



## 29. God's Covenant and the Covenant of Love

*The Triune God is a Being in dialogue. This has to be so if it is true that God is Love, because it is part of the essence of love that it can give and receive. So the life within the Blessed Trinity has to be understood as a constant exchange and circulation of love between three Partners: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.*

*It follows from this that God's actions are borne by love. The motivation of love underlies creation, the "world's fundamental law", which we looked at in the previous chapter.*

*The nature of God and the nature of love consequently mean that all action motivated by love is designed for partnership. God created the world, and above all the beings endowed with an intellect, in order to find partners in love. So the world's fundamental law is at the same time also the law of a covenant of love.*

*God has revealed this in unmistakable terms in salvation history. He entered into – and wants to enter into – a covenant with people, which he intends should increasingly become a covenant of love, a marriage covenant. So the Old and New Testaments are a revelation of the "Old Covenant" and the "New Covenant".*

*The actual covenant of love of 18 October 1914 is a practical realisation of this covenant with God. In Fr Kentenich's letter to Monsignor Josef Schmitz (known as the "Josef's Letter") there is a central text on the covenant of love, which describes the covenant structure of salvation history. It is richly underpinned with quotations from the Sacred Scriptures, and the theme is carried through until our covenant of love.*

*The text given here can be found in "Das Lebensgeheimnis Schönstatts, II. Teil, Bündnisfrömmigkeit" – The Secret of Schoenstatt's Life, Part 2, Covenant Spirituality – Vallendar-Schönstatt 1972, pages 43-60.*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S COVENANT FOR SALVATION HISTORY**

Those who survey the past thousands of years in the light of revelation will gladly subscribe to the statement: God's covenant, the covenant of love between God and his people, is the fundamental meaning and form, the fundamental force and norm of the whole of salvation history, starting with Adam and continuing until the day when the Lord will appear on the clouds of heaven with great power and glory in order to judge the living and the dead.

### **God's covenant is the fundamental meaning of salvation history**

Using dramatic images the Book of Revelation reports on the course of history directed by God. It also paints a graphic picture of its completion. As a result it reveals history's innate and God-given meaning: the perfection of the loving union between God and human beings, which is depicted in the image of the marriage feast between bride and bridegroom. At the end of time both are completely open and receptive for each other; both hasten to meet with a warm call of longing on their lips, "Come!"<sup>36</sup> They are united with and in one another in an eternal and indissoluble community of love. That is the ultimate meaning of all world events and every human fate.

"Then I saw", the Apocalyptic writer relates, "a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See I am making all things new. ... I will be their God and they will be my children'"<sup>37</sup>

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. ... Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb."<sup>38</sup>

"Then one of the seven angels ... came and said to me, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.' And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory of God and a radiance ... clear as crystal. ... I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb"<sup>39</sup>.

### **God's covenant is the fundamental form of salvation history**

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<sup>36</sup> Rev 22, 17.

<sup>37</sup> Rev. 21, 1-7.

<sup>38</sup> Rev. 19, 6-9.

<sup>39</sup> Rev. 21, 9-11. 22f.

Philosophy draws our attention to the fact that the *causa finalis* determines the *causa formalis*.<sup>40</sup> So the covenant of love, which in its perfection depicts the meaning of all world events, must also be the fundamental form of salvation history as a whole and in its individual parts. That is to say, it gives every event the form and structure of love. Love prepared and sent it, love has to awaken and deepen it, love must also help to creatively fashion and complete it in retrospect.

The sacred books never tire of confirming and proving this in many and varied phrases, reports and descriptions. The thought can be followed through all events like a golden thread: The Lord of history is the God of the Covenant. He is holding all the threads in his hand and weaves them to create an artistic fabric. His fundamental relationship to humankind is a covenant relationship. It sets its stamp on and determines every action of the one who guides the world. He requires the creative co-operation of his covenant partner, whom he is guiding.

With Adam and Noah God appears as the God of the Covenant of the whole human race.<sup>41</sup> With Abraham and Moses he limits himself to the Chosen People, God's people,<sup>42</sup> which in the New Covenant enters history as the people of the Church. The New Testament speaks of the Lord's covenant with his Church,<sup>43</sup> which opens up the way and secures it for the covenant of love with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The history of Adam and Eve does not use the expression "covenant". Nevertheless the way in which God adheres to them and they to God, clearly bears the marks of a covenant of love. The reciprocal relationship of the two partners is an ideal realisation and revelation of a reciprocal covenant of love. Their conversations are a dialogue between lovers who have found each other and belong to each other. The obligations of the covenant are only indicated; they can be discovered in every detail from the effects of the breach of the covenant.

