



## 16. In the Shadow of the Shrine!

Consecration talk for secondary school students on Low Sunday, 7 April 1929

*In the course of his life, Fr Kentenich repeatedly referred to his saying about “the shadow of the shrine”, which he used for the first time in this text.<sup>106</sup>*

*If we recall that those words were spoken in 1929, that is, just fifteen years after the foundation, when the Movement was really only beginning, we can begin to guess what a leap of faith it required of the founder to proclaim, “In the shadow of the shrine the fate of the Church will be essentially decided for the coming centuries in Germany and beyond.” For him the gradual and progressive development of the Movement in the time that followed must have confirmed the correctness of these prophetic words. This explains why he referred to them repeatedly.*

*The statement was made in the framework of a talk given to secondary school students in preparation for their “consecration”, as the covenant of love was called at the time. It appears right at the end of the talk, almost like an afterthought. Nevertheless the very slightly abbreviated talk is given here as a whole for two reasons:*

*Firstly, it reflects the amazing warmth and enthusiasm with which Fr Kentenich prepared the young people for their total self - surrender in the covenant of love. The radical nature of some of his statements might even appear frightening to the presentday reader. We can take it that today the founder would be more moderate in what he emphasized. Nevertheless the thrust of what he was saying still applies today: all who consecrate themselves to the Blessed Mother have to give themselves completely, and place themselves completely at her disposal.*

*Secondly, the text as a whole could well be used still today to prepare our young people for entering into the covenant of love once they have decided to do so.*

*This text has been taken from the (largely untranslated) anthology “An seine Jungen - To his Students”, 5 - 31.*

... When I see you before me in this way, I am involuntarily reminded of what happened fifteen years ago. It was also Low Sunday in 1914. A group of young and pure “Sons of the Muses” had the same aim as you have. They wanted to give themselves solemnly to the Blessed Mother for time and eternity. What has

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<sup>106</sup> Some examples are quoted in this volume, e.g., Text 17 (only 6 months later), Text 19 and 21.

come of this seed? A Movement that has embraced almost the whole of Germany and almost every walk of life.

I am thinking of a time in the more distant past – 325 years ago. It was a Saturday, on 6th April, late in the evening, towards 8 p.m. Fr Rem was kneeling in his chapel, his shrine, before his picture. He was expecting a great grace from the Blessed Mother for himself and those in his care.

Towards 8 p.m. the Blessed Mother appeared to him and told him her favourite title and wish. Imagine how the Sodalists in Ingolstadt rejoiced and sang on this day 325 years ago! They knew for the first time that the Blessed Mother wanted to be honoured as the Mother Thrice Admirable, and to reveal her glory to the world in this way. We know and believe that the same Mother of God, as our Mother Thrice Admirable, has taken up her abode here in the shrine in order to reveal her glories to suffering humankind, and to radiate these glories into the world.

At this moment it almost seems to me that the Blessed Mother is taking over a statement of St Paul and calling out to us, *Vos estis corona mea! – You are my crown!*<sup>107</sup> Today I want to give you to the Apostolic Movement, the Movement for secondary school students, as her crown. It seems to me that she is adopting the saying of some Roman mothers. ... Some young women were discussing their greatest treasures. One mentioned this, another that. Then one pointed joyfully to her sons, “See, those are my greatest treasures!” You, my dear consecration candidates, may see yourselves today as the greatest gift the Blessed Mother can give to our Family. Am I exaggerating when I say that?

Am I exaggerating the importance of the present hour? Don’t you feel that at this moment you have reached, firstly, a profound turning point in your personal lives, and, secondly, in the life of the whole Movement?

### **[1. Importance of the consecration for our personal lives]**

May I interpret your thoughts and feelings? I have so often accepted consecrations on behalf of the Church at this place. Each presented a different picture, depending on the preparation, or the dominant mood at that moment. When we knelt here last Easter, it was my task to prepare the candidates for their consecration, to give them the final polish. It isn’t necessary this time. You are already aware of the significance of the consecration. The whole conference with its great thoughts has attuned you to it. So there remains nothing else for me to do than to put your thoughts and feelings into words. I think I may read from your eyes the confession, “We have reached a turning point in our lives!” Or am I deceiving myself?

