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CONTEMPORARY PILGRIMAGE— THE SCHOENSTATT EXPERIENCE

*Sister Jean Frisk**

Introduction

We are all pilgrims on life's journey, strangers seeking our *home*, ultimately in the heart of God. René Laurentin, ever attentive to the roots of words, writes that "pilgrimage comes from the Latin *peregrinus*" which means *stranger*, "for the pilgrim is a traveler: He has left his home in order to come to a country (or a place) that is not his own. . . . Etymologically, the word has as its root *per ager*: one who goes through a field, or again *per eger*, one who goes across a frontier, in doing which the traveler becomes a stranger, in a country that is no longer his own."¹

In 1 Peter 2:11 and Hebrews 11:13-16, we are called strangers and pilgrims;² refugees in this world;³ beloved strangers in exile;⁴ visitors and pilgrims;⁵ aliens and exiles.⁶ The pilgrim's travel here on earth anticipates the final destination. We are at

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¹René Laurentin, *Pilgrimage, Sanctuaries, Icons, Apparitions*, trans. William Fackovec, S. M. (Milford, Ohio: Riehle Foundation, 1994), 11: published lecture notes from a course with the same title taught by the author at the International Marian Research Institute, July 18-22, 1994 (hereafter: Laurentin).

²Laurentin, 11.

³*Good News for Modern Man* (American Bible Society, 1966).

⁴*The New American Bible* (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 1970).

⁵*The Jerusalem Bible* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968).

⁶*Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition* (Catholic Truth Society, 1966).

the same time on the way to the kingdom and citizens of the kingdom here and now.⁷

The birth of the written English language—sacred and secular harmoniously one—took place within the framework of stories about pilgrimage, as Geoffrey Chaucer's fourteenth-century *Canterbury Tales* tell so well.⁸ Nor is pilgrimage a theme of less interest for twentieth-century readers. Sigrid Undset's classic love story, *Kristin Lavransdatter*, published in 1923, continues to be printed and read with delight. Kristin must go on a pilgrimage of repentance, and indeed the exercise opens new depths of experience and understanding in her heart.⁹ Can pilgrimage be considered a nostalgia of the past?

A special issue in July 1998 of US Airways' *Attaché* was devoted to pilgrimage.¹⁰ Definitions of pilgrimage abound, by no means limited to specific religions or centuries past. For the *Attaché* editors, pilgrimages are "spiritual wanderlust." To quote them further: "Pilgrimages permeate all history and cultures; you would almost think that spiritual wanderlust is hard-wired into the human psyche."¹¹ Paul Theroux, novelist and former Peace Corps worker in Africa, writes, "Pilgrimage is a form of going home, of going to a sacred place . . ." ¹²

⁷Ephesians 2:19, Colossians 1:21.

⁸Geoffrey Chaucer (1342-1400), *The Canterbury Tales*, trans. Nevill Coghill (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1977), from the Prologue:

When in April the sweet showers fall / And pierce the drought of March to the root, and all / The veins are bathed in liquor of such power / As brings about the engendering of the flower, / When also Zephyrus with his sweet breath / Exhales an air in every grove and heath / Upon the tender shoots, and the young sun / His half-course in the sign of the *Ram* has run, / And the small fowl are making melody / that sleep away the night with open eye / (So nature pricks them and their heart engages) / Then people long to go on pilgrimages / And palmers long to seek the stranger strands / Of far-off saints, hallowed in sundry lands, / And specially, from every shire's end / Of England, down to Canterbury they went / To seek the holy blissful martyr, quick / To give his help to them when they were sick.

⁹Sigrid Undset, *Kristin Lavransdatter* (20th printing; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980).

¹⁰Jay Heinrich, et al., *Attaché* (US Airways, July 1998) (hereafter: *Attaché*).

¹¹*Attaché*, 66.

¹²Paul Theroux, "A Voluntary Africa," in *Attaché*, 38.

There is contemporary interest in pilgrimage as a spiritual journey. But pilgrimage has long been part of the expression of faith and religion. Fr. Laurentin lists pilgrimage, along with sanctuaries (shrines), icons, and apparitions, as one of the four defining signs of popular faith.¹³ Pilgrimage implies movement, shrines, and images. Laurentin speaks of the various dimensions of the human experience with its interplay of the dynamic and static. But, says Laurentin, these four signs of faith have *one* thing in common: "they are all intelligible with reference to God, as *signs and means of supernatural grace*. These signs are not sacraments . . . They are signs of human making, intended to animate the faith and the works of the believer. They are efficacious *ex opere operantis* (dependent on the faith and the action of the believer who is their beneficiary, the grace of God helping along)."¹⁴ Laurentin goes on to say, "These signs are part of the divine pedagogy that leads mankind to God: *to the invisible through what is visible* . . . Pilgrimages, shrines and icons are material, natural, objective signs . . . they are concrete, perceptible, human. The Christian people are not reached by abstraction alone. Not without reason, they prefer *personal encounter* and are attached to tangible signs that witness thereto. In this the *sensus fidelium* is seldom mistaken. It manifests its human dimension as well as its sense of the Incarnation."¹⁵

This presentation on contemporary Marian pilgrimage presents one such sign, an apostolic movement founded by Fr. Josef Kentenich which comprises various expressions of pilgrimage, shrines, and an image of Mary unique to its history. One element of Laurentin's treatment must be left unconsidered (i.e., apparitions), for Schoenstatt does not claim an apparition or an extraordinary event as its source of origin.¹⁶ Fr. Kentenich spoke of the restoration of the Catholic *sensus*

¹³Laurentin, 1.

¹⁴Laurentin, 2 (emphasis added).

¹⁵Laurentin, 2-5 (emphasis added).

¹⁶Though Schoenstatt's early history is not based on an apparition or similar experiences, its later history does record some extraordinary phenomena. See *Oktoberwoche* (1999), Report of Sr. M. Erika: 76-81, 95-96.

through a heightening of the consciousness of the role of the Virgin Mary.

We want to make the masses of the people believe again in our time so that they do not lose the substance of faith. . . . We live in a time of spiritual insecurity. Whom can we believe nowadays? What must the Catholic people receive again today? Catholic sureness of instinct, a *Catholic nose*. The people must have a *Catholic nose*. These are seemingly small matters. How do the Catholic people get sureness of instinct? When we present the *whole Christ* to them, the mother and the Child [and here Kentenich includes *the Church*]. What is one of the deepest foundations of Catholic sureness of instinct? Catholic sureness of instinct lies in the Marian aspect.¹⁷

I. History of the Establishment of the Marian Shrine of Schoenstatt (1914)

The story of Schoenstatt begins with a place, followed by a worldwide movement of renewal—which calls itself an *instrument* of God and Our Lady, a *work*, and a *family*—and, finally, a history of countless persons, especially the founder, Fr. Josef Kentenich.

