

Covenant Conquest

Monthly impulses for the Schoenstatt Girls' Youth,
group leaders and mothers from our Jubilee Family Shrine,
Sleepy Eye, Minnesota

October 18, 2016

From our Jubilee Family Shrine... many greetings for the covenant day
October 18, 2016

Dear Schoenstatt Girls' Youth,

It is once again October, the month of the rosary and the month of the covenant of love, the month in which we celebrate the founding of Schoenstatt. For us as Schoenstatt children, this month should be especially dear to our hearts...a Marian month and a month in which we remember and thank, in a special way, for all of the gifts and graces which we have experienced as a fruit of 102 years of the covenant of love with our Mother Thrice Admirable in her shrine.

In honor of this founding month, we will delve a little deeper into the first part of our year's motto: "Forever Firm", this time looking at it from the aspect of being firm in our foundation, the original covenant of love.

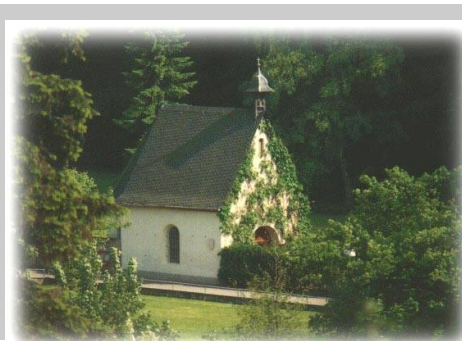
United in our RTA,
Sr. M. Faustina

Forever Firm...in our Covenant of Love

"No, my dear sodalists, I have not lost my trust in you. I know that we, by building on what we have already attained, shall make great progress in this year just as we set out to do in the last." (First Founding Document, paragraph 4)

These words were spoken 102 years ago on October 18, 1914 by our father and founder, Fr. Joseph Kentenich to the hero sodalists, in the talk which is now known as Schoenstatt's *Founding Document*. What Fr. Kentenich told the boys then holds true even more today: "by building on what we have already attained." What a firm foundation we have under our feet, a foundation which has been built by several generations of faithful Schoenstatt members who have daily brought their contributions to the capital of grace to our Mother in her shrine. If we want Schoenstatt to continue and flourish as it has in the past 100 years, we must continue to build upon this firm foundation. We must go back to our roots, to our history, so that we may preserve the original spirit of Schoenstatt, the original flame which burned in the hearts of the young hero sodalists.

"Even as I speak, my dear sodalists, I feel that I have struck the right note. Your hearts have caught fire. You have made my plan your own. With confidence I place it and its fulfillment into your hands." (Ibid) Once again, Fr. Kentenich speaks these words, this time to us, the new founding generation. He places "his plan", Schoenstatt, and its fulfillment into our small hands. What a great gift, and at the same time, what a great task! Can we become worthy of this calling? Can we preserve and pass on the spirit of Schoenstatt as the original sodalists did over one-hundred years ago? We can indeed, but not on our own. We must return to the foundations on which we were built. Only if we are



firmly rooted there, can we hope to continue to pass on this treasure which we have found: Schoenstatt, in its original purity and beauty.

So what does it mean to return to these foundations and to become firmly rooted in them? For the answer, we must open the Founding Document once again and see what it was which made the hero sodalists' hearts burn and glow for Schoenstatt. What was the secret of their youthful zeal and enthusiasm? The answer is: The love of the Blessed Mother in the shrine. *"To me it is as if at this moment, here in the old chapel of St. Michael, Our Lady were speaking to us through the mouth of the holy archangel: Do not worry about the fulfillment of your desire. Ego diligentes me diligo. I love those who love me (Proverbs 8:17)."* (First Founding Document, paragraph 11) This was their secret! They had discovered in the shrine a mother who loved them just as they were, with their originalities, with their abilities, but also with their miseries and limitations. This pure, mother love enkindled the love in their youthful hearts and made them want to love in return! "Love for love, faithfulness for faithfulness!" JK. This unconditional love gave them a firm footing in their striving for sanctity. Standing firmly and securely on the love of their mother, they were able to reach for the stars of sanctity without hesitation or fear. Thus the first demand of the covenant of love became their greatest joy, and a concrete reality in their lives:

⇒ **"Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously."** (*ibid*)

How did they fulfill this demand in their everyday lives? How did it become a concrete reality? The remaining demands of the covenant of love give us the answer to this question.