#### **[1.1 The consecration sets a seal on our mission]**

Until now the following principle has applied in our Movement, “Conquer what you have inherited from your forefathers in order to possess it!”<sup>108</sup>

Those who knelt here before you, those who stood here before you, longed fervently for this day and remembered it for the rest of their lives. How many tears had already been shed before their consecration – tears of joy, tears of suffering, depending on whether the candidate had been accepted or rejected. In these days I found a letter written by the first secondary school student to be accepted in May 1915. He wrote to his covenant brothers in the trenches or garrisons. “Now,” he wrote, “the die has been cast; now I know what I want. Now the decisive hour of my life has struck!”

In these days have you also acquired this enthusiasm, this profound grasp of the importance of the day? For a time it seemed as though those words applied to our Movement for secondary school students, “Those who envisaged great things and built great things now rest in their coffins. We wander over their graves as a species of dwarves!” However, it only seemed to be true. The present conference with its start, build up and ending, shows what God and the Blessed Mother have achieved in our little community in the last few years.

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. Phil 4,1.

<sup>108</sup> “What we inherit from our fathers should/ Be ours to have and hold, to use it as we would.” Goethe, Faust, Part I, Scene Night, p.23, translated by John R. Williams, Wordsworth Classics, 1999.

For me the most important thing is that their work has been so profound and effective, although the Centre of the Movement<sup>109</sup> deliberately neglected the Movement for secondary school students. Today we harvest with great gratitude what others have sown. I am thinking above all of our Federation Priests in the Seminaries. From now on you will have a knowledgeable and purposeful leader. We can be sure that the new seeds he has sown so richly will bring fruit a hundredfold.

“Conquer what you have inherited from your forefathers in order to possess it!” I have been told what high demands you have made on yourselves in preparation for the consecration. This proves to me that the ancient traditions, and the heroic spirit you have inherited, govern your members; that you possess the spirit of our hero Sodalists.

However, shall I introduce you more deeply, and tell you more clearly, what is happening in your souls? At this moment your hearts are on fire. You are convinced of the importance of this hour, because the consecration includes:

- *setting a final seal on your personal mission, and*
- *your all - comprising self - surrender to this mission.*

#### [1.1.1 Setting a final seal]

I have guessed rightly, haven't I? The idea of the mission dominated your whole conference. How enthusiastic you have become for this great idea! Today's liturgy sheds new light on what it implies. Our Master, Lord and King stands before us. He breathes upon his apostles and speaks those earth - shattering words, “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you. What you loose on earth will also be loosed in heaven!”<sup>110</sup> A few days later we again see him before us. It is as though he is holding the pillars of the earth in his hands, “All power has been given to me in heaven and on earth, so go out and teach all peoples!”<sup>111</sup> That happened two thousand years ago.

The breath from his mouth has been blown over to Schoenstatt. It has created a family – our Movement. We believe in the supernatural mission of our Movement. We believe, above all, in the **supernatural mission of our Movement for secondary school students**. That is what you will solemnly declare afterwards in your consecration,

„Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen of the Apostles, God has ordained that the world has to be renewed in Christ through you, the Protectress of the Church. I firmly believe that as the Mediatrix of Grace you have set up your throne in Schoenstatt's shrine in a very special way, so that through the community of the Catholic Apostolate we can reach out to what your Servant, Vincent Pallotti, tackled at your inspiration.“

What did he set out to do? To renew the world. He took up the command to carry out the mission for his times, and has passed it on to us. We believe in the mission of our Family. We believe firmly and unshakably that the Blessed Mother **needs instruments for this tremendous task**. We believe that the breath from our Lord's mouth has reached, and must reach, individual people today.

„I firmly believe that you recruit as many zealous people as possible, who want to spread the boundaries of your kingdom to the ends of the world, and win it for Christ.“

Am I one of those people? May we believe in our personal mission, may we believe that the breath from the mouth of the God - Man was also intended for us? Sometimes it seemed that this was so. But then other times came. We doubted; we wavered. At those times how often we prayed what we will repeat later,

„I beg you, please choose me as well, although I am unworthy and too weak to carry out this great work, and accept me into the community of your sons and servants.“

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<sup>109</sup> The team of priests who were leading and co - ordinating the Movement under Fr Kentenich's guidance.