Before speaking of Schoenstatt as a place of pilgrimage, we will establish that it is a place of grace. First, we will sketch Schoenstatt's origin. Then we will look at Kentenich's aim in establishing a Marian sodality with seminarians. From there we will trace some elements of Schoenstatt's historical development wherein pilgrimage plays an essential educative and apostolic outreach. Then we will examine fundamental governing principles of the Schoenstatt Movement which influence the

¹⁷Josef Kentenich, *Schoenstattgeheimnis* (Christmas Convention, 1933), unpublished manuscript, p. 39f. Fr. P. Josef Kentenich was born in Gymnich, Germany (1885), professed vows in the missionary society of the Catholic apostolate known as the Pallottines (1908), was ordained to the priesthood in Limburg (1910) and assigned as spiritual director in the Pallottine's minor seminary in Schoenstatt/Vallendar (1912). From here his work developed into the International Schoenstatt Movement. By the time of his death in 1968, the Schoenstatt Movement had spread worldwide and consisted of twenty-six autonomous branches, consisting of secular institutes, federations, leagues, and the branch for pilgrims.

organizing and conducting of pilgrimages, and, finally, a list of examples of contemporary pilgrimage will be provided.

A. A Place

The Schoenstatt property once held a monastery, now in ruins, tucked among the hills near a small arm of the Rhine River not far from Koblenz at Vallendar. For close to 900 years the place has borne the geographic name, Schönstatt (tt, not dt, *a place* not a city)—that is, a beautiful place, a quiet valley nestled between high rolling hills. The pattern is familiar anywhere in Europe: growth, expansion; decline, reduction. The early Augustinians moved on, the buildings were used in various ways over the centuries—from church-related institutions, to factory, to private estate. Finally, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the estate was purchased by the Pallottines, a young society of priests and brothers of Italian origin who came to Germany primarily to educate seminarians for mission work.

Two ancient towers stood as a reminder of the growth and decline of the religious communities. The ancient church was used mainly as a barn. There were lush gardens where a convent cemetery once had been, and there was a little cemetery chapel dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel, dating back to the late-fourteenth century. Though it had been used frequently for services, by 1912, the chapel was the storage place for garden tools.

Early in 1914, the Pallottine Provincial granted permission for the seminary's newly established Marian sodality to restore the building as a place for prayer and meetings. It could accommodate about twenty-five persons. In the summer of 1914, students of the Marian sodality refurbished the chapel's interior. It possessed the usual decor typical of the Rhine and Moselle River area: plaster-of-paris statues of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary, an old worm-eaten altar, blue painted ceiling with gold stars added to remind of heaven. It had an earthen floor, uneven plastered walls, a pot-belly stove in the back corner to ward off the ever-present dampness of a Rhine valley.

As time went on, improvements were made, step-by-step. By 1915, the paper-print Madonna and Child image now recognized as Schoenstatt's image of grace found its place of honor in a hand-carved frame made by one of the students. Carved into the wood was the adage, *Servus Mariae nunquam peribit* (translated in the Schoenstatt Movement mainly as *A child of Mary will never perish*).¹⁸ The picture had been purchased by a teacher of the seminary in a junk shop—definitely not as sophisticated as today's pawn or antique shops. The image disappointed the then-current German artistic taste: it was too soft, too sweet, too colorful, and not well proportioned. But it was wartime, the picture was inexpensive, and it was thought that something more acceptable could be purchased later when money was available.

By 1916, however, comments in the sodality newsletter show that in some way the picture drew the attention of the beholder. Known as the *Mother Thrice Admirable* (MTA), the picture drew the gaze and held it. Unlike the magnificent statue which the students hoped to purchase when funds were available, this simple paper image depicted a fourfold intimacy: 1) the unbreakable bond between Christ and Mary; 2) Mary's steady gaze, directed to the viewer; 3) her invitation to come to the heart of her Son, to which she points; and 4) her own heart, toward which her Son tenderly leans. It is an odd picture, insofar as it is not Mary who holds Christ, but Christ holding Mary, even while their interwoven destiny is symbolized in one cloth that seems to enfold child and mother in one.

Fr. Kentenich approved the image. He wrote,

The MTA picture¹⁹ is for us far more than a recollection of an historical event in the life of the Mother of God and the Savior. It [the image] unveils

¹⁸See Johann G. Roten, S.M., "Your Questions," *Mary Page*: "What is the earliest reference to the promise, 'A devout child of Mary will never be lost'?" (www.udayton.edu/mary/questions/yq/yq229.html).

¹⁹MTA = Mother Thrice Admirable, Schoenstatt's original title for the image. The title is taken from the Ingolstadt image of grace in southern Germany. See: Otto Mauer, *Dreimal Wunderbare Mutter: Ein Titel macht Geschichte* (Vallendar-Schönstatt: Patris Verlag, 1983), 58 p. See Schoenstatt's adaptation of the title: Jonathan Niehaus, *New Vision and Life, the Founding of Schoenstatt* (Waukesha, Wis.: Schoenstatt Fathers, 1986).



a permanent office that the Mother of the Lord acquired in the kingdom of her Son and wishes to manage perfectly. Through her yes at the Annunciation she chose the best part, which shall not be taken from her. God placed her as a helper at the side of the Savior, to whom she is similar in a singular way.²⁰

By the 1930s, a new carved wooden altar was the center of the interior of the shrine. The altar was designed as a throne

²⁰Pater Josef Kentenich, *Das Lebensgeheimnis Schönstatts*, II. Teil, *Bündnisfrömmigkeit* (Vallendar-Schönstatt: Patris Verlag, 1972), 87-88.

for the tabernacle and for the image.²¹ Today, more than 150 replicas of this little chapel are scattered on every continent.²² Their familiar size, shape and identical interiors have rendered them the icon of the Schoenstatt Movement. The Schoenstatt shrines are places of grace, holy places that form (as Pope John Paul II would call it) a certain *geography of faith*.²³

B. Schoenstatt's Foundation

Schoenstatt regards October 18, 1914, as its founding day. On this Sunday afternoon a talk was presented to seminarians by (then twenty-eight-year-old) Fr. Josef Kentenich, who was the seminary's spiritual director. On this day, Fr. Kentenich invited Mary to take up her dwelling in Schoenstatt and make it her home.

Note that Schoenstatt developed first as a movement of education and not as a result of an extraordinary phenomenon, such as an apparition. Today, we characterize Fr. Kentenich's educational aims and approach as a new spirituality within the Church. At the time, Kentenich simply responded, as he believed any Christian would, to the *promoting of grace on a*

²¹There is a history for each object in the Schoenstatt Shrine. The objects call to mind salvation history and are an invitation to share in it. For more on this topic see: J. Frisk, ed., "Introductory Guide to Schoenstatt" (1985).

²²In 2000, twelve Schoenstatt Shrines were built in various countries around the world. See the pamphlet by Jonathan Niehaus, "Schoenstatt Shrines Around the World" (Waukesha, Wis., 2000).

²³"One could perhaps speak of a specific 'geography' of faith and Marian devotion, which includes all these special places of pilgrimage where the People of God seek to meet the Mother of God in order to find, within the radius of the maternal presence of her 'who believed,' a strengthening of their own faith. For in Mary's faith . . . an interior space was reopened within humanity which the eternal Father can fill 'with every spiritual blessing.' It is the space 'of the new and eternal Covenant' (*Roman Missal*, Eucharistic Prayer), and it continues to exist in the Church . . ." (Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Mater*, 28—"Encyclical Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Life of the Pilgrim Church," *AAS* 79 (1987): 361-433; St. Paul Editions (Vatican Translation), 1987.

journey of faith, convinced somehow, through inspiration and prayer, that God wanted him to establish a place of pilgrimage. To understand his intentions it is necessary to delve into the period before the founding of Schoenstatt when Kentenich, while involved with educational methods, came to recognize *grace* in the educational process.

