

Fr. Joseph Kentenich

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Excerpts from

October Letter 1949

especially under the aspect of Vincent Pallotti
as historically creative personality
and our changing times

translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, 2006

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Introduction

Father Kentenich spent all of 1949 overseas, tending to the fledgling Schoenstatt movement in South America. By this time the *October Week*, the annual convention of the leaders of the movement in Germany, was an institution. Placed in the days before October 18, it served not only as a renewal of the covenant of love with the Mother Thrice Admirable, but also as an opportunity to review the past year and look ahead, setting goals and priorities for the next year of work within the movement.

Fr. Kentenich had been the main speaker at the first October Weeks in 1945, 1946, and 1947. But he had already missed the October Week in 1948 because of his world travels. At that time he had sent a lengthy message in the form of the “October Letter” to the delegates gathered in Original Schoenstatt. In 1949 he did the same, this time with an even lengthier October Letter.

The October Week and the October Letter 1949 took their focus from the upcoming beatification of Vincent Pallotti, founder of the Pallottines and important figure for Schoenstatt and its mission. Not only was Fr. Kentenich a Pallottine Father, but most of the priests who worked full time for Schoenstatt were also Pallottines. Fr. Kentenich sensed the need to open up new and relevant “accesses” and “starting points” for the movement to appreciate Pallotti and develop a more personal relationship to him. This became the theme of his letter. To open the way to Pallotti he wrote an extensive reflection on the purpose of history and the crucial moment in time in which Pallotti lived – and we still live today. The letter is therefore one of Fr. Kentenich’s most fascinating on the subject of God and history.

The October Letter 1949 was written in two parts. The first part was sent from Villa Ballester, Argentina on October 7, 1949. The following month he wrote a continuation – too late for the October Week but valuable nonetheless.

The segments translated here are all from the first part (October 7). Subtitles and footnotes have been added to the translation as a help to the reader.

JN, 2006

Sun, stand still!

{13} Sun, stand still! Such was the prayer of Joshua when he had defeated his enemies and needed daylight to pursue them and finally render them harmless. And the sun stood still... (cf Josh 10,12f).

As member of the Church militant, Schoenstatt is, like her, a child of war. It was born during war and grew up in war¹. It was constantly encircled by battle. That is how it was and how it must be if it is to remain faithful to its original mission. That is why it passes through our age like Israel: with a trowel in one hand and the sword in the other (cf. Neh 4,9-17). With one hand it makes its unique contribution to building the temple of God’s kingdom, to building the Church of the future. With the other it fends off every foe. The sun that thus shines is the *face of God shining through the events of our times*, is the wish and signal which God gives through the essence of man and matter as well as through the tangling and disentangling of public and private relations to show us the way, and which he wants us to use as our central agenda and schedule for our lives and deeds².

{14} The sun shines for us day after day; day after day the God of Life and History speaks his guiding word: sometimes more quietly, sometimes more loudly.... but never so loudly that it can’t be overheard or misunderstood.

God’s voice in the history of Schoenstatt

That’s how it was from the beginning. In 1914 only a tiny glimmer of light shone out to us, comparable with a dawn slowly freeing itself from the darkness on the distant horizon. We could only look back on two short years of family history and but dare a hesitating attempt at interpretation. This explains why the Founding Document

¹ Schoenstatt was founded on October 18, 1914, that is, just two and a half months after the outbreak of World War I. For the historical context see J. Niehaus, *New Vision and Life: The Founding of Schoenstatt* (Waukesha, 2004), especially p. 92-103.

² Description of “practical faith in Divine Providence,” a key part of the spirituality of the Schoenstatt movement.

proceeds so cautiously, feeling out its way. It says:

“Whoever knows the history of our sodality will have no trouble believing that Divine Providence has something special in store for it³.”

Thereafter, God spoke more and more clearly through events and circumstances. His light grew brighter and brighter with each passing year. His countenance radiated more brightly and clearly in the history of our family and our times. The events in and around Schoenstatt stood out more and more as something remarkable and unique against the darkness of our times; this made it easier to interpret Divine Providence. God’s voice became more distinct to our listening and ever more trained ear. It called on us to take greater and greater risks, which in the war years were by no means of a routine nature.

Its voice was always restrained and from far off... It never revealed itself to us like the hand in the days of King Belshazzar in Nineveh, drawing mysterious signs on the wall and thus revealing the future (cf. Dan 5,5). Nor did God speak to us through the sudden budding of a barren rod as he did with Aaron’s staff (cf. Num 17,16ff). We never had visions like Cornelius or Peter (cf. Acts 10,1-24), never had dreams through which he spoke to us as he did to Don Bosco⁴. Nonetheless, we grew in confidence as we dared, year after year, to repeat the words of the Egyptian magician: *Hic est digitus Dei*, Here is the finger of God (cf. Ex 8,15). It is God who, through the signs of the times, reveals to us his face and speaks to us.

When his words lacked clear immediacy, it *forced us to make a death leap of mind, will, and heart*. We did so with courage – and have done so at every stage of our history. Each time we were guided higher, each step upward, each pace on dangerous summits exacted this great price.

³ First Founding Document, October 18, 1914, No. 7. In *Schoenstatt – The Founding Documents* (Waukesha, 1993), p. 31.

⁴ St. John Bosco (1815-1888), Italian founder of the Salesians who often had extraordinary insight into personal lives and world history through dreams.

As a result, we have developed a keen awareness of our history. In other words, an interpretation of history based on deep faith in Divine Providence has instilled in us the conviction that Schoenstatt has a creative mission in the realization of a clearly defined vision of the future.

That is how Schoenstatt was born, that is how Schoenstatt has grown, that is how it prepares itself each year for new tasks, for new battles, for new victories: the child of war is a child of Providence and wants to stay that way in eternity.

At the threshold of a new era of history

{16} Such exactly and relentlessly pursued clarity of purpose has spared us *much suffering, especially modern man’s greatest torment*: the bewildering insecurity caused by the seemingly insurmountable meaninglessness and incomprehensibility of contemporary events. The whole world senses that the car of history, having begun to shudder alarmingly, is nearing a dangerous curve. No one knows for certain what is waiting around the corner. Is it a yawning, gaping abyss spewing death and destruction, or a steep mountain whose summit beckons to us with a piece of paradisaical majesty, or a peaceful, fruitful plain? Who can presume to loosen this knot, this crucial and vital question for both individual and society?

The best of every nation instinctively sense that we are standing on the threshold of a new historical epoch, of a transformation of secular proportions. They sense that the die is being cast which will decide the fate of the world for four to five centuries to come. And they sense that all without exception are called to make their creative contribution in forming the new world vision – if not as architects and contractors, then as laborers. This explains the universal and frantic groping and searching for an answer to the whys and whences so as to better grasp the wherefores, whithers, and hows. Isaiah knows of no greater punishment for the nations than to have them ruled by striplings (cf Is 3,4). Today it seems, to many at least, that the Lord of the universe has lost his sovereign control and steady hand and has sunk into powerlessness and helplessness. It is as if he has simply

left creation and history, like a stagecoach driver who has lost hold of the reins, leaving it to run wild or to follow the wiles of cruel tyrants {17} and the destructive fury of Satan. How else, they say, can the senseless atrocities crying out to heaven or the fearful tragedy of untold millions, both individually and as nations, be explained?⁵ Others see in these enormous catastrophes of our time extraordinary birth pangs. They, too, face riddles. Again⁶ and again they ask the question: What will the child of such pain look like? What could be the features of the approaching world and community being born from such distress?

These and similar questions exercise practically all minds and groups today.

We have tried to offer an answer through our living, practical faith in Divine Providence, and the vision of the future that flowed from it⁷. Although it is not final and complete, on the whole it offers us a clear vision and a firm standpoint. It does so with growing security – growing not only because the sun of God’s face, which remains hidden behind dark and towering clouds, is revealed with increasing splendor, but also because the official magisterium of the Church is expressing itself with increasing clarity, and interpreting history as we do.

Historical activists

As a result we *protest* against activism and passivism, and unconditionally *profess* a theistic and creative concept of history.

{18} The *activists* are without history. They are the beginning of their own family tree. For them there is no God who has drawn up an unchangeable plan for the world, and who holds the reins of world events in his hands with sovereign security, working towards a clear

⁵ Such as the millions who were exterminated in the Nazi holocaust and the millions more who died in the battles and violence of World War II.

⁶ From here to page {26} the translation is adapted from Mary Cole.

⁷ For Schoenstatt’s “vision of the future” see Fr. J. Kentenich, *Message 1968: With Hope and Joy, Confident in the Victory, We Go with Mary into the Newest Time*, September 7, 1968 (Waukesha, 1995).

goal, certain of the victory. They see in world history no integration [of God’s action and man’s], no organic development of a great divine unifying idea, but only a mechanistic sequence of unrelated events. As a result, for them history is not – as it was for Cicero – a teacher of life and an eloquent witness of the proven wisdom of the Ancients. Nor is it an unfailing and tried-and-true motivation for generous striving and conquest, as it was for Nietzsche, who declared:

“We need history for life and deeds, not as a convenient excuse to turn away from life and deeds, much less to gloss over selfish life and cowardly, evil deeds⁸.”

They are even less inclined to read it as God’s extremely significant and instructive primer and book about life. That is why, when they plan for the future, they do not question what happened yesterday or the day before, as did the Hungarian politician Ladislav Szalay⁹ after the great collapse of his country in 1849. Through studying history he wanted to discover whether his people had a future.

Quite the opposite! They [the activists] deliberately cut all such threads. They arbitrarily carve their image of the future to fit the needs of their hearts, and to fit the delusions of their unbridled imagination and the constructs of their misguided minds. They constantly take their bearings from the echo of their own senseless and absurd dreams, which they then cry out into the chaos of the present times, so as to receive an echo. They then use it as {19} a sedative for themselves and as a means of propaganda [to control] the masses. They join Goethe’s Prometheus in saying: “Here I sit and form people in my image and likeness.” They work with ruthless cruelty and unswerving fanaticism to bring about their vision of the future. They do so by making concentrated use of previously unknown technological aids, and the oppressive and well-thought-out art of agitation

⁸ F.W. Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* (Of the Usefulness and Uselessness of History), here as cited by Anton Schütz in *Gott in der Geschichte* (God in History), Pustet-Verlag, 1936, p. 17. This book from Schütz is often cited in this October Letter.

⁹ Ladislav.(or László) Szalay (1813-1864), Hungarian statesman and historian.

and propaganda.