Noah was the first human being to hear the word "covenant" from the mouth of God. Yahweh speaks,

"I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal on the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations; I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.'"<sup>44</sup>

God remains true to his plans. He upholds the covenant he has made with human-kind, but begins a new method when the opportunity offers itself: He introduces the principle of an elite into salvation history. Abraham and his descendants were singled out from the peoples. Yahweh entered into a covenant with him. Through it God promised him the Promised Land – a land flowing with

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<sup>40</sup> The final cause determines the formal cause, the cause that gives something its form and structure.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Gen 1,28-30; 2 and 3; 9,8ff.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. Gen 17; Ex 19,5; 24,7f.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Eph 5,23ff.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Gen 9, 9-13.

milk and honey<sup>45</sup> – descendants as numberless as the sand on the seashore,<sup>46</sup> and the birth of a redeemer from his descendants.<sup>47</sup> In return he required the complete self-surrender of his covenant partner until the end of time. At the time when the people were wandering through the desert with Moses, God entered into the covenant directly with the people at Mount Sinai. Until then he had only made it with the Patriarchs as representatives of the people. The Bible reports, “Then Moses went up to God; The Lord called to him from the mountain saying, ‘Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites. You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation.’ ... The people all answered as one: ‘Everything that the Lord has spoken we will do.’”<sup>48</sup>

The event was so profoundly impressive that the people were inwardly gripped by it and it changed their feeling for life, so that an awareness of the covenant grew. Despite all the ups and downs and temporary paralysis, their vital energy, enthusiasm and victorious optimism repeatedly returned with new buoyancy.

When the fullness of time had arrived, the second Person in the Godhead appeared in the flesh. This fulfilled the meaning of the Old Covenant.<sup>49</sup> Through his blood, through his death on the gibbet of the Cross, the crucified Bridegroom ransomed his Bride, the Church, and led her home. This is how we see the New Covenant, sealed with the Blood of the Lord. His Church has thus been purchased for a great price.<sup>50</sup> The *matrimonium ratum* that was accomplished on the Cross, becomes *consummatum*<sup>51</sup> in the subjective redemption. Thus the bridal symbol has passed over to the New Testament, although with this difference, that from now on it is the meaningful expression of the covenant, and a loving relationship between Christ and the Church and the individual soul in the state of grace. The symbol of the same fundamental attitude to the Father is that of the “Father-child relationship”. Let us not forget that we are always dealing with images, with symbols, and not remain with them for too long. At any rate, let us not overlook the heart and centre of the image: the reciprocal covenant of love.

What circumcision was for the Old, baptism is for the New Testament: the integration, the incorporation [of the individual] into the corresponding covenant relationship. Accordingly, all the baptised have entered into a covenant with the Lord. They have been baptised into his death, so they

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. Gen 15,7; Ex 3,8.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Gen 15,5.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Gen 17,7 in connection with Gal 3,16.

<sup>48</sup> Ex 19, 3-8.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Gal 4,4.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6, 20.

<sup>51</sup> The betrothal (*matrimonium ratum*) was consummated (*matrimonium consummatum*). The comparison implies that the covenant of love between Christ and his Bride, the Church, was founded by Christ’s death on the Cross, but only becomes effective and fruitful through the personal ‘Yes’ of each individual member of the Church to this covenant.

have been drawn into a communion of death with him. They are meant to remain inseparably united with him in a holy and mysterious communion of being, life, love and destiny, and in him and with him to be drawn into his loving union in the Holy Spirit with the Father.

St Paul took up the idea of the bridal relationship and combined it with love. He called the church in Corinth the bride of the Lord. He presupposed that all were members of Christ and children of the Father. So he wrote, "I feel a divine jealousy for you, for I promised you in marriage to one husband, to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."<sup>52</sup>

Accordingly every graced soul can be called a "bride of Christ" in the wider meaning of the word. In the narrower sense it applies to those who freely choose to make this bridal relationship exclusive and permanent. This is how we understand the ecclesiastical state of virgins and the ancient custom of the consecration of virgins. Starting with the idea of the bride, St Paul solved a number of serious questions, above all the problem of the cult of the body and of marriage.

