

Original transcript in German:  
*Seelenführerkurs Jugendpsychologie, 1926*

**Fr. Joseph Kentenich**

## **Perspectives on the Spiritual Direction of Youth (1926)**

*Excerpts from the*

*Seelenführerkurs Jugendpsychologie*

*Schoenstatt, August 30-September 3, 1926*

translated by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, 2003  
revised and expanded, 2007

Preliminary translation, revised and with annotations, for the private use of the reader. Subject to further review and revision.  
English translation copyright © 2007 by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus, 7839 Wheel Rim Circle, Austin, TX 78749 USA.

## Introduction

Fr. Joseph Kentenich (1885-1968) is well-known for his strong pastoral gifts, especially as “a father to many.” In his long career, he especially saw youth work as a crucial part of the ministry of the Church. “Whoever has the youth, has the future,” is a saying he liked to use from the perennial wisdom of the Church.

Fr. Kentenich’s first ministry as a young priest had also been with youth work. In fact, his intensive service to high school boys as spiritual director at the Pallottine Minor Seminary from 1912 to 1919 provided the setting for the founding of the Schoenstatt Movement that would become his hallmark contribution to the Church<sup>1</sup>. His service to these 12- to 19-year-olds (and beyond) gave him invaluable insight into the situation and needs of modern youth and the challenges of youth formation.

### *History of the Courses of Spiritual Direction*

In 1919, Fr. Kentenich was given the full-time task of serving and promoting the new Schoenstatt Movement. One of the main accents of the early years was the development of a movement of diocesan priests who had the support of a spiritual community (the Apostolic Federation) and adequate guidance through the often turbulent first years of priesthood. He himself took an active personal interest in the needs and situation of each seminarian and recently ordained priest that belonged to Schoenstatt.

One fruit of this interest was a series of annual workshops or courses on spiritual direction. Because the courses were held in Schoenstatt, the young priests who attended were encouraged to frequently visit the Shrine of the Mother Thrice Admirable in order to reawaken their personal love of Mary and the wellsprings of their priestly vocation. The talks given by Fr. Kentenich then explored a topic of crucial interest to the young priests who, for the most part, were ordained less than five years. The sequence of topics was:

1924: Spiritual direction in general

---

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed study of his time as spiritual director, see J. Niehaus, *New Vision and Life: The Founding of Schoenstatt* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition: Waukesha, 2004).

1925: Fatherliness as the key to spiritual direction

1926: Psychology of youth

1927: Mysticism

1928: Sexual questions and spiritual direction

1929-30: Social justice and the care for souls

The 1924 and 1925 courses were of a more general nature while the following years looked into particular areas of pastoral interest.

The first particular topic was youth work, an evident choice since almost every young priest is immediately assigned to youth work, be it in the parish, a school, or elsewhere. Fr. Kentenich used the 1926 course to especially discuss aspects about working with teenage boys. In an era when all priests were formed in scholastic theology, a necessary supplement was to reflect on the psychology of youth so that the young priests would understand the inner dynamic of natural and supernatural growth – often silently and hidden away – in the heart of the young person.

### *The Source of the Text*

The early workshops and courses given by Fr. Kentenich are only preserved in the handwritten notes of participants. The 1926 course (abbreviated *SFKJPsy* in the Vautier listing) is preserved in four sets of notes: A (44 p.), B (37 p.), C (24 p.), and D (9 p.). Fr. Joachim Schmiedl used A and B to create the manuscript entitled *Zur Psychologie der Jugend*, (86p., DIN A5, Münster, 1982), which is the basis of this translation. The numbers in braces { } indicate the page number in this manuscript. In a few cases where C or D provides greater detail, this is integrated into the footnotes.

It is important to remember that even the best notes (A and B) are not word-for-word transcripts. This can be seen by comparing the volume of material preserved with the volume of material found in stenographed talks from the same era. It can also be seen by crucial insights found in C and D which are missing in the longer sets of notes. Still, we can be confident that the train of thought has been preserved with sufficient detail for us to appreciate the thinking of Fr. Kentenich on this topic.

### *Literary Background*

For Kentenich scholars wishing to dig more deeply into the material presented here, the foreword to the 1982 manuscript gives some useful background:

This workshop from the year 1926 originates from a series of courses on spiritual direction held by Fr. Joseph Kentenich (...). As he himself said, three groups of people especially need regular spiritual direction:

- persons striving for perfection and those mystically inclined,
- sick souls,
- youth. (...)

The following is the 1926 course on spiritual direction entitled “On the psychology of youth,” probably held for the first time from August 30 to September 3.

Here Fr. Kentenich especially discusses the structural psychology of Eduard Spranger, which originated in the *Wertlehre* (axiology) of Max Scheler’s phenomenology. Spranger’s *Psychologie des Jugendalters* (“Psychology of Youth”) was published in 1925 and went through several editions in a short time. This book, as well as its Catholic counterpart by Linus Bopp, *Das Jugendalter und sein Sinn* (“The Age of Youth and its Meaning”) form the background for the following workshop. It is an example of how Fr. Kentenich processed the psychology of his time. The workshop reveals elements of Schoenstatt’s pedagogical-psychological concept which would continue to develop in the 1930s. As a result, the course on spiritual direction from 1926 is a transition piece between the more scholastically oriented talks on knowing the soul and personality formation from 1912-13<sup>2</sup> and his own pedagogical-psychological teaching [that came to light in the 1930s], characterized by the organism of attachments<sup>3</sup>.

Fr. Jonathan Niehaus  
June 11, 2007

---

<sup>2</sup> The “talks of the microcosm.” See *New Vision and Life*, Chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> Joachim Schmiedl, “Vorwort” (foreword), J. Kentenich, *Zur Psychologie der Jugend*, (Münster, 1982) p. IV-V.

### *Opening Conference – in the Shrine*

{1} There are many peoples said to have a highly pronounced attachment to home<sup>4</sup> – a great longing for home – no matter where they are. Just think of the Tyrolese or the Gypsies, or those living along the seacoast. In fact, everyone on foreign soil has a strong longing for home. Our longing for home is for Schoenstatt, our little Shrine. If you look back on all the blessings you have received here for your soul, you may very well feel the tug of longing deep inside. How many graces are mediated for us here! How high did our idealism go whenever we were here in community and spurred each other on for what is most beautiful on earth – for God and souls. In certain times and places we may even feel spontaneously urged to reflect. This is how it is for me today. And what I reflect on today is about

once upon a time  
and now.

### *The Tension Between Ideal and Reality*

Yes, once upon a time – how filled we were with idealism and trust as we set out into the world! How we wanted to be unswervingly loyal to our principles and, with the help of our Mother, to try to win the whole world for her. Once upon a time.

And today? Not too long ago a Protestant critic wrote a book called *Crisis in Catholicism*. In it he analyzes the souls of various great men. They went through crises until their soul found a new edifice, until they attained a different religious system. The reviewer wondered why so many priests eventually fall from the faith. Of the reasons that he mentions, he especially points out that many young people must go through so many trials in their maturing years without a qualified spiritual director. He then says, and I quote, “What is true of these young people preparing for the priesthood in high school or college seminaries, applies all the more for the first years as a priest.”

---

<sup>4</sup> German: *Heimatgefühl*

These are the tensions in a young priest's soul. Mighty tensions and contradictions! Why might this be? Because the disharmonies in {2} the tension between towering ideals and raw reality have not yet found a point of balance. Does this not capture something of the life in our soul? Have we found our point of balance between ideal and reality? Let me briefly remind you of some of the things you have recently written to me. This will give you a picture of many disharmonies. You will not take it wrong if I refer to some of the things you wrote me. Ranging from the blackest to the most ideal...

Do you find it understandable when the soul of a priest who is placed on the lampstand, who wants to renew the world as the salt of the earth, when the soul of a priest feels hopeless [seeing] the wounds of ugly habit breaking through [in his life] again? What disharmonies, what imbalances<sup>5</sup>!

Unlike in the past, there are now no new strong impulses [for my spiritual life]. One [of us] receives so few inspirations from the outside that he wrote:

“I look coldly into the future, into the abyss. I even celebrate unworthily. I know the suffering I have, but am filled with such an interior lethargy. Can you understand that?”

Disharmonies, imbalances! But his longing also breaks through:

“I want to be how I used to be. The powerful longing and child-like trust must stir again, otherwise no one can help me...”

We are dealing here with someone who is brilliantly gifted. Disharmonies in the life of a young priest.

### *Nearer my God to Thee!*

Conversions... We must be transformed. Conversion: There is a two-fold conversion – the first conversion when the soul rejects all that is sinful, [and the second conversion when the soul lets God take total charge of one's life<sup>6</sup>.] How many times we need to be converted

---

<sup>5</sup> German: *Bipolaritäten*.

<sup>6</sup> For a thorough treatment of first and second conversion as seen by Fr. Kentenich, see J. Kentenich/J. Niehaus (ed.), *Schoenstatt's Instrument Spirituality* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 109-153.

– if only we were sensitive [to all the promptings of the Spirit]!

Conversion... Does not the Blessed Mother need to implore this for each one of us? One wrote:

“I can brilliantly preach... tell others the truth. But what do I myself do? I feel so empty! Oh, if only I could be devout again when I pray, at least at Breviary and Holy Mass.”

Conversion. Disharmonies in the soul. The Blessed Mother must {3} lead us out of this labyrinth. Another writes:

“I preached about the Damascus hour<sup>7</sup>.”

Conversion! Here we, too, await a Damascus hour.

You sense where I am going with this. My object today is that you become aware of the cleft in your soul. I hope that the longing will be stirred in you: release me from this disharmony. Nearer my God to thee!

When I greeted you, one of you said, “Yes, it is good that we are gathering here. A few days ago I meditated on the gospel for the Assumption of Mary: ‘She has chosen the best part’ (cf Lk 10,42).” In his voice resonated the striving: Away from all superficiality – up to God!

What do these thoughts have to do with a course on spiritual direction, with a course whose object is the psychology of youth? We all know that we accomplish more with the young the more we are anchored in God.

If, on the one hand, we raise the awareness of the cleft inside of us, then, on the other hand, we must use these days to awaken in us the silent longing for God. Nearer my God to thee! (...)

---

<sup>7</sup> A typical sermon topic taking the conversion of St. Paul on the road to Damascus and using it as a motivation to notice when God calls us to radically change our lives or to follow him in a new way.

## *First Conference*

### *Our Work with Youth*

{8} What has brought us together is the great need and concern that we carry in our priestly hearts for the young people entrusted to our care. After all, most of us work with youth organizations<sup>8</sup>. Others work in schools, while still others work, even though they are still young, in girls youth organizations and sodalities. In the next years we will devote most of our time and the best of our strength to youth. But we also know from experience how difficult it is to reach the youth pastorally, [that is] on the level of the soul!

