



August 18 2026 Volume 7 Number 8

United in the Covenant Pilgrims of Hope

1 Covenant Day Message

Dear Schoenstatt Family and Friends,

Greetings and blessings from our Schoenstatt Shrines for this Covenant Day – 18th August. Just the day before we celebrate our Covenant Sunday, we commemorate the Solemnity of The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (15th).



In fulfilling the mission given to our Blessed Mother by the Heavenly Father, Mary became a perfect and authentic witness to holiness. The Church looks at the Blessed Mother as a sign of true hope and comfort for the pilgrim people of God.

In our Novena for this month, we look at the many pilgrimages that have taken place to Schoenstatt. There have been those people who have included in their travels overseas, a visit to original Schoenstatt, Germany. Sometimes this has been only one person, or a small group of people or a larger organised pilgrimage.

Many of those who have visited Schoenstatt and the Original Shrine, whether privately or as part of a group have experienced that we are all Schoenstatt. It doesn't

matter what language we speak, which country we come from, we all have our Lady as our Mother, we all have the Covenant of Love as our source of grace and strength, we have Father Kentenich as our spiritual father and we have the shrine as our home. This is a unity that we all share, and it reflects the mission that we share with each other and with Father Kentenich.

Already in 1958, on his 73rd Birthday, Father Kentenich said that he never believed that the mission he had received was just for himself. He said:

My dear Schoenstatt Family— I may say that all of you are drawn into my mission. This mission was not placed on my shoulders alone, but also upon the shoulders of all Schoenstatt children. God has called you to help me fulfil this great mission. Every one of us receives now this great mission — the mission of our dear Mother and Queen of Schoenstatt. It is a consolation to me that it does not rest on my shoulders alone. It is wonderful that you want to help me fulfil my great mission."

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As well as the many experiences shared during the pilgrimages, there have also been many Jubilees and Milestones that we have celebrated in our Schoenstatt Family here in Australia. These have allowed us to not only take an active part in these celebrations, both spiritually and practically, but have allowed us to deepen our understanding and commitment to Schoenstatt and our Covenant mission.

We want to give special thanks to Our Blessed Mother for all the gifts and graces she has given to us through our Shrines and for leading us through our Covenant of Love to the Heavenly Father.

Through our unity with each other in the Covenant of Love we share in Mary's mission for our present times.

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. As Pilgrims of hope, let us pray:

*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 PMA Reflection Day - Mary, our Mother and Queen!

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By: Agnes Aldana

What do we do amidst the cold winter season when the temperatures are between 8°C – 15°C. Yes, that was exactly how the weather was, possibly even a few degrees lower in Mulgoa, on Saturday 11th of July for the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate Reflection Day. However, after this cold start, it became a glorious sunny day, as a group of about 40 people accepted the invitation to attend the PMA Reflection Day, which was open for all people.

The day began with coffee, tea, biscuits and conversation as each one slowly made their way into the warm Family Hall at Mount Schoenstatt, Mulgoa. Sr. M. Rita, as the PMA Moderator for NSW, welcomed the attendees and theme of the day, as *'Mary, our Mother and Queen'*. In front of the altar, a large image of the Pilgrim Mother, known as the auxiliary (which is a replica of the first one carried by John Pozzobon) was set up. Beside that the participants were also invited to add their Pilgrim Mothers. In the middle a large rosary was formed with tea light candles in glasses. A jar with the contribution slips was also placed there. Sr. M. Rita reminded everyone that the first miracle performed by Jesus at the wedding feast of Cana was through the intercession of Mary and that this provides the foundations for our Contributions to the Capital of Grace, our gifts of love.

After a short opening prayer by Sr M Rita, Fr Pawel OP spoke about the Queenship of Mary throughout history and in the church. By reflecting on Mary's life and sacrifices he explained how she is our Mother and Queen. Through her single yes at the hour of the Annunciation, she became the Mother of God. Through her faithfulness standing at the foot of the cross Jesus gave her to us to be our very own Mother and entrusted us and the whole Church into her care.



Fr Pawel mentioned in his talk that in the lives of kings from the Old Testament the right of Queen was given to the mother of the King. Mary's queenship is rooted in Jesus, as she is the mother of the true King of Kings. She is our Queen by the power of grace. Again, in the Old Testament the Queen Mother had an important role as being a great intercessor and advocate for the people. Mary is our Queen Mother who intercedes for us and the whole Church and always advocates for us. The blessed Mother's queenship is always directed towards Jesus. Mary's dignity comes from her divine motherhood, from being a perfect humble disciple and cooperating in God's plan of salvation.