He impressed on the Corinthians that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The reason is evident: We are members of Christ and hence inspired by his Spirit. So we do not belong to ourselves.<sup>53</sup> The body is a shrine.<sup>54</sup> It is there for the Lord.<sup>55</sup> Even more clearly: The body is a member of Christ. Whoever fornicates desecrates a temple. He desecrates and debases Christ's members to become members of a harlot.<sup>56</sup> Hence his terrible threat, "If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple."<sup>57</sup>

The Apostle to the Gentiles deduces the greatness and dignity of Christian marriage for its likeness to the bridal-spousal union between Christ and his Church. So he teaches the Ephesians,

"Wives be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church, the body of which he is the Saviour. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendour, without a spot or wrinkle or anything of the kind – yes, so that she may be holy and without blemish. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church. Each of you, however, should love his wife as himself, and a wife should respect her husband."<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> 2 Cor 11,2.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6,19.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 3,17.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6,13.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 6,15-18.

<sup>57</sup> 1 Cor 3,17.

<sup>58</sup> Eph 5,22-33.

In much the same way as Paul, John uses the symbol of marriage in order to explain the covenant with God. Also with him the Bridegroom is not simply God, but Christ. For him the present time in the world is the bride's single great time of waiting for her Bridegroom. That is why he closes the Book of Revelation with the words,

"It is I, Jesus, who sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.' The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.'"<sup>59</sup>

And again,

"The one who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming soon.' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"<sup>60</sup>

### **God's covenant is the fundamental force of salvation history**

Just as with the fundamental form and fundamental meaning, so God's covenant is for Israel the fundamental force, that is to say, the constantly bubbling source of strength. By virtue of the covenant Yahweh promised to protect his Chosen People. He lent them his arm, the arm of his omnipotence, and Israel felt sheltered under his protection. In every circumstance it trusted in it and never tired of calling upon it when the waters of tribulation overflowed. In all the ups and downs and aberrations of history it sought and found its way back to God's covenant. The Lord of armies spoke to Jacob,

"I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you."<sup>61</sup>

The Word of the Lord was spoken even more clearly to Moses,

"I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as God Almighty. ... I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens. I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ... I am the Lord, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgement. I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord."<sup>62</sup>

Israel trusted unshakably in the covenant God had made with them. If superficiality, worldliness and passion caused the people to forget it, the Prophets arose and made them aware of it once

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<sup>59</sup> Rev 22,16f.

<sup>60</sup> Rev 22,20.

<sup>61</sup> Gen 28, 13-15.

<sup>62</sup> Ex 6,2-8.

more. At God's command Hosea had to marry a prostitute. The reason was, "For the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the Lord."<sup>63</sup>

Israel

"is not my wife, and I am not her husband – that she put away her whoring from her face, and her adultery from between her breasts. ... She has played the whore, she who conceived them has acted shamefully. For she said, 'I will go after my lovers.' ... Therefore I will hedge up her way with thorns ... She shall pursue her lovers, but not overtake them; and she shall see them, but shall not find them. Then she will say, 'I will go and return to my first husband, for it was better with me then than now.' She did not know ... I will put an end to her mirth ... I will punish her for the festival days of the Baals, when she offered incense to them, and decked herself with her rings and jewelry, and went after her lovers, and forgot me, says the Lord. Therefore, I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. ... You will call me, 'My husband,' ... I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy. I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the Lord."<sup>64</sup>

In Isaiah we read,

"For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts is his name; the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. For the Lord has called you like a wife forsaken and grieved in spirit, like the wife of a man's youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you. ... For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord who has compassion on you."<sup>65</sup>

"For you shall no more be termed Forsaken, and your land shall no more be termed Desolate; but you shall be called My Delight Is In Her, and your land Married; for the Lord delights in you, and your land shall be married. For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your builder marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you."<sup>66</sup>

The New Testament lives wholly out of this covenant, the oneness in love and the community of life with Christ. Just as the branches wither if they are not connected to the vine,<sup>67</sup> just as the members cannot live and work without the head,<sup>68</sup> neither can Christians. They know no rest until they can pray with St Paul,

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<sup>63</sup> Hosea 1,2.

