



63. Our System of Self-education

The text on the “Guiding Stars of our Pedagogy” (see Text 56) has already pointed out clearly how much weight Fr Kentenich gave to creating a fundamental attitude that would enable people to influence their lives positively in freedom and generosity, and to seek God’s will and answer it. This pedagogical fundamental attitude corresponds with our founder’s attitude and teaching on self-education, which was more often called “asceticism” in the past than it is today. The text presented here indicates this very clearly. Self-education, or asceticism, is essentially concerned with different practices and our own efforts. They are necessary, and Fr Kentenich follows them up in detail. However, it is unmistakable that his main concern was that every act and practice should be the outflow of a fundamental attitude, and should serve to form the personality in its originality – through the personal ideal, and the special resolution as its concrete application. So his concern, particularly in this text, was not so much with a large number of individual practices – they are suggestions – as with a system of self-education in which practices are related to attitudes, and in which the individual practices complement and enrich one another.

The text originated at the time of the foundation of the Schoenstatt Fathers, 1962/63 (Foundation 1965). It clearly mirrors the founder’s efforts to give the developing community a form, but at the same time to motivate and convince its members that they had to decide personally to carry out definite practices and customs.

The text is taken from the so-called “Milwaukee Tertianship”, Conference 59-62; Volume VI, pages 142-210 in the duplicated edition.

See the introduction to Text 48 for the literary genre of the Tertianship, and the principles by which the text has been edited.

The weakness of our system can be found in the strong emphasis we place on a person’s attitude, because we could then forget the actions. Actually, because we repeat our consecration so often, we have made some provision for seeing to it that the attitude gives rise to action. However, we

need to emphasise it especially. The danger of malnutrition arises if we neglect and undervalue our religious exercises. We are then easily inclined to reduce them, or let them drop in certain circumstances, or for petty reasons. Since we are engaged at present in training ourselves for life, we have to call things by their proper name. So the ancient saying applies, *Cave canem* – beware of the vicious dog! In our context this means: Beware of undervaluing religious exercises.

Let us ask ourselves,

1. What do we have to do to acquire the correct attitude to spiritual exercises?
2. Which spiritual exercises do we want to cultivate in the Family and in our personal lives?
3. Which means can we apply to secure these spiritual exercises?

[1. The correct attitude to religious exercises]¹⁹⁹

[2. Which exercises should we choose?]

So which spiritual exercises should we place on our common and personal daily schedule? One principle has to prevail here. We're good at this – one, two, three, and a principle is there!

The principle is: We should arrange our day's work in such a way that there is no longer period without a secured religious exercise, whether this is official or private. Provision has already been made for this in our system of control, the spiritual daily order, with its daily examination of conscience about our personal

What is the reason for not spending a longer period without a secured spiritual exercise?

One reason is to maintain our attitude. A habit is born through repeating individual acts. Such acts exercise an influence on our attitude, but they are also a means to deepen the inner attitude. If we place great emphasis on always being united with God, on living and working with him, we should take it for granted that during the day we repeatedly renew our contact with God. This happens through our religious exercises.

Praying the Breviary is based on the same principle. Through *Prime, Terce, Sext*, etc.²⁰⁰ it was intended that the day's work should always be permeated, interiorised, supernaturalised and imbued with heart and soul when we lift up our soul to God in definite ways. So it contradicts this principle – even though it is in order juridically – if I say: I'll do it all in one fell swoop! All the exercises are prayed in the morning, and that's the end of it! During the day I simply live my life. Since we do not have the ordered life of a religious Order, but are a dynamic troop, we have to find the

¹⁹⁹ In order to abridge the text somewhat, the discussion of point 1 is only given in this footnote. Fr Kantenich followed the Jesuit tradition and explained that our attitude to religious exercises should be:

- *prima imprimis*, that is, the most important things first. In the first place this applies to our evaluation of spiritual exercises, not necessarily to their implementation. The implementation can often have to give way to the demands of a concrete situation. Then we have to have the inner freedom to dispense ourselves from doing something. However, as far as possible this should not happen to the spiritual exercise which I consider the most important and supportive for myself.