Fr Pawel OP also mentioned some prayers honouring our Blessed Mother as Queen, one being *'Salve Regina'* which has become a popular recessional hymn at Mass. Other references to Mary's queenship include the Litany of Loreto and the Fifth Glorious Mystery, the *'Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth'*. Finally, our own Schoenstatt consecration prayer begins precisely with that title: *'My Queen, my Mother'*. These are only some of the inspiring thoughts given by Father Pawel OP in his talk.

After this powerful talk there was morning tea and then a period of quiet time for adoration. Simultaneously those seeking a renewal of their relationship with God had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Following this we celebrated Holy Mass together. In his homily Fr. Pawel OP reflected on the words of the angel to Mary at the hour of Annunciation, as well as Mary's response and provided us with motivation and suggestions to how we too can say 'Yes' to God's plan in our lives.

During lunch, there was a big surprise for everyone, with the cutting of a cake to celebrate an early '*Au revoir*' for Sr. M. Rita as she prepares to go to Schoenstatt, Germany. She will leave at the end of September for further training and will be away for about six months.

In the afternoon, we prayed the holy Rosary together reflecting on the Joyful Mysteries. We formed a massive prayer circle around the large rosary formed by the glasses with tea light candles. As we prayed each decade, we included all our personal intentions, and one person ignited another tea light candle. Eventually the whole rosary was alight, and it was a very beautiful scene with a deep and prayerful atmosphere felt by all.



Following this, Sr M Rita spoke of the history of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate reflecting on how it all started with Venerable João Pozzobon in Brazil. She then went on to explain how the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate began here in Australia in 1985 through the dedication and love of Visnja Turner and Fr. Denis Foley. On 20th May 2001 the large auxiliary image of the blessed Mother was crowned as "Mother and Queen of the Australian People." This means that this year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of this coronation. For this reason, Sr M. Rita took the coronation prayer from 2001 and went through it line by line. It truly is fascinating to see how relevant and applicable this crowning prayer is even in today's situation.



We prayed the final devotion and prayer of thanksgiving to our *Mother and Queen* in the Shrine. It was a wonderful joy to see a new Pilgrim Mother being sent out from the Shrine at the end of this Reflection day. The day concluded fittingly with Benediction, and the singing of the hymn 'Salve Regina' - - - O loving O sweet Virgin Mary, our Mother and Queen!



3 Girls Day Out at the Shrine

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Throughout the year girls are invited during the school holidays to a Girls Day Out at the Shrine at Mulgoa. This was held once again during the last school holidays on Tuesday 14th & Wednesday 15th July with a great response for both days. The first day attracted 11 teenagers, all who have been to a Girls Day Out previously. The second day there were 22 girls, many for whom it was there first time coming to such an event. On both days there was a couple of young women volunteers who assisted in the group discussions and supervision throughout the days.

Six girls from the first group stayed overnight to assist as junior leaders for the following day which was aimed at the younger girls. The junior leaders had the opportunity to develop their leadership skills and did a fantastic job organising the games and running the craft session. Each day's program was filled with a variety of activities, games, singing, a rosary bushwalk, group discussions and craft activities. The schedule and content of both days were essentially the same but tailored to the different age groups.



The theme of the days was based on the topic of TRUST. After a few games the girls were asked to gather as many words as possible related to trust. This built the first part of the day as we discussed what trust meant in general and some characteristics related to being trustworthy. We then went on to discover some figures in the bible as well as some saints who displayed a great trust in God and explored how they can be examples and models for us. Finally, the girls discussed together what God has entrusted to us and how we can develop the skills and talents that he has given us to be great Marian Apostles.

One of the highlights of the days is the “Ask me Anything” session. The girls have the opportunity to ask Sr. M. Rita and the leaders any questions they might have. Many are hesitant at first but as soon as we start answering the first questions, the flood gates just seem to open, and it is very difficult to find an end to this session. On the second day in fact, we had to shorten the rosary bushwalk as the questions kept on coming. The girls really appreciated this time and gained a lot of new insights on the topics of faith, vocation, science and relationships.