The one group [of activists] is based in the East¹⁰. They deny as a matter of principle that history has any God-willed and God-directed transcendental and immanent meaning. For them, history is nothing more than a tangle of arbitrary and selfish acts of exploitation by princes, capitalists and the middle class which no one can unravel. These exploiters have to be replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat. The darkest forces of history have found in them willing and docile pupils and workers, instruments and prophets, confessors and martyrs.

The others live in the West¹¹. Their forefathers built their republic in days gone by in an historical vacuum. Great moral earnestness played a significant role. As a result, the currently living and leading generation does not try to brutally eliminate Christianity with harsh tactics, but believes it can create order in Europe and the whole world without carefully studying God's book of history as a whole, and interpreting it from the standpoint of faith.

Historical passivists

The *passivists* are the pleasure-seeking freeloaders or uncommitted dilettantes of world history. They allow themselves to be driven willy-nilly by the waves. They have neither the courage nor the strength to influence their course. They live thoughtlessly without worrying about tomorrow, sometimes laughing, and sometimes weeping, {20} according to circumstances. Or, like Chamberlain¹²

¹⁰ In the world situation of 1949, Fr. Kantenich is obviously referring to the Marxist-communist ideology of the Soviet Union (Russia), and therefore based in Eastern Europe.

¹¹ In the world situation of 1949, Fr. Kantenich is obviously referring to the western-style capitalism of the United States, along with its desire to shape the world in its image after its victory in World War II.

¹² Houston Steward Chamberlain (1855-1927), Anglo-German publicist, playwright, cultural critic, race theorist and philosopher of science. Not to be confused with Neville Chamberlain, British Prime Minister, 1937-1940. See William L Shirer's comments on H.S. Chamberlain and O. Spengler in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, p. 104ff.

and Spengler¹³, they get entangled in a web of an imaginary history of philosophy. Neither understood what God was saying through the times, and avoided giving a clear and binding answer. The powerful challenge issued by Josef Goerres¹⁴ in 1815 in the *Rheinischen Merkur*, directed to all governments and peoples, also applies to them. Those were the days when the "dancing" Congress of Vienna wasted its time with endless speeches and haggling, while Napoleon used the opportunity to escape from exile and return from Elba. For a hundred days he was up to his old tricks. Goerres wrote:

"You rulers, let us beseech you, for the sake of the good of your people, at long last to understand the times in their depths and to listen no longer to the superficial counsels of the weak! Understand that in the face of the new danger (blunted indifference and hopelessness) a new spirit must be mustered, but that all words are totally powerless to do this and only deeds of renunciation and justice can awaken it. If once more you want to introduce half-measures because of your half-heartedness, timidity and trembling wills, no one will be able to foresee the end of the misery, nor will any conscience be wide enough to take responsibility for the neglect...¹⁵"

The passivists are followers of historicism, whose main modern representative is Dilthey¹⁶. His followers include the liberal Protestant theologians of whom Harnack¹⁷ and Troeltsch¹⁸ are the main exponents. They see historical structures, including Christianity and all other religions, as a mere chain where one simply takes the place

¹³ Oswald Spengler (1880-1936), German philosopher. He argued that nations and cultures have a natural lifespan and their rise is inevitably followed by their eclipse. He emphasized the individual's duty of obedience to the state.

¹⁴ Jakob Josef Goerres (1776-1848), German publicist, professor, and natural scientist. He founded the newspaper *Rheinischer Merkur* (Rhine Mercury).

¹⁵ Josef Goerres in *Rheinischer Merkur* Nr. 215, of 30.3.1815.

¹⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), German philosopher and pioneer of biographical historiography.

¹⁷ Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930).

¹⁸ Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923).

of the other. {21} All events and epochs are of equal, but only transitional and therefore relative, value. All have a role to play until they are replaced by other institutions, which in their turn can expect the same fate. So their meaning is simply to make room for one another. This reminds us of an event in the life of a famous man, the historian Mommsen¹⁹. He had been appointed Vice-chancellor of one of the most respected German Orders. Out of conscientiousness and sense of duty he asked the Chancellor what his duties were. He was told: You have nothing else to do than wait until I die. Then you will become Chancellor.

Historically creative personalities

The *theistic and creative understanding of history* judges things quite differently. In this view, world history is like a mighty river, which has its source and its mouth in the heart of God. Its ebb and flow, its bed, direction and goals have been worked out and are guided by God according to a wise plan, so that its billows and waves do not follow one another mechanically. They are inwardly connected to one another, helping and challenging one another, being the cause and effect of one another. Today has been born out of yesterday and bears tomorrow in its fruitful womb. Both the past and the future live simultaneously in today, although in different ways. The past lives in its effects – either as a *rudis indigestaque moles*²⁰, as the bubbling and surging of conflicting forces that have not yet come to rest, or as the *tranquilitas ordinis*²¹, as an enlightened mass and calm and calming order; the future lives as a seed, {22} capable of blossoming and bearing fruit. Just as today fulfils the meaning of yesterday and the day before, so it provides tomorrow and the next day with direction, goal and richness.

Today, as the source of knowledge about God's wish and will for tomorrow, is, in the mind of our Lord, so important that he presup-

¹⁹ Theodor Mommsen (1817-1903), German historian and politician.

²⁰ A rough and disorderly mass.

²¹ The tranquility of order.

posed that his followers would constantly make use of it. He wrote off the lack of a sense of history and a stunted ability to interpret life with the remark: You know how to interpret the signs in the heavens, but you are unable to understand the signs of the times (cf Lk 12,56). This art can only be learned in the school of practical faith in Divine Providence. It is available to everyone. It teaches us to get to the bottom of all that happens in order to discover the creative and destructive forces in world events, to expose them, and to interpret God's wish and will for tomorrow correctly from their nature and direction. It gives us courage and strength to unite ourselves with the constructive forces, and to fight the forces of destruction. In this way we intervene creatively in history. The main forces that exercise an influence on world events are God and the devil²². Both are in eternal conflict. Both are the irreconcilable great powers that make war on each other, that look for allies among human beings, and in this way divide the world into two camps – the *civitas Dei*²³, and the *civitas terrena et diabolica*²⁴. So the underlying theme of world history remains and will forever remain the same. It appears in thousands of variations. It is the battle of faith with disbelief, the struggle between Christ and the Antichrist, the {23} conflict between God and the devil and their followers (cf Rev 19,11-21). God and the Kingdom of God will ultimately win a complete and glorious victory over Satan and his kingdom, despite every crisis and setback. As a result, history loses its insignificance as a brawl, or as someone picking a quarrel, which will be lost in the mists of time. It acquires a structure, content and form which can be followed up in every phase and stage, and which connects everything, beginning with the first fall and ending with the last judgement.

This makes the historic task of historically creative personalities eminently clear. They place themselves at God's disposal – as

²² Cf. *Heavenwards*, p. 61.

²³ The city of God (or kingdom of God). Cf. St. Augustine of Hippo, *De Civitate Dei (The City of God)*.

²⁴ The city of this world and the devil. *Ibid.*

willingly and daringly as St Michael (cf Rev 12,7f) – in order to fight God’s battle here and now, to build up his kingdom with every means at their disposal, and to overcome the devil and his kingdom in the actual circumstances of the times in which they are living.

No one can intervene creatively and as a leader in this gigantic battle who has not, like Jacob, struggled victoriously with God, nor has dared to take the death-leap of mind, will and heart, thus letting go of self and delivering himself unconditionally to God and his wishes.

Sacred Scripture reports:

“Jacob was left alone. And there was one that wrestled with him until daybreak who, seeing that he could not master him, struck him in the socket of his hip, and Jacob’s hip was dislocated as he wrestled with him. He said, ‘Let me go, for {24} day is breaking.’ But Jacob answered, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’ He then asked, ‘What is your name?’ ‘Jacob,’ he replied. He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have contended with God and men and have prevailed.’ Jacob then made this request, ‘I beg you, tell me your name,’ but he replied, ‘Why do you ask my name?’ And he blessed him there. Jacob named the place Peniel, ‘Because I have seen God face to face,’ he said ‘and I have survived.’ The sun rose as he left Peniel, limping because of his hip.” (Gen 32,25-32).

Just as God threw his whole weight upon Jacob, so he weighs us limited human beings down with the things we cannot understand and explain in our times. We are thinking people, but, as Pascal²⁵ called human beings, we are shaking reeds. Just as Jacob struggled with God throughout the night until dawn, so every creative fighter for God must pass through the dark night of a lack of intellectual clarity and security on account of the meaning and purpose of the mysterious and puzzling events of the times and the anxieties of life. We must struggle through moral weaknesses and helplessness, as well as

²⁵ Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), French mathematician and philosopher.

through religious blunting, until we reach the light of intellectual clarity, religious depth and moral strength. We must fight with God, until the all-wise and all-merciful God reveals his face, blessing us with the blessing of insight, security, daring, and victoriousness.

There may not be many people and communities which proceed from this battle as complete victors, and {25} hence deserve to have their names changed as Jacob did. From that time on he was known as *Israel*, that is, the one who fought God in a most eminent sense. There are many who have faith; they try to discover a greeting from God in all that he sends them or allows to happen, in every suffering and joy and try to answer God’s gifts of love and wooing with loving deeds. However, practical faith in Divine Providence has not yet gone over into their flesh and blood. It has not yet become their distinctive world view and is therefore unable to withstand the extraordinary pressures of our present times, much less carry out a great, historical mission. May God bend down, as he once did to Moses, and say:

“I have seen the miserable state of my people in Egypt. I have heard their appeal to be free of their slave-drivers. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. I mean to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians and bring them out of that land to a land rich and broad, a land where milk and honey flow. ... So come, I send you.” (Ex 3,7f).

He was addressing himself to deaf ears, to hardened hearts that were enslaved to this world. No matter how often he promised: “I will be with you... so go, I will be with your mouth and teach you what you should say” (cf. Ex 4,12). The answer never changed: “No, Lord, send whoever you will!” (cf. Ex 4,13). [In other words:] Leave me in peace!

God’s call to Schoenstatt

{26} *In his kindness and mercy God also called Schoenstatt in this way, and without any merit on its part offered it such a great mission.* He revealed his face and his wishes clearly through the events of the times, and Schoenstatt answered humbly, generously

and trustingly: *Ecce adsum, mitte me* [Here I am, send me! (Is 6,8)]. It allowed itself to be led day by day into the battle of life by the God of life. It was always the call of the times – and not, as with Joan of Arc, mysterious voices – which showed it the way and the goal

For years the great October Week has been the time when we repeat the plea of Joshua: Sun, stand still! By your light let us look back on the way just traveled, let us look forward to see the paths ahead by which you want to lead us into the future, thus equipping us to face the battle of minds and hearts for a new world. In the past years we have looked back and ahead over relatively short stretches. They were momentary and not long-range snapshots of the times. Mostly we began with 1912, interpreted our special Family history, and looked at the tasks for the coming year.

