

Covenant Day Greeting_November 2018

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November 18, 2018

Dear Schoenstatt Families,

Many blessings as we renew our love for Mary on this covenant day!

Looking back to the past weeks since October 18th, we see how our covenant with the MTA is our source of strength. With her, we can bring into practical life the message of our year's motto:

Like Father, dare to offer ourselves for the Church.

How was this motto born?

It was during the October Convention, when all leaders from across the USA gathered to renew their apostolic strength after a year of service. Each of the participants was able to engage in lively discussions in the morning and in the afternoon. In the morning, we looked into our practical faith in divine providence. God leads us through the ordinary events of everyday life. We can speak of events at a global or at a local level. Whether we can grasp God's steady hand behind the global or local events depends on our practical way of believing.

We should keep in mind the following points in order to evaluate how practical our faith is:

- Do we respond to real needs?
- Do we keep an ongoing prayer life?
- Do we observe God's guidance in a daily basis, making note of his presence behind particular events?

God stands behind the world-wide and nation-wide issues as well as behind the things that impact our personal or family life. Knowing this can be comforting and challenging, at the same time.

Looking into those challenges and trying to find fitting answers was part of the morning discussions at our leaders' convention.

From this perspective, we could take a closer look into different topics in the afternoon. We focused on areas of interest and concern within the Church, world, society, and Schoenstatt. After a couple of hours of intense exchange of ideas, the leaders concluded with the motto formulation. Father Kentenich's life of loyalty to the MTA and to the Church is always a great inspiration when it comes to

KENTENICH'S LIFE OF LOYALTY TO THE MTA AND TO THE CHURCH IS ALWAYS A GREAT INSPIRATION WHEN IT COMES TO answering the needs of the time. Therefore, the motto reads:

Like Father, dare to offer ourselves for the Church.

His life inspired us to serve the Church, to give our yes to it, and learn to embrace it whole-heartedly. Today, we rely on Father Kentenich's words in order to learn how to dare to offer ourselves for the Church. Let us reflect on some of his words from 1965:

[We must] begin again to dare the daring things that faith asks of us! Faith is not some easy chair in which we sit back and relax. No, taking risks is simply an essential part of faith. Please understand what I am trying to tell you. It is my personal conviction that if the Church wants to win the battle after the Council – I am now speaking in purely human terms – then it will only be possible if the Church-to-come forms Catholics who are in their essence *heroic*.^[1]

And again:

Please do not forget that this is the art we must master, [this is] our great goal: We must become heroes of faith again! Heroes of faith: [We must] especially hold fast to the faith, faith in Divine Providence, when on the purely human level everything seems so entangled, when we really get the impression, as we heard it in the “death notice^[2],” that God is “out of town,” no longer cares, is dead, or is taking a long nap in heaven. This becomes even more urgent when we realize on the other hand how man today {241} no longer views himself as a mere creature, but takes for himself the part of creation’s powerful co-creator! With all the advances of technology, what all are we not able to accomplish today! It is clear that when man can accomplish all these things with all the technical means at his disposal, he struts his stuff and shouts: Why, all of world history can be explained without God’s intervention!

Faith in Divine Providence! What does that say about ourselves? Everything which happens in our life is a gift of love and an attempt by God to win over our love. To win over our love! And what does that demand of us? The answer of love. We cannot hold fast to all that if we only see world events and the events of our personal lives with natural eyes. It is only possible if we once more become children, heralds and heroes of the three divine virtues – faith, hope and love. You must not overlook this, be it [on retreat] or when you are sitting around the table as a family.²

Today, as we renew our covenant of love, let us not forget that we do not strengthen our faith isolated. If we remain steadfast in our faith, the faith of those around us is strengthened as well. Daring to believe in the midst of our everyday life dynamics (challenging as they often are), without waiting for extraordinary signs of God’s intervention, can demand heroic trust from us. We can reflect on the following: Can we see God’s hand behind rejection, trials, and illnesses, or only behind solutions and healing? Do we dare to offer ourselves for the Church through a high degree of faith, and trust that God’s hand stands behind every entanglement -- just like Mary believed?

May our MTA, by virtue of our covenant with her, intercede for us the grace to step out of our way and give our all for our Catholic Church and its purification, as well as for the maturation of our Catholic people today.

United in the covenant,



[1] Father J. Kentenich, 1965, as quoted by Father J. Niehaus in *For the Church*, 2004.

Heroic refers to be willing to profess our faith and accept its consequences, even if they are difficult.

2 Ibid



Items of Interest:

- Attached you will find the power point presentation on *Practical Faith in Divine Providence*, by Father Mark Niehaus, presented at the October Convention. You may use it at your meetings.
- Please pray for twelve families, who are making their covenant of love on Saturday, December 1st, at the shrine in Waukesha.
- Remember: Father-Son weekend, December 13-16. Call the office (262-522-4300) for more information.
- If you know of any families (couples) who are preparing to make the covenant of love, we will have another *Covenant Family Retreat* on February 8-10, 2019. This means that the families who sign up for this retreat are coming to make the covenant of love. There will be another *Family Retreat* (as usual) in March 1-3, 2019. Call soon to register of if you have any question.
- Don't forget to take some time today to renew your covenant with the MTA and pray the motto: *Like Father, dare to offer ourselves for the Church.*
- Make sure you share this email with the members of your group. It may be used as discussion material for your next meeting in the coming weeks or for personal reflection.

Attachments:

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