent to all the local parishes.

Our 24 hours began with Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Pawel OP at 6pm on the Friday evening after which Confession was offered for a couple of hours. Several groups took responsibility for praying and offering appropriate texts for reflection at various times throughout the 24 hours. The adoration continued during the night with a few people braving the night hours. The conclusion was Holy Mass at 5pm on the Saturday which was preceded by the offer of the opportunity for Confession once again. There were about 50 people present at both Masses and many pilgrims took the opportunity to pray through night and day.



After Mass on the Friday evening there was an opportunity for some fellowship in the Pilgrims’ Centre and the hot soup and buns were very much appreciated. Many thanks to the organisers and volunteers who made this initiative once again possible.



Lower Photos:
Alphonsus Fok/
Diocese of
Parramatta



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/>



Events

- Covenant Sundays – Third Sunday of each month
11am Mulgoa, NSW; 3pm Wantirna, VIC; 3pm Mount Richon, WA
- Men at the Shrine – Second Wednesday each month 8–9pm Shrine, Mulgoa
- Shrine Time – for young adults – Fourth Sunday each month 7–8pm Shrine, Mulgoa

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 April	Jesus and Mary give us hope https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia
Video for March	Mary's Fiat in everyday life https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GFiNjQXKLLY
Video for February	The Consecration Prayer gives us hope anew each day, how our Covenant of Love invites us to hope. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGJt4KJMYXU&t=11s
Video for January	Meaning and Purpose of the Jubilee Year 2025 https://youtu.be/fkbxsbnZKRE

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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