*But this time our radius will be expanded in both directions... Pallotti*²⁶, who has occupied us for some years in his relationship to our Schoenstatt Work, will now stand at the focus of our interest. The whole year wants to go down in history as a *Schoenstatt {27} Pallotti Year*. The occasion for this is Pallotti's beatification. Our glance spontaneously goes back to the year 1850, the year of his death. Three generations stand between then and now, wishing to be surveyed and understood. To this backward glance over the past hundred years wants to come a forward glance along the same lines. *Truly, reason enough to pray: Sun, stand still!* Enlighten our minds and hearts with the light of practical faith in Divine Providence and let our historical mission in the framework of the great events of world history be more clearly seen and more vigorously realized.

And more! We cannot correctly providentially interpret the past three generations *unless we multiply them by four, unless we let them expand from one hundred to four hundred years, and try to look backward and look forward in this order of magnitude.*

²⁶ St. Vincent Pallotti (1795-1850), beatified by Pope Pius XII on January 22, 1950 (the 100th anniversary of his death), canonized by Pope John XXIII on January 20, 1963. Pallotti was the founder of the Pallottines (to which Fr. Kentenich belonged until 1965) and since 1916 Fr. Kentenich had worked to integrate the mission of Pallotti in the life of his own Schoenstatt movement.

It is only in this way that this year's October Week can fulfill its purpose, only in this way that Schoenstatt, which has thus far made Pallotti's idea and work a home, will be able to erect a throne for him in countless hearts and churches and allow the espousal between the movement and the society²⁷ to become complete, eternal, and fruitful for both partners. We therefore pray more intensely than usual: Sun, stand still! Lavish your light upon us, dispelling the darkness and filling our minds with purest light. Give our hearts and wills the glow of enthusiasm and inspire them deeds of daring.

Discovering Vincent Pallotti

{28} *Many, both before us and with us, have tried to get to know Pallotti better, both in his ideas and his person.*

Father Schulte's study about the Catholic Apostolate²⁸ and his Family Letter (May 1948)²⁹ have *delivered conclusive proof of the essential equality between Pallotti's Catholic Apostolate and the Schoenstatt Movement*, without distorting the uniqueness of Schoenstatt. In this way members of the Pallottines with an open mind can come closer to Schoenstatt, and all Schoenstatt members can more easily connect with Pallotti. The Congregation for Religious has taken both the equivalence and the uniqueness into account when it coined the term: *Apostolatus Catholicus Schoenstattensis*³⁰.

Less clear is our relationship to the person of Pallotti. We know

²⁷ Meant is the "marriage" between the Schoenstatt Movement and the Society of Catholic Apostolate (= the Pallottines) which reached a culmination with a solemn covenant in Dachau in 1944, where both Fr. Kentenich and the provincial superior of the Pallottines, Fr. Heinrich Schulte, were prisoners of the Nazis.

²⁸ Fr. Heinrich Schulte, *Vinzenz Pallottis 'Katholisches Apostolat'* (The Catholic Apostolate of Vincent Pallotti) (Limburg, 1947). Here the "Catholic Apostolate" specifically refers to the work of St. Vincent Pallotti.

²⁹ The internal publication of the Limburg Province of the Pallottines. The May 1948 issue especially focused on the relationship between the Schoenstatt Movement and the work of Vincent Pallotti.

³⁰ Latin for "Schoenstatt Catholic Apostolate." If the term "Catholic Apostolate" defines the unique work of Pallotti, then the addition of *Schoenstattensis* indicates that Schoenstatt is a special mode of the same work.

a few details about his life, value him as someone who has and proclaims an idea of universal magnitude, and also sense his personal greatness rooted in his comprehensive infinitism³¹. But many of us have not yet developed a deeper personal relationship with him. We looked to the experts from the [Pallottine] Society [to help us in this]. We have expected them to help modern thinking and feeling find an open access to the mysteriously veiled shrine of his soul. We have expected them to deliver to us moderns the key to his spirit and heart. So far their response is: our work is not yet finished.

The Generation of the {29} Black Crosses³² shares the same longing and clarity and sincere devotion with us. They brought back from foreign soil the mortal remains of our heroes and gave them a home in the shadow of the Shrine. But they also worked to give the relics of Pallotti a home in the same place. These can now be found there. They speak an eloquent language, testifying to an unfulfilled longing to deeply and vibrantly grasp Pallotti's mysterious personality.

Whenever Schoenstatt first comes into the awareness of [part of] the [Pallottine] Society, the first reaction is usually a certain protest against a foreign body and intruder, and a strong statement of loyalty to the founder³³. Both [reactions] must be spoken of as evidence of a healthy autonomy and a growing self-awareness. But this is not infrequently followed at once by a certain resignation, and a tangible helplessness when his person becomes the center of discussion.

I wish to therefore try to make a sketch here of his personality in

³¹ For Fr. Kentenich's view of Pallotti's infinitism, see especially his words in the third talk of Schoenstatt's Third Founding Document (December 8, 1944). The text is found in *Schoenstatt – The Founding Documents*, p. 97-112.

³² The generation of Schoenstatt Boys Youth, primarily from the Schoenstatt high school seminary, who brought back the mortal remains of the "hero sodalists" of Schoenstatt's founding generation in 1934. Because these hero sodalists were reburied behind the Original Shrine in Germany with the traditional black crosses of the German war dead, this generation came to be known as the "Generation of the Black Crosses," where the Black Cross also stands for total surrender to the MTA (see J. Niehaus, *200 Questions about Schoenstatt*, Waukesha, 2002, No. 172.

³³ Pallotti is meant.

the light of the past four hundred years. In doing so we pursue the decided intention of *finding an access to him* in the history of our times. We will not go into detailed descriptions of his life, being, or work. The other talks during the October Week will no doubt cover this. More precisely: *Here we will only elaborate the starting points in Pallotti's soul and in our times, as well as possible ways of bringing them into mutual connection.* As a result, our overall effort will produce a frame more than a picture. It will not be hard for those familiar with the picture to place it in the frame themselves. That ideas will play a role in this should not surprise anyone, for the ideas and life's work of a person are reliable {30} expressions and invaluable hallmarks of his spiritual character.

From what we have already said, it will be clear that the look into the past will contain – by way of the connection between yesterday, today, and tomorrow – the seeds of essential elements for our work in the future.

Our effort will not so much be a laudatory speech but rather a popular-scientific investigation. Though composed from an objective viewpoint, it is written with a warm heart and hopes to be received by open minds and hearts able to be enkindled for love.

The thesis of this study

Allow me to begin this study with its conclusion:

Pallotti is a great historically creative personality with a great permanent historically creative mission at the end of a great historical change of epoch³⁴.

With that I make an important assertion. It is like a hidden treasure whose radiance cannot be grasped in just one glance. It must first be *made understandable*, then *proven*, in order to then be *applied*

³⁴ German: *Zeitenwende*, turn/change of time/era/epoch. See also J. Kentenich, *Education and the Challenge of our Times* (Waukesha, 2nd edition, 1996), p. 70ff, where the translator (Ulrich Proeller) uses "turn of time" in continuity with the term "turn of the century." Here we will use "change of era" to denote the broader sense of the term and "change of epoch" when Fr. Kentenich is clearly speaking about a change of era of a particularly fundamental nature.

to practical life.

And so we stand before three questions which will demand our attention:

1. *What does this important assertion mean?*
2. *How will it be proven?*
3. *What does it demand of us?*

{31} The first question requires a clarification, the second an objective discussion, and the third some indications about how it can be applied in everyday life.

I. What does the assertion mean?

The answer can be found by anyone who tries to understand the deeper meaning of the individual words and sentences.

A. Pallotti is a great historically creative personality

First sentence: Pallotti is a great historically creative personality.

In the first place this means: He was neither a historical activist nor a historical passivist, but like many others a creator of history¹. But also: As a creator of history he towers above countless others because he stands out in grand format. In other words, he powerfully reached into the workings of the times, inspired them and transformed them, so that his activity left behind a recognizable trail. Like a skillful weaver he sat at the loom of the time and wove into its fabric many, complex indestructible threads. He was a superman in the genuine Catholic sense of the word, not merely as a stone-cutter and building stone, but as an architect and overseer in the project of forming the society of tomorrow. And so he reminds us of a burning bush in the midst of countless dried-up thistles and brambles, mysteriously {32} enkindled by God, whose glowing and burning unmistakably proclaims the word of God into the times: take off the shoes of superficial bargaining and haggling and merely human calculation, for the place where you stand is holy ground (cf Ex 3,2ff)... is God's masterpiece, is a chosen instrument who deserves respect, openness, and our full attention.

The more creatively a personality intervenes in world history, the more he is himself a product and a gift of the lavish self-giving and creative action of God.

To start with, God has wisely foreseen and determined, ordered

¹ For a more detailed description of these three personality types, see p. {17} to {25} above. For a briefer survey, see J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Instrument Spirituality* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 129f.

and ordained *all the factors* which played a role in shaping his personality. These include needs of body and soul; longings of the heart; his relationship to nature and his surroundings, to society and contemporary history; inherited and acquired abilities and experiences as well as tensions between nature and grace, between man and man, between ideal and reality, between conquering his nature and facing his personal limitations. Take them singly or all together: in their concrete form they come from the determining, ordaining or permitting will of God. All are foreseen in God's plan for the world and serve, down to the last detail, the firmly ordained goal of Divine government of the world. They weave thread after thread into the pattern of a perfect tapestry, even if the back side looks like a jumbled and confusing chaos, an impossible tangle.

(...)

{36} *Great personalities often appear in the framework of great historical eras.* Both seem to go hand in hand. Here, too, we see God's wisdom and kindness. In times when the needs are more acute his answer is more powerful. *In times of epochal change the great trailblazers of humanity sum up in their person and work the creative forces of the past. They overcome the present with its needs and crises and anticipate the future {37} in an original way.* They are the evening twilight of the past, the blossoming of the present, and the dawning day of the future – just like Dante², who can be spoken of as the last Medieval man but also the first Renaissance man, because he embodied in himself and his immortal works both the attitudes of old and the attitudes of the new. Because such [great personalities] are far ahead of their times, they were largely not understood in their lifetime. They must reckon with contempt and lack of recognition. They can usually expect understanding and justice, justification and recognition only after their death.

² Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), poet from Florence whose work made him the father of modern Italian. His greatest work is *The Divine Comedy*.

