



Woman Authentic in Being and Action

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Woman touched by God, authentic reflection of Mary
Mujer inspirada por Dios, reflejo auténtico de María



PART TWO

UNITED IN MARY – ORDER OF FEMININE BEING IS THE ORDER OF FEMININE ACTION

MARY EDUCATES ME TO BE HER AUTHENTIC REFLECTION IN MY BEING AND ACTING

Under the protection of Mary, we want to educate ourselves to be firm, free, priestly, (Marian) personalities. (9)

“Apostolate of being. This is primary and can be practiced always and everywhere. To become an exemplary person is our first and permanent task in the apostolate. Towards this end we apply all our striving in self-education... We make a great effort to practice this form of apostolate which cannot be replaced by anything else. What we pass on to others, what we want to proclaim we must have ourselves, therefore: apostolate of being! To lead people to the Shrine means first of all to be a shrine myself... “

Father Kentenich prays in ‘Heavenwards’: “It has its place in the framework of our apostolate and it helps to enkindle zeal for souls,” and: “What you are and do affects their lives, determines their misfortune and increases their happiness.”

We may trust that the Blessed Mother in the Shrine, especially also in our Home Shrine, is close to us and gives us the grace of inner transformation, so that, as people with formation, we can act convincingly. “Let us reflect your image...In us go through our times and make them ready for Christ.” (*Heavenwards*, p. 163).

She educates apostles by giving us the grace of finding a home (in God, in her and in the Schoenstatt Family) and she helps us that we may be apostolic by our very being. Through her we become persons who radiate something, radiating (God’s life) into our environment.” (15)
(example of Fr. Kentenich in Dachau)

The Fifth Demand of the Covenant of Love

“Our Thrice Admirable Mother says to us in her Covenant of Love, “fulfill your duties faithfully.” In the Covenant, the Blessed Mother requires that we carry out our duties faithfully, especially those that are intrinsic to our being, to our state in life, and to the activities we have chosen.

Duty is not what we wish to do or what we feel like doing in the moment, or what brings us personal gain. Duty results from objective norms which are an expression of God's loving will for us and therefore are not determined by feelings. Duty describes the conduct that is required of us by very clear and definite norms: by the sense of justice, the dictates of our conscience and the well-being of others, the demands of morality, God's laws, the demands of one's occupation and position, etc.

We are born into a host of duties. Because of our endeavors to fulfill these duties we can live in security and peace and will be able to realize our purpose in life and reach our final destiny. If we neglect our duties, we will have to bear the consequences which are determined by our intentions and the gravity of the matter.

Love shall motivate us to do not only what is necessary and demanded of us, but in addition, to constantly search for more perfect ways to carry out our duty and to do even more than is required of us. When we strive to fulfill our duties faithfully and even most faithfully, we can make a great contribution toward the renewal of our time." (10)

What, then, are our duties proper and intrinsic to our being – as human beings which make men and women different from the world of animals?

We read in Genesis 1:27, "God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."

"God reveals his plan to us by the laws he placed into every being. He wants everything to grow and develop according to this finality. St. Thomas Aquinas advocated the maxim that the order of being determines the order of acting. We should recognize what and who we are and what we should become; this knowledge should then determine our every action." (11)

"The spirit is the most elevated part of our nature. It distinguishes us from all the other creatures on this earth. In accord with the *ordo essendi* (order of being), the spiritual nature of our being also needs fulfillment. It is open for truth and wants to penetrate the depths of truth. The entire person must be educated; that is why a person's spirit must also be given the support of recognition of truth.

The human heart must have the support of a person; but the human mind must have the support of clear knowledge of truth. The truth provides us with security, support, shelter, a world view and the possibility of establishing contact. If we want to do justice to the nature of humans, we must see that they can rest in ultimate truths. A clear view of God-willed and God-formed truths – particularly a comprehensive view – is a means to secure a firm hold amid the insecurity, lack of principles and lack of character of our day." (12)

A MOMENT TO REFLECT - Bishop Thomas John Paprocki, Ninth Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, "Accepting and caring for our bodies as they were created" (September 15, 2019)

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are living in very confused and confusing times, when longstanding truths from time immemorial are not only being questioned but are being rejected outright. One of these basic

truths is the reality that people are born into the world as male or female. Proponents of transgender theory argue that gender is fluid and cannot be confined to binary categories of male and female...

