



69. Universality

It will only be possible to appreciate the following text if we are aware of the historical background against which it arose.

We need to go in spirit to the concentration camp at Dachau. Fr Kentenich had come through the transition to the camp with all its privations, the dreadful starvation and epidemics of 1942, and the constant danger of immanent death. His attempt to create a common current of spiritual renewal among the priests had failed. In 1943 he decided to work for Schoenstatt, and the necessary doors also opened. It also meant that he began to build up Schoenstatt groups among the priests in the camp, especially among the Polish priests in the neighbouring block, with whom he had spent the first months at the start, and had offered them meditation points every evening. Since he knew no Polish, he spoke in Latin. To start with, this group work was very rough-and-ready. So he decided to work more intensively with two groups of leaders. In both groups the idea of being an instrument in the hand of the Blessed Mother caught on, and this inspired Fr Kentenich to write a study on the spirituality of an instrument.

Both groups also discovered an ideal and symbol. This was the origin of the “Hand Group” and the “Heart Group”. Both worked out a medal with a corresponding symbolism, which was made on the camp “black market” where so much became possible, and prepared for their consecration. The Hand Group made their consecration on 18 October 1944. Fr Kentenich’s address on this occasion is known as the second part of the Third Founding Document. The Heart Group made their consecration on 8 December that year. Fr Kentenich’s address on this occasion formed the third part of the Third Founding Document. This address is reproduced in the text that follows.

This brings us to about four months before the end of the Second World War and the closure of the camp. The general mood inside and outside the camp looked forward to the end, and it is understandable that there was only one concern – to survive.

Against this background it seems strange, even eerie, that Fr Kentenich and the priests around him had risen so far above the actual circumstances and dangers in which they were living. In the climate of general collapse, heart and mind were concentrated on Schoenstatt’s mission and its tremendous, universal dimensions: in the height, depth, breadth and length. There is no trace of resignation or “save yourself by all means”. They were the Blessed Mother’s instruments and ready for

anything, even the ultimate sacrifice.

The text is quoted from the publication "The Founding Documents", Vallendar- Schoenstatt, 1967, 74-82.

Today this tree is sprouting a new and fruitful branch – our group. It is fully co-ordinated to the tree from which it has sprouted. That is why it consciously reaches out to universality with the same warmth that inspired the October consecration, and has made it its clearly recognised and purposefully willed programme for life. Indeed, it goes further: It extends this universality to all sides: to the depths, the heights, the length and breadth, as a glance at the chosen symbolism unmistakably shows.

Vincent Pallotti would express it as infinitism. We want to make his expression our own, but instead of infinitism, we want to call it universality.

1. Infinity in depth

Strongly forming the foreground and focal point is the heart of the Blessed Mother and our Lord²⁵⁵. This is how I interpret the fact that the heart is engraved into the Cross and the sign of the MTA. Both most holy hearts have to repeat their beat in our hearts so long and so profoundly that in the end we will be able to say: **Three hearts and one beat**. It is not by chance that we have chosen just the heart to be the symbol of our character as an instrument, rather than the hand chosen by the other group. We want to offer and give ourselves to the master builders, our Lord and the Blessed Mother, not only with our wills and minds and memories, but mainly with our hearts. We are not satisfied merely with a communion of wills. Our aim is higher. We are striving for a distinctive communion of hearts, a perfect fusion of hearts, the *Inscriptio perfecta cordis in cor*.²⁵⁶

Accordingly the heart indicates a two-fold depth:

a. It is a **symbol of our emotions**, our unconscious and subconscious. This is how much we want to be freed from self, so that also our subconscious is unreservedly and unconditionally surrendered to the master builders as their instrument. That is what we mean when we speak of three hearts and one beat. Such complete self-surrender out of love, or such detachment, is impossible without having a positive predisposition for the cross and suffering, as it is expressed in the Inscriptio. This universality or infinitism in depth requires us to be completely detached from self in the spirit of the Inscriptio. As often as we look at the heart, the petition reaches our lips, "Accept, O Lord, through the hands of our dear Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, my entire freedom. Accept my memory, my mind, my whole will, my whole heart. You have given me everything, I return everything to you without reservation. Do with it what you will. ..."

b. The heart may be seen as the **embodiment and core of the whole personality**. Our medal expressly points to the perfect self-surrender of our entire selves to our Lord and the Blessed Mother

²⁵⁵ See p. 320 for medal.

