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APOSTOLIC MOVEMENT OF SCHOENSTATT

**Opening Celebration of the Jubilee Year
of the 100th Anniversary of the Founding**

Schoenstatt, October 18, 2013

CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Greeting and Introduction

I cordially greet the representatives of the large family of the Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt in Germany – and beyond that the representatives of the Movement from various parts of the world. You have come together here today, at the cradle of the Movement, so to speak, to open the jubilee celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the founding of 1914.

I address a heartfelt greeting to the members of the General Presidium, to those responsible for the numerous branches of the Movement. I thank you for the invitation to celebrate this Eucharist with you. Today's celebration is like a door that opens to us the way into the jubilee year, into an outspoken year of grace! As President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, I am especially happy to experience this significant moment with you. As you know, the Pope has entrusted our council with the pastoral care for the ecclesiastical movements. That is true both of the movements that have recently come about as well as those which – like yours – have already been able to prove themselves in a long history. I gladly join you in your *Magnificat*.

Let us make the Blessed Mother's hymn of praise our own and thank the Lord for the great deeds he has worked in your Movement, and through you in the Church and in the world. How many fruits of holiness, how many families who live in faithfulness to their calling, how much missionary fire! For that we can only give thanks! But at the

same time we want to entrust this special year to the Lord, so that it becomes a true *kairos* in the life of the Movement: a time of grace and of the renewed missionary commitment which our Church so urgently needs ... The responsorial psalm of today's liturgy assures us: "The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth" (Ps 145:18).

Let us prepare our hearts for this Eucharistic celebration by being heartily sorry for all our sins: *I confess to almighty God ...*

Homily

"Go; behold, I send you out ..." (Lk 10:3)

1. With this Eucharistic celebration the Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt begins the celebrations of the 100-year anniversary of its founding. The year that is thus opened will become a special year for you – a year of grace, a true *kairos* – a passing by of the Lord ... That is a great gift for all of you – a gift that must be accepted with joy and gratitude, but also with great responsibility, so that we don't pass up the grace and miss the unique opportunity it offers us.

From the beginning we want to place this holy time under the special protection of the Blessed Mother – the one who is full of grace, the humble handmaid of the Lord, who opened herself without reserve for the gifts of the Most High and who – like no one else – gave to God a total and unconditional yes; she, the first disciple of Christ ... That is the Marian way, the way onto which she calls us in a special way in this jubilee year.

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist. And I believe that is no accident! St. Luke has much to say to a Marian movement. We know he is called the first "painter of Mary." Indeed all Marian icons in the Byzantine Tradition refer to that icon which St. Luke is said to have been the first to paint in its original.

Painter of the picture of Mary – surely we may also say this of Father Kentenich. Without a doubt he saw himself as such. And it seems to me that in the image of the Mother of the Lord, upon which so many generations in the Church have painted, he emphasized some features that have special timeliness today. He was convinced: She has a lasting mission from God. She wants to work among us, for she is our Mother. Thus Father Kentenich could compare her task in the Church – in union with Christ the Head – with the function of the heart: Mother and Heart of the Church!

Moreover, as a spiritual guide your founder incessantly painted the image of Mary into the hearts of people. Father Kentenich wrote in his own way the "Totus Tuus" of Bl. John Paul II into countless hearts and thus gave Marian persons to the Church.

All of us as Christians should become "Painters of Mary," which means painting the image of the Mother of God with our own life, as it says in a well-known Schoenstatt prayer: "Let us walk like you through life, let us mirror you forever ... Walk in us through our time, make it ready for the Lord." This is surely the special calling of the members of the Apostolic Movement of Schoenstatt, whose original charism is a *covenant of love* with Mary. Those who let themselves be guided and formed by Mary take part in her task in the Church.

2. The celebration of the 100-year anniversary of the founding becomes an occasion for the Schoenstatt Movement to recall with a grateful heart the stations of its long history. It is extremely important in the life of each ecclesiastical movement to keep the memory of its origin alive. The deepest essence, the complete beauty of the charism out of which a movement grows and again and again renews itself over time, appears from the origin. The living memory of the beginning is the prerequisite for a clear knowledge of one's own identity: Who are we in the Church? What is our calling and mission in the Church and in the world?

Therefore I would like to go back with you to October 18, 1914. Together with a group of students, Father Joseph Kentenich, a young Pallottine who had been entrusted with the task of spiritual director in the Pallottine House of Studies in Schoenstatt, carried out an act which went down in history as the beginning of the Movement. Back then, in the little chapel of St. Michael in the Schoenstatt Valley, a real *covenant of love* with Mary was sealed. Father Kentenich invited the young people to prove their love for the Mother of God in life, and thereby to "draw her down," so to speak, into the little chapel, so that she could unfold her entire motherly effectiveness from there. In his talk Father Kentenich said, "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.'"