We will later need to examine to what extent this character sketch of great men applies to Pallotti as well as to what degree we must ask him for forgiveness³.

B. Pallotti has a permanent historically creative mission

Second sentence: Pallotti has a permanent historically creative mission. In other words, his mission did not end with his death. It continues until the end of time.

Whoever wants to study missions of this type will find instructive material in the life and work of the founders of the three great families of orders in Western Christianity: Benedict, Francis, and Ignatius. Their influence can still be clearly felt today after many centuries. It can be traced back to their extraordinary personality, the originality of their ideas, and the fruitfulness of their works and foundations. Of course, it is also a fruit of an extraordinary Divine blessing.

{38} In this context we will later need to verify if Pallotti is called to be for our times what the great patriarchs of the orders were for theirs.

C. The present change of epoch

Third sentence: We are in the midst of a change of epoch of historic dimensions.

In order to understand the magnitude of this assertion, we need to answer two questions. The first is: What is a change of time⁴? The second is: What features are characteristic of a change of time?

1. What is a change of time?

In order to *make understandable what is meant by a change of epoch*, we contrast it with related life processes found in the frame-

³ For not understanding him even 100 years after his death.

⁴ Although the subject is the "change of epoch" which occurs only at very long intervals, the discussion now turns to the more general and more frequently occurring "change of time." To understand a "change of time" allows one to better understand the more drastic "change of epoch."

work of the times: the temporal crises and the end of time⁵.

a. Temporal crises

In medicine and psychology one speaks of a *crisis* when body or soul are shaken by dangerous tensions of an acute nature. *In history* one speaks of a crisis when changes of an acute nature occur in the normal life rhythm of the nations, plunging the usual traditional order into an alarming state of confusion. Major historical events like revolution and war are born of crises and followed by crises. If, sooner or later, the flow of history returns to its previous channel, it was merely a greater or smaller shift, but not a change of times.

The latter is in play when the wheel of history can no longer be turned back, when one historical era is closed and a new one begins, so that pastoral work and education must necessarily find new ways.

Because history is a singularly {39} comprehensive organism the transitions from one era to another are not a clean break. Both often flow together for a long time in the same channel, causing crises. The old does not want to clear the field and the new is not yet strong enough to assert its dominance with a single blow. It often takes a long time for even the study and interpretation of history to determine with sufficient clarity the differences and contrasts so that it can more precisely characterize both the old and the new. The waters do not unite into a vibrantly flowing fountain from one day to the next.

It is similar in the development of the lives of great men. This is why they often experience many, often earthshaking interior crises. Often they must go through a long process until they can enter into the public eye in full maturity, until they can be a lighthouse for their surroundings, a fruitful tree on whose delightful fruits countless many rejoice and are refreshed. An English children's verse puts this quite drastically: To his father he was William, to his mother Willy, to his playmates and siblings Will. But today he is known to everyone as Shakespeare.

⁵ German: *Zeitenkrise und Zeitenende*.

When we assert that Pallotti lived and worked in a great change of epoch, then we mean by this the elemental struggle of the great "unknown," of the [man of the] coming epoch with the Renaissance man of the past who replaced the Mediaeval man about the year 1500.

What this means in detail will be discussed later.

b. The end of time

{40} The "*end of time*" equals the end of the world. No one can rightly claim that our times are the end of time, even if the biblical signs seem to find gradual fulfillment. God's wisdom deliberately leaves us ignorant about the second coming of the Lord. No one can know the day or the hour when he will come to judge (cf Mt 25,13).

It is a perilous to walk with the prophets without a vocation. This is especially true when two epochs are in transition. History can tell us of many disappointments and false interpretations, especially when the issue was not the structure of the soul, but of political geography! For instance, a man of some political stature, E. Lasaulx, predicted in 1856 that there would be an Asian-European war resulting in the end of Turkey. He called the unification of Germany a pious wish and an unfulfillable dream⁶. The opposite came true.

Those who have dared to announce the end of the world have faced even greater disillusionment. Every so often, especially in the West, a feeling will sweep the nations which can best be called a sense that "the end is near." Again and again false prophets arise who try to interpret and direct it. So far their predictions have always been wrong. This will not change. Augustine and Jerome expected the end to come around the year 400. They were wrong. When St. Stephen⁷ laid the foundations for the thousand-year kingdom in

⁶ Ernst von Lasaulx (1805-1861), German scholar and philosopher. See his work: *Neuer Versuch einer alten, auf die Wahrheit der Tatsachen gegründeten Philosophie der Geschichte* (A new attempt at an old philosophy of history based on the factual truth), 1856. Note: Although the Ottoman Empire eventually collapsed, it was replaced by modern Turkey. And the efforts of Bismarck succeeded in creating a unified Germany in spite of the predictions of many.

⁷ St. Stephen, King of Hungary (975-1038).

Hungary, {41} his contemporaries expected to see the Judge of the Living and Dead to appear on the clouds of the sky. Otto III⁸ was not remiss in preparing a pilgrimage to the grave of St. Adalbert. Even the intelligent and knowledgeable Otto of Freising⁹ held the same conviction. The following centuries brought a corrective. Instead of the end of the world came the glorious era of Church history of the 12th and 13th centuries. Many more examples could be given.

It is not necessary to point out that our thesis is not about the end of time but about a change of times, a change of epoch.

c. *The purpose of history*

Whoever wants to make a sound judgment about the reality and type of the change of time cannot let blind feelings or the suggestive power of public opinion color his judgment. *He must seek trustworthy indicators.* They are, as is immediately evident to experts in the field, to be sought and found in the realm of history itself. Change in an organism can only be reliably determined and correctly interpreted by someone with a precise understanding of its structure and a deep grasp of its God-given meaning. The same is true of history.

Hence we must first become familiar with the purpose of history. Then we will be able to make a judgment about its changing features, its possibilities, and find indicators for a change of time.

Because of the shuddering of the car of world history, which exposes problems of a most difficult sort, there is scarcely a topic which is so discussed today by the great and the small, the learned and the simple, directly or indirectly, {42} but on which the opinions also so widely diverge. Everyone is asking and looking for the purpose of world history. It happens most urgently among those who have been asked to carry a heavy burden on their shoulders and who see the lack of purpose afflicting the natural thinking of the world

⁸ Otto III, Holy Roman Emperor (980-1002).

⁹ Otto of Freising (c. 1114-1158), German chronicler and bishop of Freising in Bavaria.

today...

We stand with both feet on the ground of revelation and represent and defend the theistic view of life and history. Faith in Divine Providence has become the way we view life and history. Faith in Divine Providence is therefore our preferred path, and so we apply it to life and history. We wish to do so this time, too. Due to the lack of time we omit the discussion of other attempts at resolving the problem, as interesting and instructive this might be in providing a contrast to our understanding of the times in the light of practical faith in Divine Providence.

The theistic view can be stated most simply this way: *The purpose of world history is the deliberate, step-by-step unfolding of the divine idea of man.*

This purpose and its realization is divine in its *origin, content, and aim.*

In other words: *It has been devised by God's omnipotence, wisdom, and love; he ordains and guides all events in a way that advances its realization down to the last detail. One can correctly speak of world history as the most excellent commentary on the divine idea of man, the one which takes into most perfect account its plenitude and richness.*

(...)

d. *The dimensions of the divine idea of man*

{43} The theological axiom *Opera Dei ad extra sunt communia* [The works of God to the outside are a community work] points out that the idea of man and its realization in world history are a *work of the Trinity*. If omnipotence is associated with the Father, and wisdom with the Son, and love with the Holy Spirit, this only happens *per appropriationem* – through a certain appropriation¹⁰. Under the influence of the New Testament, new light falls on the story of creation.

¹⁰ That is, although we associate certain features of Divine activity more with one Divine Person than another, all features are the work of all three Persons.

When God says: “Let us make man in our image” (Gen 1,26) it is not difficult for us to interpret the word “us” to mean the most blessed Trinity.

Genesis continues: “In our image and likeness let us create him...” This accurately captures *the content of the idea of man* – man made in the image of the most blessed Trinity. (...)

{44} *Man as a natural image of God allows us to see him as a divine masterpiece in the order of creation. Man as a supernatural image of God points to the glory of the order of grace as it has taken concrete form in our redemption through Jesus Christ and in our sanctification and union through the Holy Spirit.*

From this standpoint we can describe the *purpose of world history* as a deliberate, step-by-step development of the incarnation (“becoming man”), and of the “becoming Christ” and “becoming members” in the organism of the Kingdom of God. If one takes the “becoming man” and “becoming Christ” as woven together in the order of nature and grace, then one sees in this the *Christian image of man* and the “becoming members” by incorporation into the Kingdom of God is seen as the *God-willed image of community*. From this we see that the purpose of world history is *the deliberate, step-by-step unfolding of the Christian image of man and community*.

i. The image of God on the natural level

The *natural side of the image of man* is accurately characterized this way in *the process of creation*: “God, the Lord, created man from the clay of the earth and breathed into him the breath of life and so man became a living being” (Gen 2,7). By the breath of life Sacred Scripture means {45} the spirit¹¹, the image of the Spirit of God. The opposing elements of matter and spirit are joined together in man in a substantial unity which in spite of an inseparable ontological union retain their unique capacities and tendencies. (...)

In his ontological structure man is an *animal oeconomicum*,

¹¹ German: *Geist*, meaning either spirit or mind. Here it refers to the part of man which is spirit, in contrast to the part of man which is matter or material.

*hedonicum, vitale*¹². That is, he clings to material values, economical values, sensual pleasures, and the primordial life forces like health, spontaneity, and freshness. But one also rightly calls him an *animal philosophicum (metaphysicum), ethicum, aestheticum et religiosum*¹³. In other words, he is obligated to the intellectual and spiritual values, to truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness. In the natural order he is committed to all of these values. Like the goods themselves, his receptivity to each value allows for many different varieties. Essential contributions to the shaping of these varieties come from the circumstances of one’s life and nature and, above all, one’s surroundings. Every typical {46} attitude to the material, rational, and religious goods can create a unique type of person, as individual and in community, and in this way impact and determine the image of man in a given era. The Medieval person was extraordinarily theocentric in his orientation. His successor, the Renaissance man, primarily revolves around his own axis. Depending on which values are in the forefront or dominate the field, he appears at one time as hedonistic or economic or vitalistic, in another as an intellectual or aesthetical or ethical, determining the flavor of the era he dominates.