- *quam plurimum*, that is, as much as possible. Again this must not be taken literally. What is meant is that I should not be satisfied with a minimum of spiritual exercises, but be personally motivated by generosity to cultivate my spiritual life, even over and above the prescribed amount.

- *quam optime*, that is, as well as possible. Our whole lives should be concentrated in the spiritual exercises.

- *usque ad mortem*, that is, until death. Even when we are old, when the spiritual life has been consolidated, and we have become relatively independent of spiritual exercises, we should still uphold them faithfully.

²⁰⁰ The names given to the various Hours are abbreviations for "*prima, tertia, sexta hora*", that is, the first, third, sixth hour. At the time when the Prayer of the Church originated, the Biblical tradition of counting the hours, beginning with 6 a.m. as the first hour, was maintained. So the hours mentioned were prayed at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., and midday.

inner context for ourselves.

You must examine yourselves to see which spiritual exercises have a place in a sound spiritual daily order. As long as we don't belong to a Federation or Institute, we maintain: Each one has to work it out for himself. However, once we are a community, especially if we are the *pars motrix et centralis*, we cannot leave it to each individual to decide. We have the right and also the duty to lay down certain exercises that are obligatory under normal circumstances. Actually it is easy. We need only ask ourselves what is required ideally of a priest's daily order. There may be enough reasons not to observe it, but the main thing is to uphold the principle. Of course, it is also easy to set up such regulations at a time of religious fervour, especially now when the founder generation has the task of laying down such things. It is more difficult afterwards to carry out the regulation.

[3. Means to secure the spiritual exercises]

What can we do to carry out our spiritual daily order? What are the means by which we can secure them?

If I list all the exercises indiscriminately, in a purely mechanical way, I can only say: Everything has to be done, woe if it isn't! However, I then have no key by which to secure them.

So if I now look for means by which to secure our spiritual life,

- these are, in the first place, my purely personal exercises;
- then there is our system of control;
- and, finally, these are the exercises we have as a community with *vita communis mixta*.²⁰¹

In addition, experience might still tell us that there are points about which we know: If this point is secured, my entire spiritual life is secured.

Which points could those be? There are very different ones; some even seem at first glance to be irrelevant. For example, I may have experienced that my religious life is in order if I have had a good night's sleep. I would then have to see to it that I get sufficient sleep. So if I put this point on my spiritual daily order, it will help me more than – to exaggerate – if I scourged myself twenty times a day. We have to be prudent in regulating our religious lives.

If I know from experience that it is best to have my spiritual renewal (recollection day) at some isolated place, for example, at a monastery, but if I also know that I am completely exhausted, I would from the start sleep for as long as necessary to be awake and open for the divine. Of course, I can also tell myself: Come hell or high water, I will kneel there like a ramrod. And when the time is over I will return home again. Although I have made a sacrifice, I have not carried out the meaning of the spiritual renewal. I am meant to renew my spirit and again become awake for the divine. So also here, be prudent and think things through properly.

In both instances what matters is to consider our bodies and our health.

Of course, this presupposes that the stream of religion is flowing in me, and that it is only suppressed when my nature is greatly overburdened.

²⁰¹ Literally: A mixed community life. The technical term denotes a type of community in which the individual can live either in community or also alone.

Our Sisters are in the habit of going to confession every two weeks.²⁰² Now if I know from experience that more frequent confession helps me not to lose my momentum, I would have to write a corresponding prescription for myself. Of course it is not the sort of confession in which one quickly mentions one's weaknesses and awakens an act of contrition. Confession has to be a resting point that I take very seriously by preparing myself and following it up.²⁰³

These are things that have to be adapted to life today. Otherwise we live by resolutions that are constantly broken. Constantly broken resolutions are a burden. We lose respect for our resolutions and for our will.

Allow me to mention another little means in this context. Above all in our practical lives as pastors it can often happen that everything doesn't run smoothly. I can't say as I do in a monastery: 11.45 a.m. renewal of special resolution. All have to be present! For that my professional life is too dynamic. So what do we have to do?