⇒ **Increase your striving to the highest degree.**

⇒ **This sanctification I demand of you.**

If we want to remain firmly rooted in our covenant of love and in the legacy which the hero sodalists have left us, then we must follow them to the heights of sanctity, and really increase our striving to the *highest* degree. When we are tempted to get tired in our striving, which will certainly happen now and then, when our ideals

"crumble under the smoke and dust of everyday life", then we must look again to our Blessed Mother in the shrine, and remember that it is *for her*. Then we must also look back again at our hero sodalists and be encouraged: if they could do it, then so can we! The same graces which urged them on over one-hundred years ago are also available to us today in the shrine! What does the sanctification which our MTA demands of us look like in everyday life?

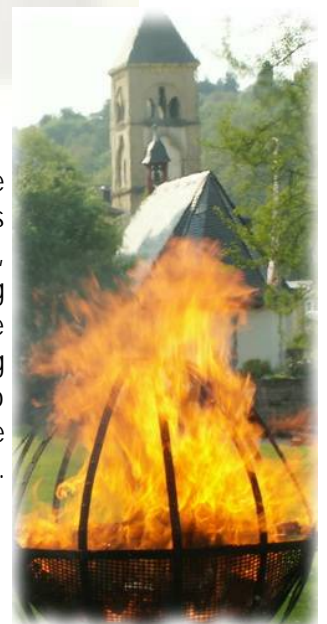


⇒ **Fulfill your duties faithfully**

⇒ **Diligently bring me contributions to the capital of grace.**

⇒ **Pray fervently**

The last three demands of the covenant tell us concretely how to fulfill the first three demands. Like the hero sodalists, we are called to be *everyday saints*. Our path to sanctity is found in the hum-drum of everyday life. Am I a student? Then studying, doing my homework, paying attention in class are all a part of my road to sanctity. Am I a daughter? Then obeying my parents immediately or even looking for ways I can help them without their asking are means for fulfilling the demands of my covenant in daily life. Am I a sister? Then responding patiently to my siblings instead of snapping at them as I am tempted to do, or giving in to what *they* want to do, instead of always insisting on my own way: these are the concrete points which the Blessed Mother asks me to give her as contributions to her capital of grace.



And above all, prayer. We cannot do any of this on our own. We need our covenant partner. Only if we are firmly rooted in her heart can we remain faithful and pass on what we have received to future generations. Therefore, our lives of prayer are so important. If we conscientiously strive to put these duties of our covenant into practice in our everyday lives, then we can be sure that we too will hear these words from our Mother's lips, and experience the fullness of her promise:

"Then it will please me to dwell in your midst and dispense gifts and graces in abundance. Then from here I will draw youthful hearts to myself and educate them to become useful instruments in my hand." (First Founding Document)

Then Schoenstatt will continue to flourish and grow, as the Blessed Mother continues to call youthful hearts to herself from her shrine.

Reflection and Discussion Questions:

- * Am I firmly rooted in the Blessed Mother's heart? Do I really believe in her unconditional love for me? Where have I experienced that unconditional love in my daily life?
- * Do I prove, through my deeds, through my serious striving for sanctity, that I love the MTA, that I am serious about my covenant of love? Where can I increase my life of striving? In my life of my prayer? In the fulfillment of my daily duties? In my contributions to the capital of grace?
- * How is it with my contributions to the capital of grace? Do I consciously offer some every day? Do I remember that this is my way to preserve the spirit of Schoenstatt and pass it on to future generations?