Yes, if we only worked with games and sports, we could rally great throngs of youth around our banner. But that is not why we are priests or what we ultimately strive for with all our strength and might. We want to reach souls, the souls entrusted to our care. To look at our youth, the way they jump around and dance, one would think they are completely happy. But when we get to know the same boys in the confessional with their urgent problems, with all the storms and disorientation and passions that confuse the youthful soul deep inside, then we may ourselves feel helpless from time to time and say with St. Peter, 'I have been out fishing all night and caught nothing' (Lk 5,5). Many may deceive themselves about the success of their activity when they enter a meeting room filled with people and see the youth coming in droves. Others may underestimate their work, thinking that it is hopeless.

These are the questions which have brought us together this time. How can we fulfill the heavy duties which God has placed on our shoulders, how can we do justice to them? We have been fishing all night and have caught nothing. It seems to me that much of what needs saying is self-understood. For you, because you are constantly working with young people. For me, because most of my time has

---

<sup>8</sup> Fr. Kantenich addresses the fact that most of the young priests in attendance are responsible for their parish youth groups. At that time parish groups were typically affiliated with one of various diocesan and national youth organizations in Germany.

been devoted to the youth. {9} But I am told again and again: You are mistaken! We don't know anything about it. We are totally left to our own means. Now you must not expect that I will give you a few recipes. That only leads to copy-cattng. For this course I want to nail down as our objective:

We want to learn, with one another and from one another, to see the youth with new eyes and to increase our understanding [of the topic] through current pedagogical literature.

### *New Eyes for Youth*

We want to learn to see the youth with new eyes. What does one usually see with the old eyes? One might say, "Oh, to be 13 to 20 is such a lark. What do boys do? Their minds are filled with nothing but daydreams. They are unruly and obnoxious." Pessimistically they say with Shakespeare that it would be no loss if they fell asleep at 13 and got up again at 24.

This is what they think of the youth, forgetting that this outward way of doing things which we call 'unruly'<sup>9</sup> is really nothing but a way of protecting the most precious treasures being formed in their soul. Why, what would we do without the teenage years? Then there would be no men, no mature men. For the years of adolescence are the great dawn of the creation of a new man. It is the beginning of a new birth.

We must learn to see this youth with other eyes. We want to penetrate more deeply into the deeper regions of the soul with the eyes of Christ, of Mary, and the of the Saints.

The eyes of Christ. With what eyes did he look on the children when he said, "Let the little children come to me" (Lk 18,16). Are not our youth often more in need of help than the little children? And with what love did he {10} look at the rich young man who told him all that he had done. And how Jesus answered him, "Only one thing

---

<sup>9</sup> Fr. Kantenich often uses the words "flegelhaft" or "Flegelei" to describe the youth. The word indicates a kind of rude, unpolished demeanor, or, as it will usually be translated here, an 'unruly' (unkempt, immature, at times misbehaving) quality of the outward person.

more do you lack. Go, sell all you possess, then come follow me” (Mt 19,21). You see, those are the other eyes with which Christ sees the youth.

And how does Mary look on the youth? The famous youth leader Doss<sup>10</sup> says, “When I see you before me and think of the special love with which Our Lady looks on you, then the thought that comes to me is that she sees in you the youthful Savior. That is why she devotes so much attention to you. [And] to the development of your soul.” The Blessed Mother sees more deeply because in God she deeply grasps the essence of each person. She knows the noblest core of the soul. She knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff.

And the saints? They look with the eyes of great educators like Philip Neri and Don Bosco. Don Bosco was out walking in the streets one day when he saw the urchins playing cops and robbers. As he watched them fighting, he reached in and grabbed the worst of them. He recognized him in the core of his being, took him to himself, educated him and made him a great help for his work.

With new eyes we want to see the youth.

### *The Current Pedagogical Literature*

But we should also try to increase our understanding [of the topic] through the latest publications in the field of education. Thankfully, Eduard Spranger’s book *Psychology of Youth* brings us a good piece

---

<sup>10</sup> In a conference for his youth in Schoenstatt in May 1914, Fr. Kentenich referred to Fr. Doss as “the noble friend of youth.” See F. Kastner (ed.), *Unter dem Schutze Mariens* (Limburg, 1940), p. 228f: “...let us follow the urgent admonition of the noble friend of youth, Father Doss, in his wonderful words of advice: ‘Love, love Mary, venerate Mary! Do not rest until you have obtained a *true devotion* to Mary! If you suppose yourself to be a Catholic youth without knowing Mary, without being enthusiastic for Mary, without carrying her in your hearts and on your lips, then you delude yourselves.’” Fr. Adolf von Doss (1825-1886) was a German Jesuit, author, and advocate of Catholic youth. Cf. Adolf von Doss, *Gedanken und Ratschläge gebildeten Jünglingen zur Beherrschung* (Freiburg/Br., 1913).

forward in pedagogical literature<sup>11</sup>. Here is an area which I think merits { 11 } scientific continuing education on our part. I see it as a great disadvantage for those of us in pastoral work that we have too little time to do further scholarly study, either in general scholarship, or especially in pedagogy and in the psychology of youth. The purpose of all this is to keep our eyes sharp. Let us learn to have a greater desire for study and then really study more<sup>12</sup>.

In this course I want to work more [on certain accents], rather than offer you a complete overview. The atmosphere of the youth has become foreign to us. Even those of us who work constantly with the young [can lose touch] if we do not keep in touch with their soul. We must do this, otherwise we will lose the youth.

### *Main Point: The Fatherly Attitude Toward Youth*

We are speaking about spiritual direction for youth. Everything which we said in the second course applies here<sup>13</sup>. It bears repeating now. We spoke of the nature of spiritual direction. At that time, of course, we only worked out the general basic laws which the spiritual director must grasp: in pastoral activity in general and in the direction of youth in particular.

We spoke about the purpose of spiritual direction [especially in connection with our *fatherly attitude as a pastor of souls*.<sup>14</sup>]. We

---

<sup>11</sup> Eduard Spranger (1882-1963), German philosopher and educator. His work *Psychologie des Jugendalters* (Leipzig, 1924) was a significant contribution to 20th century German pedagogy.

<sup>12</sup> See J. Kentenich, *Childlikeness Before God* (Waukesha, 2001), p. 247 where Fr. Kentenich cites St. Francis de Sales’ admonition: “Study is the eighth sacrament for a priest.”

<sup>13</sup> The first course in 1924 was on spiritual direction in general. The second course in 1925 (the year before this course) was on fatherliness as the key to spiritual direction.

<sup>14</sup> See purpose or definition will follow shortly. It restates Fr. Kentenich’s main premise in the 1924 and 1925 courses: A spiritual director is a priest, appointed by God, who in fatherly attitude actively helps a particular soul for a period of time to discover and realize, rapidly and surely, through self-initiative and self-autonomy, his personal ideal. Cf. *Seelenführerkurs*, August 15-30, 1924, transcript, p. 12, and *Seelenführerkurs*, August 4-7, 1925, transcript, p. 1.

therefore want to formulate the topic of our present course more precisely:

*What does the fatherly attitude [of a pastor of souls] look like toward the youth?*

### *I. Preliminary Points*

I must preface our topic with two preliminary points:

[A] the current status of the discussion

and then [B] a few other methodical points.

It is not as if these preliminary aspects are a digression. No, they will lead us directly into our topic. It is of value to discuss these preliminary questions because they open the way for us to work with the souls of youth.

#### *A. The Status of the Discussion*

{12} The chosen topic is this: What does the fatherly attitude look like toward youth? It is in reference to the direction of youth, the direction of souls. When I speak of “direction of youth” and not just “*spiritual* direction of youth,” then many a modern pastor of souls could feel some inner aversion. He would prefer to have nothing to do with this chaos. And yet, we are dealing with a finer reality [of life].

In the past we distinguished between spiritual direction as a general topic and areas of particular application. You already know the definition of spiritual direction in general. In the first course I discussed it at length: “The spiritual director is a priest, appointed by God, who in fatherly attitude actively helps a soul for a certain period of time so that through self-initiative and self-autonomy he recognizes and realizes with certainty his personal ideal. (...)

{13} What do our times need most today? Diligent priests who completely understand the individual soul. How do I learn to do that? How do I learn to sense what is going on in the soul of a young person? I can experience it when I more closely examine the laws of the spiritual life... when I ask about the needs of my youth, awakening and unfolding them... when I observe them when they think they are not being observed – at play or in conversation, when they are

with one another, when they speak in private about their growth and development. Then I will gradually sense what is going on in the soul of the young person. Hence, the best means to know the right way forward for a youth organization would be a schooling in the fine and delicate life of the soul and what moves it. (...)

### *I. Description of Youth*

{16} We are accustomed to speaking of four stages in life: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, old age. But life cannot be easily reduced to a simple formula. One cannot say that so-and-so will begin a certain period at such-and-such an age. That can vary greatly from person to person. But when we look at the sum total of life these stages are still useful. We can divide this question into three subquestions: What do we understand by youth

1. in the dimension of time,
2. in the dimension of the soul,
3. in the dimension of the body?

What do we understand by youth in the dimension of time? Or the question might be better asked: What period of life is meant by “youth”? This question is not so easy to answer. After all, as we have already noted, life is something that fluctuates. Youth usually means that period when the maturing of the body takes place. That varies greatly between boys and girls and from nation to nation. In our northern European situation adolescence for girls lasts from about age 13 to 19, for boys from about age 14 to 23. But modern culture often extends this time. Where would we still find those today who could be appointed bishop at age 18 and be able to do the job?

*[Discussion of the views of different scholars on the maturing of the body. Age 17 is a frequently mentioned age for the final letting go of childhood. Discussion of the effect of the maturing of the body on the maturing of the soul.]*

## Second Conference

{21} We are trying to consider what the fatherly attitude [of a pastor of souls] looks like toward the youth. In order to connect with the great currents of our times, we began by discussing two preliminary questions. They have to do with the status of the discussion on the spiritual direction of youth.

### 2. Fatherly Attitude

The fatherly attitude: in the last [course on spiritual direction<sup>15</sup>] we saw what this attitude looks like theologically, pedagogically and psychologically. Our interest is in the psychological<sup>16</sup> perspective. We found that its root is a deep interior sense of responsibility for the soul of the young<sup>17</sup>. In our personal demeanor this creates: fatherly dignity. In our contact with those entrusted to our care: fatherly wisdom and fatherly concern.

