



June 18 2026 Volume 7 Number 6

## *United in the Covenant Pilgrims of Hope*

### 1 Covenant Day Message

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Blessings and greetings for this Covenant Day – 18<sup>th</sup> June. We are now almost halfway through this year and well into our novena praying for vocations for the Schoenstatt Sisters community, during this, their Jubilee Year.



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This month in the novena, we focus on the work of the sister's community in the Philippines. Although the sisters still did not have many vocations in Australia, they responded to the request to send sisters to that country. The sisters saw this as a call from God, and through their trust and confidence in the Blessed Mother, and the Heavenly Father, accepted this new mission with courage.

Mindful of the teaching of Fr. Kentenich, the sisters would surely have reached out to bring Schoenstatt's mission to the Philippines with trust and faith in Divine Providence.

When speaking about faith in Divine Providence, Father Kentenich said:

“Whoever knows the history and soul of our family, will know that our victorious faith in our mission is rooted in this faith in Divine Providence. Faith in a mission in all its degrees, even to being gripped with zeal for a mission, is part of the essence of Christianity ..... It draws us in a mysterious and profound way into the stream of the God-Man's mission. In the same way as he was, we have also to be gripped with zeal for our mission and its victory”  
*(Kentenich Reader, Vol.II, P.171)*

“If we as a Family talk about a mission, we mean a mission and task we did not look for, but which was given to us by God. Through faith in Divine Providence and from the history and destiny of the Family, we can recognize that God is behind it and not human folly, presumption and pretension. To put it more precisely: from the insignificance of the instruments, the magnitude of the difficulties that had to be overcome, and the successes attained”. (*Kentenich Reader, Vol.II, P.172*)

Are we receptive to the wishes and will of God in our lives and how do we recognise what God is asking of us each day? If we believe that God has given each of us a unique mission, then we need to be attentive to what He is saying to us in all circumstances, through people, in our workplaces, among our families and friends. Are we able to set aside our own wants and needs and learn to be totally open to accepting the mission that God is giving us each day.

I wish you all many blessings and graces from our Consors Patris Shrine as we continue to follow the example of our Blessed Mother in saying ‘yes’ to all that the Heavenly Father asks of us. United in our Covenant of Love, our Blessed Mother, and our father and founder, may we find hope, peace and joy in our lives.

Shirley Hall



## 2 Priestly Ordination of Father Kentenich, 8 July 1910

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We give thanks for the gift of our founder's priesthood and the fruitfulness of his priestly service over 58 years. On Friday, July 8, 1910, eight new priests were ordained in the house chapel of the Pallottine Limburg Mission House. The youngest of these, not yet 25 years of age, was Joseph Kentenich.

The following Sunday, July 10, in the same house chapel, Fr. Kentenich celebrated his solemn First Mass. Fr. Kolb, the provincial superior, was the assisting priest.

A solemn First Mass in his home parish in Gymnich followed on July 24. The Mass was in St. Cunibert's Church and afterwards the family gathered to celebrate at the home of Hubert and Sibilla Blatzheim (siblings and cousins of his mother).

Joseph's ordination and First Mass were a cause of great joy for his mother. After many years of sacrifice and prayer she saw him reach his goal. For the occasion she gave him an ornate 4-foot (120 cm) wooden crucifix. She had this dedication hand-carved in ornate letters on the back: "Dear Joseph! Your Mother gives you this Cross for your First Mass".

Joseph's ordination card placed a kind of headline over his life's vocation. The motto he chose was: "Unite, O my God, all minds in truth and all hearts in love!" To this he added: "Heart of Jesus, I trust in you" and "Sweet Heart of Mary, be my salvation"

*Grant, O my God, that all minds maybe united in truth and all hearts in love. (From the back of the Mass card for his first Mass)*

Over 50 years later, in 1962, he commented on the spirit in which he embarked on the priesthood. Speaking of himself in the third person he said: Throughout his life he was inspired by a single great ideal: God and souls. For him all else was secondary. All else was resolutely ordered and subjected to this great idea of his life. Hence, he always sought to open souls for God and unite them inseparably with God. And this made it imperative for him to see to it that the soul be opened and remain open— wherever possible to its inmost depths— to God and the divine.