Firstly, it is wise to survey our day's work in the morning during meditation. I will then be able to tell myself when I will normally have the first pause so that I can do this or that. Again I presuppose that we take our spiritual exercises seriously. It isn't just a matter of the bell being rung and then I do this or that. No, I have to secure my spiritual exercises personally.

Secondly, I also want to see to it that the religious exercises are spread somewhat through the day, at least the obligatory exercises for priests, and of course, only to the extent that this is possible.

Thirdly, now comes some advice given by St Francis de Sales. Priests in pastoral practice are often faced with instances when we can and must consider ourselves dispensed from an exercise, because it simply isn't possible. We must be very honest with ourselves and admit that the danger is great that we will quickly find an excuse. There is a saying: *Quod volumus, facimus libenter* – we do what we like to do. We find a reason quickly enough for that, don't we? So St Francis de Sales advised that we should be resolute in dispensing ourselves, and then tell God: As soon as I can, I will return to the exercise. Don't do it afterwards! Otherwise we will have to do a mountain of things afterwards. The exercise in itself is not what will save us; it is only one means among many others. I only want to prevent superficiality.

Behind this advice there is the thought that if we interrupt a habit, a certain relaxation has taken place. So we have to uphold the attitude: Unless we are prevented by something very important, we will return to the exercise tomorrow.

What matters is the question: How are we to secure our spiritual exercises? We who have to wander around the world like diocesan priests do not have the secure rhythm of religious life. We are talking here about ourselves as Schoenstatt priests on the level of a Secular Institute with *vita communis mixta*.

On the level of the Federation we know there is a control apparatus, which is composed of controlling ourselves, and external control.

[Controlling ourselves]

²⁰² In the meantime the regulation is for monthly confession.

²⁰³ *Nachbereitung*.

By this we are not saying that we cannot exist without such a control. However, if our religious life is secured – naturally in the sense of a religious attitude – we are more strongly open towards grace and can spend more of our strength for the apostolate.

These things sound very down-to-earth. As long as we are talking about our ideals everything is invigorating and draws us upwards. Now comes the down-to-earth asceticism: *Hic Rhodos, hic salta!*²⁰⁴ You now have to show that you aren't a dreamer, and that you remain with both feet on the ground. Although we have to be eagles with wings, these eagles – they are quite unique birds – have such long legs that they reach the ground.

It isn't necessary for things to be secured with a control apparatus such as we have, it could be something else. However, this is how it has developed. In principle we have to admit that a community has the right to apply such means and to make them obligatory – not an obligation under pain of sin, but in a way that suits a community. If the community lays down such things, they must also be applied, otherwise we don't have a vocation to this community. Often it is more difficult to apply the control than to observe the exercise.

Yesterday I told our Günther²⁰⁵ how it was with me at times. Now I must first say that I practice what I teach, even if I can tell myself: You can manage without the control. You may not exaggerate these things. Others can also manage without the control. I told him what happened to me late at night when the lights were put out. Thanks be to God, you don't need to do your control! It's a downright nuisance to have to sit down in the evening and control your spiritual exercises. [...]

What I am trying to say is that with all our high-flown goals, we must think in concrete terms. In doing so we have to remain on the level of psychology and pedagogy. This does not mean that it is an absolute condition without which I cannot be a good priest. However, it is a little means we have chosen.

[Two psychological reasons in support of controlling ourselves]

1. We people of today are more strongly endangered by **forgetfulness** and moodiness. I can become as ancient as Methuselah – we simply remain human beings. Of course, I can examine my conscience in the evening just as the others do who manage with that. Yet, even if it is stated: Here we examine our conscience, notice how quickly we have completed it! I may be prepared to consider once more whether I have carried out a certain exercise, but if I am already in bed when I do so – Lord, give him eternal rest and let your light shine upon him! Heaven and hell don't depend on whether I examine my conscience now. However, we are dealing here with a higher level of the religious life, so we also need to secure it practically.