We now ask ourselves: how must this attitude show toward the youth? The question is quickly answered. You only need to think of what especially strengthens our sense [of responsibility] when we are dealing with the young. Do not expect me to elaborate on this in detail. I only want to raise your awareness and sharpen your eye for a new way of seeing into the depths of the youthful soul. I will therefore only choose the one or the other motif which can make it

---

<sup>15</sup> *Seelenführerkurs*, August 4-7, 1925.

<sup>16</sup> Fr. Kentenich means *psychology* in the philosophical, not the behaviorist or clinical sense of word. As such it examines to the processes of the soul (Greek: *psyche*) such as recognition, attraction, repulsion, growth.

<sup>17</sup> As discussed in the 1925 course: “Compare it with the change that motherhood effects in a young woman. Before she was silly, carefree, and superficial; now she is a reliable, caring, focused mother. Her new being results in a new way of acting. The change was produced by a new responsibility: responsibility for a [new] life. Care for a child. This responsibility corresponds to a natural drive. The same is true of a man who really becomes a father. (...) Supernatural, spiritual fatherhood also enkindles a profound feeling of responsibility for the divine life in the souls; for awakening and supporting supernatural life. The natural urge to sustain life, to lead the person, is elevated into the supernatural realm and produces spiritual fatherhood” (*Seelenführerkurs*, August 4-7, 1925, p. 11).

fruitful.

What can especially strengthen us for the young? Ernst von Wildenbruch<sup>18</sup> offers us a valuable thought in his “Morning Stroll of the Heavenly Father.”

Early in the morning, the heavenly Father found two dewdrops on a leaf. He took them in his hand, looked at them, and spoke to the angels. He asked them, “What should I make of these in order to make the children of man happy? What can I make of them in order to give them something good?” The one suggested, “Let them fall to earth as flowers.” Others wished for two diamonds. The heavenly Father smiled and let them fall. The angels flew after them to see the dewdrops became the eyes of children – pure and virginal – a sign of the soul at peace.

And so the eyes of children are an expression of harmony. How often are we permitted to look into {22} the eyes of children! And how many boys keep their childhood eyes totally pure throughout adolescence in a soul which passion has not touched. What can strengthen in us the feeling of responsibility for our boys? It is the awareness of the dangers to and the helplessness of our youth. If I wanted to discuss this in detail, I would have to mention many things that you already know. Even Spranger depicts how there are an immense number of difficulties today which weep into the soul through the stimuli of life – and much helplessness<sup>19</sup>. Our boys grow in a pagan atmosphere. These are the souls that have been entrusted to us.

Does this not strengthen our feeling of responsibility for the youth? The boys of today are the men of tomorrow, seeds of a new culture. Whoever has the youth, has the future. History teaches us this. If one time places the accent on this or that aspect of the life of

---

<sup>18</sup> Ernst von Wildenbruch (1845-1909), German poet and playwright. The German title is given here is “Morgengang des himmlischen Vaters.”

<sup>19</sup> Transcript C adds: today’s youth are endangered “by our cultural life with its excess of sexual stimuli (culture of nudity and immodest fashions)” and helpless “because the destruction of the family and today’s pagan atmosphere result in them growing up without a proper formation” (p. 22, note 1).

the spirit, a different cultural epoch will find it inadequate. This is why we see culture taking on new forms again and again. It has always been this way; and what the youth is striving for is always a preview of a new time<sup>20</sup>. It is important for us to remember this, otherwise we will be fighting against natural law. It will wear us out and we will be rewarded with failure. Hence, we want to devote ourselves to the youth. I can also see what the youth is striving for from other vantage points [than that of the current adult culture]. Always pick up on what is healthy and set aside what is unhealthy.

{23} The president of the state of Baden recently gave a talk on why more and more of today's youth are not going to the university. The main reason he gave was the failure of the institutions of learning to keep up with the times. The youth of today wants life and if the universities do not moderately accommodate this youthful urge, they will lose enrollment. We, too, must accommodate the youth. It is similar to the area of education. Previously administration was the main thing. But today it is personality – [an accent] which comes from the youth.

It is remarkable that when an earthquake is near, the animals sense it first. In a culture it is similar. It is the youth who first notice when something is amiss. The youth has a sensitivity all its own. The application here is to see what is alive in the youth. For instance, think of the need [of youth] to set themselves apart. This is something that shows in the way classes stress their own identity. Here I distinguish between a healthy and an unhealthy class spirit, which resists adult influence, and make use of the pronounced sensitivity for community, self-education, and apostolate. Fatherly attitude is rooted in the feeling of responsibility to God, the people, and the generation. What forms do fatherly concern and wisdom take? I cannot say it more beautifully than Herder did [in his poem]

---

<sup>20</sup> Transcript C says: "The trends in today's youth will show up in generations to come. We think of the trends in modern education. Earlier it was intellectualism, today it is personality cult" (p. 22, note 1).

about the saved disciple<sup>21</sup>.

When St. John was in exile, one of the disciples on whom he had lavished his love became a robber baron. Is not also our youth today like this? Do they not often fall into the hands of robbers? St. John did not give up. He kept hoping and trusting in the goodness in the young man. He had himself taken to the boy, sought out personal contact with him, and then the poem ends. What was it that his heart so deeply saw and believed in? What was it that found him again and saved him? St. John's faith and trust and fortitude and love. What was inside of John that kept his trust alive? What was it that finally saved the disciple? I will {24} later come back to this when I speak about having understanding for our youth. For now I will only mention it in the context of the currents of our times. This is the fatherly attitude [of a pastor of souls] applied to youth.

### *B. Methodical Remarks*

Now to the second [preliminary] question: [some] methodical remarks.

Until now it has always been our method in the workshops to discuss ultimate principles as much as possible. We do not want to become functionaries<sup>22</sup> who save the world through patent recipes. This would make us unhappy. We want to learn, over and over, the final principles so that we can go to work with autonomy and per-

---

<sup>21</sup> Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), German poet. Fr. Kantenich must be alluding to a poem of Herder's about St. John (the Apostle?).

<sup>22</sup> German: *Handwerker*, in the sense of someone who simply applies a solution from a handbook. See a similar comment in the 1925 course on spiritual direction (p. 15): "A pastor of souls is no bureaucrat who stops thinking of the people he serves; no his work is only just beginning when he gains insight into the situation of the soul. (...) I am the father. If you think this way, then you will work untiringly in the area God has assigned you, but without getting nervous. You will not become a functionary (*Handwerker*), a bureaucrat. Your sermon will enkindle, you catechesis will find a way into the hearts of the children, you will keep away the wolves; you will be the one working the most in the parish, not outside priests and confessors." See also *Allgemeine Prinzipienlehre der Apostolischen Bewegung von Schönstatt*, 1928 (Vallendar-Schönstatt, 1999), p. 87.

sonal initiative. We worked out the final principles of spiritual direction in the last course: *Ordo essendi est ordo agendi*<sup>23</sup>:

We want to examine the ontological laws and verify them against the core truths. In this way we will find the norm for our actions.

We must apply these laws when we speak of the object of education, [that is, the youth]. It is therefore necessary that we study and know the ontological laws at work in the young. Here we find a level path before us.

Wust<sup>24</sup>, a philosopher from Cologne, says that the axis of modern scholarship has shifted from Kant to Plato, from the subjective to the objective. Therefore, [there is a growing] recognition of the objective order of being. This makes it easy for us to elaborate the objective ontological laws which are found in the youth. I would like to give this [year's] course a more psychological focus. We want to discover the ontological laws at work in the young. Then I will know: the law behind the form will become the norm [of my actions]<sup>25</sup>. Then I will have a specific norm for my actions and that gives many starting points for calm objectivity as I work with the young.

Is this study necessary? Yes, for most of you. And useful for everyone. Even for those who have a certain intuition. This study does not need to be theoretical; it can also be practical – going about

---

<sup>23</sup> “The order of being is the order of action,” a Latin saying often used by Fr. Kentenich. As the previous footnote on the term *Handwerker* reveals, his concern as a formator of pastors was to open to them a maximum of pastoral freedom and initiative. Rather than offer specific recipes or models, he preferred to elaborate the underlying principles so that each pastor would observe the specific pastoral situation he faced and come to his own conclusion on the best way to act.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Wust (1884-1940), Catholic lay man and German philosopher most famous for his book *Ungewißheit und Wagnis* (“Uncertainty and Daring,” 1937).

<sup>25</sup> An example from earlier in this conference helps clarify this: the tendency of adolescent school classes to seek and defend a unique identity. If one understands the psychological laws behind this behavior (a strong sensitivity to community identity, the need to identify with a group and an ideal, etc.) one can more effectively overcome its unhealthy aspects by promoting its healthy aspects and avoiding certain pitfalls. One can then make best use of this feature of the youth to help them grow in a God-willed manner.

our activities with eyes open and observant. Who would dare throw himself into youth work on the basis of instinct alone? Sailer<sup>26</sup> once said: “It is not enough that we are pious. To educate the young also requires an introduction and knowledge.” One hears the complaint from many sides that {25} we have no time to study. This is why I want to create a counterbalance through the workshops. (...) You must therefore keep in mind that study is essential for the born educator of youth. Especially the study of practical life.

(....)

---

<sup>26</sup> Bishop Johann Michael Sailer (1751-1832), Catholic professor and theologian and later bishop of Regensburg.

## Third Conference

### II. Main Body of the Course

{28} The fatherly attitude [of the pastor of souls] demands of us concern for youth. Fatherly concern and fatherly wisdom! *Ordo essendi est ordo agendi!*<sup>27</sup> We must also become familiar with the natural order into which the youthful soul has been created. Foerster once said in *Education and Self-education*<sup>28</sup> while speaking of the ideal of the modern educator: He must combine realism and idealism. He points out how great painters created great works because they knew their subject matter, then they carefully checked the mixture of their colors and gave long and careful study to the material before finally proceeding to make wondrous creations.

The same is also true for us. We must have not only ideals, but also reality, realism, and know exactly the material we are working with. This is even more important in our case because the soul of youth has been placed into a particular material. This is where the great importance of the personal ideal really comes to the foreground. The soul of the young person has already been created with a P.I.<sup>29</sup>, the ideal as such. This makes it doubly essential that we know the material and know the life of the soul of youth. *Ordo essendi*. This morning I said that we would receive valuable assistance in our knowledge of the life of the soul of youth from modern structural psychology<sup>30</sup>.

---

<sup>27</sup> See Second Conference above.

<sup>28</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster (1869-1966), German educator whose themes on self-education were well-known to Fr. Kentenich as early as 1912. Here: *Erziehung und Selbsterziehung* (Zurich, 1918).

<sup>29</sup> P.I. = Personal Ideal.

