



## ***Living Monstrance***

Based on: Marian Woman—Outlines for the Schoenstatt Mothers League, South Africa, 1984

Edited for the group meetings for the Schoenstatt Mothers League, USA, 2019

### Group Outline Two: **Mary in our Everyday Lives**

“Let there be Mary!”

“Prove first by your deeds that you really love me, by faithful and most faithful fulfillment of your duties!”

This is the second covenant demand Our Lady made at Schoenstatt’s founding hour. She clearly indicated where the process of our sanctification should take place: in everyday life; through everyday sanctity as we like to express it. The difference between everyday life and a sanctified everyday life consists in not accepting our duties as the orders of just anyone, but as the wish and will of God. Our duty is to be what God wants us to be!

He wishes us to be a *little Mary*, a reflection of the Woman who was the only person to realize perfectly his idea of the human person. She was so great in her perfection that no one can imitate her fully.

The development of the community of Schoenstatt Mothers indicates that according to the *law of the open door* God in fatherly love has assigned to the mothers the task to reflect Our Lady as a living monstrance. After World War II ended and Father Kentenich returned to Schoenstatt, each branch of the Movement developed its own symbol. Father Kentenich sometimes helped with this as he did with suggesting that the symbol that best represented the Mothers was the living monstrance.

**Thought question:** What is the importance Father Kentenich gives to us striving to be a Little Mary?

Therefore, the Schoenstatt mothers began to work for a monstrance, spiritually and materially, as a symbol of their striving. The first monstrance was finished in 1949 and presented for the promised Adoration Church. Today we have many such monstrances, presented by mother’s groups for our shrines. The symbol is an expression for the life and striving in the mothers’ branch. Thus, we may say, the history of the Schoenstatt mothers

is the history of the monstrance. As a little Mary, I may join the *song of praise* of the great, holy Christ-bearer:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior.  
For he has looked on his servant in her lowliness;  
henceforth all ages will call me blessed. . .”

This may be applied to the *other Mary* as well; we, too, are bearers of salvation. We, too, are *his servants*, who are chosen by the Father’s love. We are helpmates of the Lord in the work of redeeming the little world into which we have been placed as wives and mothers.

**Thought question:** How do we help redeem our little world? Give some practical examples.

“The Almighty has done great things for me. Holy his name!”

We are really monstrances. Since Baptism, Christ lives in us. He wants to live in us and through us meet our fellow human beings.

“His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him.”

Our founder taught us to say: “The Father in heaven loves us *not because we are good, but because he is good.*” Indeed, in his mercy he has drawn each one of us to himself. In return he expects our reverence, love and obedience.

Thought question: How have you experienced that God loves us not because we are good but because he is good? Give examples.

“He puts forth his arm in strength  
and scatters the proud-hearted.  
He casts the mighty from their thrones  
and raises the lowly.  
He fills the hungry with good things  
and sends the rich away empty.  
He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy,  
the mercy promised to our fathers,  
to Abraham and his children forever.”

All this applies to us today as well. The eternal Triune God is alive. He wants to act through us. He wants to shape the world through us. We are to reveal his love and mercy, but also his truthfulness and justice. He needs us to lead the world home to himself.

**Thought question:** How does the heavenly Father shape the world through us?

*Ordo essendi est ordo agenda!*(The order of being is the order of acting) That is to say, we should act according to the order of being. This is the teaching of Thomas Aquinas and of our founder. This means for each of us personally: If I am a monstrance, I must live as a monstrance, I must act correctly, according to the order of my being:

- towards myself,
- towards my neighbor,
- towards God.

To act correctly towards myself: Let us concentrate on one point from among the many that apply here. How do I regard my body? Is it for me an object for advertisement or lust? It is a mortal frame, a vessel in which Christ lives. If I give witness to this reality through my way of dressing, I act according to the order of being and thus I act correctly.