2. Psychology tells us that the more senses are involved in an act, the deeper it will go. In the control, a number of senses are involved. First of all, the hands are active. I look to see what is written on my sheet of paper; so the eyes are involved. You can see that in this way something has a more

²⁰⁴ A saying of the ancient Greeks. Someone was boasting about his heroic exploits at a sporting competition on Rhodes – until someone interrupted him and said: This is Rhodes, jump here!

²⁰⁵ The future Fr Günther Boll; at the time he was responsible for the group from which the participants in the Tertiariats were drawn.

profound effect than if I only do it mentally. Especially when I am older and allow myself to be driven more strongly by life, or if I can presuppose that an inner attitude is already at work, it is not superfluous – even if it isn't absolutely essential – to have such a safeguard.

In addition, while my senses are concentrated on the examination of conscience, it suggests itself that we should also formulate a corresponding resolution for the future, because then everything is far more concrete and tangible. So not just an attitude, also the action.

Now for the external control.²⁰⁶

[...]

What has been said so far sounds so one-sided, as though we are putting all our eggs in the one basket of self-activity. This is actually not the case. It only appears so if it is not seen in connection with God's activity. We are in the habit of saying, "Nothing without you, but also nothing without us". It is only in this context that we have to see our striving for moral perfection.

I would like to ask you to examine three important concepts. What is the aim of grace with regard to nature? First of all, it uplifts human nature, it perfects it, and thirdly, it sees to it that nature sacrifices itself. We cannot be perfected, burdened as we are with original sin, unless nature learns to sacrifice itself.

In the section concerned with the intervention of grace in our nature, we speak about two means that have to be applied. God's activity has to be prepared for, accompanied by and completed by our own activity.

Self-knowledge. Of course, grace is at work in us, but it must also enlighten the mind, set the will in motion and warm the heart. If I don't know myself sufficiently, I cannot support the work of grace in my soul sufficiently.

What are the usual means we have to apply here? In ascetical books two means are mentioned: the general examination of conscience, and the special examination of conscience. The latter is called the special resolution or particular examination. With regard to the latter, at least as we see it, we are not so much concerned with examination as with a comprehensive means of battle that permeates the whole day, taking hold of us inwardly and drawing us upwards.

[1. The general examination of conscience]

So what has to be said about the general examination of conscience? If we have remained religiously sensitive, it is natural that our conscience makes itself felt if we haven't obeyed it. This is

²⁰⁶ Fr Kentenich's explanations at this point refer exclusively to the way this question came into existence in the Apostolic Federation. He attempted to use concrete regulations to find a median position between individuality, which had been too strongly awakened, and the different degrees to which it has matured, on the one hand, and the social nature of human beings, on the other.

The objectives of the individual were considered in that the main responsibility for control remains with the individual, personally. He or she gives an account of their spiritual life on a monthly basis only to their spiritual accompanier or director, or regular confessor.

The social nature of human beings, and hence also the justified objectives of the community, which has to know something about the spiritual life of the individual, finds expression in the individual member sending in a monthly account to the group leader, but the actual "account of the spiritual life" is made to the spiritual director in the "spirit of the Family". This also makes it possible for the spiritual director or accompanier to dispense a member from a spiritual exercise without the community knowing anything about it.

Since besides this the integration of a member into the community is far more important than the spiritual exercises for securing the spiritual life, Fr Kentenich's main concern was to create small cells within the community in which the individual is at home, and is connected for his or her entire life: the courses.

The question whether a monthly account, in the sense of external control, should be given to the competent authority in the community, was left open by the founder in the present discussion and at the time of foundation – three years before the juridical erection of the new *pars matrix et centralis* – and before other groups could be consulted. He only opened up the subject.

what one calls the pangs of conscience. The conscience makes itself felt. So a person who is striving in a religious sense doesn't need much time to examine his or her conscience.

Now, if we are striving to have a strong character and cultivate the personality, it ultimately means that we have to obey our conscience. Our conscience tells us God's personal suggestions. So if we obey our conscience, we have a brilliant means at our disposal by which to form ourselves very personally, and allow ourselves to be formed.