Two songs accompanied the Girls Day Out. The camp song which many have come to know and love and “I trust your might” song which is in fact one of Schoenstatt's common prayers. At the end of the day the girls gathered in the shrine to bring their final thanksgivings to the blessed Mother for this very enjoyable and fruitful day. As a gift in return the girls presented to the blessed Mother, the new songs they had learnt. It was so beautiful to hear them sing with such great passion and devotion.



All the girls enjoyed themselves and new friendships and connections were made. They had an amazing time learning more about how we can trust God and Mary in all circumstances of our lives and how we too are entrusted with great things which we should love and cherish.

Sr. M. Rita Baysari



4 Shrine Time Winter Special - July 2026

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Shrine Time is a monthly Holy Hour in the Shrine at Mulgoa for youth and young adults which usually attracts about 10-15 young people from all over western Sydney. In the month July, Shrine Time was a little more special than usual as it was advertised as a 'Winter Special' with an added bonfire and social gathering. Last year the 'Winter Special' had a great response and was such a beautiful evening that with great enthusiasm it was requested once again this year.

On Sunday evening July 12th the Shrine was completely full, with even a few young people standing at the back of the Shrine to get away from the cold. The meditation given by Sr. M. Rita reflected on the Gospel of the day about the parable of the Sower. The key message emphasised that God is so generous with his love for us that he will seek us out no matter what situation we may find ourselves in. During the time of silence, the young people were invited to write a letter to Jesus or Mary as a form of prayer and surrender, and once completed they placed their letters into the jar to be later burnt in the bonfire.

During the evening Fr Pawel OP also made himself available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and was kept very busy with many young people taking up the invitation, which was a true blessing. A group of young adults from Our Lady of the Rosary, Kellyville assisted with creating a very beautiful, deep and prayerful atmosphere in the Shrine with their powerful and amazing voices. The time of prayer in the Shrine ended with Benediction.

We then gathered the benches around the fire pit and sat directly in front of the Shrine. It was such a joyful and peaceful atmosphere sitting, so to say, in the "shadow of the Shrine". Many enjoyed the roasted marshmallows, hot chocolate as well as the great company! An added joy was that Fr Johnson and Fr Pradeep, the Somascan priests from Glenmore Park, also joined us for the Holy Hour in the Shrine and the time around the bonfire.

Sr. M. Rita Baysari



5 Vale Chris Wilson

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This tribute brings together a Schoenstatt remembrance and the St Dominic's College testimony. Read together, they honour Chris Wilson's faith, devotion to Our Blessed Mother, family life, music ministry and lasting contribution to the communities he served.

VALE MR CHRIS WILSON

By now most of you will have heard of the passing of Chris Wilson. He died early on Monday morning, 20th July. His family were with him as they had been during his struggle with cancer. The funeral Mass for Chris was held on Wednesday 5th August at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Springwood.

The symbols placed on Chris' coffin reflected the essential elements of his life: his commitment to our Blessed Mother, his love for his wife and family, his deep love for music and his desire to share it with others. His Rosary beads reflected his spiritual life. The chain with a crucifix and Schoenstatt consecration medal, which he wore daily, reflected his deep love for Our Blessed Mother and his early connection with the Schoenstatt boys' groups.

Also on his coffin were his wedding ring, symbolising his deep love for his wife Julie and their five children; plectrums, expressing his love for music, which he shared to enrich the liturgical life of the Church, the education of students at St Dominic's College and the Schoenstatt Family during the May Pilgrimage days; and an Edmund Rice Award, which he received in 2022 in recognition of his commitment to bringing the Gospel to life, especially through music.

Chris grew up in a Schoenstatt family. His parents, Barbara and Jack Wilson were members of the first Schoenstatt family Group, the Foundation Group. Chris was, during his early years, involved in many activities of Schoenstatt, especially as part of the boys' groups.

For those who didn't know Chris personally during those early days of Schoenstatt, will surely have seen him at many of the May Pilgrimages. For many years Chris brought the band from St. Dominic's College, Penrith where he taught, to provide the music for the Pilgrimage Masses. In the later years, Chris and his family took over providing the music for the May Pilgrimage Masses as well as leading the singing. Chris was always at the Pilgrimage Masses until this year when his illness prevented him from attending.

Please keep Chris and his family in your prayers as they mourn the passing of their beloved husband, father and grandfather.

May he rest in peace.