The church teaches that our identities as male and female are part of God's good design in Creation, that our bodies and sexual identities are gifts from God, and that we should accept and care for our bodies as they were created. A person cannot change his or her gender. A person should accept and seek to live in conformity with his or her sexual identity as determined at birth. The Catholic Church teaches that the removal or destruction of healthy sexual and reproductive organs is a type of mutilation and is intrinsically evil. Procedures, surgeries and therapies designed to assist a person in "transitioning" his or her gender are morally prohibited.

In his Encyclical Letter on the environment, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis wrote, "Learning to accept our body, to care for it and to respect its fullest meaning, is an essential element of any genuine human ecology," noting that "valuing one's own body in its femininity or masculinity is necessary if I am going to be able to recognize myself in an encounter with someone who is different. In this way we can joyfully accept the specific gifts of another man or woman, the work of God the Creator, and find mutual enrichment." May God give us this grace. Amen. For the video or full transcript see <https://ct.dio.org/bishops-column/message/accepting-and-caring-for-our-bodies-as-they-were-created/read.html>

What are our duties proper and intrinsic to our being – as feminine human beings?

Father Kentenich tells us (A talk given to Schoenstatt Mothers May 31, 1966):

"What is our position as women, as mothers, in Schoenstatt? A position comparable to that held by Our Lady according to God's plan in the redemption of the world, in the total redemption of the world... I shall only mention a few thoughts here that are very plausible. Let us think of the incarnation. You can imagine that if Our Lady had not said yes, if she, as a woman and mother, had not said yes to the message of redemption, there would have been no redemption...

What, then, is our position as Schoenstatt Mothers in Schoenstatt? May I give you the daring answer? Without us, without our Schoenstatt Mothers, Schoenstatt is absolutely incapable of carrying out its mission today. Let me repeat: Just as there would not be redemption without Our Lady, so there cannot be a fruitful Schoenstatt realm without our Schoenstatt Mothers...

When we place these thoughts into the context of the condition of women in the world today, we partly rejoice at what the movement for the emancipation of women has achieved in the last few decades. But you will surely understand me when I add immediately: The emancipation of women as it is developing today, as it is in ferment today, and as it had come to a head today, overthrows a whole **order of being**. The aim is to place women on the same footing as men, or to make them equal to men. You rightly feel that when woman becomes masculine, in this way the danger is great that very soon man will become feminine. This is put in rather an extreme way, but you realize what is meant in the individual case. Truly, we have much for which to thank the emancipation of women, since many false teachings, many injustices, and many practices that enslaved

women have been overcome. But the aim can never be to put man and woman on the same footing, or to consider a man and woman as ontologically (ontology is the philosophical study of being. More broadly, it studies concepts that directly relate to being, in particular becoming, existence, reality, as well as the basic categories of being and their relations) the same. If such efforts continue, we will be faced with an ontological revolution. Such an ontological revolution means a form of destruction for the whole human race...
(ex. Woman's embracing arms vs Man's strong pushing arms)

The truth is, and this is what we all strive for and are thankful for – you know what we usually say in this regard – the two sexes are not alike; they are of equal value, but they do not have the same **natures**. Hence, everything depends on whether we Schoenstatt women exemplify the ideal of woman. Let me add, everything depends on whether we really become little Marys. The position of the great Mary in the plan of salvation must be repeated in the position of the little Mary in Schoenstatt...

Our basic attitude to God must be feminine. What is meant? It must be that of childlike service. Today, when we say so much in Schoenstatt about being a realm of the Father and of children, these words apply not only to ourselves, but also to our sons and husbands. A realm of children before God. And what must we women be? We all want to be mature and strong women when confronted with life. But we can only be this when the **root of our entire being** as women is this childlike attitude of service towards God. Please remember – when facing life, we must be mature and strong women, but in relation to God we cannot be childlike enough...

The greatest misfortune is that we have lost our childlike attitude to God, because it makes God's fatherly activity impossible. Then mankind has broken down again, when it has again grasped even slightly the meaning of and need for deep, childlike self-surrender to Almighty God. God the Father will then begin to reveal that activity which is most proper to himself. Hence, on the other hand, the greatest good fortune of modern man is the reconquest of this childlike attitude, because it almost forces God the Father to reveal and pour out his endlessly merciful fatherly activity over modern man, over woman, over the redeemed women, but also over the men.

If we now ask: How are we to bring about the great, world-wide Schoenstatt realm? What can we contribute towards this aim? I think you should be able to grasp the answer quite easily. What should we do? I can only repeat: Become little Marys. The less women today want to reflect the image of Our Lady, the more Our Lady – we can almost say – is banished from public life., even from the public consciousness of the Church, the more we want to give her an opportunity to reveal herself to the modern world in us, her images. We therefore want all the more to make those words come true that we so often pray in "Heavenwards": "Let us be, O Queen, like you, more and more your clear reflection: strong and noble, childlike, true, offering peace and joy, protection. Yours the task in which we share: hearts for Christ help us prepare."