Even if we have a finely organised conscience, which always makes itself felt if we have not corresponded with grace, we should maintain the **examination of conscience at night**. It has to summarise the weaknesses we have noted during the day. We won't be able to spend a day without experiencing our weaknesses, and we don't want to treat them in such a way that we get used to them.

During the examination of conscience at night what matters is to see the overall picture. Don't concentrate too much on counting the individual failures – one, two, three, four, five ... It is far more important for us to keep hold of our experiences of our miseries, and to deepen them. Just with the people of today a great deal depends on learning once again to behave before God the way we are. Away with the veil! Away with the mask! Appear before God's face in all our nakedness.

In this context it is simple for us not only to know in theory, but also to carry out in practice, how we can give the four negative and four positive answers. We have to do this consciously for a time until it has become second nature to us and we practically swim in this attitude.

What I am about to say is ultimately another form of contrition. In view of our weaknesses we should,

- firstly, not be surprised,
- secondly, not become confused,
- thirdly, not lose courage,
- fourthly, not settle down in them.

So we shouldn't simply say: This weakness is as much part of me as my face! Since we are so strongly borne and influenced by our milieu, the danger is great that our conscience will no longer make itself felt, because we have simply accepted public opinion as the language of our conscience. So, if I live in line with public opinion, I will become superficial and behave accordingly. Then my conscience, as the strongest motivating force for the formation of my individual personality, will rapidly become discoloured until I have become part of the crowd²⁰⁷ without even noticing it. So we have to have this negative boundary.

Then comes the positive. Now I have to make use of little things according to the example of St Paul: If I am weak, then I am strong. I boast about my weaknesses. So I have to become

- a miracle of humility,
- a miracle of trust,
- a miracle of patience,
- and a miracle of love.

²⁰⁷ *Massenmensch.*

That sounds complicated, doesn't it? However, the act is very simple. We have only to understand it if we really want grace to be at work in us; we have to be constantly at work in the background in order to allow God to govern us.

If we gradually want to open our Christian lives upwards and downwards, we must always do three things:

look up to God very often in faith,

speak to him with faith and love, have a conversation with him,

and offer corresponding sacrifices out of faith and love.

So, don't just look at God with faith, and pray to him, but also offer him sacrifices. This is the **general examination of conscience**.

[2. The special examination of conscience: the special resolution or particular examination]

Then secondly, we have adopted what we call the particular examination or special resolution. The word examination is immediately justified, because the examination is an essential element of the particular examination. However, the particular examination is more than that for us; it is a very practical method of battle. The particular examination is an examination of a special point. To that extent it forms part of the examination of conscience.

What is its specific originality with us? Our human nature is fundamentally marked by two main passions: Sensuality and pride. We naturally have to understand the concepts in the way they are meant. In general usage, the sensual person, or the proud person, is always something less than good. This is not how the concepts are meant here. They describe fundamental tendencies. In each of us there is either a strong tendency to give ourselves (sensuality), or to conquer (pride). Sensuality, as the ability to give oneself to others, can be either good or bad. The same applies to pride. Since we are now mainly concerned with ennobling our passions, we can say that the meaning of the particular examination is to ennoble our main passion as concretely as possible. This is always done in the closest possible contact with our personal ideal. Since the personal ideal is drawn in, we preserve ourselves from getting stuck in a mechanistic way with little points, but connect all the individual acts of our lives with the central attitude, and in this way make them its expression and means. For a time we are well advised to repeat this to ourselves very often. As a result we will get a stronger awareness that we are directing things ourselves, and not simply allowing everything to happen.

The object of the particular examination, the particular point we are dealing with here, must on the whole be our main passion, and always from the point-of-view of ennobling it.

So what must I do now? The practical tasks have to be carried out individually.

[Firstly: Battle against negative tendencies]

For a time I will have to proceed negatively. That is to say, I have to work to ensure that excesses are gradually removed. So, I consider how, for example, the desire to please, fickleness, hopping from branch to branch, show with me in an unpleasant way. This means becoming aware of the individual expressions and then zeroing in on the individual faults in my particular examination,

each time in connection with my personal ideal. When I renew both, I have to make myself aware that in order to achieve my personal ideal and to deepen it, I will have to try to attack this or that fault in a special way today.