<sup>110</sup> Jn 20, 21. 23.

<sup>111</sup> Mt 28,18f.

Today's consecration offers a clear, sure and firm answer to this wish of your hearts. Our Federation has been woven into the garland of Church communities. What the Church binds here on earth, is also bound in heaven. When your consecration has been accepted by a designated priest, when your consecration has been accepted after mature reflection on both sides, you may be sure: I have been called! From now on I may doubt no more!

Can you see the profound importance of this act of consecration? In future we may allow ourselves to be inwardly filled with a victorious awareness of our state in life. Underlying it there must be **strength**, but also touching humility. How those words of the apostle Paul resound in our ears, *Apostolus Jesu Christi missus! Missus sum!* – I am an apostle, an emissary of Christ!<sup>112</sup> In future each one of you may say with the Federation: I have been sent, I have been given a personal mission. *Civis Romanus sum!*<sup>113</sup> What did those words imply when spoken by a Roman citizen? They opened the whole world before him; they led him victoriously through every obstacle he encountered on land or on sea.

Don't you think you can now say as well: *Sodalis apostolicus sum?*<sup>114</sup> How those words will resound in future from the mouths of those who have solemnly consecrated themselves! Others may wait and pray to be given a special mission; we already have it. Shouldn't we be sincerely grateful to the Blessed Mother for it? We know that the awareness of our vocation does not include sabre - rattling. We know only too well that there was a Judas among God's first emissaries. We can lose our vocation. We know, "You have not chosen me, I have chosen you!"<sup>115</sup> We did not first choose the Blessed Mother; it is not we who have attracted the breath from the mouth of the God - Man. We have been chosen out of millions. So let us join our hands in humility and gratitude.

My dear Federation Brothers! Am I right in saying this? Am I right in interpreting your feelings, and combining all that resonates in your hearts in a single statement: this solemn act sets a solemn seal on our mission? We believe in the communion of saints. Can't you feel that the whole Family is interested in us secondary school students? There stand our Fathers and Brothers – the pars motrix of the Movement.<sup>116</sup> And there stand a number of Federation priests, especially your educator and leader. In the background we see our Sisters of Mary and Sisters of the Federation ...

The communion of saints! Indeed, the whole court of heaven is looking down on you with joy. How heaven must be trembling when you consciously pronounce those words,

„I choose you today to be my Mother and Queen. I consecrate to you forever, for time and eternity, all the graces and powers I possess, or will possess, the gifts of nature and grace, indeed myself without any reserve.“

May God grant that this promise comes true! That is why we are here. That is why we are knights. We have received our personal mission from the hands of the Blessed Mother, so that we can fight and battle in her service. The Movement is our work; it depends on us.

## **[1.2 The consecration as all - comprising self - surrender to our personal mission]**

I have made a second statement, and this statement opens up an incomparably vast and profound world of thoughts and feelings. The statement was: our solemn consecration implies an all - embracing self - surrender to our personal mission.

### **[1.2.1 Decisive self - surrender]**

Self - surrender, total self - giving! Haven't we surrendered ourselves until now? Without doubt! The conference proves it and the history of the Movement proves it. It is your work. We are the Movement, that is,

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<sup>112</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 1,1: "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ ..." His other letters have similar openings

<sup>113</sup> I am a Roman citizen! Cf. Acts 22,25f. – Paul's declaration that he was a Roman citizen

<sup>114</sup> I am an apostolic Sodalist!

<sup>115</sup> Jn 15,16.

<sup>116</sup> The reference here is to the Pallottine Fathers and seminarians. Initially Fr Kentenich had intended that they should be the central and moving part of the Movement.

under farsighted leadership we have welled up from below, for deep within the Church. Self - surrender!  
How often we have repeated this self - surrender already!

Otherwise how would you have done your utmost for the groups despite all the difficulties? It has always been a law that when a seed germinates, it has personally been planted by the supporters of the Movement. So if I nevertheless say that **all-embracing** self - giving was lacking, would you want to call me a liar? There is a big difference between wavering to and fro, between dull or strong masculinity, "Here I stand, I shall not be moved!"