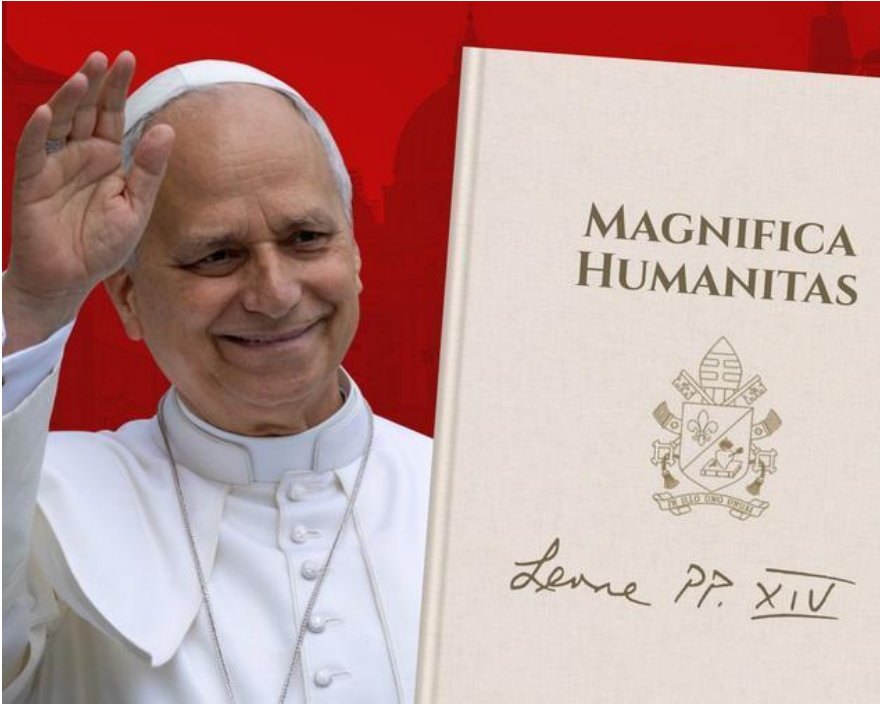
Fr. Kentenich understood his entire priesthood to be in the light of service to God and others: Throughout his life he was inspired by a single great ideal: God and souls. For him all else was secondary. All else was resolutely ordered and subjected to this great idea of his life. *(From: "Brushstrokes of a Father", Volume 1)*

### 3 First encyclical from Pope Leo XIV: Magnifica humanitas

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*Artificial intelligence is the focus of the first encyclical signed by Leo XIV. The Pope explores the topic in depth across five chapters.*

*Humanity, created by God in all its grandeur, is today facing a pivotal choice: either to construct a new Tower of Babel or to build the city in which God and humanity dwell together.”*



The opening words of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, summarize its underlying reasons and purpose.

Published on Monday, May 25, the Pope signed the encyclical on May 15, the 135th anniversary of the promulgation of Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum*.

Pope Leo XIV has taken up the legacy of his predecessor, writing a social encyclical which addresses one of the principal challenges of the contemporary age: **artificial intelligence**.

Divided into five chapters, *Magnifica humanitas* has an underlying premise: technology is not “a force antagonistic to humanity” (4), nor is it “inherently evil” (9). However, “technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate, and use it.

Therefore, Pope Leo XIV appeals for people to build “for the common good” and to “remain human,” following a courageous mentality of shared responsibility and communion, so that the world “will come to recognize the human heart as the place where God desires to dwell” (16).

#### **Grandeur of humanity**

At the conclusion of his first encyclical, Pope Leo XIV invites the faithful to navigate this new technological era in the light of the Gospel, following “a sober yet demanding program of Christian life.”

Even in the age of AI, concludes the Pope, “we may bear witness to the grandeur of humanity, in which God has made His dwelling.

The Encyclical can be found on the Vatican Website: <https://www.vatican.va>

## 4 Remembering Sr. M Rebecca Sampang

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*Adapted from the Eulogy given by Sr. M Isabell*

The heavenly Father called Sr. M Rebecca home to himself in the late afternoon of 8 May after a battle with cancer which lasted almost 17 years. When in June 2025 she received the news of her impending “end of life” she consciously prepared herself for this last stretch of her way homeward to the Father. She was filled with gratitude toward the Triune God, our Sisters’ family and all who accompanied her on this difficult journey, day after day.

Sr. M. Rebecca was born on 13 December 1967 in Quezon City, Philippines, the eldest of three children. In 1975 her parents migrated to Australia, where Sr. M. Rebecca grew up and came to see herself wholeheartedly as Australian, even as her Filipino heritage continued to shape her character in subtle and beautiful ways.

Sr. M Rebecca did her initial training in our community in Schoenstatt Germany, commencing her novitiate on 5 August 1995. She received the Marian Sisters’ dress on 3 September of the same year. Sr. M. Rebecca returned to our province on 7 February 2000 but undertook further periods of training in Schoenstatt where she sealed her final commitment to God and to our family on 6 December 2003.



In both the East and West of Australia, Sr. M. Rebecca worked with the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate and served the Movement with particular love for youth and young adults. From 2007–2008 she was Youth Coordinator and, in this capacity, also an event organiser for WYD08 in Sydney.