1. Schoenstatt's Pre-History and Its First Marian Approach

Two years prior to Schoenstatt's official foundation, Kentenich presented what he called his *program* to the students. As newly appointed spiritual director, he planned to foster self-education, to teach the students to learn to act from inner conviction, not because of exterior norms, and he intended to establish a formal Marian sodality as an educational system to accomplish these ends. He mapped out a plan characteristic of his own original approach to spiritual direction, promoting both the individual's and the societal good, in stark contrast to the teaching methods of the day.

Kentenich had not wanted the job of spiritual director, but he was, as he said, resigned to it, determined to fulfill his duties *to all* and *to each* as perfectly as possible²⁴—*to all*, as a collective for the common good, but also to the personal care and welfare of *each*, as individual children of God, infinitely loved, uniquely called and chosen, and infinitely worthy. Some sense of his personality can be found in what Schoenstatt calls its pre-founding document: "I now place myself completely at your disposal with all that I am and have: my knowledge and ignorance, my ability and inability, but above all, my heart."²⁵ Such manner of expression is perhaps not strange for us in a post-Vatican II Church at the beginning of a

²⁴Josef Kentenich, "The Pre-Founding Document, October 27, 1912," in *Schoenstatt, The Founding Documents*, English manuscript (Waukesha, Wis.: Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, 1993), 13 (hereafter P-FD).

²⁵P-FD, 13.

new millennium, but it was uncharacteristic of German educational praxis at the time.

The core of the *program* is found in what is now called the Pre-Founding Document:

Under the protection of Mary we want to learn to educate ourselves to become firm, free, priestly personalities.²⁶

—We want to learn—not only you, but also I. We want to learn from each other. For we are never done learning, especially not in the art of self-education . . . which will indeed take our whole lifetime.²⁷

—We want to *learn*, not merely in *theory*: . . . No, we must also learn in *practice* . . . One learns to walk by walking, how to love by loving; therefore we have to learn to *educate ourselves*. . . . That is a noble, a royal activity.²⁸

This early talk indicates the tone which characterizes Kentenich's approach: forward, upward, never backward. Do not, he said, go back to meaningless forms but move forward, but do so on firm, clearly recognized principles. Not the *form* but the *spirit*. For Kentenich it was clear that a time would come in society, but especially on a personal level, when heaps of religious exercises and external devotions would no longer be of help. What would be needed would be free, firm, noble personalities who, fully aware of their dignity, were ready to embrace and live out the faith without the support of traditions that formerly sustained devotion.

Later, Kentenich elaborated these ideas: The spirit [of any gathering of people] creates a form [out of which the group decides to act in future]; the form protects and secures the spirit; but [it is also true] the form can kill the spirit. In the praxis of devotion, each generation and each individual must newly conquer the *expressions* of devotion. In no way shall the substance of doctrine be diminished in this process of claiming and expressing the faith devotionally.

²⁶P-FD, 14.

²⁷P-FD, 14.

²⁸P-FD, 15-16 (emphasis added).

2. The Marian Reference Not Merely a Formality

Was the Marian reference in Kentenich's educational *program* a formality expected in Catholic devotions? One could possibly interpret these early Marian references in the sodality as utilitarian. The sodality had a good educational method; the Marian elements were incidental to it, more-or-less just something traditionally expected. What remained for the students was to find ways to express devotion to Mary communally (i.e., beyond the *symbols* of school banner and medal) for the purpose of self-education.

Any such utilitarian notions are dispelled by Kentenich's action of October 18, 1914. On that day, Schoenstatt's founding day, the founder asked Mary, the Mother of God, to dwell at Schoenstatt and make it a holy place of grace. He invited her to make this place—and these hearts—her home. On that day, Schoenstatt believes, the little chapel became a place of grace and, therefore, of pilgrimage.

In less than two years, from 1912 to 1914, the world changed forever. The Great War of 1914–1919, as it was known in Europe, would claim nine million lives.²⁹ The foundation of Schoenstatt on October 18, 1914, might have happened with or without the war, but the war became the proving ground for this seedling group, to test its principles and to firm up its

²⁹A related aspect of contemporary Schoenstatt pilgrimage is to travel to the battlefields in the footsteps of a handful of seminarians who searched the ways of Divine Providence, seeking *not so much the why* of such atrocity, but seeking instead how to *master life* through the example of others who faced these evils. The pilgrims live in an old farmhouse, eat a canteen meal or two, and search out the spot by a creek where Joseph Engling (one of Schoenstatt's founding generation) wrote his final offering of life for the aims of Our Lady. They walk the last walk before this young man's death, when he took the place of a man on the front line, the father of a family. They visit the manicured cemeteries of the French, the Canadians and the Americans, but also the abandoned, overgrown cemeteries of the Germans. They visit the trenches. They hear story after story, such as the singing of *Silent Night* at Christmas time in the trenches, when the English and German troops had to be transferred because they would and could no longer fight each other. The pilgrims recall the foundations of the Church and the blood of martyrs—that continues today. They leave with one question each must answer: Do I determine to live life by the standards of Christ and Mary, their love and law, or by all those things and desires that lead to aggressive war?

spirituality. Fr. Kentenich was called upon time-and-again to define, explain and defend what happened on October 18, 1914. The objections were numerous. What was he doing with the students? Hadn't the sodality been established just a few months before? Weren't the traditions and regulations of the sodality enough? Hadn't he received permission to use the ancient cemetery chapel as a place of prayer and devotion for the sodality? Hadn't it been renovated to some extent during the summer months by some of the seminarians? Finally, how could this chapel be legitimately called a *shrine* of Mary, a place of grace? The answer is in the founding text of October 18th. These are Kentenich's words:

[T]his sanctuary, which has stood more or less neglected, desolate and bare for as long as we can remember, has been—because of us and at our instigation—restored and given to the Mother of God. . . . Surely! It would be a sublime task, worthy of the diligence and labor of the noblest, if we sodalists could succeed in instilling a burning love of Mary and an ideal striving for virtue in our college such as it has never seen. . . .

The slow development of the grace of our vocation and the consequent higher degree of our religious apostolic spirit is not, however, the aim which I want to present to you. My challenge goes incomparably higher. Each one of us must achieve the highest conceivable degree of perfection and sanctity according to his state of life. Not simply the great and the greater, but the greatest heights ought to be the object of our increased efforts. You will understand that I express such an extraordinary challenge only in the form of a humble wish.

But if you want to know the reason for this wish, I must tell you of a favorite and (up-to-now) secret idea of mine.

When St. Peter saw the glory of God on Tabor, he called out with delight: "It is good for us to be here. Let us build three tents here" (Mt 17,4). These words come to my mind again and again. And I have often asked myself: Would it then not be possible for our little sodality chapel to likewise become for us the Tabor on which the glory of Mary would be revealed? 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. You gather what I am aiming at: I would like to make this place a place of pilgrimage, a place of grace for our house and for the whole German province, and perhaps even further afield. All those who come here to pray shall experience the glory of Mary and confess: "It is good for us to be here. Here we want to build our tents, here shall be our favorite place."