<sup>30</sup> H.C. Warren (ed.), *The Dictionary of Psychology* (Boston, et al, 1934), p. 264 defines structural psychology as “a method or systematic treatment of psychology which investigates and describes the composition and the integration of the various mental states and conscious experiences.” Eduard Spranger used such an approach to try to understand the evolving structure (composition and integration) of the psychology of youth.

### A. Theoretical Foundation: Objective Values<sup>31</sup>

First the foundation in more colloquial fashion. Which foundation do we find here? Let me take the previously quoted passage of Peter Wust as the starting point: [The axis of modern scholarship has shifted from Kant to Plato, from the subjective to the objective.] This modern intellectual trend can also be found in ethics and philosophy. The shift from Kant to Plato is being tried even by the Neo-Kantians. Kant’s ethics applies the principle of the categorical imperative. It is strictly about the doctrine of absolute obligation. In the long run such a doctrine of obligation cannot interiorly apprehend the person, as even the {29} Neo-Kantians already admit as they seek out a doctrine of objective values. Even they have admitted to values outside of man. Of course, the Neo-Kantians get stuck in the notion that these values must first be grasped emotionally for the objective content of the values to come into play.

The modern phenomenology of Scheler<sup>32</sup> goes farther. He postulates a distinctive theory of values similar to that of scholasticism. In any case, it offers us many places from which to start and you yourself can feel the affinity to scholasticism. According to this theory there are objective values outside of man and they are placed into the individual person by the Creator. You can immediately sense how this resonates with Platonic ideas. Such ideas are placed in man

---

<sup>31</sup> The following discussion revolves heavily around the term *values*. The word itself (“the appraised worth of a thing,” *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, 1966) serves as a bridge between the objective and the subjective realm. For Fr. Kentenich it provides a platform for examining psychological and pedagogical processes. “Objective values” refers to those which in some way transcend the person (e.g. beauty, truth, goodness) and therefore lend themselves to formulating general principles in education and spiritual direction. At the same time, each person ventures into the world of values in a unique way, “receiving” and “creating” them along the lines of his personal ideal, and developing an experience that is often rooted in the embodiment of his personal ideal in certain persons and exemplars.

<sup>32</sup> Max Scheler (1874-1928), German philosopher. His phenomenology especially concerns itself with the “ethics of values” or axiology. For an overview, see Manfred S. Frings, *Max Scheler: A Concise Introduction into the World of a Great Thinker* (Pittsburgh, 1965).

and have objective value not only in their own right but also stand for entire kingdoms of objective values.

### *Which Values are Objective?*

All of pedagogy picks up the resonance of this doctrine of values. How many values do phenomenologists distinguish?<sup>33</sup>

First of all *vital values*. The Creator has infused this into the life of his creatures. On this foundation the *values of beauty, truth, goodness and holiness* are built. It is also [called] the ethics of values. Culture is the degree to which these values are realized. But individual values also form new values. This theory has a profound connection to practical life because it sees the connection between community and the way each individual esteems values. This sounds rather theoretical, but it is very important. Values not only bind the individual but also mankind to community. A community forms to the extent that it coalesces around certain values.

Vital values are at the heart of the family. Cultural values are at the heart of social organizations. So that value receptivity becomes value realization, a person must join with others in whom the values are already realized. {30} At first this community is just a community of ideas, that is, its idea is looking for ways, for new ways [to be realized]. This is important for education. Do you not sense the axis turning from the subjective to the objective?

This is the underpinning of structural psychology.

### *Pedagogical Principles*

How does one build on this foundation? Let me begin by saying that this is not the final word. We will only consider what we think is consistent with a healthy philosophy and useful for education.

*First principle: The uniqueness of the personality comes from the way one relates to values.*

---

<sup>33</sup> Scheler distinguishes the following kinds of values, from lower to higher: sensible/sentient (*sinnliche Werte*), vital (*Lebenswerte*), spiritual (*geistige Werte*), and holy or unholy (*Werte des Heiligen und Unheiligen*). Cf. Frings, p. 114-118.

Why? You may be able to sense that. In the view of structural psychology, what makes the personality unique? The way one relates to values, the individual way of relating to values. Outside of us is a vast kingdom of values. All ideas have a value and are found in the person. Now each individual has a certain innate way of reacting to values. It depends on which values are introduced to the soul. Depending on the way that the soul reacts to this or that value (goodness, truth, beauty, religion) the soul has a certain uniqueness.

The disposition of the soul to react to certain values must be guided by the spiritual director. This disposition will then develop. The individual will find his uniqueness and be empowered to create new values. Hence, the process is not just about self-realization, but value-formation<sup>34</sup>. I must therefore know how the boy's soul reacts, and must be a master in the kingdom of values in order to introduce him to the right ones. This individual way in which someone relates to values is called "the form of one's life," that is, his personal ideal. From this one can see how all things modern resonate in the personal ideal.

{31} *Second principle: There are not only objective values, but there is also a hierarchy of values.*

Values stand in mutual relationship, with some higher and others lower. We must ask: What is the criterion for putting these values in right relationship with one another, into their hierarchy? Spranger does not give an answer to this. We say: the highest value is always God and the moral and religious sphere. Everything else revolves around this supreme value, and it must be introduced this way to the soul. This is why it is so important that we study. Thousands scour the whole world in order to experience [the values that correspond to their soul]. Spranger speaks in his structural psychology of an objective spirit. (...) [For Spranger] the normative spirit has not yet been found. [We say:] The proper hierarch of values, from which all values have their norm, is God.

---

<sup>34</sup> German: "Also nicht bloß Selbstentfaltung, sondern auch Wertgestaltung."

### *Value Receptivity, Experience, and Creation*

Looking at the pedagogical applications I can point out another fundamental thought. The soul is formed by value receptivity, value experience and value creation.

Value receptivity: The soul is able to react to values it meets outside of itself.

Value creation: [The soul is] created by God to create new values, to create new values for the rest of mankind. How easily we can use this insight to analyze ourselves. Why do we feel such a strong urge in our soul to do this or that work? Here is where the need for value receptivity finds a strong resonance.

[Value experience:] And when one has contact with souls [who embody the values I seek, my] value receptivity is able to transform into a value experience.

### *Psychological Considerations*

In order to gain more clarity, I will use two popular expressions. One is structural psychology, the other is the psychology of understanding .

#### {32} *Structural psychology*

What is structure? A systematic whole built and organized around a single point to which everything returns<sup>35</sup>. Structural psychology refers to an entity, an organism. Some scholastics call it the *totum integrale* [integrated totality]. That is, an organism in

---

<sup>35</sup> If the key to structure psychology is the “composition and integration of the various mental states and conscious experiences” (*Dictionary of Psychology*, p. 264 as cited above), then it is telling that Fr. Kentenich immediately reads it as a “psychology of the organism,” that is, as focused on the organic life and growth of the soul. See also this comment from the 1928 workshop *Allgemeine Prinzipienlehre der Apostolischen Bewegung von Schönstatt* (General Principles of the Apostolic Movement, Vallendar-Schoenstatt, 1999): “When I speak of ‘structure’ then I know: the forces are interiorly related. They form an organism.”

which the individual parts and the partial functions contribute something electrical to the whole and to the total functioning, and so the whole can and must be explained from the parts and the parts from the whole. This is simple. The whole thing is an organism. We are speaking from the psychological viewpoint, as opposed to the logical, which looks at everything in the cross-section of connections and interconnections.

One speaks of an individual and a transindividual structure.

a. Individual: to the extent that the soul is a whole – and the parts and partial functions of the soul are in a deeply grounded relationship with the total soul.

b. Transindividual: structures in which the individual soul tries to see itself as part of a great universal kingdom, so that I see my personal efforts as contributing to the efforts of the times and having an impact on my contemporary world. Perhaps I can express it this way: the structure of the individual soul is determined by the way the soul is receptive to values and how it is inclined and created to create new values. Because of this one can also call the structure of the individual soul an organism, for instance, the present state of my soul is a structure [with its own organic growth]. [Virtues like] *Caritas* [love of neighbor, and realities like] *Passio* [suffering] are part of the life of my soul, but they also undergo an organic development<sup>36</sup>. Nor must we forget, as long as we are speaking of structure, that grace too is a reality.

#### {33} *Psychology of Understanding*

What does “psychology of understanding” mean? When do I understand a soul?

I understand an individual soul when I grasp its purpose, when I know how the individual parts of the soul relate to the whole picture,

---

<sup>36</sup> In the 1920s Fr. Kentenich presented such topics as the *Stufen der Passio* (levels of suffering) and the *Stufen der Caritas* (levels of love) as ways to help his listeners understand that the spiritual life goes through organic stages of growth, and that the cultivation of the spiritual life must respect the stage in which the soul currently finds itself.

for instance, when a boy goes through a mania – such as crafts, or drawing, or long-distance running. I understand when I see it in the context of the larger picture. The boy needs to develop his urge to activity in order to be able to do great tasks in the future. Spranger puts this in quite scholarly terms: One speaks of purpose when a task is significant to accomplishing a great work. From this he draws two conclusions:

[1] As we all agree, it is important that we understand the life of the soul of youth.

[2] When do we understand it? I understand the young person when I can explain his individual actions and omissions from the totality of his values, when I know what purpose it has in his development. To understand I myself do not need to have experienced everything which he has experienced. Of course, it can be very helpful if I have experienced the same thing, because then the association is easier. But it is not necessary.

These are all theoretical considerations.

So much for [the principles of] structural psychology. (...)

### *B. Application to the Soul of Youth*

What does it mean that I can grasp the tendency of a particular striving [of the soul]? Can I also grasp the causal connection between an action and other physical factors? To understand the young person correctly I not only need to grasp the purpose motivating his individual actions, that is, the *causa finalis* [the purpose which urges him forward], but also the *causa efficiens* [the work it takes to get him there] and the *causa materialis* [the role of the “material” (temperament, personality, family traits, etc.) in the process of formation]. The tendency [of a particular striving is relevant because it] is part of the work that gets him to his goal.

{34} We now want to apply this standard to the psychology of youth. We want to analyze the structure of the soul of a youth. I can go one of two ways. I can analyze the individual features of the soul and proceed to the overall structure. Or, going the opposite way, I can portray the overall structure and proceed to the individual features.

We choose the latter way, and so we ask: What does the overall structure of a young person’s soul look like? Where is the point of organization; where is the key to its understanding? The starting point is *how the soul relates to reality*. This is the point from which the psychology of youth can best be appreciated. Our examination will best be served by starting from either the structure that precedes adolescence or the one that follows it — the structure of the soul of either childhood or adulthood. In our case it makes sense to make the psychological structure of the child our point of reference.