<sup>64</sup> Hosea, 2,2, 4, 7-10, 13, 15f., 18, 21f.

<sup>65</sup> Is 54,5-8, 10.

<sup>66</sup> Is 62, 4f.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Jn 15,6.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 12,12-26.

“It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me”.<sup>69</sup> Christ who declared solemnly, “Without me you can do nothing”.<sup>70</sup> “No one can come to the Father except through the Son”.<sup>71</sup> They say with St Paul, “I can do everything in him who strengthens me”.<sup>72</sup> “So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”<sup>73</sup>

### **God’s covenant is the fundamental norm of salvation history**

From this we can understand why the Old and New Testament evaluate people’s life and striving in the light of God’s covenant. It is the fundamental norm for their attitudes, actions and life. Above all the Old Testament saw and experienced God’s covenant as the great and fateful power in its history. Faithfulness to the covenant brought a blessing, a breach of the covenant resulted in curse after curse. Confusion and the blows of fate each time urged them to return to the covenant and renew the covenant. If God did not cast off his unfaithful people completely in the course of the centuries, it was because of his consideration for the faithfulness of the patriarchs and prophets.

“But the Lord was gracious to them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them.”<sup>74</sup>

The awareness of the covenant was most alive where its completion was still experienced by the people and lived in their memories. From time to time the prophets urged the people to renew the covenant solemnly in order to make it the norm for their existence and the form of their lives once again. In order to select one example from the many available, let me quote Josiah. It is written about him:

“The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the Lord, to follow the Lord, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant.”<sup>75</sup>

In the New Testament the covenant with Christ, which is founded on the baptismal covenant and perfected through the sacraments, through God’s guidance and dispensations, and through our personal struggles and striving, is simply the heart and centre of Christian life. It is the axis around which everything turns, the norm that clarifies all questions about salvation, and decides over our being blessed or cursed in this world and the next.

### **SCHOENSTATT’S COVENANT OF LOVE AND GOD’S COVENANT IN SALVATION HISTORY**

This gives us the framework within which we may place our covenant of love. We have called it an original, practical form of the covenant God entered into with human beings in Paradise and wants

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<sup>69</sup> Gal 2,20.

<sup>70</sup> Jn 15,5.

<sup>71</sup> Jn 14,6.

<sup>72</sup> Phil 4,13.

<sup>73</sup> 2 Cor 12,9.

<sup>74</sup> 2 Kings 13,23.

<sup>75</sup> 2 Kings 23,3.



to implement in salvation history and world history. It isn't difficult to define the similarities and differences between the two.

### **The covenant of love as a renewal of the baptismal covenant**

The similarity consists in the fact that our covenant, as with all Christians, is founded on baptism. Think of how many Christians sing with great enthusiasm, "My baptismal covenant shall stand firm forever ..." <sup>76</sup> However, they are not aware that their Christian existence is based on this covenant, and that it is a real covenant between two partners – Christ and the soul – a covenant that imposes covenant obligations and grants covenant rights to both partners. They don't really know about the nature and challenges of the baptismal covenant they have entered into.

The spirit of faith tells us that it includes three essential elements: dispossession, handing over, and taking possession. Christians are chosen out of the world. They are dispossessed of themselves, that is they are no longer their own master, they can't do whatever they like. They belong to the Lord, to whom they have been given, and who has taken possession of them and united them to himself.

This gives rise to many and varied consequences and demands for the human partner of Christ and the Blessed Trinity. The 1948 October Letter goes into this most thoroughly. It speaks of the four qualities the partner of Christ has to have. The first relates to his or her being, the three others to their attitude, actions and lives. The text states,

"Both the partner of the Blessed Trinity and the partner of Christ has to have four qualities:

**Firstly**, the ability to enter into a covenant. This includes

- a) Equality,
- b) Inequality in the sense of a reciprocal ability and need to be complemented (with God this is the willingness to be complemented),
- c) Membership (God first enters into a covenant with the Church and allows its members to share in it),
- d) Stability.

**Secondly, the willingness to enter into a covenant** (being open for the partner, who is also open).

**Thirdly, awareness of the covenant** (the awareness that we have given ourselves and been accepted, of being rich and fruitful).