Actually this system is very unified and coherent. We are well advised to consciously remind ourselves of this from time to time.

Let me take an example: Be consistent today and study! It will always remain true that when I am tired, I'm tired. But I have to be careful to notice whether there is too much fickleness behind it. So for a time simply adhere to this point: Come hell or high water, *hic Rhodos, hic salta!* Remain consistent! In the long run it is naturally difficult to find the golden mean. Of course, it can also be a good thing if I am very tired to look for a certain change and do something else at the moment. As in everything, so also here, it is true to say that if two people do the same thing, it is by no means the same. I have to know the root from which this or that action has grown.

So, as my particular examination I can take a certain aberration, a fault, in which my desire for self-surrender has become entangled.

[Secondly, strengthen and develop positive forces]

I can, secondly, try to develop my desire for self-surrender positively. For example, how can I try to serve others today, or give them pleasure?

[Thirdly, cultivate the complementary virtue]

A third way consists in cultivating the complementary virtue. The complementary virtue of sensuality is the urge to conquer. So for a time I must try to ennoble the urge to conquer, self-assertion, pride, in myself. Actually there is an interplay in these matters. However, if I want to lead myself, I have to know the inner related realities. If I want to lead others, I don't have to explain the related realities to them each time, but I have to know the direction in which I want to lead them.

So if I see these things, I have a battle plan, a means in my hand, to oppose the laws of gravity in my nature and attain the aim pointed out by my personal ideal.

I need not add that also with regard to the second and third means, the connection with the personal ideal has always to be set up. For a time this must be done reflexively, later it will become second nature to us. This will happen to such an extent that working with the particular examination will naturally be connected with the personal ideal. At the beginning it will probably not be the case. It can grow bit by bit.

I would like to ask you to consider whether you have been given a deeper insight into the whole organism with these hints. It is essential for us to stress again and again that our main passion has to be ennobled. You may not overlook in the process that we must also always get rid of something. It isn't done only by ennobling. From time to time we must consciously zero in on the negative element in order to reduce the dangerous aberrations of our passions. So much for the particular examination.

[Various ways to see our personal main passion more clearly]

Now, how can I discover my main passion? There are various ways to do so. For example, I can ask: **What is my temperament?** The temperaments are the expression of the main passion. So I can, for example, ask myself: How can we describe the pride of the melancholic, and that of the choleric? So I determine my temperament by applying it to my own personality. It won't do any harm if we reflect on it once more from time to time. So if I have various Tertianships, it is always worthwhile to initiate such reflection, first of all, to train ourselves for life, then for our ongoing education. If it is a school for life, we have to apply these general topics again and again to practical life.

A significant means to determine our main passion is to ask ourselves: **What do my friends and acquaintances say?** There is a saying that we can't see ourselves with our own eyes; we need a mirror.

Look back on the accusations our parents and siblings often made. Probably there is a golden thread to be found there. It is beside the point to justify ourselves, or to work out what was justified. There are times, for example now in the Tertianship, or during a retreat, when we look at our weaknesses with a certain one-sidedness. Afterwards we can look at the positive aspects in a one-sided way. They must always be connected organically. If we tear things apart mechanically, some will feel inferior, others will become superficial.

Applied to ourselves, this is the place for the *correctio*,²⁰⁸ an excellent means to get to know oneself.

Of course, I can also ask: In which direction do my sympathies lie? My sympathy indicates the direction of my main passion. Normally I am attracted by those people who are my exact opposite. In all probability people who have the same character will never be naturally attracted to each other – at most if the mixture is different.²⁰⁹

In the beginning one has to distinguish these things clearly. Later they merge. If we have worked something out slowly, and bit by bit, we will sooner or later find that the elements form a whole. It often happens with people who are striving that the particular examination and personal ideal gradually merge. Once my soul has become balanced to a certain degree, and my personal ideal has become effective, almost spontaneous, it is sufficient if I renew my personal ideal, because then the special resolution, or the particular examination, is renewed at the same time.