Those who wish to preserve their intellect from heretical impulses and their will and heart from revolutionary fits, *must unswervingly hold fast to* and be oriented on *two lines*. The one leads back to the past, the other upward to God. If history can be compared to a current, the *present must never be separated from the past*, just as one must never separate the fruit from the stem and root. The past remains a formative factor in history even when the present and future want to make themselves independent. One sees this in the predominant history-making images of man in the East and West today. They simply reject the inner connection to the past, resulting in complete confusion [about the way to the future].

¹² A creature with an economic, hedonic (or pleasure-oriented), and vital (or life-oriented) dimension.

¹³ A creature with a philosophical (metaphysical), ethical, aesthetical, and a religious dimension.

The second line leads *upwards to God*. Every image of man must be oriented on the plan and idea of God. God is the measure of all things in everything, and will always be so, whether he makes himself understood through supernatural revelation or inner promptings, or through the ontological structure of man and created things or through history. If this measure {47} is rejected or ignored, the result is idolatry. Those who do not bow before God will worship an idol of their own making. Along the way it does not matter if the idol is state or class, flesh or race, pleasure or intellect, morality or social attitude. In this way history truly becomes a comprehensive commentary on the words of Genesis: “Let us make man in our own image and likeness” (Gen 1,26).

We must not be astonished *that the idea of man unfolds only gradually, step-by-step*. There are two reasons for this. One lies in man’s *unique way of being*, the other in the *incredible fullness of life* which is contained in the idea of man.

God’s essence-form is eternity. In other words, God is always and everywhere simultaneously totally and in complete fullness what and how he is. In him existence is not sequential (one thing after the other) but one single grand simultaneous co-manifestation. (...)

Man’s essence-form is time: the historical one-step-after-the-other that allows the God-given seed of his being and perfection to unfold. Time is not an empty channel which absorbs the water of events, it is not an empty thread which man can use to sew any events he wishes; it is strictly speaking this historical sequentiality. When Sacred Scripture places such emphasis on the pronouncement of time in Genesis – “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...” “And it was evening and {48} it was morning...” (Gen 1,1) – it wants to expressly point out this step-by-step development and unfolding in man and through man. What is brought to expression through deeds takes on even more specific form through God’s creative command: “Grow and multiply and fill the earth and subject it to yourself” (Gen 1,28). Grow! Unfold all the seeds of talents and capabilities that you carry within you in the sequentiality of history, until you reach full

maturity and perfection and harmonious balance. Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth! Take possession of the whole earth through steady increase of the human race. Make it subject to yourself: Exercise your dominance over all the forces of nature and make them serve you in technology and industry, in agriculture and animal husbandry. But also take care that you do not become slaves to inanimate creation.

The reason why this original essence-form follows the sequentiality of history is because *the idea of man is filled to overflowing with content*. It is not unjustified for man to be called a microcosm, a world in miniature. It is said of him: *est quodammodo omnia* [He is, in a certain way, everything]... Every level of created being has a branch and embodiment in him: the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom, and the angelic realm. When each lower level submits to the levels above it, they take part in their perfection.

The image of man which history sketches is like a big picture book. Most people only see and understand the one page which they or their contemporaries represent. At the very most they may {49} still have access to the previous page. Only few are able to page through the whole picture book and understand not only the contemporary pictures, but also the earlier pictures from all ages, and in this way protect themselves from onesidedness and making individual favorite pictures the absolute standard and to bow before God’s infinite fullness of life and endless multiplicity of ways to imitate him.

(First characteristic)

{49} *One can and must speak of a historical change of time when an image of man which has dominated a time significantly changes its face*, when for instance the intellectualistic image gives way to the vitalistic, or when the anthropocentric gives way to the theocentric.

ii. The supernatural image of God in man

With this we already touch on *the second, grace-filled side of the idea of man*, which as [part of] the order of redemption points to the

supernatural character of his divine likeness – which in Jesus Christ becomes incarnate and attains fullness and perfection – which is the ideal radiating through the sequence of historical events, inspiring the idea of man as it develops and matures. All without exception strive incessantly toward this ideal from an innate created inner tendency in the order of grace.

And so the purpose of history becomes the preparation, continuation, rounding-out and completion of Christ's life for the sake of a more perfect union of love with the Father. The time before [the Incarnation] is the preparation for his coming, {50} foretold with sufficient clarity in the Protogospel (Gen 3,15). The time after [his Ascension] is the mysterious repetition of the individual phases of his life both in individuals and in whole generations. Sometimes it is the childlike Savior who dominates an individual and an era, leaving his mark on both. Sometimes it is the militant Christ. In some cases the horror of Good Friday repeats itself in a tangible way, in other cases the rejoicing of Easter Day.

When the first man left paradise in order to go into exile, and carried in his heart the longing for paradise, Christ became his companion, Protogospel in hand, never more to leave his descendants. As the *logos spermaticos*¹⁴ he follows the pagans and in a mysterious cloak accompanies the Christians. Here he prepares Advent or Christmas, even if only few come to adore him and when only few are ready to bring him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. There he renews his life in Nazareth. He does it wherever Christian families allow him to enter. In priests and laity he goes through the whole world, preaching and healing. In all places his word and actions unyieldingly demand a strong division of spirits. In a mysterious way he relives once again Good Friday with all those and in all those who replace in their body as Paul did (cf Col 1,24) what is lacking in the

¹⁴ Greek: the seminal word, a term from pagan Greek philosophy about “the seeds of truth” which was picked up by early Fathers of the Church, such as St. Justin, to discuss the action of the Logos (= the Word), Christ, in the background of history.

sufferings of Christ, who remain silent when the masses violently cry out to the Pilates of their time: “Crucify him!,” who do not collapse when Judas figures become their betrayers and sell them for 30 silver coins. Day after day he celebrates Easter, even if there are only a few faithful witnesses of his resurrection and {51} his glorious victory. He sends his Holy Spirit to all those who persevere in prayer and the breaking of bread.

In Christ every tragedy in life and in contemporary events finds a solution. One speaks of tragedy when weak human strength enters into conflict with stronger, higher powers, causing it to collapse, so that abundant blessings flow from the defeat. Theology puts it this way: In Christ the *mysterium iniquitatis* is transformed into the *mysterium gratiae*¹⁵.

He gives luminous meaning and victorious mastery over the ultra-powerful forces which sin has caused to erupt from the netherworld. Since Adam's fall these forces have tempestuously flowed from man's inmost being. They have unleashed death and destruction through the angry forces of nature, subjugating man burdened by original sin. Sin has separated man from God. The sinner desires to be his own god, or at very least to go his own ways independent of his Creator and Sovereign, Lord and Master. This apostasy leads to a fourfold decay: [1] the breakdown of the inner harmony of the soul, [2] the collapse of man's sovereign dominion over the forces of nature [3] and those of the netherworld and [4] loss of a right to feel at home.

The harmony of the soul's faculties has been lost: at times the intellect is the tyrant, at others the heart and emotions. And so man loses the sense of having a genuine home here on earth. Only the harmoniously formed man can make the world a kind of paradise, a piece of heaven. The splintering and fragmentation of his inner world

¹⁵ That is, the mystery of lawlessness or iniquity is overcome by the mystery of grace. The term *mysterium iniquitatis* comes from the Vulgate translation of St. Paul (2 Thes 2,7) and the juxtaposition with *mysterium gratiae* is a way to summarize a central thesis of Paul's theology of grace and salvation.

make {52} even the most beautiful piece of earth a den of thieves, a piece of hell. Hence one sees the inner relationship between the sentences: *Homo homini Deus; homo homini lupus; homo homini diabolus* [Man is man's god; man is man's wolf; man is man's devil]. Just as the forces of nature within man have turned against him, so to the outward forces of nature. What the Litany of Saints has prayed from time immemorial points clearly to the two great powers in the life of man: "from pestilence, famine, and war... from the wiles of the devil... Lord, save your people." Nor is nature the only enemy; there is also the devil. And at times he is granted extraordinary power, a power which he uses with relentless brutality.

Therefore history's dark side delivers a reliable commentary on the threefold judgment rendered in paradise over the devil, woman, and man.

The *devil* is told: "I shall set enmity between you and the woman, between her seed and yours. You will strike her heel..." (Gen 3,15). Since that time the domination of the diabolical powers over world history is boundless. Their influence has been felt in both the pagan religions of old and of today. As a result, the Holy Spirit states: "*Omnnes dei gentium sunt daemonia*" (Ps 96,5)¹⁶. In the witch hunts of the Middle Ages, in the spiritistic dabbling of modern times, and in the fanatical and blood-thirsty atrocities of modern nations we encounter the cold {53} hand of the primordial murderer of man (cf Jn 8,44). His battle against Christ and his kingdom is no less than the causative agent of all world history, beginning with the fall of our first parents and continuing until the final confrontation of all times.

To the *woman* are directed the hard words: "In pain you shall bear your children" (Gen 3,16). From now on, the place of man's creation not infrequently becomes the place of death for both mother and child – at times because of personal guilt, at times with no guilt at all. "The man shall be your master" (Gen 3,16). In many ways she has

¹⁶ The Latin Vulgate literally says: "All the gods of the pagans are demons." More often, the translation is made in this vein: "All the gods of the pagans are things of nought."

become the slave of the man. And so it remains today: here as a cheap source of labor, there as a pleasure object for masculine lust. She willingly submits to the lordship of the man, at times by shamelessly chasing men, at others by fashion madness and a no-shame body culture.

To the *man* is directed the curse: "Cursed be the ground! With toil you shall eat its fruit all the days of your life. It will bear you thistles and thorns. The bread you eat shall come by the sweat of your brow" (Gen 3,17-19). The historical reality gives detailed evidence of the ramifications of such a harsh verdict. Incredible amounts of sweat have flowed for bread. Incredible amounts of blood have been poured out in wars and revolutions for earthly gain. Because of economic things the best and the brightest have committed themselves to work for technological progress instead of directly for God and Divine values.

This is what the *mysterium iniquitatis* looks like.

Christ has transformed it into the *mysterium gratiae*.

{54} *He solves in his person and disciples the multifaceted tragedy of sin.* He masters the rebellion against God by being obedient – he himself and in his disciples – unto death, even death on the cross. He overcomes the distress of the interior rupture [between the higher and lower faculties of man] because he – he himself and in his disciples – circles with all his capabilities of body and soul only around the Father, his person, his wish, his will, and his Kingdom. He transforms the song of homelessness as often as he joins with the Father and the Holy Spirit to dwell with his own. He uses the power of the untamed forces of nature with its four apocalyptic riders – war, revolution, famine, and disease – to deepen his disciples' awareness of their childlike dependence, so that they can grow to full maturity. He frustrates the attacks of the devil – whether cloaked with guile or brutality; after all he has come into the world to destroy the devil's works. He does this by using them as catalysts for the birth of a new life and striving. He releases woman from her enslavement to the man as often as he gives her the awareness of her high personal dignity, after pouring out his blood for her and elevating her to the

nobility of the children of God. He honors and ennoble the work of the man through the thirty years he spent as a simple worker.