### *1. The Psychological Structure of the Child*

Let me sum up the overall structure of the child’s soul<sup>37</sup> with the following thesis: The psychological structure of the child is strongly monistic, that is, children live in a strong symbiotic relationship with the things in their surroundings that capture their attention.

#### *The Child at Age Three to Eight*

I speak here of a monistic symbiosis of the child’s soul. When speaking of the traits of children, pedagogical books often tell us about their imagination and vitality. For children everything they encounter is real. We must not forget that when we use the word “imagination” here, it is not the adult imagination. Children lack the quintessential feature of the adult imagination. We know that it is only in the mind. But to children everything is real. Our imagination is dualistic; theirs is monistic. They feel as one with all things in a harmonious whole. Still, {35} their symbiosis with their surroundings is not perfect, only highly monistic. They, too, sense a contrast with the world around them. When they contradict the wishes of the adults, the difficulty often arises from an effort on their part to join with the adult reality. For us as adults, the difficulty runs in the other direction. We look back on the world of children with nostalgia.

What captures the special interest of children? They certainly have many interests, and many are totally different than ours. Apply

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Spranger, *Psychologie des Jugendalters*, p. 32-27.

this to a few categories.

How do children perceive space? Like two spheres. The first immediately surrounds the child and is familiar and homey. There is probably no place where we feel as much at home as in the nursery. It is psychologically important for children to have a place where they learn the feeling of home. People lacking this, [will find that] crucial ligaments of life<sup>38</sup> are torn. Where can modern man, who must wander from place to place, find a place for his imagination to call home? How predestined is his later life for superficiality, unless these ligaments of life are strengthened through self-education!

The other sphere is the supernatural world. The imagination of children knows no bounds; it reaches into the infinite expanses and magically calls forth the most beautiful things it can think of.

Children also have a different concept of time. They experience it as intensively infinite. They don't think of later and tomorrow. When they begin to reflect on the fluctuations of time, then the soul's adolescence has begun, or will begin soon.

Children are likewise oblivious to the laws of nature. Only the imagination is at work. They make plans, build ships which will let a boy sail beyond the seas.

Children have even less grasp of the life of the soul of others. They are oblivious to the fact that others also have feelings.

{36} This is the strong symbiosis of the child's soul with the things of interest in his or her surroundings. These are the middle childhood years, when the child is three to eight years old.

### *The Child after Age Eight*

In later childhood the relationship to reality already begins to change. The childlike soul is filled with an incredible and conscious malleability. The imagination withdraws to the outward things – interest in crafts, technology, rules of games. Boys prefer to play with other boys.

Adolescence bursts rudely into the midst of this equilibrium of the

soul. The ligaments of life are suddenly torn – like a severed earthworm in which both halves want to keep living but begin to dry up.

---

<sup>38</sup> German: *Lebensbänder*.

## *Fourth Conference*

### *2. The Psychological Structure of Adolescence*

{37} Our gathering is motivated by a common concern for the salvation of those entrusted to our care. We want to accomplish two things. First, we want to see youth with new eyes, and then we want to increase our understanding through modern pedagogical literature.

[We want to] look at the youthful soul with new eyes. Hence we must learn to interpret appropriately the principles concerning the life of the youthful soul.

#### *a. Starting Point: How the Soul Relates to Reality*

Which starting point can help us to learn to grasp the total life of the soul as a[n organic] structure? It is *how the soul relates to reality*. The young person is in a state of maturing. Where is his starting point? How does the maturing soul relate to reality, to the reality of self and surroundings and of fellow man? Where is the starting point? I cannot describe it more clearly than with the image of a severed earthworm. The severed halves writhe to find each other<sup>39</sup>. Such is the reality of the soul of youth. The poor soul of the youth experiences how its surroundings have become alien and unfamiliar. But also the self. Everything is an unfamiliar world. A totally new experience!

The reality of self needs to be conquered and taken in hand. This causes the experience of self to have two aspects: self-discovery and self-conquest.

#### *b. Phases of Adolescence*

##### *First phase: Self-discovery*

You can imagine the struggles which boys and girls go through in the teenage years when the ground has been pulled out from under their feet, when everything is in turmoil. You can imagine how the

---

<sup>39</sup> Namely, soul and reality.

soul feels, as isolated as in a prison, so that there is practically no prisoner in world history who has felt as lonely as the youthful soul in adolescence. This terrible loneliness is under the constraint of slowly-unfolding laws of nature. The self needs to be rediscovered and reconquered.

{38} The young person, whether boy or girl, begins to constantly reflect about his or her ever fluctuating self. It begins with the severing of the bands which previously held the young person in symbiosis with self and surroundings. Before this the child does not reflect on things. Over time the intense longing to escape this prison works wonders in the youthful soul. First the soul looks inward on itself, feeling a powerful shame and shyness toward the self. We must now begin to do justice to both sexes. Before this it was not necessary. Someone writes of this phase:

“I can clearly recall the negotiations I made with my newly recognized and bitterly detested self. I still know how agonizing it was for me in this time – I was probably 11 years old – to speak of myself as ‘I,’ to feel myself as ‘I.’ Even my own name was something horrible to me; I tried again and again to prove that it was something foreign to me, by no means part of the ‘I’ (as I had experienced it earlier). But the way things go! Later in life one often has the experience that one can get used to the most unpleasant of people if one only is in daily contact with them. And so I got used to myself, and so every young person gets used to his conscious self<sup>40</sup>.”

This shame and shyness is even keener when some kind of blemish stains the family name. At the same time, the child’s exterior form is going through many changes.

##### *Second phase: Self-discovery, ideal-centered*

Now begins a transfigured process of grasping the idealized, exaggerated self. At this point one does not yet see one’s reality, one’s real self. One idealizes the self {39} and exaggerates it. Girls

---

<sup>40</sup> Dr. Gabriele Dolezich, “Aus dem Seelenleben des Jungmädchens” (From the life of the soul of the young girl), article in *Pharus*, Volume 16 (1925), p. 455.

show this by wanting to change their name. Annie becomes Anne, Mary become Mae, Elizabeth becomes Liz. This tendency is really just a self-exaggeration. They see a new self. This is also the reason for the constantly changing hair styles.

### *Third phase: Final self-discovery and self-conquest*

[In the later teenage years] the young person grasps the real self with its good and bad points. It is [a time of] self-discovery and self-conquest. I am assuming that the process of self-reflection and the constant fluctuations in the interior world still continue. As a result, the soul still has not yet reached anything firm, and the young person is painfully aware of this. Everything is in flux; he is a stranger even to himself. Within him is not only the constantly fluctuating self, but even a constantly revolutionary self. Spranger describes it briefly: The same person finds contradictory traits in himself. Everything is in flux. From bursts of energy and breaking records to laziness and sloth. Self-discipline and self-denial, initiative and moral reflection follow in quick succession. This fluctuating self becomes a terrible fact to the young person. How it causes him pain! Or have you ever heard of anyone who thinks back fondly on the beginnings of adolescence? One has not yet found one's self. What is the full meaning of this revolution? It is a constant experimentation on the part of nature until it finds the right character for the young person within<sup>41</sup>.

### *c. Key Traits of the Fatherly Attitude toward Youth*

The most important thing for young people in these years is therefore that they experience someone who shows them *an uplifting understanding*. What does this entail? Infinite kindness, optimism and serious intervention by the educator. Uplifting understanding!

---

<sup>41</sup> Fr. Kentenich could well be describing his own experience as a young man. He endured a painful inner loneliness which he could nonetheless appreciate later on as the time when the deepest treasure of his personality – “the world I carried within me...” – was formed. See talk of May 31, 1949, No. 10, in: J. Niehaus, *The 31st of May* (Waukesha, 1995), p. 8, see also p. 14-18.

### {40} 1) Kindness

1.1. Kindness demands that we correctly understand the process of adolescence. The young person does not understand himself, does not know what is going on inside of him. The educator must help him interpret. How many err when they say, ‘You are a bad boy, you will amount to nothing!’ The boy does not understand himself. He feels the lower drives, but also the higher. If I now tell him that he is bad, something like a compulsion will come over him, a fear, and he will believe what he has been told. He must first be given an interpretation of what is going on inside of him. ‘That is who you are! Like many boys you are vulgar and mean. Well, if that’s the case you will just end up that way.’ In this way the healthy individuality of many is broken and destroyed. Be careful about prophesying bad endings! Here and there it may be justified to expose the darkness lurking in the soul, but how do we know we are actually right?

In contrast, it is important to the education of youth that we interpret things as ideally as possible. One cannot be ideal enough in what one says and does. The boy will live up (or down) to the expectations others have of him. Therefore, show him ideals! The young man is not as rough as he seems and often acts. In the depths of his soul he is receptive for values, has an experience of these values, and can create them. He will not yet be able to create the values based on his ideals. For now he is intent on forming himself, not exterior works. But he must encounter these values [in others], so that his receptivity for values will become an experience of values. As the educator I must be at home in this world of values, so that I can reach him on all fronts. We must have more faith that the young person also carries ideals and values in him. First let him encounter them, so that receptivity can become experience.

Also interpret the life of the drives, the passions that are at work within him. How grateful boys are when they notice that someone has faith in them! Some have been saved because a wise {41} educator gave them a task, awakening trust. The boy can do more than he thinks. He is still formable. Uplifting understanding must draw him upward.

1.2. Proper kindness also includes a proper attention to the young

person with all his suffering and sorrow. Do not think he is calloused when you see him do something cruel. Deep in his soul he is receptive to lofty values and seeks to experience them. Therefore he needs a little love, even when he has done something wrong. The awareness that someone loves me can do wonders!!!

1.3. At the same time, kindness includes a great reserve and reverence for the youthful soul. Do not pry needlessly into the souls of others. In the long run it will lead to aversion. Utmost reserve! When I was the spiritual director, how long it took for the boys to totally open up to me! For some it took years. But if I had forced matters, the soul would have lost its most delicate and precious feature. If I always tell a boy everything and he tells me everything, eventually a hostility, a resistance will set in. The boy must be able to make mistakes. We must allow that, as long as it is not abjectly sinful. Nature wants to experiment, therefore be reserved. Leave the decision to the boy himself, even if it will not be so perfect as what I could tell him. Only give general hints. In this context I want to share with you a passage from a letter:

“Another issue in my spiritual life is my relationship with Alois. Once we were two peas in a pod; now we are oceans apart. The reasons for this are found in me and in him. The strong side of his temperament always makes me swallow a lot. I often need to call on all my best motives to keep down a total aversion to him. The deepest reasons for this go back to the years when we were first friends and have their root in the unusual role which he played in my development. At that time I was totally enthused by him, and often poured out my heart to him. Today I have a strong need to express myself. But I cannot do it with Alois. It is not as if he would have betrayed my trust. No, it is the awareness that, unconsciously, he was one of the main deforming factors {42} in the development of my soul. To be sure, my own nature did not help. I still have a stack of his letters to me and mine to him and a pile of notes in which I gave him reports on myself. Every time I see them and think about it, I become angry and I am reminded of how dependent I was on him. We will never manage to attain spiritual closeness and spiritual understanding again. One goal is

now: in closest attachment to Christ, forget everything and make myself independent in order to be a new person toward him.”