²⁵⁶ Perfect inscription of one heart (our own) into (another) heart.

in the spirit of the instrument's spirituality.²⁵⁷ If the instrument undertakes such self-surrender and self-abandonment, it means that the perfect instrument, as reflected in the symbol of the heart, will strive in every respect for perfect self-surrender and perfect self-abandonment. We may interpret the words placed on the Blessed Mother's lips by the Founding Document: *Ego diligentes me diligo*, as: *Ego perfecte diligentes me perfecte diligo*.²⁵⁸

2. Infinity in height

Infinity in depth corresponds with infinity in height. By virtue of its symbol, the other Instrument Group is striving for the full realisation of the mystery of redemption, so it is attached with all its love to our Lord, the great Redeemer of the world, and the Blessed Mother as his permanent helpmate in the entire work of redemption. Such self-surrender also includes the most Blessed Trinity, at least as a seed. Our symbol is not satisfied with this indication. What the other group includes in its goal, is for us a clearly recognised task, to which we fervently aspire: To be gripped by the mystery of the Trinity. The powerfully extended hand points clearly to the Father; the seven rays that penetrate the whole of creation remind us of the Holy Spirit and his seven gifts. The *Verbum divinum incarnatum*²⁵⁹ is clearly identified by the Cross; the Blessed Mother, as the Bride and permanent helpmate of the God-Man, and her relationship to the most Blessed Trinity, is sufficiently brought to mind by the MTA. The reverse of the medal describes us as "*instrumentum Patris per Christum cum Matre ter admirabile in Spiritu Sancto*".²⁶⁰

It follows that we may not be satisfied if people can say of us: Three hearts and one beat. They must be justified in saying: Five hearts and one beat. Not only the mystery of the incarnation, but also the mystery of the Trinity, has to find in us fervent devotees and zealous apostles and defenders. Even if we do not make a special promise in this direction, our pedagogy of ideals nevertheless requires us to commit ourselves with our whole soul and all our abilities until the end of our lives to this task that has been dignified by God. This is how we will interpret the main commandment in future: "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength". All whom we win to become apostles for God's kingdom must in their turn become like us, apostles of the mystery of redemption and the Trinity, so that soon there may be "one shepherd and one flock".

3. Infinity in breadth or extent

Our medal shows not only the globe from which the Cross rises on high, it not only wants to win us to be instruments in the hand of the Blessed Mother and the Triune God "*ad pacandum mundum*",²⁶¹ it also shows the moon and stars as symbols of the whole of creation, which the Apostle Paul saw writhing in the pangs of original sin. This indicates the subject of our transmission of love. We are told that the heart of the Apostle Paul is described as: *Cor Pauli cor mundi*, that is, Paul's heart embraced the whole world with its love. Our symbol requires us to have a heart of Mary, a heart of Christ, a heart of God. However, how much more is it true to say of these hearts: *Cor Mariae ... cor Jesucor Dei et cor Mundi*. It is lovely and worthy of thanks if we burst asunder the innate and carefully tended and cultivated narrowness of our hearts, our self-obsession and self-seeking, so that as a group we may exemplify the closest possible community of life,

²⁵⁷ Fr Kantenich wrote the study on the spirituality of an instrument at the same time in the concentration camp. It was published under the title "*Marianische Werkzeugsfrömmigkeit*" (The Spirituality of a Marian Instrument), in 1974 by Schoenstatt-Verlag.

²⁵⁸ I love those perfectly, who love me perfectly.

²⁵⁹ Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God.

²⁶⁰ The Father's instrument through Christ, with the Mother Thrice Admirable in the Holy Spirit.

²⁶¹ To bring peace to the world.

and that people can say of us: *cor unum et anima una*.²⁶² It could take a long time before we have embodied this high ideal of a comprehensive union of love, life and tasks. Yet, if we do, we will only have carried out a tiny fragment of our ideal. We have to aspire higher and further. Our heart belongs to all people, all nations, no matter what they are called and what history they may still have. There is even more: The whole world has to be subject to the dominion of the Triune God. We embrace everything equally, the big and the small, and we will know no rest until the whole world is placed in Christ at the feet of the Father, until those words are fulfilled: Schoenstatt my world, indeed the whole world has to become Schoenstatt. If the other group has on the whole received a mission for the individual nations, we believe we have all been called for a distinctive apostolate for the world.

4. Infinity in length or duration

Infinity in depth, height and breadth includes a corresponding length. It applies not only to here and now, but also to tomorrow and the next day, indeed to our whole lives. And what we have embraced, longed for and aspired to with all our love here on earth, may, will and must be the object of our concern throughout eternity, as far as this is possible. St Thérèse of Lisieux was convinced that she had been given the task to continue and complete in heaven and from heaven the task she had been given on earth. We too believe very simply that all the deceased members of our Family are not dead and unfruitful for us and our common life's work, but are active from the next world in the spirit of our mission. This is how we understand the *communio sanctorum*²⁶³ in our own way. We may find it difficult, humanly speaking, to see that so many pillars of our Family are no longer here among us. The gaps grow bigger and more numerous. Who knows how many instruments the Blessed Mother will still fetch into our Schoenstatt heaven! Come what may, we will keep still and remain in constant contact with our dear departed. In holy competition we struggle with them for perfect self-surrender to the work of the *Mater ter admirabilis*. So for us they are not dead. They march with us in our ranks, and we in theirs. Indeed, it may seem easier for us to remain in connection with them than it was at the time when they were still with us. ... And if God's wise Providence suddenly sends the angel of death to us, in order to transplant us into another world in which he will reveal his plans to us, we hope that in close connection with all our members we may live and work far more for Schoenstatt than we could while here on earth.

²⁶² One heart and one soul.

²⁶³ Communion of saints.