With that we touch on the second characteristic by which we can discern a change of time. It is part of the order of salvation. If there is an essential change in the relationship to the God of revelation, one can correctly speak of a change of time.

iii. Community and the image of God in man

{55} *The third characteristic derives from the relationship to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love and unity: community... A change in the image of community can also cause a change of time.*

In the *natural order* man is already an *animal sociale* [a social being]. This is why the creation of Adam leads to God's serious deliberation and significant decision, "It is not good for man to be alone. Let us create a helpmate for him who is his equal" (Gen 2,18). And God created Eve from the side of sleeping Adam. Ever since the creation of man takes place in the community of the family, and the person is formed and built up by the family. Without community he withers. The community creates obstacles and incentives. It provides tensions and urges one to overcome them. It gives aims and motives which give no rest. It gives us companions and helpmates and associates, or gives rise to rivals. Both are of great advantage for shaping one's work and developing one's personality. This is how we can understand Goethe when he says that he must attribute seven-eighths of all his works to others. Man needs community so as to receive from it. And man needs it so that he can give and self-give – lavishly and overflowing. Shared sorrow is half the sorrow, shared joy is twice the joy. The disciples of artists and educators push them to give all they know; this is something which constantly awakens in them their entire creativity.

Just as the order of creation is built on the community, so too *the order of salvation*. Its starting point is the {56} communion of sinners with Adam and climaxes in the communion of saints when one is incorporated into the community of the Kingdom of God here

on earth.

Christ has come to proclaim, establish, and complete this Kingdom. He therefore begins his public ministry with the call, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" (Mt 4,17). He teaches his followers to pray each day, "Thy Kingdom come" (Mt 6,10). (....)

{58} *The Holy Spirit, the Love between the Father and the Son, is the bond that joins together all Christians in a living unity: "Caritas Dei diffusa est in cordibus vestris per Spiritum Sanctum qui datus est vobis."* ["The love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Rom 5,5).]

Thus the idea of community is given simultaneously with the idea of creation, redemption, and sanctification.

This results in a natural *multifaceted tension between individual and community*, a tension which has riled the nations for centuries, especially in the West. *Two currents* – individualism and collectivism – try to resolve the difficult problem. *Both are extreme, and both misrepresent the essence of individual and community. Both run the car of history aground on a difficult-to-escape sandbank.*

Individualism only knows self. It is sick with unrestrained self-centeredness. It views community only as a mechanical summation of individuals who have made a compact of utility to secure the right to uninhibited personal development. It sacrifices this freedom only – and only inasmuch as – it is absolutely necessary, making sure that the unavoidable contact with others does not lead to a war of all vs. {59} all. Its ultimate and highest ideal is anarchy: a condition in which there is no longer a head, presider, or superior, and in which law and prohibitions no longer exist. The perfect autonomy of individuals is then universal, even if it must be guaranteed by bombs and shells.

Collectivism abandons the rights of individuals. The individual's purpose is to serve the collective, the mass. The individual has neither formal, guaranteed personal rights, nor justified interests of a specifically personal nature, much less a claim on protection for his person. All of this is the sole and absolute domain of the collective.

The individual is unconditionally delivered into the hands of the masses. One only has a right to exist and be valued inasmuch as one serves and is assimilated by the collective.

Individualism atomizes the community. Collectivism makes man into a herd animal, into an interchangeable cog in a machine. Each undermines the community in its own way.

The ideal of the perfect community includes the perfect person. The two are organically connected. The individual is driven, right down to the deepest roots of his being, to community – and community, as an overarching third reality, as a natural-law function of the social dimension of human nature, is not where the rights and claims of the individual die, but is rather their selflessly serving mother and midwife. We see the ideal realized in the womb of the most Blessed Trinity and in the life of the Holy Family of Nazareth. In the early stages of our Family we gave it this form: The Federation am I, {60} and I am the Federation... I will let myself be crucified for the Federation, and the Federation will go through fire for me. This is the true solidarism which holds the middle ground between individualism and collectivism. Individualism only acknowledges the individual, the “I alone” and his property. The creed of collectivism is: You are nothing, your nation is everything...

{60} *Given the importance of community-consciousness for human society, one can readily see that a profound change in the dominant forms of community life is an easily recognizable feature of a change of time...*

With that we conclude our explanation, in order to direct our attention to the proof.

II.

[How will we prove the assertion?]¹⁷

We have made three assertions. All three are in search of a proof. For psychological reasons we will reverse their order and start with the last one. We begin with:

Pallotti, with his great, historically creative personality and *permanent mission* appears at the end of a historical change of epoch.

Description of the current change of epoch

We understand this change of epoch to be the time of his historical life and the time from his death until his beatification. {61} The epoch which is hastening to its end with violent, unmistakable, unstoppable force, began about 1500, when Mediaeval man was replaced by the man of the Renaissance, who over the course of the about 400 years of his genesis, growth, and action, has rubbed himself so sore and raw on what he has created that everywhere around us gapes the abyss of nihilism, to which the world seems hopelessly doomed, unless it throughly and holistically retakes its orientation from the divine original idea of man: the revealed image of man, God, and community.

Philosophers of history speak of a change of epoch when *one of these images undergoes a radical change* in public opinion. Today, when the ontological revolution has become so total that all three images are affected and dissolved right down to their ultimate and finest fibers, one can and must *speak of a all-encompassing, radical, revolutionary change of epoch.* (...)

{64} That we are standing on the threshold of such an all-encompassing change can be *surmised from two secondary phenomena.* The first are *massive tremors in the whole world situation*, the second

¹⁷ Fr. Kentenich did not complete the study as originally conceived and therefore never wrote his proposed Part III (application).

is the *change in the main carrier of world influence*. In both cases the signals are seemingly superficial. But both reach truly deeply into the interior workings of the times: in the one case as cause, in the other as effect. Where and when the one or the other occurs is not always evident at first glance. Both want to be judged according to the wisdom of the ancient Greeks which Anaximenes¹⁸ poured into classical form as: *Per quas causas res nascitur, per easdem et dissolvatur oportet*. That is: The same causes by which something is born will also lead to its dissolution.

History draws our attention to how great historical changes of epoch were always connected with *great historical events*. This was true at the time of the invasion of the Germanic tribes¹⁹, with the fall of Carthage, with Alexander's triumphant conquest, {65} and with the rise of Rome. In every case political and military upheaval was either the cause or effect of intellectual and spiritual transformations which reshaped the landscape.

The epoch of the Renaissance man

The change of epoch from Medieval man to the Renaissance man was accompanied by such revolutionary events. It does not concern us here which were the causes and which were the effects. In any case the Christian West was swept by an unprecedented drive to discovery and conquest. It dramatically changed the map and the perception of the world.

“This spirit of discovery showed in five areas. In the *world of technology* arose gunpowder, the printing press, and the telescope. *Across the sea* man discovered new parts of the world, *in the universe* he discovered new stars and even a completely new point of reference. *In art and science* he returned to the culture of antiquity and found new forms and colors. *In the area of faith* came the teaching of the sikhs, the innovations of Luther and

¹⁸ Anaximenes of Milet (c.585-c.526 BC), Greek philosopher.

¹⁹ The *Voelkerwanderung*, or massive migration of Goths, Visigoths, etc. that hastened the fall of the Roman Empire in the West.

Calvin, in Tibet Lamaism developed²⁰.”

At that time the outward order was shaken in many ways that accompanied the change to the man of the Renaissance. Similar and perhaps even greater earthquakes in the external sphere are shaking the worldview of the Renaissance man today. In the time of Pallotti it took place through the French Revolution. More recently it has taken the form of the two world wars which we ourselves have experienced and whose continuation holds the world in the grip of fear. Add to this the fantastic successes in the world of technology. If the magnitude of such external {66} change is the measure of interior change, then we can understand or at least guess the magnitude of the change of epoch in which we stand. It must very obviously be a world-toppling, right-down-to-the-root revolution of all conditions and concerns. And so it truly is. It fully justifies the words of Anaximenes: *Per quas causas res nascitur, per easdem et dissolvatur oportet*. (...)

{70} Whoever wants to understand in detail the impending inner change of epoch must orient himself on the *characteric features of the Renaissance man*... (...)

He “released himself from the authoritative bonds of the Middle Ages. He stands on his own two feet (Giordano Bruno), wants to be his own master, wants to set his own laws and determine the framework of his own life, discovers the forces, rights and possibilities slumbering in his own breast, and wants to let them live. But he also discovers this earth with its magic and wants to orient his life on it. He intones the watchword, ‘It is a joy to live’ (Ulrich von Hutten) and half the world listens and agrees.

“Personal self-improvement is his goal in life and the new this-worldly ‘feeling of life’ comes together with opportunités for accomplishment offered by the newly discovered transatlantic world, and by puritan Calvinism. Quietist Calvinism leaves no

²⁰ A. Wirth, *Men, Peoples, and Times*, as quoted by A. Schütz.

room for man to be a cooperator in the works of the supernatural world, and so he throws himself with all his intense intellectual and moral might into this world, {71} soon giving birth to merchantilism and later Manchesterism. The spiritual energies which were accumulated and organized by the hard asceticism of the Middle Ages were now largely set free to release the colors of the glories of nature. They achieve the proudest creation of the new world: the mathematics-based and technology-producing natural science, placed in the constant service of the enterprise of capitalistic production²¹.”

The crisis of the Renaissance epoch

From this standpoint it is not difficult to clarify the image of man, God, and community which dominated in the most recent centuries. All the currents which have been inspired by this threefold image or created it are close to total collapse. They have all failed and demand a new creation.

Now it cannot be completely new. This is too irrefutably clear from the divine idea as Sacred Scripture reveals it to us and on which century after century have provided its commentary. This is what Goethe means when he says:

“The truth has long been found
and been joined with noble mastery:
lay hold of the ancient – it is true!”

At the most, the change can only adjust the elements of the inexhaustible divine original idea and the unique way they are ordered to each other. What all the images of man of the past 400 years have had in common, has come to such a clear crystalization and been so consistently interpreted by the philosophers of our time that one can speak {72} of a consensus for some generations already. *All agree that the characteristic features of the Renaissance man are the separation of the images of man and community from the revealed image of God and a onesided concentration on the self and life in this*

²¹ J. Burckhardt as quoted by A. Schütz.

world. One therefore speaks of the secularization of life, of naturalism, and of the plague of laicism²².