A MOMENT TO REFLECT:

“It is not difficult to picture to ourselves Mary who was always under the influence of her Son, as a singular light of God, which silently burned, shedding light, warming, and inspiring. This must have been her manner of action wherever she was...

Mary, the mirror, reveals in a large measure to the believing eye and loving heart of the human person the order of nature, the order of redemption, and the order of salvation, and by doing so, places the dignity and the activity of the ideal of womanhood into the limelight.

In Mary God has given back to the woman her lost crown. Through her the woman has again become a queen. The only mere creature who as person was allowed to enter into the intimate union with God, is a woman: The Queen of Heaven and Earth. All women behold in her the ideal of womanly dignity and beauty and a part of their own God-given greatness.

Undoubtedly, we could not accomplish a greater apostolic deed nor leave our successors a more precious legacy than to urge our Lady and Queen to erect her throne here in a special way, to distribute her treasures, and to work miracles of grace” (J. Kentenich). (16)

Just as Our Lady has until now proven herself the great Queen, Mother and Victress – as we mentioned in a profound way during the celebration today – may she also be the Victress over everything we have pointed out as a false ideal for woman. Let us, therefore, give ourselves once again to Our Lady with the petition that she should form us into little Marys according to her image and likeness. When the movement for women and mothers has realized this aim in the individual member and in their children, it will have fulfilled a great mission.” (14)

PRAY: IMITATION OF MARY

Let us walk like you through life, let us mirror you forever, strong and noble, meek and mild, peace and love be our endeavor. Walk in us through our world, make it ready for the Lord (**Heavenwards**).

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 by being, fill every part of me, that all your ways and conduct in me each one can see. Amen.

Mary’s being and acting were always in unity. She allowed her feminine nature to determine her every action and her womanly greatness.

What is womanly greatness? “If we compare womanly greatness to a tree, the root is **untouched childlikeness, the trunk selfless, serving motherliness, the top and fruit the intuitive recognition of truth**” (The Jewel of Purity).

Our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen and Victress of Schoenstatt is the heart of our Schoenstatt Family whom we want to imitate. She guides us, educates us, and nurtures us in the Covenant of Love. We, as women, can best imitate Mary’s unity of being and acting and her womanly greatness by fulfilling the Demands of her Covenant of Love especially the Demand to faithfully fulfill our duties intrinsic to the feminine nature of our being as planned by God.

The following questions will help us reflect on ways to be **United in Mary – on fire as we go forward to be Women Touched by God, Authentic Reflections of Mary**. And, like Mary, with the grace of womanly greatness, we can make a great contribution toward the renewal of our time.

(9) The Pre-Founding Document - October 27, 1912 (Marian inserted by author)

(10) Three Pillars pages 170-172

(11) The Three Pillars pages 90-120

(12) Forming the New Person

(14) The Great Mary, The Little Mary

(15) My Covenant Way

(16) Marian Instrument Piety

(17) Jewel of Purity, 63

PART TWO - QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

- 1) According to Father Kentenich, **a childlike attitude toward God** makes God's merciful fatherly activity possible in the world? Do I realize that when I work to honor God's plan for my life by fulfilling the duties proper and intrinsic to my womanhood and state in life with a childlike attitude toward God, I am making God's merciful fatherly activity possible in the world? Share examples or insights.
- 2) Do I allow love to motivate me when fulfilling my duties? Do I fulfill my duties with an attitude **of selfless, serving motherliness** in imitation of our Blessed Mother? Share examples or insights of selfless, serving motherliness.
- 3) Mary recognized what and who she was and what she should become and this knowledge determined her every action. She allowed her feminine nature to determine her every action and womanly greatness. Is this what is meant by **intuitive recognition of truth**, the fruit of womanly greatness? Share examples or insights.
- 4) **God created mankind in His image; He created them male and female**. Some today are seeking to separate the image of man from the image of God and to deny the two natures of mankind in an attempt to bring equality to all. What is Father Kentenich's term for the separating of persons, ideas, etc. that should not be separated? Share examples or insights.
- 5) By imitating the qualities of Mary's womanly greatness, I give Mary the opportunity to reveal herself to the modern world in me, her image, her clear reflection. Do I realize that the **apostolate of my feminine being and acting** as a clear reflection of Mary can be a force for bringing others to God and can contribute to the renewal of our world and time? Share examples or insights.