Do you want to know the difference between lacklustre self - giving and all - embracing self - surrender? Let me tell you about the man who discovered the golden land of Peru. He wanted to be one of the famous sons of his nation. He manned a ship and set out to sea. Yet he encountered difficulties everywhere. Some of his crew mutinied. As the leader he was helpless. Then a saving thought flashed through his mind. He leapt in front of the group, drew his sword and with it drew a line in the sand, "Whoever steps to the left of the line can continue with me, but will have destroyed every bridge to civilization. Whoever doesn't want to join me, can go home. You are looking for a comfortable life, but you will never be counted among the heroes." Twelve men stepped to the left of the line to join Pizarro.<sup>117</sup> They had decided: there's no going back! Their hearts may have trembled, but their decision was as firm as steel. They became the famous sons of their nation and the discoverers of Peru.

That is what your hearts must be like now. All wavering has to be set aside! Now or never! Or should I tell you about another event? Let me point to today's Gospel. We know that Thomas had also been sent out. He had been given a personal mission, vocation and calling. After he had immersed himself in the world called Christ, he battled seriously and with enthusiasm for his Lord and Master. But then a moment arrived when his heart began to doubt. The whole structure of his self - surrender was shaken. Today's Gospel shows how the Master adapted himself to Thomas' weakness, "Feel the wounds in my hands and place your finger in the wound in my side ...".<sup>118</sup> Thomas was now ready. He answered his mission with **all-embracing** self - surrender. He was able to call out those words to the world, "My God and my all!"<sup>119</sup>

You see, that is how I understand **all-embracing** self - surrender, holistic self - giving to your personal mission. **All-embracing**, that is to say, there's an end to all wavering. Let us leave aside the symbols of the various *Weltanschauungen*<sup>120</sup> and allow the spiritual currents of our times to flutter in the breeze. **We** are entering the Blessed Mother's camp. When we do so we take a final stand to our task in life.

There are two flags that have gathered the crowds in world history: the flag of the devil and the flag of the Blessed Mother. This was prophesied from the beginning of the world and human history. "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed!"<sup>121</sup> That is a battle standard to which we dedicate ourselves and before which we swear our loyalty. It is a battle standard, but also a standard of victory! "She will crush your head and you will strike her heel."<sup>122</sup> We declare it now and wherever we go: We belong to Mary! Whoever says Mary says grace. "Hail Mary, full of grace!"<sup>123</sup> We hear those words from the angel's lips. Whoever says Mary speaks of inwardness. "She kept all these words in her heart!"<sup>124</sup> Whoever says Mary speaks of readiness for sacrifice, "*Stabat mater iuxta crucem!*"<sup>125</sup>

#### [1.2.2 Unconditional and permanent self - surrender]

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<sup>117</sup> Francisco Pizarro (ca. 1471 - 1541), Spanish conquistador. The event described here took place in 1527.

<sup>118</sup> Jn 20,27.

<sup>119</sup> Jn 20,28.

<sup>120</sup> Technical German term for: world view, philosophy of life, ideology, outlook on life, orientation to life.

<sup>121</sup> Gen 3,15a.

<sup>122</sup> Gen 3,15b.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Lk 1,28.

<sup>124</sup> Lk 2,19.51

<sup>125</sup> At the cross her station keeping...(cf. Jn 19,29). A traditional Marian hymn.

So our act today is one of decisive self - surrender to our mission. It is holistic, that is, **unconditional and permanent!** We want to keep nothing back any more.

„I choose you ... I consecrate to you forever all the graces and powers I possess, or will possess: the gifts of nature and grace, indeed myself without any reserve and forever.“

So our self - surrender is unconditional and permanent. Please understand me correctly! What I am saying to you, you have already read or heard often before. This time, however, every word sounds different, because each of them applies to you, has been spoken by you, and solemnly repeated before the altar. *You* are consecrating yourselves.