This sodality chapel will become for us the cradle of our sanctity, just as a chapel of Our Lady in Florence was for our second patron, St. Aloysius. And this sanctity will apply gentle force on our heavenly Mother and draw her down to us.³⁰

Kentenich later spoke of this moment as a *covenant of love with Mary*. Human cooperation recognized *in faith* that Mary can abide with us and assist us. Mary is more than Christ's mother in the physical sense, "she is also his *official helper in the entire work of redemption*."³¹ Kentenich wrote in 1954:

"What God has joined together, let no one put asunder" (Mt 19,6). These words may also be applied to the relationship between these two holy persons (Jesus and Mary). In the divine scheme they live in full and eternal unity. Mary knows only Christ and his interests as the great purpose of her life, and he does not merely draw her into the closest vicinity of his heart; he joins her everlastingly in the sense of the divine words, "Let us make him a helpmate like unto himself" (Gen 2,18). . . . The whole content of her life can be derived from these two passages: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to your word" (Lk 1,38) and, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2,5). And he devoted himself to her in the most important hour of his life. There on Calvary he moved Mary into the foreground with great love and care. It was at that moment that he made his last will and testament and spoke the words: "Behold your Mother!—Behold your son!" (Jn 19,27.26). These are both directive and creative words.

They are directive because they show the way for both the Blessed Mother and for human society. For all eternity Mary should consider humankind her child and should care for it. . . . And humankind should ever consider and love Mary as its loyally caring mother.

³⁰Josef Kentenich, "The Founding Document," in: *Schoenstatt, The Founding Documents*, English manuscript (Waukesha, Wis.: Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, 1993), 28–30 (hereafter FD).

³¹Father Joseph Kentenich, *Mary, Our Mother and Educator: An Applied Mariology*, trans. Jonathan Niehaus (Waukesha, Wis., 1973), 36 (hereafter MoME).

Both of these directives are, at the same time, creative because they profoundly effect what they say. They give the Blessed Virgin a motherly warmth, a creatively rich and tender heart deeply concerned about the cares and needs of her children. But to the children they also give the warm and open heart of a child, with the indelibly tender affection of a child. That explains the secret bond of sympathy that exists between the Blessed Mother and Christianity; and also the secret sympathy of our own hearts (for Mary). It is a sympathy that is so deeply rooted within us that it cannot be easily destroyed. Often this bond survives and continues to function in souls even when their inner unity with Christ and God has been severed. The spiritual history of Christianity through the centuries can cite numerous examples to support this claim. . . . That which Sacred Scripture reports of St. John—"and from that hour the disciple took her into his care" (Jn 19,27)—must become a norm for our whole life and daily striving. She belongs in the house of our hearts; she belongs in our churches and in our homes. She belongs there—not separately from Our Lord, but intimately united with him in indissoluble two-in-oneness.³²

In the final draft of Schoenstatt's founding document, Fr. Kentenich uses a rhetorical device in which he states:

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 [St. Michael]. Do not worry about the fulfillment of your desire. *Ego diligentes me diligo*. I love those who love me (Prv. 8.17). Prove to me first that you really love me, that you take your resolution seriously. . . . By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and through an ardent life of prayer, earn many merits and place them at my disposal. 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 hands.³³

For the remainder of his long and fruitful life, Fr. Kentenich would refer to this simple act as an inbreaking of grace, a *divine initiative* awaiting only the human response of practical belief in God's beckoning call, or—to use the term which is now part of Schoenstatt's message—practical belief in Divine Providence. It is the divine game of love, addressed to every

³²MoME, 37-38.

³³FD, 32-34.

person, to walk through an open door which will lead to furthering God's reign on earth. In this case, God's preeminent instrument and servant, Mary, is invoked and, in turn, calls us to walk this journey of faith, hope and love with her.

3. From "It depends on us" to "It depends on you and us"

Kentenich said in 1966,

[T]he pre-founding document (1) outlines in general terms what we later called our great aim: the new person in the new community directed toward the universal apostolate. . . . The important point is . . . the fact that Schoenstatt began with a fight for freedom. The great idea which today rocks the Church inwardly is the idea of a new type of freedom. . . . The aim which we described with the words "the new person (2) in the new society, directed toward the universal apostolate," had . . . to be striven for and achieved under the protection of Our Lady. Two years later—the war had broken out—we realized that we would not manage that way. We could be as active as we pleased, we could stress self-education to an extreme; we would not bring about what we have since to call spiritual transformation. Hence the great turn that was taken on 18 October—Our Lady no longer in the background and we in the foreground.

On 18 October 1914 we said: We must draw Our Lady down from heaven, as it were. She must have a place among us, and *she* should to some extent be the main educator at God's behest. And we? Yes, we are in the background, we want to learn from her the act of opening ourselves to her influence and direction, and of continuing with our self-education until the ideal of the new person in the new society had been achieved to some extent.³⁴

On the 18th of each month, Schoenstatt remembers its anniversary day by renewing the "covenant of love with Mary," the term used for a unique form of consecration to her. On that day, each Schoenstatt Shrine around the world tries to use an

³⁴Josef Kentenich, *Our Marian Mission*, trans. Mary Cole (Constantia, South Africa: Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, 1991), 37-38.

altar antependium with the words of the foundational insight: "Nothing without you, MTA; nothing without us."³⁵

II. Development of Schoenstatt as a Movement of Moral and Religious Formation

There were no visions, apparitions, or miraculous occurrences demonstrating Mary's active presence in Schoenstatt. There was nothing other than the faith—given to every Catholic—that Mary is a part of the parish community gathered for worship, that Mary's image is a reminder of her presence. It is comparatively easy to establish the authenticity of a site of pilgrimage like Lourdes or Fatima. However, Schoenstatt's Shrine and Mary's active presence there—and her role as educator of the peoples at that place—was based on Fr. Kentenich's and his students' simple act of faith. Their faith would be challenged from every conceivable perspective. To his superiors, he demonstrated that believing in Mary as a powerful motherly educator was nothing new in the Catholic Church. Through the Marian sodalities, the Jesuits in Ingolstadt, Germany, were able to keep Bavaria from separating from the Catholic Church during the Reformation. In the early years, Schoenstatt was called "The Parallel," referring to the similarity between Ingolstadt and Schoenstatt. The Church was renewed morally and religiously throughout the ages by looking to Mary and her relationship with Jesus Christ. In Schoenstatt spirituality, Mary is more than a model of faith. She is a beloved family member. Walking with Mary, members of Schoenstatt enter a covenant of love, an original expression of one's baptismal commitment.

Schoenstatt *is* a place of grace where Mary assists in the education of the Christian person through her intercession, through her example (as outlined in Scripture), and through

³⁵MTA = Mother Thrice Admirable, the first part of the official title for the Virgin Mary venerated in the Schoenstatt Movement. The full title is "Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt." The names, Queen and Victress, were each joined to the original MTA during the National Socialist and post-World War II periods respectively. See also n.19 above.

the influence of her person. Schoenstatt—as people of God, as home of Mary, as movement, as Church in miniature, as shrine—can be a place of grace. In Thomistic thought, it would be a secondary cause, dependent upon the primary cause, that is, God's active presence in our world.

But these words and claims mean nothing without an encounter and experience of the place, of Mary and of those who walk with her. That is why the founder and the founding generation were and remain so important. It is not enough to say that a place is beautiful. It must be shown and experienced.