**Thought question:** How can I act according to the being of a Living Monstrance? Give examples.

To act correctly towards my neighbor: Let us make this point practical and apply it to our husbands. To be a living monstrance means to be a blessing for my husband. I am his partner in order to help him fulfill his task here and to reach heaven, that is, to become holy. I should help him to act correctly. According to his being he is a father. He can only be a father and act as a father if I assist him as his wife and as the mother of his children. It is my task as a mother to lead the children to him and to protect his fatherly authority and to assist him in carrying it out.

**Thought question:** How can I be Living Monstrance in relationship with my husband and children? Give examples.

Our founder elaborated on these two points in a talk he gave to 300 Schoenstatt mothers, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1966.

Mary set out and went with haste to a town in the hill country. Here, in the house of Zachariah, she fully unfolded her efficacy. She went into the hill country, but as Christ-bearer, Christ-bringer and servant of Christ: Wherever she goes she is the holy monstrance who bears Christ – this is essential to her very being. As the monstrance

bears Christ and as Christ is borne everywhere by the monstrance and blesses everyone through the monstrance we find that Mary did something similar in the house of Elizabeth. . . If we want to examine our own task as a holy monstrance more thoroughly, we have first of all to become more deeply aware that we, too, are Christ-bearers. Our concept of a saint today is a person who radiates a divine atmosphere.

**Thought question:** How do I, after Mary's example, bring blessings to those around me? Give examples.

In the same talk Father Kentenich continued saying:

What about Zachariah? Which grace did he receive? He found that he could speak again. Indeed, he even prophesied. Read about his prophecy in Holy Scripture. What is the deeper implication? The man must learn again to speak, not to shout and speak to his wife and children in a hard and harsh way. Such tensions have to be conquered. In which way? By learning to speak again with God, by learning to pray. He is to become again the priest in the family... He will not be able to do so unless I, his wife, assist him.

**Thought question:** How can I as living monstrance help my husband or sons to learn to speak in a God willed way? Give examples:

The ideal is so great that it might frighten us. But our founder also shows us the aid which helps us to approach the ideal: the covenant of love with Our Lady.

If we are aware of having entered into a specific covenant of love with Our Lady and are convinced that Our Lady has entered into partnership with us, then we know and take it for granted that the meaning of the covenant of love is a mutual exchange of tasks, of gifts and of hearts. What does this imply?

**Thought question:** How does the covenant of love help me to be a living monstrance in daily life?

Quote from Father Kentenich continues:

Exchange of tasks! Our Lady has to take over the task which we cannot accomplish. If it is not possible for us by our own efforts to become spiritual women, religious women who have a religious influence on their husbands, then you have to reach out for the easiest medicine, the easiest pill and do that in great confidence. Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, I belong to you and I love you; you

have to fulfill my task. We do not know when she will do it and how she will do it, but we believe firmly that she will help.

**Thought question:** What is the medicine that Father Kentenich encourages us to take when it is difficult to be a living monstrance?

The quote from Father Kentenich continues:

As supernatural people we have to and want to stand not only in divine light, but also in divine confidence. There are many mothers who have led a heroic life, who could be glorified, beautified and canonized. The saints of the ordinary life are the splendid examples of everyday sanctity! We should take it for granted that our family, the community of the Schoenstatt mothers should at all times reach out for this exceptionally high ideal. This is the way we have to interpret the symbol of our monstrance.

**Thought question:** Who are the Schoenstatt Mothers that have shown in their life that everyday sanctity as a living monstrance is possible. Give examples.

**Prayer:** Think in me, O Mother, that my thoughts be clear and bright;  
Speak in me, O Mother, that my speech be true and right;  
Work in me, O Mother, my work is then well done,  
Then holy is my labor, my rest a holy one.  
You penetrate my being, fill every part of me,  
That all your ways and conduct in me each one can see.

### FOR DISCUSSION

1. We should accept our daily duties as the wish and will of God and be what God wants us to be. What are the practical consequences of this for us as mothers and women?
2. What are my duties towards myself? Do I fulfill them?
3. What are my duties towards my husband? Do I fulfill them?
4. The ideal of being a living monstrance is rich in symbolism. Discuss this symbolism from the point of view of Our Lady's encounter with Elizabeth.
5. How can I be a living monstrance in my everyday life?