A pedagogy of ideals is a pedagogy of attitudes.²¹⁰ Each renewal of the personal ideal is a renewal of our fundamental attitude. Whoever has understood Schoenstatt will in essentials live from attitudes, which is the most important thing. In community we have plenty of opportunities to deepen our attitude: at the recollection day, then on 18th and 20th of every month. These are always opportunities to renew our personal ideal and community ideals, and to grow more deeply into them.

²⁰⁸ The *correctio fraterna*, fraternal correction, is a tried and tested, even if not a very easy means that can be used in education within a community. A group, a course – preference is given to a community that has grown together, where there is sufficient openness within the group and sound preservation of confidentiality towards the outside, if possible with neutral supervision – has a session in which each member characterises the others, pointing out their limitations and weaknesses. The success of this undertaking depends to a large extent on whether there is sufficient trust in the group and mutual goodwill has grown, so that the *correctio* is experienced as genuine assistance in one's personal growth.

²⁰⁹ The starting point – that our main passion can be discovered from our sympathies – is not followed through in this conference. If I feel sympathy for someone who is my exact opposite, we could conclude that the character that attracts me tells me what I am not. Indirectly I can also recognise which main passion and which temperament is dominant in me.

²¹⁰ The section that follows was preceded by a discussion about the personal ideal and how it can be found, which has been omitted from this text, because we are dealing here with asceticism and its application in practice. Cf. Text 47 for the Personal Ideal.

So a pedagogy of ideals is a pedagogy of attitudes, in contrast to a mechanical pedagogy of practices. Secondly, it is a **pedagogy of generosity**, in contrast to a simple pedagogy of duties. Of course it has to be preceded by carrying out our duties. We must also become people who carry out their duties, but it must be enhanced until we become generous people who are prepared to go beyond duty, but who take duty for granted.

[Various practical suggestions for conducting our own lives]

Now for something practical ... More or less how can we do it?

To start with I want to take a side-glance at our Sisters. The courses – they often guard it as their course treasure – have composed an original prayer for each article of clothing as they dress themselves. That is everyday sanctity, a way to put heart and soul into everyday life. Added to this is the strongly symbolic way of thinking that is natural to women. They like to see a symbol in everything. And for a woman her dress and underwear are far more important than they are for us.

I am not saying that we should copy them. We need to apply the principle behind it meaningfully to ourselves.

Since the prayers are composed by the courses, when they are carried out it also always cultivates the community.

Let us suppose that the bell is rung in the morning. Actually the morning should begin the evening before. I want to highlight a few points that are also important for us men. For example, **getting up on time**. If you reflect on the night prayer in *Heavenwards*, it expressly states: “at the appointed hour”.²¹¹ Underlying it is refreshed and in good health, profound psychology and pedagogy. In community we have to be very strict about getting up at the right time. In the past I said jokingly: Otherwise we have already thrown the first rotten egg at Almighty God. A great deal depends on what the first act of our day’s work is like; by the way a great deal also depends on our first emotion in the morning. Since the first feeling that appears in the morning is determined by what I do before I go to bed, a great deal depends on the last acts of the previous day’s work. They continue to influence us subconsciously, and re-appear immediately first thing in the morning.

Even if I am alone out in the world and can give expression to myself more freely, I have to hold onto the principle: I determine in the evening when I will get up in the morning. If I do it in the morning, there will be an eternal battle with my pillow. You can be sure that the pillow will win. It doesn’t matter if I say – now I am exaggerating – I will sleep till midday, but I have to stipulate it the evening before. Of course, exceptions prove the rule. It is important for us to have clarity about the principles that will help us later to intervene vigorously in the mechanism of our own soul. I could even stipulate that I will sleep in the morning until I wake up. However, if I determine this in the morning, there is always something spontaneous about it. Especially as men we have to strive not to be too dependent on spontaneous feelings.