In summary, Schoenstatt understands, as a sustaining force of its life, the *Marian principle of formation and the patrocentric orientation of the Schoenstatt spirituality*. These two essential elements are summarized in the axiom: *With Mary through Christ in the Holy Spirit to the Father*. The Marian principle of formation proceeds from the personal character of the Blessed Mother now officially the permanent companion and permanent helpmate of Christ, the head of all creation, within the entire work of redemption.³⁶

A. Schoenstatt's Way of Recognizing God's Initiative

Schoenstatt's theological basis for belief in Mary's active and ongoing participation in salvation history are, first, the accounts in Scripture as they have been presented and interpreted by the Church, and, second, faith in Divine Providence which continues to maintain the Church in fidelity.

Fr. Kentenich spoke of the *law of the open door* (I Cor. 16:8–9, II Cor. 2:2);³⁷ the *law of the creative resultant* (the smallness and weakness of the instruments, the greatness of the task and difficulties, the magnitude of the results); and the *divine security of instinct* (the work of the Holy Spirit in human persons) which confirms in the Christian people that

³⁶*General Statutes of the Schoenstatt Work* (1997), 6. [The term "patrocentric" is used in the Schoenstatt tradition.]

³⁷I Cor 16:8–9, "But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." II Cor 2:12, "When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, a door was opened for me in the Lord."

Christ, Mary, and the Church cannot be separated. He asserted that Schoenstatt taught nothing new or extraordinary, but was indeed a *creative synthesis* of Church teachings. He did not claim for Schoenstatt a unique place in the development of doctrine, but he did lay claim to pastoral methods which would effectively bring doctrine to life. These pastoral methods are what distinguish this spirituality to a great extent. Schoenstatt devotion, a part of which is pilgrimage, would have this solid foundation.³⁸

B. The Ongoing History of Schoenstatt— Its Founder's Life

After the First World War, Fr. Kentenich's superiors recognized the gifts of his dynamic new methods and freed him from all other duties so that he could care for the budding apostolic movement, a movement already at this early stage structured into a league and federation with various levels of commitment. In the 1920s, women became part of Schoenstatt. In 1926, the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary were founded, a community which was later approved under *Provida Mater Ecclesia* as a secular institute of papal right. By 1965, twenty-six autonomous branches existed in the Schoenstatt complex.³⁹

In the 1930s, 30,000 priests participated in retreat courses offered by Kentenich. The titles of some of the programs indicate Fr. Kentenich's courageous approach to contemporary issues: *Concerning Social Questions*, a convention regarding pedagogy in an industrial environment;⁴⁰ *Marian Educational*

³⁸Another paper could show how Kentenich applied the principles and guidelines of *Marialis Cultus* from the onset of his educational activity and application of Marian devotion.

³⁹Its general statutes provide the following essential definition of the Schoenstatt Work: "The international Schoenstatt Work is a confederation of autonomous communities which, in the spirit of apostolic responsibility for the kingdom of God as a movement of religious-moral renewal from Schoenstatt, have dedicated themselves to the Marian formation in Christ of the Church and world at the shore of the new time" (*General Statutes of the Schoenstatt Work*, preliminary translation, 1997, p. 10).

⁴⁰Josef Kentenich, *Zur sozialen Frage: Industripädagogische Tagung* (Schoenstatt-Verlag, 1990). [Covers such themes as education in the light of world revolution, Christian and Socialist educational movements, the Church and the proletariat, vari-

Course, Specifically Teaching Principles for Modern Catholic Youth; Convention for a Pedagogy of Marriage; Priests' Retreat, "Marian-Priestly Wisdom of Life." In all these issues, Kentenich sought to develop an answer in organic harmony with the teachings of the Church, historical experience, and the latest known contemporary developments.

III. Initiating a Pilgrimage Movement in Schoenstatt

At Christmas 1931, Kentenich began to encourage members of the branches on various levels to reach out to the people. He developed what he called a strategy to establish a *people's and pilgrim's movement*. The members of the federations and leagues understood themselves as a type of *elite*. Kentenich regarded the elite as those with the *vocation* to initiate members into a deeper commitment. Regulations for membership were stringent enough to secure this elite. Such an elite would later embody and secure the spirituality. Nonetheless, even in this light, Kentenich insisted on universal, apostolic outreach. Kentenich envisioned the Church of the future, not only with a priesthood and committed religious institutes, but also with a vast network of the laity who would take responsibility for bringing the Gospel message to every level of human existence.

A. Antidote to National Socialism

Kentenich was appalled by the psychological reaction of the masses to the mindless demonstrations and coming to power of the National Socialist party. He once said that the waters of baptism could never be poured over this type of philosophical system. He saw the need to educate the masses in true Christian principles and thinking. He had foreseen these trends already in his early teaching days: People do what the others do because the others do it. He called it mass-mindedness or herd-mentality. Eventually, he coined terms to describe what he called a separation between what people outwardly did (especially when in crowds) and what they otherwise had been

ous positions within the Catholic Church, workers as contrasted to skilled, trained craftsmen (trained for a lifetime job), spiritual direction of the working masses.]

taught regarding the moral law: "Sunday Catholics" (irreligious during the rest of the week).

B. Purpose of Schoenstatt Pilgrimages

Kentenich longed to reach the people directly. There are countless stories of how he encouraged the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary, for instance, to organize pilgrimages to Schoenstatt. "Gather the people, encourage them to come," he exhorted. "Charter trains, make an all-out effort to be hospitable and to serve the individual who will in turn bring others." He preached indefatigably, powerfully, warmly, filled with faith. His approach was not to use the voice of dire warnings, but over and over again to speak about God's fundamental law in governing the world: *God is love; he who lives in love, lives in God and God lives in him* (cf. Jn.17).

Kentenich engaged the Schoenstatt Sisters to write, to publish manuscripts, to create hymns, poems, art—anything creatively unique—on themes that would apply this fundamental law to everyday life. Mary was the gospel exemplar of such love: loved and loving.

The National Socialists promoted a propaganda of hatred in the 1930s. For Kentenich, the fundamental governing principle of history was love, not hatred, and love was the meeting place where faith and reason could encounter each other. Everything possible had to be done—personal contacts, written materials, pilgrimages, and education—to touch the hearts of the people to counteract the prevailing influences. The most important of these methods, and the reason for Schoenstatt's rapid growth, was *personal contact*. The second method was to *start where the people are, but never leave them there nor fully join them* (in the sense of staying there). For Kentenich, there was the *Marian model* of taking and leading the people into the heights and depths of the message of Scripture and tradition.

Kentenich began early to preach about the *Marian* way of evangelization: Like Mary at the Visitation, Christians are called to be Christ-filled persons always ready to assist, but their main apostolate was that of *being*. Mary—mother, queen, and educator of the peoples—is revealed in the Scriptures as a person

who loves and who is depicted in *images of relationships*, fully human yet fully oriented to God. Kentenich taught that these were some of the Marian attitudes which can transform a person and ultimately our world.