What is this all about? They supported each other. But the one did it in an unhealthy manner and made his superiority felt. This resulted in the stunting of the one boy’s growth by years and now a most violent aversion. To feel one is chained like a slave to the educator is something a boy cannot bear. He must always have the awareness, “He is letting me develop on my own.” If this is not the case, the end result will be hostility and aversion against the educator. [Let him] dare something! Even in important matters do not always give the answer right away. [Let him] look on his own.

At a psychological course a young priest once asked, “What should one say to a high school student if he is not able to come to grips with predestination?” To this Spranger answered, “One should only say it is very difficult to find the answer.” He must look for it on his own.

## 2) *Optimism*

Uplifting understanding demands heartfelt kindness. But also optimism. Optimism even for the youth movement! Confidence in self, confidence in youth!

2.1. *Confidence in youth.* Trust the most elemental forces in human nature. Not long ago in Karlsruhe there was a course on individual psychology. Among other things, Dr. Allen said: nature can {43} mobilize a vast sum of forces [to ward off disease, heal its wounds, to save the life of someone in danger, etc.]. The same can be said of the soul. In most cases the soul has within it the strength to heal itself. Don’t worry about your youth making mistakes. Of course, protect them from sin...

We must have hope in the sound core of youth. We hope and must have hope that if we want to keep them reasonably pure, they will prove themselves in the end. Have confidence in the youth! God is in on it, too. We should not overestimate our work. What good does it do if we always build a wall around them?

2.2. *Awaken the boy’s confidence in self.* Even when boys get unruly, do not get upset. After all, [his actions] also make him suffer

inside. He did not want others to think he was a sissy. Hence the unruliness is a kind of protection. Stay as calm as possible. When he makes trouble and is happy to have outsmarted the priest or teacher, don't take it personally. His happiness is in discovering that his mind has gained a new talent.

As educator I must have both confidence in the youth and a great confidence in myself. I must have the certainty that I will be able to handle the boys. This comes together with:

2.3. *A great confidence in God.* Here I would need to say much about grace. If it is true that an educator must know much, it is also true that he needs a great striving for sanctity. Hirscher<sup>42</sup> once said, "We need holy educators. If you give us this, then we have everything. If you take them away from us, then we have nothing."

I sanctify myself for them. To them belongs my prayer, my life of sacrifice. I sanctify myself for them.

#### {44} 3) Firmness

Uplifting understanding, however, also requires firmness. Not everything which is awakening in the youth is God-willed, is healthy. Not everything develops spontaneously. The youth will not be offended, either individually or *en masse* if we firmly intervene now and then. But the boy must know that I am making sacrifices for him and that I understand him. Woe to me if I let some of his weaknesses go by unchecked! I show him through such weaknesses that he must also accept the shortcomings which he has.

When the boy later looks back on his youth and on the priest who understood him, he will be grateful to him. Such [a priest] will be one of the greatest blessings of his life, because with his help he could get through the difficulties of life and discover his real self. Of course there will also be times when the boy will make the best progress if he is not understood. But that can only happen when he has reached a certain maturity.

An example of this comes from the development of our [Schoen-

---

<sup>42</sup> Presumably Johann Baptist von Hirscher (1788-1865), German Catholic priest and theologian.

statt] sodality during its slump in the year 1916<sup>43</sup>. What turned it around? The fact that the leader of the Eucharistic Section was hurt in his ambition. Even things like that spur growth. Uplifting understanding!

I am ready, think some, to give the youth everything, if only they open up to me. But opening up to someone is difficult for every adolescent. It is difficult for everyone. But youth has this great longing. If only Prince Charming would come and awaken the Sleeping Beauty of my soul! The youth needs someone who understands it. The longing for understanding and someone with whom to communicate is incredibly strong. Even in extremely unruly boys. The desire is there, but the loneliness is twice as hard, because he is afraid that he is the only one experiencing it. {45} He has the impression that he is the only one with such difficulties. This is why it is necessary that the educator, through his talks, etc., help the boy find his voice. One can let him know that he is not alone in his suffering, can show him how his soul lives and breathes. One of you asked me how to begin. We must make the first move, because the youth cannot. Tell him that some people experience life this way or that way, how is it with you? But always maintain a natural reserve in the process. (...)

Uplifting understanding is the great means in the teenage years to help boys discover their identity. With that I have also showed you the way one ought to portray Jesus and Mary. Read what Spranger writes about being understood. And think about how Christ and the Blessed Mother understand the heart of youth. How they are so kind and understand everything. Tell this to your youth and take some time to portray it in detail. Objective values must complement and awaken the subjective values, so that value-receptivity becomes a value-experience. This does not profane what is holy. God has created them as values so that young people can grow and mature. It presupposes that I am entirely at home in the spiritual world of my youth and in the world of values that inspires them.

---

<sup>43</sup> See *New Vision and Life*, p. 141-43.

## *Fifth Conference*

{46} *Psychologica psychologica!*<sup>44</sup>

We are trying to gain clarity about what the fatherly attitude [of a pastor of souls] must look like. We have discussed the four phases<sup>45</sup> which the soul goes through on the way to completely discovering and conquering the real self.

### *d. The Power of Longing in the Soul of Youth*

The first phase includes a remarkable shyness about one's own self. This raises the question of how the soul can pass from this shyness of self to a proper discovery and conquest of self. Here I must remind you of the great loneliness which overtakes the soul when the ligaments of life which typify childhood are severed. In this loneliness and from this loneliness the young soul experiences the stirring of a great longing to escape this prison. [It is] an indescribable longing to rediscover the unity it once had as a child with itself and its surroundings.

This longing has an incredible power. It pressures and drives the individual faculties of the soul, gives a certain direction to the person and a certain form to his development.

Like someone suffering from a compulsive idea, the young person is always looking inward. He wants to see and learn to know himself, but he also wants to reconquer his surroundings and see it returned to

---

<sup>44</sup> Latin: Psychological things (must be understood) psychologically.

<sup>45</sup> Only three phases are discussed in the existing transcripts. Based on his 1931 pedagogical workshop *Ethos und Ideal in der Erziehung: Wege zur Persönlichkeitsbildung* (Vallendar-Schoenstatt, 1972), p. 324-343, the fourth phase must be self-enrichment (*Ichbereicherung*). Applied to the education of girls: "Self-conquest needs to be supplemented as soon as possible by self-enrichment. Once the vessel is conquered, once the person is autonomous, once the person is more or less freed from the slavery of the leveling-in effect of her surroundings, bent on dragging her down, we must work very seriously toward the absorption of the specifically feminine values by the soul of the girls [we work with]" (p. 236). For girls such values include: purity, selfless service of the life of others, sense of what is fitting (*Schlicklichkeitsempfinden*), personal devotion to Jesus and Mary.

a harmonious unity. But before he can see and take the task in hand, yet another task will demand his attention. As a result his perception and appetites take on definite direction, form, and hue from the longing to conquer the self.

What is the meaning of this exaggerated, morbid activity of all the faculties of the soul in the teenage years? They are not focused on accomplishing the exterior task, but on forming the self.

Now you may object: What you say may be true of boys in boarding schools, but not of our boys in the parish organizations and in the streets. Unruly though boys can be, {47} especially when they get together, deep inside is still the longing to rediscover oneself. And everything [inside of them] struggles to give it a voice. They try to express what is slumbering in their souls. This is the meaning of the activity of their souls during this time: self-assertion, self-development, not the accomplishment of the outward work. One cannot expect a boy to create great cultural values. He is not yet mature enough for that. Instead, he uses the values realized outside of him in order to go from cultural receptivity to an experience. This applies to philosophy, poetry, to all areas.

He wants to express himself, assert himself. If you understand this you will give much latitude to things that seem overly introspective. It used to be said that anyone who did not write poetry in their youth was never a real boy. It is an expression of self-development.

### *Effects of this Longing on the Faculties of the Soul*

Let us now examine how this longing influences and makes fruitful the individual faculties of the soul. We begin with the faculties of recognition, distinguishing between the intellectual and the sentient faculties.

#### *The Intellectual Faculty of Recognition*

The mind. What does its activity look like? You can think this out for yourself by considering the fluctuation of self and the longing in the young person to understand what is slumbering inside of him. The activity of the intellect first begins as an almost fanatical self-

reflection; later it turns into a biting readiness to critique everything.

This must not be viewed as a drive to community, but as a means to personal self-development.

The self-reflection is almost fanatical. How does this show?

### *Normal Forms of Self-reflection*

{48} Here and there through harmless activities – boys keep a diary, write poetry, make friends, write many letters.

– The letters they write will be less about self-communication than about unfolding the personal self. They are trying to express what is inside of them and this finds a stronger voice in letters.

– When they make many friends, do not immediately think it is sexual. Such friendships are harmless, are only expressions of the need to unfold who one is.

– Diaries: when I was in South Germany, I was told about a boy who is a melancholic and keeps his diary in shorthand. Here is isolation, shyness, an attempt to not be seen. But what is going on inside of him is being put in words. Should we encourage boys to keep a diary? No, but one lets it be. Many boys find a silent friend in their diary. This is where he can say everything. And if he does that, his soul will have found its voice.

– We must support this struggle of the soul to express itself. When a boy asks you something, you must not think that he is always expecting an answer. He is always grateful if you listen to him patiently. In girls this form of introspection expresses itself by constantly looking in the mirror. This is not vanity, only joy in discovering who she is. We do not promote it, but we learn to understand it.

### *Extreme Forms of Self-Reflection*

When this reflection loses itself in religious and mystical things, it can lead to self-torment and self-mutilation. This is especially frequent with girls. Where does their frequent fear come from that their confession may be invalid? The girl is looking for a clarity about her interior uneasiness, her fluctuating self. She will remember hearing in religion class: Whoever is in sin and whose conscience is

disordered {49} will be uneasy<sup>46</sup>. [She will jump to the conclusion:] So this is the reason; [therefore] my confessions have always been invalid. This produces a twofold anxiety in the soul. One is the anxiety and fear of self, the other is a terrible fear that her educators will find her out.

