



Places to meet Father

Gymnich



Joseph Kantenich, age 2 1/2

The house were Joseph Kantenich was born



Gymnich:
church, school, kindergarten

Joseph Kentenich:

Homeless

*Abandoned and alone
I wander the world
Rejected by my father
Without a home of my own.*

*An iron hand
Snatched me from my mother's love
In the cold crowd
I am misunderstood and misjudged.*

*Around me I see peace
Enthusiastic words
Praising their parents –
I weep and leave.*

*My heart is consumed by the cold
Loved by no one
So I wait to see
If someone will love me. 15.IX.1902*

(A close translation of simple four lined rhyming verses)

“However, you many not overlook the inner context. ... Giving ourselves to one another on a lower level secures the reality at a higher level. ... The fundamental relationship between father and child secures the reality of a supernatural Father. Unless we have such a human experience, the knowledge of God, the love of God, always remains fragmentary, even if God gives us the grace to surrender ourselves to him without such an association on the lower level. ...”

Was it not necessary ...”

In St Luke’s Gospel, in the account of the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, Jesus asks them: “Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”

When we look at Fr Kentenich’s mission and its development, it isn’t difficult for us to see a similarity with this mysterious “necessity”. He had to grow up without a father. The poem quoted above, which was written by the 16-year-old during a weekend in Ehrenbreitstein, mirrors his “unfulfilled desire to experience what it was like to be a child with a father. He suffered under his father’s refusal to acknowledge him as his son.” (Cf. Sr Doria Schlickmenn, *The Hidden Years*)

Was it not necessary for him to suffer this in order to become the transparency of the Heavenly Father to the extent that he was? Of course we can say that this suffering had a lasting effect on the development of his personality, and his later activity. We are here touching on the profound mystery of God’s guidance in his life.

What does it have to say to us? Don’t I also become aware of this “was it not necessary...?” in my own biography, in my experience of suffering and disappointments, which I need to digest? Let us ask our father and founder to help us to understand and accept our personal mystery of God’s guidance more deeply. Let us ask him to help us as we accompany those entrusted to our care along this path.

Felix Kreutzwald

16 November 1885: 125 years ago, Fr Kentenich was born at Gymnich. On Sunday 21 November 2010 the parish, the civil authorities and the Schoenstatt Family remembered this occasion with an impressive celebration. Cardinal Meisner celebrated the festive Holy Mass in the parish church.

Photos and quotations of Fr Kentenich's words are taken from the German edition of the book: Dorothea Schlickmann, *The Hidden Years*, Fr Joseph Kentenich, Childhood and Youth (1885-1910).