**Fourthly, faithfulness to the covenant** (reference to the faithfulness of the Old Testament God of the covenant in every circumstance of the historical covenant with Israel).<sup>77</sup>

For us, our covenant of love with the Blessed Mother, as it has developed historically and finds expression, is a profound renewal, confirmation and security of our baptismal covenant, that is, our covenant with Christ and the Triune God. For our thinking and willing, each consecration, and each renewal of the covenant it expresses, is a new, freely chosen and freely willed decision for Christ:

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<sup>76</sup> Traditional German hymn composed by Friedrich Matthias Berghaus (1762-1814).

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Letter of 1 October 1948 from Santiago, Chile, printed edition, p. 50f.

for him personally, for his interests and for his kingdom. It includes a new, clear and strong upward movement of the will, a new decision for him, the King of the world and of our hearts, but also at the same time a downward movement of grace from him to us. At the same time it means that we grow more deeply into a close communion of love with him and the Triune God.

**The covenant of love as Schoenstatt's fundamental meaning, fundamental form, fundamental force and fundamental norm.**

The idea of the covenant has grown so deeply into our conscious awareness and our feeling for life that we may unhesitatingly call it our fundamental form, our fundamental meaning, our fundamental strength or force, and our fundamental norm. This is how far the similarity goes between us and the thinking and feeling, volition and action of the Old and New Testament. I do not know if there is any other religious community in the modern era that can make this statement about itself to the same extent.

Each page of our family history bears witness to this profound and comprehensive similarity. "*Heavenwards*" proves the same. It may be regarded as the authentic document of our spirituality. It can be proven that the spiritual lives of all the deceased Schoenstatt members of both sexes have been marked by the same attitude. Finally, the public opinion of the Family takes it for granted that the only door leading into our realm is the conclusion of such a covenant in the form of a consecration. Just as baptism to the Christian, so baptism and consecration make us a Schoenstatt child. We regard the consecration in its usual sense as an original and specific renewal of our baptismal covenant.

We can carry out each individual demand of the Family – we can carefully observe our spiritual daily order, and control it each day, we may keep in contact with a confessor, we may be politically active and do charitable works, we may do this or that, and many, many other things – if it doesn't include the consecration as I have just described it, an essential element is missing: we are not Schoenstatters!

The degree of membership is determined by the degree of the consecration. So we distinguish between a consecration of acceptance, an elite consecration and a life consecration. We speak of the Blank Cheque,<sup>78</sup> Inscriptio<sup>79</sup> and Engling Act,<sup>80</sup> and take it for granted that the members of our Institutes and Federations strive towards this threefold height of the covenant of love. For us it is a

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<sup>78</sup> The concept was coined in 1939 by a course of Sisters of Mary following an expression used by Fr Lippert. In July 1939 Fr Kentenich spoke about it in a conference on the life of a priest: "In business terms a blank cheque means that there is an empty sheet of paper, and I sign this empty page. By doing this I declare that I am prepared to do everything God writes on the empty page of my life. I want to be completely dependent on God and the Blessed Mother." In October that year the whole Schoenstatt Family consecrated itself to the Blessed Mother in the spirit of the Blank Cheque.

<sup>79</sup> In 1941 this concept was derived by a course of Sisters of Mary from a saying that expresses the psychological dimension of love, and that is attributed to St Augustine, "*Inscriptio cordis in cor*" – inscribing one heart into another. In Schoenstatt the "Inscriptio" denotes the highest form of the covenant of love, which proceeds beyond the holy indifference of the Blank Cheque, and includes preference for the cross and suffering if this corresponds with God's will.

<sup>80</sup> On 31 May 1918, in the trenches of World War I, Joseph Engling offered his life to the Blessed Mother for God's plans for Schoenstatt. Since then many Schoenstatters have followed Joseph Engling's example and have offered their lives for Schoenstatt's mission. This happened above all in times of great tension, in order to overcome obstacles and threatening dangers. This offer has been accepted from many.

foregone conclusion that all without exception will have climbed to some extent to the peak of the mountain in one or the other form by the end of their Tertianship, and that the genuineness and soundness of their character, as well as the reliability of their whole being, can be measured by the seriousness with which they apply their consecration in practice to everyday life. This is how we interpret our Lord's words, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven".<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Mt 7,21.