### **[1.3 Consecration as renewal of baptismal vows]**

Yet I have not said everything. What is included in this self - surrender? I think it contains three things. We repeat, “I renounce” three times, and, “I promise” three times. It reminds us of the renewal of our baptismal vows. Yes, today’s act reminds us naturally and necessarily of the renewal of our vows when we made our First Holy Communion. What baptism and Communion, with their renewal of the vows, meant to us in our childhood, this day must mean to us in our adolescence.

I renounce, firstly, half - heartedness, and promise the greatest radicalism!

I renounce, secondly, every disordered love for created beings and myself, and I promise wholehearted and faithful self - surrender to the One I love with all my heart.

I renounce, thirdly, my youthful wanderlust, and promise to find my home here in Schoenstatt.

Let us examine these three statements and weigh them up.

**1. I renounce half - heartedness and promise the greatest radicalism.** I renounce half - heartedness!

“Conquer what you have inherited ...” It has been true until now that the mottos have changed, but the content has remained the same. At times there was the battle cry: away with mediocrity! At another time: no one may die without having achieved the utmost in keeping with his abilities! Or, *Aut Caesar aut nihil!*<sup>126</sup> The idea never changed – to aspire to the stars! This is radicalism. And when in the past blossoms and fruits were revealed, they always grew out of the same spirit of heroism and the conviction, “There is something extraordinary, something special about the Federation!” Only those who want to distinguish themselves may find a home in our Family. Either we win the victory with this spirit, or we fail and die without it. That is the right road. And whoever cannot bring himself to do this, whoever is satisfied with saying, “That’s enough!” has no place in our Family.

Isn’t this also expressed in your consecration prayer?

„Out of love for you alone, and in deepest union with my Federation Confrères, I will never stop striving to attain the greatest perfection in keeping with my talents, and exhaust my abilities in pursuit of the goal for which you have chosen me.“

So in future we have to take our bearings from the stars. Consider that the die has been cast for the rest of your life!

**2. I renounce every disordered love for created beings and myself! I promise wholehearted and faithful self - surrender to the One I love with all my heart!**

My dear Federation Confrères, I wish I had the tongue of angels in order to be able to tell you what is moving the heart of our Blessed Mother at this moment. You know how our poor, young hearts are often so restless when created beings call out to them, “I am the Lord, your God!” Another voice objects, “You shall not have strange gods before me!”<sup>127</sup> How often this strange god is a woman. We promise: the only love of my heart is our Blessed Mother.

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<sup>126</sup> Either (I become) Caesar, or nothing! All or nothing!

<sup>127</sup> Ex 20,1f.

Do you know what is implied when you pray, "I choose you to be my Mother and Queen"? Indeed, I choose her to be my Mother, Queen and Protectress. She stands before us. Can I nevertheless choose her? According to God's wisdom she was meant from all eternity to be my Mother, Queen and Protectress. We are told in the Bible that those who are borne by God's Spirit will be made conformable to the image of his Son.<sup>128</sup> The Son of God had a human Mother and a divine Father. He is a Child of his Mother and his Father. So we can take it for granted that every Christian may and must call out to the Blessed Mother: you are my Mother, Queen and Protectress!

So how can we choose her today? Through our consecration we solemnly **acknowledge** what has been a reality and truth from all eternity. Besides this we say from overflowing hearts, "Even if you have not been my Mother, Queen and Protectress until now, unless God had appointed you as such, I would freely choose you today on my own account. I don't want anyone else. Even if I could have thousands of other people, I only want you; you, the one who has been uniquely chosen and elected!"

What does all this imply? In future those words apply in my life: **Our self-surrender to our Queen!** We are her knights. "Mother Thrice Admirable, teach us to fight as your knights ..." You are our Queen, we are your knights! Through the consecration it is the task of the knight to **open his heart wide** for the Queen of his heart, and to capture all her glories into himself. It is the task of the knight to defend his Queen and to fight for her.

In future our favourite task will be **to allow the wonder world of the Mother Thrice Admirable to take on form and structure in us**. She stands before us as the **Immaculata**, the symbol of our **knightly honour**. In future, if any of us follows the disordered drives and passions of his heart, he violates his consecration, he violates his oath. "This is the banner I have chosen, I will never forsake it, I swear it to Mary!"