The covenant of love – that is the heart of the Movement, the source of the spiritual vitality and fruitfulness of the Movement in these 100 years. The covenant of love, your charism! And everything focuses on this place, on the Original Shrine of the *Mater Ter Admirabilis*. From here, and in many Schoenstatt Shrines in the whole world, she works as the Educator of that "new person" and that "new community" which the Church so urgently needs.

Thus we all have a reason to thank Divine Providence, who gave this place and this shrine in the covenant of love to the entire Church. Our thanks also goes to the community of the Pallottines for the gift of the Original Shrine to the Schoenstatt Family. That is a big jubilee gift for which we are all happy!

Who would have thought on that October 18, 1914, that a Movement that would have such an extraordinary historical development would come into existence! From the small mustard seed a large and expansive tree has grown – a spiritual family, rich in gifts and branches, united in the distinctness of the league, the federations, and the secular institutes. A large movement has come about that is meanwhile represented on all continents, in almost 50 countries, and you, dear friends, are the proof of this.

Schoenstatt brings a remarkable missionary dynamic into the Church. How many initiatives of evangelization and formation for youth, adults – men, women, and families! But above all: How many people can testify that their lives have changed here in the shrine! How many young people have experienced through Schoenstatt the joy of the faith and the beauty of being a Christian! How much missionary potential in individuals and communities has already been uncovered here and placed at the service of the Church!

Next to the many joyful and comforting events in the history of Schoenstatt, tests, and even very painful tests, were not lacking. With that I don't only mean the two World

Wars, the imprisonment of the founder in the concentration camp of Dachau, but also and above all his long-lasting exile in the United States, which was imposed upon him by the Church authority. In spite of everything, in Father Kentenich's heart and in the hearts of his Schoenstatt Family the love for the Church didn't diminish during these difficult years. Looking back on these years, Schoenstatt can say with St. Paul: "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear" (2 Tim 4:17). The words "*Dilexit Ecclesiam*" are found on the tomb of the father and founder. That says it all.

3. The ecclesiastical movements are no theory; they are much more the concrete response of the Holy Spirit to the difficult challenges which the Church must face at all times. The movements are projects that come about – as Father Kentenich says – “with their ear on the heart of God and their hand on the pulse of the time.” If one ponders the history of the Schoenstatt Movement, the words of the Prophet Isaiah come automatically to mind: “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is 55:9).

God surprises us again and again with his gifts! In this jubilee year it is important to rediscover for oneself the fascinating beauty of the original charism of Schoenstatt. This gift of grace is, after all, the lasting strength and lifeblood of the Movement. Therefore accept the charism of Schoenstatt anew with renewed love, with joy and gratitude! In our life the paralyzing powers of habit and routine always lurk too. Even a spiritual tiredness, a type of lukewarmness, can pervade us. With the help of the Blessed Mother we can live this year as a “time of grace,” in order to regain in ourselves the enthusiasm and joy of our “first love” (cf Rev 2:3-4).

To keep a charism effective means to live it in its totality and to place it at the service of the Church's mission. There is no other way. Many of you will recall the first meeting of the ecclesiastical movements in 1998 and the words of Bl. John Paul II: “The Church expects from you the ‘mature’ fruits of communion and commitment” (*Speech to the Ecclesiastical Movements and New Communities, May 30, 1998*). In 2006 Benedict XVI added: “Dear friends, I ask you to collaborate even more, very much more, in the Pope's universal apostolic ministry, opening doors to Christ. This is the Church's best service for men and women ...” (*Homily at the Pentecost Vigil, June 3, 2006*). And finally, Pope Francis addressed his words to the movements on this year's Feast of Pentecost: “You are a gift and a treasure in the Church! [...] Always feel joy and enthusiasm for communion in the Church and stand up passionately for it!” (*Regina Coeli, May 19, 2013*). Especially today the Church needs a new missionary fire and looks trustingly to the ecclesiastical movements. She also looks with great trust upon Schoenstatt. The Church counts on Schoenstatt!

In today's passage from the Gospel of Luke we heard the words of Jesus: “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Lk 10:2). At the beginning of the jubilee year let us also hear the missionary words of Christ, directed to the whole Schoenstatt Movement: “Go; behold, I send you out ...” (Lk 10:3).

After almost 100 years on this missionary way, the big Schoenstatt Family can now newly testify to its readiness with its response: "Here I am, Lord, send me!"