The effects of the crisis

The effect of such a separation are easily understood. One is reminded of a snowflake which breaks free high up in the Alps, turning into a thundering avalanche which destroys everything in its path as it rolls into the abyss. It is not for nothing that we have spoken so thoroughly about the great law: *Apostasy means decay*. The decay of the harmony in human nature and society, the decay of the awareness of a home and the power over nature and hell is now so thorough that it is plainly visible to anyone without pointing out the details of the story.

For a time the image of man separated from God was the *intellectualistic* image. Since about 1900 it has changed into the *economic, vitalistic, and mechanistic image*.

It is generally known and acknowledged that [the perspective of man as] *homo oeconomicus* – also known as *homo faber*²³ – dominates life today not only in Europe but also in the rest of the world. Everywhere one turns, economics are the determinant factor. The strength of highly talented people is poured into solving economic questions. {73} The economy determines policies, fills the media, decides over war and peace, is the main topic of international consultations. It is the standard used to measure the value and dignity of persons and nations. Nor is *homo oeconomicus* satisfied with just satisfying his needs. He demands the creation of new needs so that he can amass wealth and acquire pleasure as quickly as possible. Everything follows the admonition: “Make money, my son!” Because capital-producing, rationalized²⁴ work seems to be the surest

²² Laicism: the imposition of the rule of lay leaders to the radical exclusion of any influence from the clergy or heirarchy. In other words, the complete disregard of any voice for religion in society and politics.

²³ *Homo oeconomicus*: man as a creature of finance and economy; *homo faber*: man as skilled craftsman.

²⁴ That is, with the maximum of efficiency and productivity.

way to accomplish this, and because technology with its amazing inventions and fabulous successes is a willing accomplice, the three terms *homo oeconomicus*, *technicus*, *operarius*²⁵ become practically the same. It makes no difference if the *homo operarius* is an entrepreneur or a day laborer, an engineer or a salesman.

The result of all of this is a prosperity such as mankind as a whole has never seen before.

And yet, *the whole world today speaks of an unprecedented economic crisis*, of a breakdown of capitalism. Apostasy from God means – here as everywhere else – decay. An economy which wanted to go its own way and has ruthlessly done so, separating itself from the natural order and turning its back on God, has condemned itself to failure. It is already speaking a telling tale of “running on empty” and of the unfruitfulness of absolute autonomy. (...)

Example: the effect on work

{74} *Apostasy means decay. The very act of work has been robbed of its natural meaning. It has been uprooted from its God-given context: its root in life, its creativity, and the consumers it reaches. The act of work has consequently been depersonalized and become a tool of universal depersonalization.*

In God’s plan, work should be an affective participation in the creative and self-giving activity of God. Instead, it has been reduced to a mechanical process of production.

{75} It should *serve life* and its needs, not violate and throttle life. It should satisfy healthy needs, not lead to their unbridled arousal and enslavement to things in an addictive manner. Production arouses needs and needs accelerate production, spiraling indefinitely until man, the lord of creation, is its complete slave. The creature who invented the machine is now under its dominion. It is like someone suffering from dropsy – the more he drinks, the thirstier he gets. The more we own, the more money we have, the more we want and the

²⁵ *Homo technicus*: man as a creature of technology; *homo operarius*: man as a creature who works.

more rapidly our work and life race out of control. Tomorrow we will need new sensations to take the place of what yesterday’s sensations promised but could not deliver. Instead of the expected satisfaction filling our souls, we feel a growing emptiness inside. It drives us with fearsome force to flee from ourselves into the swirl of life, work and pleasure.

By its nature, the act of work should be connected with *creating a work*. It is meant to arouse and satisfy in us the creative will to shape the world. Rationality makes this impossible. One speaks of the different systems – Taylor²⁶ and Bédeaux²⁷ and many others. What they all have in common is the aim of making work totally efficient and raising productivity. But it leaves man more and more depersonalized. He works on an assembly line, doing the same mechanical task over and over again in endless repetition. As a result, he never develops a relationship with the work {76} his hands help create. His slumbering creativity goes untapped, his work gives him no joy, it never becomes a true and genuine profession. A growing bank account and all the pleasures that money can buy are no real compensation. In the long run they do not truly satisfy and set free.

Just as modern workers are totally severed from life and creativity, so too are they cut off *from the consumers*. The result is all-embracing depersonalization. Workers may be paid for their efforts and the sweat of their brow. But [because they do not see who benefits] it is also impersonal and adds to the depersonalization.

As the old saying goes: *man is punished according to his sins*. Modern man has committed a serious offense by disregarding the meaning of work and misusing it and material things. As a result, both have increasingly come to scourge and tyrannize us. By depriving them of a soul we find that, instead of satisfaction and joy, they

²⁶ Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915), American engineer and most famous pioneer of efficiency management in manufacturing.

²⁷ Charles Bedeaux, French born and naturalized American who developed (in the 1920s) methods to rate workers’ speed, skill, and efficiency.

bring us a nameless emptiness and lack of joy. By idolizing work and material goods we have been scourged with the horror of unemployment, a great enough sorrow in its own right but now made even worse. Efforts are made to solve it through war and military production. If what is said of Peter the Great is true – in his final decrees he is supposed to have declared that every ten years Russia must conduct a new great war, otherwise it cannot be governed – then one understands the anxiety with which mankind currently counts on the catastrophe. (....)

What will the divine idea look like tomorrow?

{90} *But what will be the concrete effect [of this crisis] on the divine idea [of man] tomorrow and the day after? We have already given an answer to this through the sketch of our vision of the future. We have another opportunity to view it again.*

We must first admit, that *to the question of tomorrow* the only answer that can be given is this: *To all appearances it seems that God is using collectivism and free masonry to finish the breakdown of the entire order inherited from the past.* An exclusively this-worldly, irrational, and emotionally oriented time can only be convinced of its errors and mistakes and urged to conversion along the ways of practical life. Only when its worldview leads to a hopeless dead-end, blocked at every turn by a labyrinth and chaos, might it be able and mature enough to turn its thoughts again to the divine plan, allowing it to guide its life and actions. So sobering and horrible such an insight is, the logic of history forces us to make it. No other option remains except to look it calmly in the eye and to prepare ourselves for great hardships and difficulties. Putting our head in the sand will not help.

{91} *So we hold fast: Today and tomorrow can only be viewed as a transition. The temporary end station of world history is the day after tomorrow.*

It is to there that our glance hastens with great longing. The day after tomorrow instills great warmth in our heart. *Once the collapse has reached its highest degree, once the forces have completely*

exhausted themselves, then the insight may be able to break through that only Christianity is able to save the world from the abyss, that in the plan of God it alone can correctly interpret and realize the original idea of man. Only then can a movement back [from the abyss] be expected in a greater format, only then can the new springtime of Christianity begin which was prophesied by Don Bosco, and about which so many religiously formed experts of our times have so many great and beautiful things to say. (....)

{92} *Our situation is similar to that of primitive Christianity.* The early Church had to fight a gigantic battle with a this-worldly world. To prevent itself from being hamstrung, it voluntarily gave up many noble, natural goods – economic, hedonic, and aesthetical – in order to be able to focus its undivided and unbroken efforts on the religious and moral ideal. The resistance of paganism finally yielded to the witness of life and of blood. This is a preview of our way. We do not place our hope so much in words as in our life and striving to gain the attention of a world drowning in earthly things. We hope to awaken at least the longing that the barred gates to the supernatural, the divine, and the infinite can be opened.

This is why we consciously and voluntarily give up things of a natural value. We must do so if we do not want our God-given energies to become drowned in the things of this world. *The ideal of the organically onesided religious and moral person must never fall prey to the magic of earthly things, nor be obscured by the luster of aesthetical things.* The aesthetical dimension can, to someone gifted in the area, be used to express the religious and moral heights, but must never become a substitute or an obstacle. *We want to carefully gather and keep alive in our striving all the great and beautiful things, all the hidden glories of the idea of man which the past four centuries have brought to light.*

The mission of Pallotti for the times

{93} *This is where the mission of Pallotti begins for our times.*

He responds as an enlightened and daring trailblazer in all the questions which man carries within him today. He embodies in his person the original divine idea of man as it will emerge the day after tomorrow and march to victory throughout the world.

This is what the statement wishes to say: *Pallotti is a great historically creative personality.*

The previous talks have provided the proof of this²⁸. If I come back to this, I have the impression that I am something like a photographer, whose main work is to prepare the picture. He looks for a favorable scenery, good lighting, and unique composition. The picture itself only takes a second to snap. We have already chosen and explained our favorable scenery. It is the past 400 years. The light of the present intellectual situation is quite effective and capable of capturing the unique features of Pallotti's person. The taking of the picture can now proceed. The October Week has already shown his person in different situations. *In this contribution it can therefore only be a matter of transposing the already familiar features into a different context.* I can therefore limit myself to brief descriptions which then place the {94} known facts, which I will only touch on, in a new light.

The perspectives which we need to consider have already been made clear in the clarifications and descriptions of the essence and work of great religious personalities.

*There are, above all, four statements which need to be applied to Pallotti*²⁹.

1. Pallotti's life – a creative resultant

First statement: *Natural factors alone cannot explain Pallotti's*

²⁸ Meant are the talks which planned for the October Week 1949 in Germany, to which this letter was providing further content and structure.

²⁹ In the October Letter, Fr. Kentenich only presents the first two statements; the Letter ends before he says what the other two would be.

personality. It does not matter if one takes the factors individually or as a whole. Without the creative resultant, without an extraordinarily strong inbreak of the Divine in his life he cannot be understood.

One cannot find it difficult to insert here all that we have heard. It leads us to the conclusion: Yes, there were favorable conditions in his life. All of them helped form him: “needs of body and soul; longings of the heart; his relationship to nature and his surroundings, to society and contemporary history; inherited and acquired abilities and experiences as well as tensions between nature and grace, between man and man, between ideal and reality, between conquering his nature and facing his personal limitations³⁰.” While this explains much about Pallotti, it falls short of explaining his extraordinary way of life and fruitfulness, which can only be attributed to the extraordinary guidance of God's grace that {95} allowed him to repeat St. Paul's words about himself, “By the grace of God, I am what I am” (1 Cor 15,10).

To a lesser degree, each of us can say the same thing. We especially like to repeat these words when we speak of our little Shrine and our work as Family. Our faith-filled thinking sees both under the same title: “By the grace of God, I am what I am.”