Consecrations are encounters with the Blessed Mother! Today we have done so in a solemn way. We want to do so day after day in the time to come. Think for a moment of how St John the Baptist became a real man through his first encounter with the Blessed Mother. We see her arriving over the mountains. We are told by Elizabeth, "The child in my womb leapt for joy!"<sup>129</sup> Catholics feel, and tradition tells us, that when he did so, John was freed from original sin. There we have a strong man, a manly man, who became strong through meeting the Blessed Mother. We read so much about him and are impressed by his strength, his austerity, his goal - directedness, his selflessness, his zeal for repentance, and his love of Christ! How did all this develop in him?

Think of how often such encounters have been repeated in the course of the centuries! Think of how many men have gone through life with a proud bearing, they have ploughed up the world, while bearing quietly in their hearts the picture of a woman: the Immaculate one. My self - surrender to the Immaculata!

She is the *Generosa*, the **Generous** one! As her knight I have to assimilate feature upon feature of her nature. She was generous! She stands before me not just as the Virgin, but also as the Mother. She gives herself to us with tremendous selflessness. I am her knight. Where is my **chivalrous generosity**? How must I exercise this knightly virtue in the time to come, in my contact with those at home, with my friends, with the whole world? People must be able to see that I belong to the Blessed Mother, that I am her image and likeness. It was a psychological masterstroke of the ancient Athenians – in the Acropolis they erected statues of their gods, images of beautiful and noble people. Through them the visitor was drawn upwards and ennobled. How noble and generous we must be who look at the image of the Generous one day after day!

She is the *Mater dolorosa*, Mother of Sorrows, and as such a symbol of our knightly strength and bravery. Our Movement's coat - of - arms shows the sword in the foreground. It penetrates into the shrine. On its pommel are inscribed the words: MTA – Mary's knights! Knighthood includes knightly strength and bravery. We have to draw this sword against the enemy within us; we have to draw it when a woman's honour is attacked, or where God and the divine are pushed into the background.

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. Rom 8,29.

<sup>129</sup> Lk 1,41.

She stands before us as the **Regina**, our Queen, the symbol of knightly nobility and knightly dignity. People today talk about a youthful lifestyle. Our lifestyle is **Marian and knightly nobility**.

My self - surrender to my Queen, that is, **I fight for her, for her honour**. If our Movement ceases to be Marian, or to create new apostles of Mary, we will dig our own grave. Give me someone who has our devotion to Mary, and you will have given me a Federation member! Give me a priest, prefect or director who loves Mary passionately; you may be sure that you will have given me a well - founded Federation group. Yes, my self - surrender to my Queen!

I dedicate my trust to my **Protectress!** This has always been the case with us. For example, read the back numbers of the MTA. During the war one of us entrusted his socks on the fence to the Blessed Mother, and they were safe ...! If you want to live your consecration seriously, every doubt in your calling, or in the final victory of goodness in you and through you, every doubt in the victory of our heavenly Queen, is a crime against your consecration.

I dedicate **my childlike love to my Mother!** One of you told me yesterday that in these days he had clearly felt how difficult it was for him to acquire a personal relationship to the Blessed Mother. He didn't have such a relationship to his own mother. When I told him he should enter into a contract with her, as it were, saying, "Look, I want to transfigure my attitude to the opposite sex, work for me, then I will work for you", he responded with the telling question, "Are we allowed to talk to the Blessed Mother in this way?" Oh yes, my dear Federation Confrères, we may relate to her in such a **childlike** way, indeed, we cannot be sufficiently childlike in the way we relate to her. We people of today have forgotten how to be children. Yet our Lord tells us, "Unless you become like children, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven!"<sup>130</sup>

So, am I right when I say that your consecration today includes rejection and a promise? Don't be afraid that you won't be rewarded! You must see the consecration as a mutual contract. You give yourselves to the Blessed Mother and she gives herself to you with her gifts and tasks. She gives you her Son, she gives you her fullness of grace, indeed, she gives you herself. She cares for you. That is the great idea that guides my work as an educator. If I manage to give to the Blessed Mother someone whom God has entrusted to me, I have fulfilled my task. So also you can be sure that she is the faithful one, the *virgo fidelis*;<sup>131</sup> she will never break her contract.