We have shown brief sketches of the *ideas* that formed the basis of the Schoenstatt spirituality, based on a covenant of love with the Mother of God. We have also looked at aspects of Schoenstatt's historical development. We are almost ready to speak about those *contemporary pilgrimage experiences* to which the title of this presentation alludes. Kentenich recognized that burn-out occurred when formation was activity-based, without serious asceticism, sound knowledge, and deep religious conviction. Kentenich saw that conversion or *education to cooperate with grace* was necessary. Therefore, Schoenstatt undertakes pilgrimage out of the motive to *instill Marian formation and promote a Marian attitude toward everyday life*. But there is another factor: the effectiveness of God's grace.

IV. Grace as Gifts

The Schoenstatt approach to pilgrimage involves the conviction that God promises to be with those who seek him. In Schoenstatt, Mary also promises something. The founding document pictures Mary speaking: "By fulfilling your duties faithfully and conscientiously and through an ardent life of prayer, earn many merits and place them at my disposal. 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 hands."⁴¹ Schoenstatt pilgrimage promises *gifts and graces in abundance*. This is similar to the doctrine of faith and the doctrine on the value of good works as stated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

2005 Since it belongs to the supernatural order, grace *escapes our experience* and cannot be known except by faith. We cannot therefore rely on

⁴¹FD, 34.

our feelings or our works to conclude that we are justified and saved. However, according to the Lord's words—"Thus you will know them by their fruits" [Mt 7,20]—reflection on God's blessings in our life and in the lives of the saints offers us a guarantee that grace is at work in us and spurs us on to an ever greater faith . . .

This is the Schoenstatt *experience* of grace. Grace-filled persons are recognized by their actions and by their heroic lives. This starts with Mary. Before the beginning of pilgrimage to Schoenstatt, Kentenich and his colleagues observed some communal qualities which could not be based on purely natural factors. Later, the universal sense of these same qualities led Kentenich to speak of Schoenstatt's three *pilgrimage graces*.

A. The Grace of a Home (*At "home" in God, at home in Jesus Christ, at home in and with Mary, at home in the heart of others*)

Many nineteenth- and twentieth-century peoples, especially those of the western cultures, feel they were uprooted and homeless, separated from their heritage. Aware of this homelessness, the pilgrim is invited to find stability in the New Law of God's covenant and in an exchange of hearts, interests, and goods with the Mother of God. It is a covenant with a fourfold dimension—*height*: the Triune God through a Patrocentric spirituality; *depth*: "No greater love . . ."; *width*: the Church and all nations/cultures universally; *length*: for all generations.

B. The Grace of Spiritual Transformation

Transformation implies a conversion and education to a life based on the evangelical counsels as applicable to every state of life and profession. Transformation means a life recognizing and responding to God's abundant *gifts and graces*.

C. The Grace of Apostolic Fruitfulness

Christian service and evangelization bring fulfillment. An excellent commentary of Schoenstatt's perspective on aposto-

late is found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* under the explanation of "The New Law or the Law of the Gospel."⁴²

V. Post-World War II Development

After a successful period as retreat master in the 1930s, when future bishops and prominent theologians heard ideas that anticipated the spirit of Vatican II, Kentenich was apprehended by the Gestapo. He spent four weeks in solitary confinement, nearly five months in prison, and three years in the concentration camp at Dachau. He considered it God's greatest gift that he could truly live, and not only preach, the cross. The Dachau period was incredibly fruitful: he wrote over 16,000 rhymes which served as a camouflage for religious instruction. He founded the Schoenstatt Brothers of Mary, the Schoenstatt branch for families, and Schoenstatt International. A powerful contemporary Schoenstatt pilgrimage experience is to travel in Father Kentenich's footsteps to Dachau, to reflect on the atrocities committed by sinful humanity, and pray together the Stations of the Cross he composed while he was in Dachau. The point is not submission, but rather the power to determine one's life even amidst the most evil of situations.

Immediately after leaving Dachau, Kentenich continued his work. However, his horizon had changed. It now encompassed the whole world. In the 1930s, he had sent Sisters to South Africa, to Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Chile. From his contacts with Polish and French priests in Dachau, he was well aware of the prejudice that Schoenstatt would encounter. Many objected that they could never become attached to a pilgrimage place and shrine in Germany. Kentenich understood

⁴²E.g.: 1972 The New Law is called a *law of love* because it makes us act out of the love infused by the Holy Spirit, rather than from fear; a *law of grace*, because it confers the strength of grace to act, by means of faith and the sacraments; a *law of freedom*, because it sets us free from the ritual and juridical observances of the Old Law, inclines us to act spontaneously by the prompting of charity and, finally, lets us pass from the condition of a servant who "does not know what his master is doing" to that of a friend of Christ—"For all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you"—or even to the status of son and heir. [Jn 15:15; cf. Jas 1:25, 2:12; Gal 4:1-7, 21-31; Rom 8:15]

the objection. For him, Schoenstatt was not *in Germany*, it was *in the world*. Cultural differences were to be respected, while basic formative principles and doctrine remained firm.

During the post-war period, Kentenich traveled to the countries where Schoenstatt foundations were beginning. The Sisters in Uruguay had built a replica of the Schoenstatt Shrine in Germany. The founder approved and encouraged this action. Today, establishing a shrine and an educational center is essential wherever the Schoenstatt branches take root on a larger scale. It is necessary to Schoenstatt's pilgrimage experience.

At the end of the 1940s Kentenich wrote a long letter to his bishop in Trier. In this letter he defended the *Marian* elements of the movement, the methods and asceticism which had developed, and his vision for the Church on the new shores of time. He especially underscored the role the laity would have in the Church of the future. He criticized what he called mechanistic thinking, that is, forms and practices which are separated from deep spiritual understanding.

His views were not understood, and he was sent in exile to the United States for fourteen years. He was also separated from the governance and the development of Schoenstatt. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he had—as he said—the pastoral opportunity to be with *ordinary people*. All that he had developed before, he could now outline in the lives of simple, working people in a German immigrant parish. For fourteen years, Monday night after Monday night, he taught the people ways to master life out of faith, hope and love. Sunday after Sunday, he preached long sermons filled with hope and confidence. He followed developments of the Vatican Council II and helped the people adjust to the changes he welcomed as necessary for a Spirit-imbued Church.

The optimism of Schoenstatt spirituality and pilgrimage is attributable to the fact that the founder did not die in Dachau nor in exile. Rather, after his recall from exile, he died on the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows, September 15, 1968, immediately after Mass on a Sunday morning, in a church of adoration built in honor of the Trinity in thanksgiving for the Dachau protection. What he left behind was an original and universal system of education based on *form-giving*

*laws and sustaining forces of life,*⁴³ twenty-six autonomous, federatively structured branches of the Schoenstatt Work united in a covenant spirituality, and a network of shrines throughout the world.

VI. The Network of Schoenstatt Shrines

Kentenich understood Schoenstatt as an integral part of the Church. He coined the phrase, *die Kirche im kleinen* (the Church in miniature). In Schoenstatt, a shrine has many connotations. It can be a physical structure—a grace-filled place, centered on Christ in Word and tabernacle. The shrine is seen as the home of Mary, who shares her home with us. The shrine is also grace-filled persons and grace-filled communities. The natural family is one such community. Gradually, the notion of a network of shrines developed.