Chris taught for many years at St Dominic's College, Penrith. The following testimony from the school offers a fuller picture of his influence as a teacher, colleague, musician and faith-filled member of that community.

— Tribute from St Dominic's College —

It is with great sadness that St Dominic's College announces the passing of Mr Chris Wilson.

After having fought illness with exceptional courage and grace, Chris passed away peacefully yesterday, surrounded by his beloved family. Our hearts and prayers are with his wife Julie, children and grandchildren.

Chris played a transformative role in shaping the culture and identity of St Dominic's.

For three decades, Mr Chris Wilson has been an integral part of the St Dominic's College community, dedicating his talents, passion and unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of thousands of students and staff through music, faith and service.

Commencing at the College on 15 July 1996, Chris played a transformative role in shaping the culture and identity of St Dominic's. Through his leadership of the Music Faculty, he has inspired generations of young men to discover and develop their musical talents, fostering creativity, confidence, discipline and a lifelong appreciation of music.

His commitment to excellence has contributed to outstanding HSC achievements and the success of countless students who have gone on to pursue careers and lifelong involvement in music, many of whom proudly remain connected to the College as members of our alumni community.

Chris' influence extended far beyond the classroom. Throughout his 30 years of service, he established and nurtured numerous ensembles, creating opportunities for students of all abilities to perform, collaborate and grow. His vision and dedication have seen the College host an extraordinary number of concerts, productions and showcase events, providing memorable experiences for students, families and the wider community.

A gifted composer and musician, Chris made an enduring contribution to the spiritual life of the College. Through the composition of original hymns and liturgical music, he has transformed the College's liturgical celebrations, helping generations of students engage more deeply with prayer and worship. Each year, he composed a hymn inspired by the College theme, creating a unique musical expression of the values and aspirations that underpin the St Dominic's community. These compositions became a defining feature of College Masses and liturgical gatherings, strengthening the connection between faith, music and community.

Chris' deep understanding of Catholic tradition and liturgy has been instrumental in shaping the College's Catholic identity. Through his leadership of music ministry, annual year-group singing sessions and countless liturgical celebrations, he fostered a culture of participation, reverence and Gospel-centred worship. His contribution in this area was formally recognised in 2022 when he was awarded the Edmund Rice Charter Leadership Award for Gospel Spirituality, a fitting acknowledgement of his profound impact on the faith life of the College.

Chris was a beautiful soul whose genuine kindness, gentle nature and humble presence drew people to him.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Chris was a trusted mentor, colleague and friend to staff and students alike. He possessed a rare warmth and quiet humour that immediately put people at ease, making everyone who crossed his path feel welcomed, valued and heard. Chris was a beautiful soul whose genuine kindness, gentle nature and humble presence drew people to him. He had an extraordinary ability to connect with others, offering encouragement, wisdom and unwavering support with grace and sincerity. Whether guiding young musicians, supporting colleagues through both challenges and celebrations, or simply taking the time to listen, Chris led by example. His kindness was shown equally to students and staff, and his generosity of spirit created lasting relationships built on trust and respect. He approached every interaction with patience, compassion and authenticity, leaving people feeling better for having spent time with him.

The legacy of Mr Chris Wilson cannot be measured solely by performances, awards or years of service. Rather, it is reflected in the lives he has enriched, the traditions he has established, the faith he has nurtured and the enduring culture of excellence, creativity and spirituality he has helped build at St Dominic's College.

Today, we celebrate the remarkable Mr Wilson and acknowledge the lasting impact he has made on generations of students, staff, families and alumni at St Dominic's.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.

May Chris rest in peace.



6 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

<https://www.schoenstatt.com>

Schoenstatt Australian Website

<http://www.schoenstatt.org.au>

Our YouTube Channel

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

Western Australian Website

<https://schoenstattwa.org.au>

Schoenstatt Men Website

<https://schoenstatt-men-australia.mailchimpsites.com>

- **Zoom Gatherings for Covenant Days** – 18th of the Month 7.30 – 8.30 pm AEDT

Videos

August 2026 – We give thanks for all our Schoenstatt Pilgrimages & Jubilee Celebrations
Zoom Meeting 18th August

July 2026 - The Founding and Development of the Pilgrim Mother Apostolate in Australia
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E6T-PeX3js>

June 2026 - The Founding of Schoenstatt in the Philippines –
<https://youtu.be/adWAhe4K8ZE>

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

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

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 before the beginning of each month



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