This anxiety drives the girl into melancholy or an inexplicable wild behavior that is an attempt to cover up everything going on in her soul. If she knew what was going on in her soul and that others must also go through the same thing, then she would no longer be anxious and calm down. How valuable it is to tell women and girls in confession again and again: The source of your anxiety is the false diagnosis of your uneasiness. The true diagnosis is... And you are not the only one to go through this. Many times, such souls aren't even able to begin to confess, so great is their fear. Have patience in such cases. Many a priest has ruined a girl's soul for her whole life through a harsh word.

In boys this strong self-reflection almost normally transfers to [develops into] metaphysical thinking. If a boy never begins to become a philosopher, a normal transition stage has been passed over. This philosophizing is often highly skeptical in tone: he doubts even his own existence. What suffering must this not mean for such a boy?<sup>47</sup>

At age 14, Roloff began to imagine that he did not exist, and that his existence was only a dream. At times this even became a certainty. In spite of his strong need to communicate this, he was unable to tell anyone about it. He only found liberation from this in the sentence of Descartes: "I think, therefore I am."

{50} If one wants to work successfully [with youth] one must give them many examples that express the interior suffering of the listeners. This [often] triggers an immense need to talk or write about it.

---

<sup>46</sup> In the sense of feeling guilty.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Joseph Karlmann Brechenmacher, "Seltsame psychische Erscheinungen bei Jugendlichen" (Unusual psychological symptoms in young people), in: *Pharus*, Volume 16 (1925), p. 583-586.

This self-reflection soon flows into an almost fantastic readiness to criticize everyone and everything in the young man's surroundings. Its purpose is not primarily to discover truth, but self. It is an attempt to assert one's mental powers. Recall the hierarchy of values. We distinguished between the values of *Bonum* (the Good), *Verum* (the True) and *Pulchrum* (the Beautiful). Once the youthful soul has established a few bridgeheads into [his own] soul, he gradually tries to assert himself, attempting to impose his own value judgments as the standard for measuring the Good, the True and the Beautiful he encounters outside of himself.

Boys focus primarily on criticism of the True. They become philosophers. Everything turns into a metaphysical search for the truth – their being, having been born, striving, sexual life, freedom. Everything is gradually drawn into this metaphysical investigation. Why?

One reason (and it often causes great anxiety in these young skeptics) is the trustworthiness of the adults around them. At this age, if an educator is not trustworthy down to the finest details, it can cause a boy many struggles.

I recall my own development. I was a born skeptic. Until I was ordained. I studied a lot, often deep into the night. I read everything I could get my hands on, but it did not make me more mature. I banded together with an older student. I once caught him exaggerating the truth. The result? I could no longer believe him. Neither in this nor in other things. This is the most necessary: that we as young people find someone whose authority we instinctively accept.

{51} I know a boy who couldn't find anyone who could resolve his doubts. The teachers often showed their ignorance. He struggled with his faith for many years because of it. Have you not noticed this yourselves: Those who know the least insist on their authority the most? The more they do so, the more they provoke the mind and the more they push the young person into a wild loneliness.

The cause of this readiness to criticize is:

1. The lack of trustworthiness in the educators,
2. the destructive spirit of our times which tears everything apart,
3. the awakening of the mind.

The awakening of the readiness to criticize is [normal; it is] uplifting and positive. I should not be uneasy if a boy no longer believes me, if he turns critical. He has not become a wild revolutionary just because he causes trouble. At first it is nothing more than the healthy awakening of the soul. If the soul does not awaken, later on it will not be capable of greatness, it will not be able to assert itself. That is the awakening of the readiness to criticize. And with what purpose?

We first consider [the purpose] purely from the standpoint of developmental psychology. We do not need to fear that the onset of the phase of readiness to criticize means that they will become great philosophers. This phase is transitory; in it the young man takes great delight in thinking games, chess, etc. Precisely in this time I must be able to answer the questions that a boy has. Normally this readiness to criticize will not turn passionate since it is counterbalanced by the many demands [of ordinary life].

But this mania for criticism can pose dangers for certain [personality] types. It may hit them in the middle of life and make them feel compelled to take action. These are the so-called "problematic natures"<sup>48</sup>. You must learn to recognize them, for they are obsessed with [discovering] the truth. But do not confuse this drive {52} with the ethical life. They are able to submit. For them the difficulty is in the metaphysical realm. They want to have an intellectual solution for everything. For them the light has not yet dawned on what reality really is. How can they be healed? Only by throwing them into life, where they must work and struggle. Only when life gives them [the template] to verify truth will they become healthy. These problematic natures have a greater inclination to anxiety; they suffer from strong intellectual compulsion. This is especially true of seminarians. In general one can let them proceed to ordination. Once thrown into life and made to work, they become healthy.

That is the purpose of the readiness to criticize purely from the standpoint of developmental psychology. But where is the deeper

---

<sup>48</sup> Fr. Kentenich could very well be describing his own condition when he was a seminarian. See *New Vision and Life*, p. 21f.

meaning?

a. It is nothing more and nothing less than the expression of a healthy feeling of life. We can suppress it, but not erase it.

b. It is nothing more and nothing less than a way to discharge oneself, to gain self-certainty. Why do they talk so much? In order to be certain that the others understand them. They stubbornly cling to their positions. They only see what they have thought through for themselves. I am blind to the reasons proposed by others. This certainty goes a long way. Why does one cling so much to the thesis of a certain professor? It is the feeling of self-certainty. Young people cannot stand constant uncertainty for very long. For the sake of philosophical clarity, it seems to be important to both educators and students that they are first at home in a very specific viewpoint before trying to learn about other points of view.

c. Often times it may also be nothing more than some good play acting. But that is a very superficial point of view. The other two reasons are much more important.

#### *e. Differences between Boys and Girls*

With that I have shown how the longing to discover oneself leads to the nourishment of mind, reflection and the readiness to criticize.

For boys this takes place in the realm of the True, while for girls in the realm of the Beautiful and the Good. There will be girls who also {53} focus their critical spirit on the True, but they usually focus on the Noble and the Delicate. For girls I must live this image the Good and the Beautiful, even embody it, for they will measure parents and educators according to this personal sense of value. For the soul of a girl, outward appearance is often the path along which it wrestles its way [to the next stage of maturity].

Of course, assertions about the Good and the Beautiful always imply assertions about the True. For girls the Beautiful is the vantage point from which they view the True.

Boys are analytical, girls intuitive in their approach. You can make the practical application on your own. In any case you notice that you must remain proper and noble in how you treat girls and place great value on courtesy and proper deportment. Do not do as

a young priest once did who began each sermon by complaining about everything; he managed to drive all the girls away from him.

For the education of girls it is equally important to lead them on the path of modesty, nobility, and a sense of the fitting, to beauty, things liturgical, and kindness. It is helpful to give to them a moderate understanding of the pace of modern life.

In closing, let me contrast for you the male and female psyche. In comparing the two, you will find important differences.

The masculine soul is typically centered on ideas, the feminine soul on persons (on self-giving and love).

At first, girls mature much more rapidly than boys, especially in their intellectual growth. But everything in these years has the tendency: I want to become inwardly rich (while [in contrast] boys want to become strong) so that I can give richly to others. Intellectual growth stops being fruitful. {54} There is only one exception: When she rediscovers herself in a loving soul. Then her fruitfulness begins again. Girls need everything presented to them from the perspective of loving and being loved. This is important for the talks [you give them as priests].

With Sisters<sup>49</sup> this drive to love must be sublimated [thus]: We are sheltered in the hearts of Jesus and Mary. This is nothing to be looked down upon. A girl or woman can [fulfill her calling to] make the ultimate sacrifice [in the gift of self to Christ and Mary]. But girls can also be malformed if their primary focus is ideas. Then we are left with men-women, with androgynous beings whom we should not make into leaders. They should not be put on a lampstand. They can organize, but will constantly break things.

---

<sup>49</sup> This is the first of various insights regarding the work of priests with women religious. Note: the Schoenstatt Sisters of Mary were founded in October 1926, a little over a month after this workshop, so perhaps questions about working with a religious community were on his mind.

## Sixth Conference<sup>50</sup>

{55} We are in the process of taking a closer look at how the conquest and discovery of the self takes place in the soul. In the first phase we saw how the rupture in the soul<sup>51</sup> generates a strong longing for integration. [We also saw that] the purpose of this activity in a young person is not accomplishing the exterior task, but forming the self. This insight explains many things. We have applied it to the faculty of recognition and the activity of the mind.

### *The Complementation of Men and Women*

We then opened an excursus in which we are comparing the differences in the ways male and female souls express themselves in life. The male soul is more focused on ideas, the female soul more on persons. Hence, in the education of women we must accentuate the person of Christ or our Blessed Mother, or the [woman's] need for love must be satisfied through a male person<sup>52</sup>.

Women religious become spiritual "skin and bones" if they fail to find a complementary nature. They remain constantly unhappy and are powder kegs in their community. There is no alternative for a woman. She clings to persons, including those who communicate the truth to her.

This is the natural order of things. I must know this as a priest, preacher, and spiritual director, so that I do not make needless trouble or problems for myself. We want to end up with women who are noble, so don't always yell that this [or that] is [too] sentient.

A Sister once complained to St. Teresa [of Avila] that she felt a natural affection for her priest and liked him. Teresa said to her, "Rejoice that you like your confessor. Don't think any more about it

---

<sup>50</sup> The notes of this conference especially give the impression of being incomplete.

<sup>51</sup> German: *Riss der Seele*.

<sup>52</sup> German: "*Deswegen muß in der Erziehung der Frau die übernatürliche Person des Heilandes oder der Gottesmutter herausgehoben oder das Liebesbedürfnis an einer männlichen Person befriedigt werden.*"

and do what he says<sup>53</sup>."

But on the other hand, don't go too far. Don't become soft or use first names or "child" or some other {56} nickname. If you go your way calmly and confidently, the mutual relationship will stay healthy.

How does the strong need for complementation between the sexes come about?

### *1. Allowing Room for the Typical "Extremes" to Grow*

The woman's natural tendency is toward the interior life [that is, interiority], receptivity. The man's is toward activity. Because the traits of both sexes first come to the forefront in adolescence when everything takes off an incredible pace, one can expect to find boys and girls of the most extreme types. Boys exuding strength and activity, girls shy to the extreme. On the one hand activity and on the other hand interiority and quiet melancholy to the utmost. This serves a natural purpose. Both should go to extremes to develop their characteristic traits. Once they do that, the need for complementation will arise. The boy's exuding strength will turn into chivalry and it will urge him to protect the shy girl. And the girl's solitude will turn into motherhood where she will rejoice and be happy she can consume herself for a vibrant, growing being.

The man and the woman now seek each other out on the level of the soul. This does not yet have anything to do with sexuality. It is the drive to complementation on the level of the soul.