**3. All - comprising self - surrender to our mission includes: I reject my youthful wanderlust and connect it with Schoenstatt as my home.**

Isn't this included in the consecration formula?

„I firmly believe that as the giver of grace you have set up your throne in a special way in the shrine at Schoenstatt.“

She is at work here as our Patroness and the Mother of our Family. The mysterious urge to go to the shrine is the surest sign that we have been chosen to belong to our Family. You can read in the old issues of the MTA how someone wrote with enthusiasm, "We have to be grateful to the soldiers, because they have protected the borders of our Fatherland, but at the same time also the shrine."

As knights, place yourselves with your swords before the shrine! We will defend it, no one may touch it, no one may separate the Movement from the chapel. Before he does that, he must walk over my corpse!

The day before yesterday I heard our Federation Sisters talk in the same way. I had left them alone to prepare themselves for the solemn consecration of their lives. At first they were outraged, but then came to the decision: now all the more! Even under these conditions we have to manage with the Blessed Mother's help. That awakens forces! Then they promised: if anyone wants to attack us, they must first walk over our corpses!

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<sup>130</sup> Mt 18,3.

<sup>131</sup> Virgin Most Faithful (Litany of Loreto).



This is our home! If our older Federation priests come home year after year, not so much to listen to talks, or to meet people, but to pray here, to feel sheltered here, why shouldn't we lay claim to it also for ourselves?

## [2. Importance of the consecration for the whole Movement]

May I come to an end with my attempt to explain your consecration? I didn't want to do anything else than to interpret your thoughts and feelings. Was I right in assuming that you are as convinced of the importance of the consecration for the whole Movement? It would mean taking coals to Newcastle, or pouring water into the Rhine, if I were to enlarge on these thoughts once again. The whole conference was borne by them.

### [2.1 In the shadow of the shrine ...]

However, I can't fail to chisel out two thoughts clearly and austere. The one thought is this: **In the shadow of this shrine the fate of the Church will be decided for the coming years!** A serious statement! An important statement! It sounds almost crazy. Nevertheless, I want to repeat it and enhance it: **In the shadow of the shrine the fate of the Church will be essentially decided for the coming centuries in Germany, indeed, even beyond!**

In the past I used other expressions to say the same thing. I pointed to Schoenstatt's importance in the history of our times and the world. ... If the signs do not deceive us, many people already look up to Schoenstatt as to a city on a mountain, or a lighthouse. I am thinking of Catholic Action and the Youth Movement... More and more people are looking towards this lighthouse. Does it not have to be a large part of our task in life to bring all entrusted to our care, all whom we influence, into contact with the Movement, or to lead them to Schoenstatt?

### [2.2 The Movement needs leaders]

The second thought I want to chisel deeply is this: the history of each Movement is **the history of its leaders!** If Schoenstatt is to carry out its mission, each walk in life had to have its graced leaders. You, my dear consecration candidates, believe that you have been called to lead the Movement for secondary school students. So a very heavy responsibility rests on your shoulders.

I once read about Cromwell, who had drawn up a plan to reform the whole army. So what did he do? He gathered a group of stalwart "staff officers" about him and educated them. Within a few years he had reformed the whole army through them, and had become the Patron of the army. You are born leaders of the Movement. Isn't it most important for the Movement that today twenty - seven new members have been called to fight the battles of the Blessed Mother for the Movement?

My dear Federation Confrères, I hope that what I have said will continue to re - echo in your hearts. What I have said is so fundamental, so elementary, important and powerful, that you will not be able to savour it in just one day. It would be nice if you could have a printed version of these thoughts in your hands, even nicer if you carry them in our hearts, and best of all if you express them in your lives. I know what a powerful impetus a high calling can give us. But I also know how weak we are. I know how much responsibility we bear for the centuries, but I also know how unworthy we all are to do so. So our consecration has to resonate in a humble petition: Please, I am ready, send me! I don't want to boast. We can do nothing of our own strength. See, heavenly Queen, I am here, send me! Amen.

NOS CUM PROLE PIA – BENEDICAT VIRGO MARIA