The first signs of her illness appeared during 2009: cancer initially detected in her eyes, later spreading throughout her body. She lived through alternating seasons of hope and suffering, including an emergency spinal operation. Her surrender in this moment was itself a profound act of faith. Her spiritual depth shone through in her writing as well, especially when she shared with our sisters’ family some “Words of Hope” in connection with our centennial celebrations. What she wrote became a quiet source of encouragement for many: “My cancer diagnosis was a tremendous “turning point” in my life. But it was also a moment in which I began to tangibly experience the reality of the Covenant of Love with Our Lady. I can truly say that the Covenant of Love was the hope and the light that became alive in the darkest of nights for me. Why? Simply because when everything, humanly speaking, began to break away, I held on to what I believe would never change... I told myself: ‘being in Covenant with Our Lady means that you are never alone.’ So, I consciously prayed to her before every treatment; invited her to be with me through each procedure.”

Sr. M Rebecca grew up in a Catholic family who valued faith and education, ensuring she attended Catholic schools. She remained deeply connected to her family and was proud of them. When no one could be present in Schoenstatt for her reception, she sent a heartfelt fax to her family, thanking them for their support and asking for their continued prayers. Even from afar, she drew strength from the bonds that shaped her.

This same gratitude was expressed to our province sisters at that time and throughout her whole journey. Even in times of great suffering, gratitude marked her life.

Gifted in many practical areas, Sr. M. Rebecca possessed strong social and communication skills. She loved her work in the Movement and was, in turn, deeply loved by those she served. Even throughout her long illness, she continued to accompany young women with remarkable dedication, offering retreats and reflection days that touched many lives. The prayers, affection, and heartfelt gratitude that surrounded her during this time were a clear testimony to the relationships she had nurtured so faithfully.

Sr. M. Rebecca's religious disposition was simple, sincere, and deeply rooted. She was a friend of the saints, turning to them with trust and affection. Her love for the Blessed Mother, especially the Immaculata, shaped her deeply. All her suffering she offered up for the Capital of Grace, for our Province intentions, most especially for vocations. During our Jubilee Year she made a conscious and deliberate decision to offer her suffering specifically for the grace and intentions of the Jubilee.

We give thanks for all that Sr M Rebecca contributed to our province and to our family. It seems that she has been gathered by God as a ripe fruit at the dawn of the second century of our family's history.



## 5 Annual Marian Pilgrimage, Mulgoa

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*Sr. M Rita Baysari*

This year's May Pilgrimage Day at Mount Schoenstatt Mulgoa, on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> May, was a beautiful and joyful celebration with over 900 people in attendance. Although the evening before had rained the weather on the day itself was superb: overcast and yet nice and warm with not a drop of rain! The amazing efforts of the volunteer team in setting up the stage, altar, flowers, chairs, tents, sun umbrellas and food stalls added to the festive ambiance as people began to arrive. The motto of the Pilgrimage Day was "Mary, Light of our Hope".



Shirley Hall opened the day in prayer and Sr M. Elizabeth gave a warm welcome to everyone including four bus groups, including a bus group from Melbourne, as well as other parish and cultural groups. Three priests were available for confession: Fr Pawel OP, Fr Peter OP and Fr Sheldon CRS and they were kept busy right up until the beginning of holy Mass. Bishop Tony Percy, an auxiliary Bishop of Sydney Diocese arrived early and made himself available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The flag procession at the start of Holy Mass was a magnificent view. This really highlighted the international character not only of Schoenstatt but also of the many different cultures of the pilgrims present on the day. The choir from Mary Immaculate Parish, Bossley Park provided outstanding music for the Holy Mass and did a great job in learning a few of the Schoenstatt hymns.

One of the main highlights of the annual Marian Pilgrimage each year is the sending out of new Pilgrim Mothers. This year, six new coordinators were presented with a Pilgrim Mother Shrine which will now travel from home to home, bringing the blessings from the Shrine to many more homes and families. In addition, hundreds of existing coordinators also renewed their commitment, were blessed and sent out by Bishop Percy. The bishop visibly expressed his surprise and joy at the number of coordinators that came forward commenting: "This is nearly half the congregation!"



Various international food stalls had been set up and were ready to serve lunch following Mass. There was such a beautiful, joyful community atmosphere amongst the crowd. Many people gathered in small or larger groups around the grounds to eat lunch or went shopping in the Pilgrim Centre. The Sister's Jubilee stall was very busy throughout the afternoon with many people taking the opportunity to buy a souvenir or other article to take home to remember the day.

The notice boards and banners also offered a great chance to get into conversation with the sisters and ask questions. The Shrine too was well visited in the afternoon with many people taking time out for a moment of silent prayer.