A. Mother Shrine and Daughter Shrines

Schoenstatt made great efforts to bring as many people as possible to the original shrine (the first one in Germany) and later to the daughter shrines (replicas around the world). Through this pilgrimage activity, people would be brought to a deep experience of Church, and there learn of Mary—her life; her faith; her power to help; her mission—through, in and for Christ and the Triune God. They would return home strengthened and strengthening, committed to their parishes and to various apostolic outreaches. [The members of the Schoenstatt leagues are to return to a primary apostolate, usually the parish. Members wish to be the arm assisting the parish in all its activities.]

B. Home Shrines ("The Domestic Church")

During his exile in Milwaukee, Fr. Kentenich followed closely the deliberations of Vatican II. He was convinced that the bishops of the council had recognized that it is not enough to bring people to the Church, but the Church must also come to the people. Even before the council, Schoenstatt saw the

⁴³See *General Statutes of the Schoenstatt Work*.

need to establish the shrine in the homes. Kentenich developed the concept of the home shrine among families in Milwaukee. He told the people to establish a focal point in their homes that would remind them that they are a living shrine, the Church in miniature, that they were to be a grace-filled family of God. Already in Dachau he had prayed:

Let me present the cross and the picture of Mary
to the nations as the sign of redemption
so that the two who stand as one in the Father's plan of love
may never be divided.⁴⁴

The symbols, cross and Marian image, were to remind people of their baptismal commitment and their duty to build the domestic church. The same graces effective in the first shrine and in the branch shrines were also effective in the home shrines.⁴⁵

C. Heart Shrines

Grace-filled persons in a grace-filled society will ultimately bring about moral-religious renewal. The heart-shrine teaching in Schoenstatt is a reminder that where your heart is there will your treasure be. Mary will never occupy this dwelling alone; her Divine Son is the foremost occupant of this home. Kentenich called the home shrine, heart shrine, and the consecrations the *fruits* of his exile and the gift Schoenstatt has for the universal Church.

D. Pilgrim Shrines (*Schoenstatt's Rosary Campaign—An Apostolate of the Schoenstatt Family*)

Schoenstatt's apostolic work draws inspiration from the Visitation. Mary is the Christ-bearer, the Christ-bringer, the one

⁴⁴Joseph Kentenich, "Way of the Cross of God's Instruments" (Concluding Prayer), in *Heavenwards*, trans. Jonathan Niehaus, American Ed. (Waukesha, Wis.: Schoenstatt Fathers, 1992), 90.

⁴⁵An example of contemporary pilgrimage that developed in Ohio is for families to travel to one another's homes and visit a home shrine. The host family explains the name they have given to their home shrine. (Titles are usually drawn from Scripture, a devotional tradition, or an experience [e.g., Cause of Our Joy, Mother of Divine Mercy, New Nazareth].)

who serves Christ. The Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign—contrary to the expectations of rational Europeans and secular North Americans—has grown rapidly. For many, it is the first point of contact with Schoenstatt. This campaign began when the founder dedicated a new Schoenstatt Shrine in Santa Maria, Brazil, on April 11, 1948. Not long after, Kentenich wrote a letter asking the people to take the MTA picture, as it is called, to their homes. John Pozzobon, a shopkeeper, husband, and father of seven, took this request seriously. Mary should do what the founder said she would do: She should educate his family and guide them to holiness.

In 1950, a Schoenstatt Sister in Brazil gave John Pozzobon a large framed picture shaped as the shrine. She asked if he would take the image to families and pray the rosary with them. In his simple, non-aggressive and kind way, Pozzobon replied that he would try to root the families more deeply in catechesis, strengthen them through the charitable works, and, in some cases bring them to the sacraments. For thirty-five years, Pozzobon visited families, schools, jails, parishes and hospitals. He began a record of his visits. His booklets show that he logged (mostly by walking!) more than 85,000 miles with the shrine on his back. The founder heard about Pozzobon's work and approved it as a sound pastoral approach to reach the people.

The key to the fruitfulness of the apostolate was the link that Pozzobon always retained to the Church and to the spirituality of the movement. He was later ordained a deacon, and he walked to the Schoenstatt Shrine in Santa Maria, Brazil, for daily Mass. On June 27, 1985, he was struck on the road and killed. Once, when concern was expressed for his safety, he said, "If you find me dead on the edge of a road, know that I have died in joy."⁴⁶ The Diocese of Santa Maria opened his canonization process on December 12, 1995. (His first and second wives and his children approved of his apostolic work; neither his family nor his business was neglected because of it.)

One method for the formation of small groups is the rotation of a small uniform image of Mary for the period of a

⁴⁶See *Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign General Guidelines*, p. 6.

month. Mary "visits" the home. Mary and Jesus are given a place of honor, the rosary is prayed (communally if possible) for the intentions of the family, and then Mary and her Child continue their journey to another house. This *coming and going* element keeps fresh the notion of Mary's active presence. If the family wishes to retain the image in their home, they are urged to begin a deeper study of Catholic faith as a preparation to erect a home shrine.

In Dominican Republic, the Schoenstatt Sisters require that catechesis and frequentation of the sacraments be the necessary preparation before the home shrine can be erected. Even in the poorest homes, preparations are made to welcome the Madonna and Child, and the visit is a festive occasion. In the secular atmosphere of American homes, the image often comes and goes quietly or sits on a stand at a bedside, speaking where words cannot, but linking the heart and mind nevertheless to the Church.

VII. Some Models of Contemporary Schoenstatt Pilgrimage

Throughout this article, some of Schoenstatt's contemporary forms of pilgrimage have been mentioned. There are others. The creative forms of pilgrimage are countless. Here, it seemed necessary to first establish *the why* of Schoenstatt pilgrimage rather than the *what* and *how*. Nonetheless, the *what* and *how* of various types of pilgrimage illustrate the *why* of the Schoenstatt experience.

First, there are pilgrimages to the Mother Shrine in Germany on the Rhine River. The shrine has a staff of priests, sisters, hired workers and volunteers who plan organized pilgrimages on a yearly basis (methods used in planning pilgrimages described later). For *international pilgrimages*, there is an International Secretariat (staffed by the Sisters), whose purpose is to coordinate the visits of groups or individuals on a daily or weekly basis. For national pilgrimages, *diocesan groups* (often with a bishop) charter trains or buses. The central loudspeaker systems are invaluable tools to provide reflections and foster unity of spirit. In the chartered trains, there are cars set aside

as confessional cars, sometimes a chapel car, usually cars for children's activities and a separate program geared to teens. It is not unusual for two-thousand persons to participate in a diocesan pilgrimage to Schoenstatt. On location, the people either walk from the train station or are transported by local buses to the pilgrims' tent church for a Mass with homily. The liturgy and opportunity for the sacrament of reconciliation are central to the program of the pilgrimage. At the close of the day there is a benediction and a homily, recalling the message of the day's liturgy and relating it to Marian consecration. The people are invited to pray the ancient Marian consecration prayer: My Queen, my Mother.⁴⁷

In Germany, many dioceses have a central diocesan Schoenstatt Shrine. Where the life of the diocesan shrines is well-established, large diocesan-sponsored pilgrimages will usually alternate their destination—one year to Schoenstatt on the Rhine, the next to the local diocesan central shrine.