2. Pallotti – dynamic synthesis of past, present, and future

Second statement: *In Pallotti past, present, and future have joined as one to form his person and work.* He unites in himself the great creative forces of the past: he is its evening twilight. He has overcome the present with its crises and needs: he is one of its loveliest blossoms. He has anticipated the future in an original way: in him shines out to us the dawning day of the future, the distinctive God-willed form of the image of God, man, and community for the day after tomorrow³¹.

³⁰ Fr. Kentenich is quoting himself above, on page {39}.

³¹ Fr. Kentenich is alluding to what he said above, on page {39}.

a. Past

His relationship to the creative forces of the past and his outstanding position in the framework of his times need only be briefly mentioned.

All the talks³² have reported on this in their own way. He was so strongly rooted in *yesterday and the day before* that at first glance one is inclined to ask: Is there anything original about him? He gathered together all the ideas and customs that he found to hold value from the past, and gave them a home in his person and community. He borrowed from the Benedictines, {96} Jesuits, Franciscans, and St. Francis de Sales. He likewise made use of the ascetical literature. He had a special love for St. Francis. This explains his attraction to the Capuchin order and why for many years he nurtured the hope to join them. (...)

{98} We are bearers of Pallotti's legacy. We have constantly stressed how we give room for our spirituality to be nourished from the rich soil of the proven past. Of course, it is equally well-known that we do not merely mimic the past, but try to form a creative synthesis. So it is that every classical spirituality finds in us a home, especially the Benedictine, Jesuit, Franciscan, and Salesian ways.

b. Present

Pallotti *brilliantly mastered in his own person the difficulties of his time*. His life proves this, as we could see in these days. We think of the heroism of his virtues, both divine and cardinal. This supports his being raised to the honors of the altar.

Here, too, we are bearers of his legacy, at least when in intent and striving. {99} It is in this direction that the ideal of everyday sanctity goes, which we proclaim. We want to make everyday life our battleground and effectively use God's grace to master it. The strength of this trend is proven by the lives of our deceased heroes.

³² At the 1949 October Week for which Fr. Kentenich was writing this letter.

c. Future

{99} *In Pallotti the dawning day of the future shines out to us*. In his person he anticipates the image of God, man, and community which wants to become the common possession of widest circles. He embodies the ideal toward which all the driving forces of the present and past, [including] all the erroneous paths and positive achievements of the last four centuries, point to as to their final purpose and the great secret goal God has been pursuing.

What especially qualifies him, what gives his soul its unique flair, *is its urge to the infinite*. He was fascinated by the other-worldly, the divine, the supernatural – *from the standpoint of the infinite*. For him the things finite, creaturely, and earthbound were constantly outshone by the luster of the infinite, were only a mirror and guide, a transparency and door. His focus was therefore much less on their intrinsic value than on their symbolic value. This simultaneously explains the two sides of his life: his nearness to and distance from all things earthly, creaturely, this-worldly.

His work can be seen as his extended self. This explains the ever-present universalism and tendency to the infinite, just as the {100} Third Founding Document proclaims it: universalism of the heights and depths, breadth and length³³.

From here we can understand the strong platonic-augustinian trend in his thinking and will. Everything inside of him strives with elemental force to the Primary Cause, to the infinite God. The secondary causes remain very much in the background. When he is in contact with the created goods, with the finite, he has no rest until he has elevated everything to the eternal, to the infinite God.

With this we touch on an urge which, as improbable as it may sound, *is in the blood of modern man*. His mistake, his sin is that he has yoked this urge with the finite, so that it has become secularized and naturalized. *This explains the restless urge in Western man toward world conquest* – intellectual, political, and economic world

³³ Schoenstatt's Third Founding Document, talk of December 8, 1944. In this talk Fr. Kentenich uses the word "infinatism" instead of "universalism."

conquest. The new nations have assimilated this same urge and let it drive them forward. *This is whay one finds in all places the effort to restlessly draw out of nature all of her secrets and powers and to exploit them.*

Every new conquest leads to the effect that earthly and creaturely things always have: they leave behind a deep dissatisfaction³⁴. Man begins to search and research all over again. At the end [of a long epoch] he has landed on the doorstep of matter and the collective. He can scarcely fall farther or be in greater confusion.

There may have been no time in history which has been so set in motion by the restlessness of the drive to the infinite, but also no time in which this drive has tried to find its satisfaction so strongly and onesidedly in the this-worldly. And so there is no time which {101} has been so dissatisfied, restless, and unhappy as ours.

The mission of “Sursum corda!”

*Pallotti expressly points upward with every fiber of his being – Sursum corda!*³⁵ The secularized urge to the infinite must be freed from its confusion, must be freed from its chains of slavery, so that it – like him – can freely develop its faith-filled contemplation of the eternal and infinite, and [give itself] in devotion to the infinite personal God who alone can satisfy our longings and who alone can free us and make us happy.

Every part of creation, not lastly the works wrought by modern man – the very things into which he has commanded, called, groaned, and embodied his longing to be infinite – is already calling more and more loudly to him, “I am not your God! Climb higher!” Might not the world of today be experiencing a repeat of the Advent that led to Christ’s first coming? Is this pronounced urge [to infinity] a good or a bad sign? Who can dare to say? That it is there at all can be greeted as positive. It is only regrettable that so many who seduce the

³⁴ See the function of created things to disappoint as described in J. Kantenich, *Childlikeness before God* (Waukesha, 2001), p. 93-95.

³⁵ “Lift up your hearts!” (from the preface dialogue of the Mass).

masses today try to exploit it capriciously, here yoking it to this car, there to another. Will not the sound reserves deep down in modern man soon rise up in revolt and cast off this yoke and insufferable burden? Cannot one expect that the eternal, constantly growing dissatisfaction will one day make an elemental escape from the prison walls of the this-worldly, driving all seducers into the desert as it finds its way upward to the Eternal, Infinite God? But along comes existential philosophy, giving the act of enduring such dissatisfaction a divine and heroic sheen, unfortunately only adding a new delay [to the time of] true conversion. Once more the drive to the infinite is {102} smothered by the this-worldly.

The central role of Mary

Who will finally succeeding in unbarring the gates of the other-worldly? We firmly and confidently believe that this task belongs to Our Lady in our times today³⁶. She brought us the Redeemer once, she will do it again today. This is our great hope. This is why she set up her throne in the Shrine in Schoenstatt and called to life a movement of world renewal. Like her, we who belong to her movement have carried in our hearts this longing for redemption through all these years. We do so in the place of all those who have not yet attained to grace or make no effort to cooperate with it. She the great woman who carried and gave birth to Christ, she the permanent helpmate of the Redeemer in the entire work of redemption, has used her school to keep our drive to the infinite from going astray. She let it become stronger and stronger. To be sure, the development of our [Schoenstatt] Family was much slower than in the case of Pallotti.

We had to conscientiously live the Founding Document of 1914

³⁶ See also Fr. Kantenich’s comment from a year later at his educational conference in 1950 (published as *Grundriss einer neuzeitlichen Religions-paedagogik*, p. 95f): “An answer which we must never forget is this: If man today is to become receptive again to religious life and values, he must be become profoundly Marian. I consider it almost totally impossible for modern man to remain religious and open for the divine unless he acquires again and again the attitude of Mary.”

for a long time. This preserved us from naturalism and the gates to the otherworldly always remained open to us. The Second Founding Document had to come, which expanded and deepened the supernatural attitude and the urge to infinity on all fronts. But their elemental breakthrough and assimilation only came with the Third Founding Document³⁷. Only since then has the covenant of love with our dear Lady become a perfect covenant. It has expanded to become a covenant of love with the God-man, with the Triune God, and with the entire world. The International was founded³⁸ and wants to carry to as many individuals and continents the covenant of love and its fourfold universal attitude: the infinitism of the heights, depths, breadth, and length³⁹. Hence our serious and strenuous effort to build daughter shrines in every country, so that the MTA can exert the same power there that she so abundantly uses in the Original Shrine.

Our covenant of love includes all the same factors found in *Pallotti's spiritual espousal with the Mother of Mercy at the end of 1832*. There is an essential difference, of course: His espousal is a bridal covenant of love and belongs to a higher, out-of-the-ordinary, mystical order⁴⁰, while ours is a childlike covenant of love and an act in the ordinary economy of grace. It moves on the level which is accessible to every seriously striving Catholic. But this does not mean we cannot recognize that the graces flowing from both covenants are quite similar. After all, both ultimately belong to the supernatural order. (....)

³⁷ Fr. Kentenich is speaking about three main steps in the growth of Schoenstatt's life in the three "founding documents" of 1914, 1939, and 1944. See J. Niehaus, *200 Questions about Schoenstatt*, No. 70.

³⁸ "Schoenstatt International," the formal expansion of the movement beyond the boundaries of Germany and German-speaking Switzerland, was founded in Dachau in 1944.

³⁹ See p. {100} above.

⁴⁰ Fr. Kentenich later added "of a private nature," in contrast to the covenant of love as it is proclaimed and fostered in Schoenstatt, which, among other things, has a public, or community character.

Pathfinder to the Infinite God

{111} What modern thinkers have overlooked, and what Pascal intuited when he saw the coming rise of natural science, filling him with an inescapable horror, (....) is something for which *Pallotti is an irresistible, amiable, and appealing pathfinder*. He calls out to the world in word and deed: endless though the universe be, *Deus semper maior* [God is always greater]! More endless is the Endless One! The heavenly bodies may run their orbits by the billions, eternity is the life-form of infinity! They may be enveloped in solitary, unbroken silence and sweep past all human destiny with cold indifference: The Endless One is not only the infinitely Great, Powerful, and Wise, he is also the infinitely Kind; he is the infinite Love who carries all things in heaven and on earth in his hands and orders and leads all things for the good of man. The whole universe may be in frantic movement, cooling, hastening to its end: God is the infinitely Calm, the Immortal, the Absolute enthroned high above all world events. He is the one seated on the throne; from him flows all motion {112} on heaven and in earth; to him it all returns...

*The modern man who finds his way back to God will and must in some way allow his image of God to be co-imprinted by Pallotti. He will and must see God more strongly in the light of Infinity. Only then will he have a tranquil answer to the modern outlook on life. Whether he sails through the skies or sits at the telescope of an observatory, whether his research helps unlock the secrets of the atom: all that he sees and hears is no longer an obstacle for his faith. On the contrary! All of it, absolutely all of it gives powerful witness: *Ascende superius. Deus semper maior*. [Climb higher. God is always greater.]*

Whoever contemplates the person and teaching of Pallotti with this attitude will read with inner joy his stammering wonder at the Infinite and the Immeasurable. He will find in his person and attitude of soul the fitting answer to the deepest longings of his heart.