At 2pm approximately 300 people gather in the valley in front of the Home of Light to begin the Eucharistic procession. Pilgrims followed behind the Blessed Sacrament, praying and meditating upon the Glorious Mysteries of the Holy Rosary. In between each decade Fr Pawel gave a blessing. Alternatively, those who were unable to take part in the procession were given the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which was also very well attended.

To end the beautiful day there was a short devotion and final benediction. Sr. M. Rita thanked all those present, benefactors, sponsors, priests and most especially the team of volunteers who organised the day. She also announced that the next major function at Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa will be the centenary celebration of the Sisters Community which will be held on Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> September with Archbishop Fisher OP, Archbishop of Sydney, being the main celebrant. All are invited to attend.



## 6 31 May 2026 – May Pilgrimage - WA

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With plans in place for our annual May Pilgrimage to be held outdoors under gazebos in front of the Shrine, including our procession, things changed when the weather forecast predicted rain and damaging winds. By Wednesday of the previous week, it was clear that this plan would not be possible. We therefore had to move the event indoors to Emilie House and send messages to all the Coordinators of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate, Movement members, and anyone else who would be attending.

Saturday was cold, wet, and windy, and the forecast was still predicting damaging winds and rain. Needless to say, we pressed on with the preparations.

Sunday morning was an early start, with more setting up to do. A small band of helpers secured metal poles along the verandah and then attached the sides of a large marquee to provide some shelter from the wind and rain. This was necessary because we needed to set up the afternoon tea outside under the verandah. The newly refurbished Emilie House was needed to allow maximum space for chairs for the expected crowd. We set up as many chairs as we could, although we thought there might not be the usual number of people.

We prepared a beautiful display of the PMA, along with a flower-and-candle rosary placed on tables, and a temporary altar for the Blessed Sacrament for our Benediction.

By 1.30pm, people started arriving, bringing their Pilgrim Mothers as well as lots of food. Everyone was cheerful and happy to be indoors. Our starting time was 2.30pm.

We welcomed around 120 people, and it was wonderful to hear everyone singing along with the choir. Fr Grant, the leaders of the decades of the rosary, our choir, and our readers all did a great job. We even had two young girls light our battery-operated candles as we prayed the decades of the rosary.



There were four new Coordinators accepted as Pilgrim Mother Coordinators (three ladies and one couple).  
It was good to be indoors while the rain and wind continued outside.

Sr Lisette was even able to show a short video about the upcoming 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Sisters of Mary. Sr Rebecca was pictured in it, so all the Pilgrim Mother people who remembered her were able to see her in the video. Before leaving, people were asked to 'save the date' for this anniversary celebration, which will take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

Philomena Theseira



## 7 Information and Links

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### 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 – Second Sunday each month 7-8pm Shrine, Mulgoa

#### ➤ Links:

Official Schoenstatt Website	<a href="https://www.schoenstatt.com">https://www.schoenstatt.com</a>
Schoenstatt Australian Website	<a href="http://www.schoenstatt.org.au">http://www.schoenstatt.org.au</a>
Our YouTube Channel	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia">https://www.youtube.com/schoenstattaustralia</a>
Western Australian Website	<a href="https://schoenstattwa.org.au">https://schoenstattwa.org.au</a>
Schoenstatt Men Website	<a href="https://schoenstatt-men-australia.mailchimpsites.com">https://schoenstatt-men-australia.mailchimpsites.com</a>

#### ➤ Zoom Gatherings for Covenant Days

– 18<sup>th</sup> of the Month 7.30 – 8.30 pm AEDT

### Videos

June 2026 The Founding of Schoenstatt in the Philippines - **Zoom Meeting June 18**

May 2026 - History of our Australian Schoenstatt Shrines – <https://youtu.be/lfvNWDQKWWA>

April 2026 – History of Schoenstatt in Queensland – <https://youtu.be/FHXwwNnggvc>

March 2026 - History of Schoenstatt Family in Melbourne <https://youtu.be/a9EAWZ69i0c>

February 2026 - Mary, our Consors Patris Queen <https://youtu.be/447oQFt0yDY>

**Note: These videos don't upload from the Schoenstatt Australia YouTube site**

### DON'T FORGET .....

#### **We are all Schoenstatt" - A Challenge Shared by All**

It is time to unite, embrace our origin and spread together our Covenant for the future. The International Schoenstatt Movement continues to need our support.

#### **How to Donate**

Donations can be made through various channels, mainly through the [Donorbox](#) platform.

#### ➤ Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome.

Please send to [movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au](mailto:movtooffice@schoenstatt.org.au) before the beginning of each month



**LinkTree** - a platform where you can view and access all essential links and social media for Schoenstatt Australia.



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