The second major type of pilgrimage revolves around *groups according to vocation in life or profession* (the usual concept of conferences, retreats, days of reflection). A third type may not have the name "pilgrimage," but the events are structured and prepared on the same principles as explained for pilgrimages above. These are *holidays* and *camps*, for example, a week for families. These are frequently the result of the family league who invite new families for the first time. Pilgrimage holidays are attempts to incorporate a balance between instruction for adults, catechesis for teens and children, and communal activities for the whole family. *Camps* for girls or for boys have the same goal of providing a mix of prayer and liturgy, catechesis, personality formation, knowledge of Church history, and arts and crafts that symbolically express the religious theme of the days/weeks. *Hiking pilgrimages*, planned for high school and college youth, include times for catechesis and discussion.

⁴⁷My Queen, my Mother, / I give myself entirely to you, / and to show my devotion to you / I consecrate to you this day / my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, / my entire self without reserve. / As I am your own, my good Mother, / guard me and defend me / as your property and possession. Amen.

A third regular event related to pilgrimage is the Schoenstatt *Covenant Day*—once a month, usually on the 18th or on a Sunday close to the 18th. Schoenstatt members recall Schoenstatt's foundation day and renew their own covenant of love with the Blessed Mother. A eucharistic liturgy with homily is usually central where possible. Talks are provided, and the day concludes with a benediction or devotion to renew the covenant of love with Mary. When a priest or deacon is not available, lay people conduct prayer services usually related to a seasonal liturgical theme.

One-hundred-and-sixty Schoenstatt Shrines are now located throughout the world. Many of these serve as *national* or *diocesan central* shrines. As far as possible, the pilgrimage model from Germany is followed on the diocesan level. The various *branches of the movement* have their own special days and occasionally the branches will work together for diocesan or state celebrations. A major point of emphasis is to highlight the cultural uniqueness of each area or nation. An example of this takes place in the archdiocese of Milwaukee in May. Each Sunday of May, a different ethnic group is welcomed to the International Schoenstatt Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin (near Milwaukee) to celebrate a May crowning unique to their culture. The Hispanic cultures, the large contingency of Filipino immigrants, and the "regulars" each have their Sunday. The German immigrant communities celebrate Corpus Christi in a festive way at the Center. These celebrations usually follow with a picnic, often with ethnic foods of the respective cultures.

The *Schoenstatt Rosary Campaign* also centers on the local shrines. The images are often blessed and sent out from the shrines. After one year, the coordinators are invited to return to the shrines with the images and to commit themselves for the next year to this apostolate. In Puerto Rico, the *Retorno* of the image becomes a huge, festive pilgrimage day, with Mass and a new commissioning. Diocesan and parish coordinators inform the pastors and bishop about this apostolate. A record is kept of those responsible for receiving and transporting the shrines, so as to prevent any individual appropriation, misuse, or superstition. Schoenstatt is distrustful of extraordinary phe-

nomena, since it was founded on the ordinary experience of the Catholic faith community

VIII. Other Examples of Pilgrimage

There are many types of pilgrimage which have produced abundant spiritual benefits. For example, a trip to the World War I battlefields of France, in the footsteps of the early seminarians who were the foundation of Schoenstatt, has been found to deepen commitment to vocation. The diaries and letters of these young soldiers can be significant factors in religious formation. To sit by a creek in silence, to imagine bombs exploding nearby, to listen to the prayer of a young soldier offering his life for the aims of the movement, to walk the last march to execution made by a soldier who volunteered to be a substitute for a man with a family—these are all the experiences that constitute the Schoenstatt pilgrimage.

Schoenstatt is located in the diocese of Trier, and a pilgrimage to that city can be a moving experience. Trier was a Roman settlement, the home of Helena, mother of Constantine, the emperor who first recognized Christianity. It is the city where Karl Marx was born and grew up. The bishop of Trier was responsible for Fr. Kentenich's exile, but that same bishop began Fr. Kentenich's beatification process. The Trier experience combines ancient heroic Christian history, the contours of Christian history, and the reconciling healing of faithful service, even in face of the dark side of the Church.

Rome is a goal of major pilgrimage for branches of the Schoenstatt Movement. There, one senses the universality of the Church, its traditions; in the person of the Holy Father, one senses the commission to preach the Gospel to all nations. A favorite point of reference for these pilgrimages is to show the origins of the Church of Rome in Christian *homes*. In recent times, the Holy Land has been the destination of Schoenstatt pilgrimages. The points of emphasis are the concepts of home and family life as presented in Scripture.

Schoenstatt also tries to foster pilgrimage to diocesan and national Marian shrines (in addition to its own Marian centers). The Schoenstatt Family in England sponsors a yearly pilgrimage to Walsingham to restore and foster national Marian

devotion. The Schoenstatt Family visits Walsingham and walks the "holy mile" for ecumenical unity, recalling that England was once "Our Lady's dowry." In some countries, the administration of a national shrine (not Schoenstatt) might be confided to a Schoenstatt priest. Schoenstatt wishes to enter into collaboration with all who aspire to a future Apostolic World Confederation.

IX. Conclusion: Theological Framework of Schoenstatt Pilgrimages

Pilgrimage, in the Schoenstatt, involves planning and preparation. Those who are leading the pilgrimage should be attuned to current themes proposed by the diocesan and international church programs. They should explore fresh ways to apply Scriptural references to pilgrimage to the events of daily life. Much material for pilgrimage is found in Fr. Kentenich's works, for example, the *Little Hours from Dachau* and *Heavenwards*, which present the Schoenstatt Shrines in allegory form—in the familiar scenes of Nazareth, Bethlehem, Tabor, Bethany, Golgotha, the Cenacle, and Zion.

When planning a pilgrimage, the team leaders will strive for the following three goals: knowledge (especially catechesis), education (personal formation), and the apostolate (commitment to Marian service). Instruction can come through the written word (nearly every branch, including the pilgrim branch, has its regular literature, such as newsletters, etc.) and audio-visual material. Commitment to Marian service is meant, first and foremost, to make beautiful with love those normal circumstances of daily life in the family, the workplace, the parish, the community. When the Marian pilgrim returns home, Schoenstatt hopes indeed that life will be different, that *grace will be abundant and apparent*.

There are, states Robert Sullivan, assistant managing editor of *Life* magazine, "a thousand different reasons, a thousand different needs"⁴⁸ for going on pilgrimage. Schoenstatt recognizes that there are many different ways to express devotion. As Sullivan further comments, "What it [pilgrimage] signifies,

⁴⁸Robert Sullivan, "Journeys of the Spirit," in *Attaché*, 51.

however, can be readily grasped. It signifies a desire for grace . . . Schoenstatt identifies this as a desire to be an instrument in God's hand, a desire for inner transformation, a desire for a home with an ultimate meaning and destination. It is an extraordinary demonstration of faith. It is about longing, yes, and also about trust."⁴⁹

Gianni Giansanti is a Rome-based photographer who has accompanied Pope John Paul II on more than 40 trips abroad and, for three years earlier this decade, made it his business to be there during the mystical, ecstatic Christian pilgrimages. He thinks back on what he saw during his own professional but nonetheless passionate pilgrimages, and says, "The real miracle I witnessed was faith."⁵⁰

Schoenstatt would agree. The whole point of pilgrimage is to go somewhere to foster and strengthen faith, hope and love in ever-creative programs and dimensions.

⁴⁹Sullivan, "Journeys," in *Attaché*, 51.

⁵⁰Sullivan, "Journeys," in *Attaché*, 51.