From experience we know that there are people who only wake up fully towards 10 a.m., and before that drag themselves round like half-corpses. In the meantime medical science has worked

²¹¹ “Tomorrow let us rise at the appointed hour, and in the spirit of service dedicate our strength and time to you.” (*Heavenwards*, Night Prayer, p. 106)

out that this depends on one's circulation. So if I know myself and know that it is difficult for my blood pressure to rise – it is a great sacrifice for those who suffer from it – I would have to make use of the means to mitigate it, for example, Kneipp²¹² treatments.

This may sound complicated, but it isn't, especially if we get used to such things.

So when the bell rings, I sit up in bed. Don't jump out suddenly! It is possible that I can do such a thing when I am young, but it isn't really a good thing. Now I make the **sign of the cross, renew my personal ideal** and then add: In order to achieve it today I want to do this or that – whatever I have chosen as my particular examination. I can renew it with a double emphasis; I can stress: I will do it! Or I can give it a more passive colouring: Please give me the grace to do this or that today.

Then, when I have washed and dressed, I can kneel down and pray what we formerly called the Federation prayer, and what we today call the covenant of love: **“My Queen, my Mother ...”**

This gives the morning a whole network of self-educational measures.

Of course, I can say: These are insignificant details! However, life is made up of many insignificant details. If I wait for “great things” to happen, I can often wait a long time. Everything that is carried out consistently on a small scale forms us in the long run.

To continue, also during **Holy Mass** the two poles of the personal ideal and special resolution continue to be saturated with meaning, whether at the Offertory, the Consecration or Communion. For a time it is a good idea to do this very consciously. As soon as the process has become an attitude, it will automatically flow into the celebration of Holy Mass. After Holy Communion or Holy Mass we can ask, for example: What can I give Jesus? I want to become like him – but according to my ideal. How do I want to become like him? In keeping with my special resolution. This continues through the whole day.

We still need to add a few words on this subject, because we people of today are easily inclined to treat it lightly. We stay put for the allotted time – often not even that – but do hardly anything in this time. The exercises are neglected because we have to do so many other things. This continues throughout the day, whether it is our Visit to the Blessed Sacrament, meditation or spiritual reading.

Actually everything should merge into the special resolution and personal ideal, no matter whether it is expressed as a resolution or a petition. The latter depends on the state of the soul at the time. When I express it as a petition I join my hands quite simply in spirit, so that grace and strength can flow into me to mould my life, or to allow it to be moulded.

Then **at night**. I can still remember the time when Joseph Engling was alive. When the young students had left the College for the savagery of war, they no longer prayed the community prayers. The attempt to hold onto what was deepest resulted in their coming to the conclusion that it was always the **morning and night prayers** they had learnt from their mothers. We can set aside the community prayers if we have grown so deeply into our form that it has become natural to us.

²¹² Fr Sebastian Kneipp developed a complete system of water treatments in order to mitigate or heal various complaints, and to strengthen the whole organism. In the above instance a tried and tested means is either to have a cold shower, or at least to immerse one's arms in cold water.

It is important that we don't go to sleep before we have given ourselves a **penance** at least for our faults against the particular examination. This satisfies not only our awareness of being guilty, but also our need for punishment. I have deliberately spoken of our need for punishment. Since we usually talk about penance – "For your penance pray ..." – it has become hackneyed. It doesn't say much. We are far more inclined to associate the word "punishment" with childlikeness, and it is far more in keeping with our emotional life.

What could such a punishment be? These are such little things that I don't know if I may say them. We could say: For every fault against my special resolution I will touch the floor with my forehead X number of times before I go to sleep. Of course, if I only see it as a form, if I don't fill it with heart and soul, it is nothing else than a gymnastic exercise. But if you think of the symbolism of such an exercise, especially for women, who are far more dependent on such little things...

The whole person wants to be embraced, especially in relation to God. With objective words we can't express many of our inner thoughts and feelings. Symbolic actions do it far more richly. I must only emphasise the symbolic character.

Can you notice how much the particular examination is a method of battle that permeates the whole day?

I want to present all this to you in order to point out the direction. You can then do whatever you like. However, if you regard the Tertianship as training for life, you will be well advised to consider what you can use personally. You could also consider what should sooner or later be included in a book of customs, and how we have to educate our youth.