



STATEMENT FROM FATHER HEINRICH WALTER

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Whoever discovers Schoenstatt somewhere in the world is very surprised at how many similarities there are in what it looks like and does, no matter where you are. However if you look closer you will see that Schoenstatt has many faces. Schoenstatt's spirituality is the same all over the world, from this spirituality we all live and grow. Our aims are the same to which we are all committed, for the Church and society.

We call ourselves not only a movement but the Schoenstatt family. This is one of our characteristics, as we all belong together. This is also connected to our relationship with our father-like figure and founder Father Joseph Kentenich. Together we build up a culture of relationships and attachments at all levels. This we call covenant culture. Despite all that binds us together and unites us, we have a federative structure. We have no directory for everyone. The many communities which have developed, among which there are 6 secular institutes, various groups, projects and initiatives, all work independently. Every country organizes its own movement into an appropriate structure for coordination. We believe in synergy based on our founder's maxim: "Freedom as much as possible, attachment only as much as necessary, spiritual care at all times."

The foundation on which we all stand is the experience that God talks to us and works in today's world. Some elements of this experience are made in the chapel of grace and at the holy place which we set up and care for in our homes. We look at Mary as the Divine unspoiled concept of humanity. Through our relationship with her we experience the power of her education which helps us to mature and leads us to a deeper faith. We walk in the footprints of the Gospel in the midst of our world just like Father Kentenich did as a way into the future.

Jubilee Preparations

The jubilee preparation began with an international planning meeting just as our structure requires. 89 representatives from 32 countries worked together in 2009 to lay down the guidelines we are using today. These guidelines were sent out to the entire movement in the form of a message. Now every country was beginning the same pathway of preparation. The last three years had a specific central theme. The opening of every year helped towards the development and growth of a very good international network.

Our spirituality and pedagogy

A new person - between freedom and individualism

Our movement began with school boarders who were crying out for freedom. Education at the beginning of the 20th century was marked by duty and punishment. The longing for freedom and self-decision was the ingredients out of which Father Kentenich developed his educational system. He spoke about the true freedom of humanity. He developed a means to form your own life, and the profile of your own character. The pedagogical basic approach is rooted in a strong faith. In the chaos of the First World War the young students of this educational system continued on their way. This is how they became multipliers at the front and the movement grew from here. Through Father Kentenich's educational workshop, instruments were formed able to discover better your own identity and develop your character. It is all about being free and strong personalities who have experienced God's call in their lives and who live from His values. It is about a person who knows he/she is loved but also accepts his/her brokenness and can therefore freely attach him/herself. The new person needs to be one who can form attachments, who can look towards someone else without losing him/herself. Our covenant of love is a counter model to the lack of attachment and relationship which we see all over today.

Life process of attachment – Mary

We know the covenant seal from the history of the people of Israel. God stands by His people. From this experience all relationships and attachments have supernatural components. This forms part of the individual's life in as far as they understand their relationship to God in covenant history. Entry to this is through Mary. We see her as the human being whose relationship with Jesus Christ was lived at the most deepest level. She invites us to go the way with her and she will lead us to a deeper relationship with her Son. This personal decision of faith we call the covenant of love. This covenant of love is the heart of our spirituality, our life secret.

The covenant of love is a form of faith, a way to form your life.

This forms the way we listen to God, how we attach ourselves to Our Lady and follow Christ. Out of this covenant we form our everyday lives. It is a way to form our relationships at home and in the working environment. The covenant is a catalyst time and again when we close a time in our lives or begin anew. So you could say it has a biographical trait.

Schoenstatt advocates a covenant culture as a way forward

We depend on the God of life who remains true to this every day anew. This is how a deep trust and positive outlook towards our fellow men develops. Covenant culture looks at developing new relationships and attachments at all levels and accepts responsibility for this.

In the turmoil of our society, culture and religion today, we go the way of the covenant, the way of attachment and covenants. We work less through missionary action and words, even though at our jubilee pilgrimage to Rome we hope for a new missionary awakening for the future. Our way is more that of an educational work way, working with small lay groups via networking and solidarity. We work through the different stages of life, care for long term streams of life and support the Christian values of a covenant culture in our society.

This covenant also marks our working together with other international and ecumenical church groups and movements. We are delighted that we were involved from the very beginning with the network "Together for Europe". There are 240 Christian movements and groups working within this network towards a better future for Europe.