If this is true, what should we think about boys and girls doing things together at this age (early friendships, clubs, activities of the youth movement)? Apart from any moral theological considerations,

---

<sup>53</sup> Cf. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Way of Perfection*, Appendix to Chapter 4: "What you can do here is not to let your minds dwell upon whether you like your confessor or not, but just to like him if you feel so inclined. For, if we grow fond of people who are kind to our bodies, why should we not love those who are always striving and toiling to help our souls? Actually, if my confessor is a holy and spiritual man and I see that he is taking great pains for the benefit of my soul, I think it will be a real help to my progress for me to like him. For so weak are we that such affection sometimes helps us a great deal to undertake very great things in God's service."

they are to be rejected for reasons of developmental psychology<sup>54</sup>. Of course, our modern society has a strong preference to let the sexes do things together and treat everyone the same. This is why boys have long hair and girls short hair. In Paderborn someone said to me: There is no longer any short hair here; it's not a good sign. And the movement of culture today produces a tendency to feel one must mix the sexes.

---

<sup>54</sup> Fr. Kantenich explains this point more extensively in the 1931 pedagogical workshop *Ethos und Ideal in der Erziehung*: "Modern culture has, unfortunately, the effect of prematurely cooling youthful dissatisfaction and longing. [How?] (....)

*First of all*, young girls today are unfortunately dragged down much too soon into the terrible realism of everyday life. How soon do girls already have to make a living and face the sobering reality of life. That cools the dissatisfaction. (....)

*Secondly*, youth's natural dissatisfaction, its youthful longing, is too greatly cooled by too many and too early an exposure to sensual pleasures. I am not thinking of anything morally wrong. (....)

*Thirdly* – this may sound strange in my mouth; it may even seem to completely contradict what I told you this morning – dissatisfaction and longing are diminished to the degree we empty out our hearts. The Youth Movement once had the motto, "I hide nothing from my boyfriend or girlfriend." Said that way it is dangerous. I can have someone, of course, to whom I completely open my heart. But if it goes beyond that to habitually opening my heart to anyone I meet, I lose one of my most delicate gifts. Not only is the gift of my womanhood depreciated – you are no longer a mystery – but it amounts to a spiritual immodesty, the loss of a world in its own right. Moreover, it shatters a most valuable instinct of the soul. (....)

In this context we would do well – we touch a whole host of life questions here – to recall how unhealthy it is for boys and girls to have so much contact with one another so early in life. You see, strictly psychologically speaking, the *power of attraction of the two sexes* in young people is primarily rooted in the fact that they are a mystery to each other. If this mystery, this mysterious veil is taken away, the power of attraction stops. That is why – when we have any influence at all over the matter – we should take precautions that boys and girls are not together too much. Each sex must first have a chance to develop in its own way and foster its own character. Otherwise we will discover some day that we have neither boys nor girls but rather boyish girls and something similar on the other side. Each must first crassly develop in their own way. The more totally that character and counter-character come into their own, the surer and stronger the mutual tension and the more beneficial the unity of tensions will be that unfolds on both sides (p. 308-310).

When should boys have men as teachers and girls have women? When should they be put in separate groups? For girls this should happen from the moment their female {57} parts begin to form. Approximately after the twelfth year. At about the same time boys should have men as teachers.

By the way, the reason Americans have something more feminine about them is because in their youth they are primarily educated by Sisters.

The same is also true for the education and formation of our Sisters. It will turn unhealthy if the masculine hand of a spiritual director is missing. Of course, the new Code of Canon Law requires that there be no men as superiors [of congregations of women religious].

Women need complementation. I have shown you what this consists of.

This brings us to problems which are very much in the public eye today. Are the sexes the same; are they equal? The *Journal of Catholic Spirituality* has published a few articles on the topic by a Benedictine under the title "Liturgy and the Soul of Woman"<sup>55</sup>.

Fr. Kantenich believes that one must affirm that women are equal, although he well understands how the Middle Ages could deny this. The problem is framed even more concisely in the *Cologne Popular Press*<sup>56</sup> and how it responds to the question. The articles are entitled "The Competition of Women and the Gymnastics of Women." One does not motivate women by talking about self-initiative, but about sacrificial love.

The contrasting features are interiority and activity. They develop to an extreme in the two sexes. Hence the attraction between the sexes. They find mutual complementation in an ideal marriage. But not everyone wants to or can marry. What then? Do they find complementation too?

Philosophy tells us that, in principle, the human spirit is asexual.

---

<sup>55</sup> *Anzeiger für die katholische Geistigkeit*, Vol. 45, No. 7.

<sup>56</sup> The transcript gives only the initials "K.V." (presumed to be the *Kölner Volksblatt*), No. 548 and 549 (1926): "Frauenwettkämpfe und Frauenturnen."

It is capable of both masculine {58} and feminine features. It is capable of both interiority and activity. As a result, scholasticism differentiates between the *intellectus possibilis* and the *intellectus agens*<sup>57</sup>. This describes a double faculty of the soul: self-giving (interiority) and activity. Whoever fosters the extremes in individuals will encourage the different individuals to develop [that which is good] in their extreme features<sup>58</sup>. In this the individuation of the body starts the process. The spirit adapts to the body. Hence, in women, interiority first develops in extreme form. Then the need for exteriority will awaken as a matter of the spirit. In this way a woman can find the complementation she needs even outside of marriage.

In the young man the spirit first develops in the direction of outward activity. Because the spirit is asexual, the need for complementation will also arise in the spirit of the boy. A deep longing for interiority slumbers inside of him. This is why men and women can find complementation without being dependent on another creature<sup>59</sup>. They have the possibility to find harmony within themselves. It is therefore of value to the complementation [of the young] to foster this [interior] complementation.

## 2. Guiding Boys and Girls to an Appropriate Complementation

So, in boys, do not foster only outward activity. Begin there, but later steer them in the direction of interiority. If a boy does not find this longing, he will break down in a terrible battle against God and his life's fate. He will want to master life but run into insurmountable difficulties. He will not find the complementation [he needs] – interiority and self-surrender.

The girl, too, must be educated in complementation. Not just to self-giving but also to activity. The way depends on her type. We already saw that some women are more masculine. In such cases our activity must give them an object of love so that they become self-

---

<sup>57</sup> That is, the intellect is both what it is capable of (*possibilis*) and what it does (*agens*).

<sup>58</sup> This sentence is not very clear in the German.

<sup>59</sup> Such as in the celibate state.

giving. Direct every admonition in confession, again and again, to the supernatural person in whom they are sheltered. Then encourage them to make sacrifices {59} out of love for the person. Work toward helping the masculine types become children again.

If the type is that of a true woman, she must find complementation in the *mulier fortis* [strong woman]. She must not break down every time someone gives her a stern look. She must develop a certain desire that she can let herself be rejected. These are minor points of education, but immensely valuable.

It is worthwhile to constantly direct the girls in our Catholic groups to acts of charity – the hard masculine personalities so that they see there is much suffering that one cannot relieve or diminish by being a rigid person but only through kindness – and the soft natures, so that they learn to take in this great love and show their activity. Because the woman is to naturally disposed to self-giving, I must know that these [acts of charity in young years] are more expressions of self-development than accomplishment of a work. We should therefore be careful with religiously inclined souls. Don't take everything they say at face value. It is only an expression of self-development, the self-release of an interior need.

(....)

## *Concluding Conference*

*(In the first part of the conference the pastor of the city of Freiburg speaks. Then Fr. Kentenich wraps up the entire workshop:)*

{81} At the start [of this workshop] one might have worried that the community would come up short in these days. And yet a great deal happened. Its source is our dear Blessed Mother, who drew your hearts to herself and to each other. We are joyfully aware that she takes care of us this way. So many mature men from all parts of Germany – and you were all one heart and soul. Who worked this miracle? Our dear Blessed Mother, the Thrice Admirable. At the end of this workshop we need to remind ourselves that we are instruments of our dear Lady. Let us not forget all we have heard and resolved to do in the future.

### *Will I be Able to be Faithful my Whole Life?*

But how often may the worry pursue and have pursued us: Will I truly be able to strive for priestly sanctity my whole life? The cedars of Lebanon have fallen. A confrere was much better than I, and yet... he fell in the line of duty. Do I not feel the sting of concupiscence in me like hardly ever before? I carry in me the seeds of all the evil drives. What can give us a sense of security? One could say: the community to which I belong which prays for me and urges me on so that at least I do not fall so low. But that is not our only security. The main security is our dear Blessed Mother. She had chosen me for her Federation; from her I receive all graces. She is the work-mistress, I am the instrument. It is my task to strengthen and preserve this awareness that I rely on her.

In Paderborn a member of the Federation was about to be ordained a subdeacon. He said, in spite of all kinds of fearful thoughts, “I am not afraid of the future because I believe in the miracles of grace of our dear Mother of God. How often was I in Schoenstatt and strengthened in my trust in her. I believe in the miracles of grace of my dear Blessed Mother.”

{82} Do we believe this, too? Our own strength, the purity of our

youth, etc. – we cannot count on these things to carry us through. Our own strength will not suffice. The Mother of Grace must help us to be faithful our whole life long. A newly ordained priest said, “I shudder when I think of the future. But I think of how I am inscribed in the Shrine, so I must also be inscribed in her heart. As long as I hold fast to my Mother, nothing can happen to me. As an instrument of our dear Lady I trust that she will not leave her work in the lurch.” It is also necessary as her instrument to feel my dependence.

Another said, “I want to make a great sacrifice. In earlier years I did this and that. I now resolve to devote at least ten minutes a day to spiritual reading about Mary.” Consciously foster your reliance on her; this is necessary. It is necessary to consciously have a shrine for my heart. And take this with you into life: “A servant of Mary will never perish!” But we are also an instrument of our dear Lady.

Of Father Doss<sup>60</sup> it is told that one time tears came to his eyes while speaking of the trials of youth. He excused himself and said, “I have already seen so much distress, sexual distress, that it forces the tears to my eyes. How much distress must our dear Lady not see from heaven. And she sends us, she wants to send *us*, to lead these poor young people to her.”

Youth and Mary, they belong together, they need each other!

### *1. Mary’s Kindness*

Therefore, lead the youth to Mary! The youth is longing for an uplifting understanding. But which solely human being can give as much uplifting understanding as our dear Lady? After all, she fulfills the first condition – kindness. She is the Mother of Mercy. She is a great ocean of love.

But what about God? He is good. Doesn’t Scripture say as much? {83} “Even if a mother forgets her child, I will not forget you. You are carved in my hand and in my heart” (Is 49, 15f). And what about Our Lord? He is good, too, letting himself be sacrificed out of goodness and love. But we must not forget that God and the

---

<sup>60</sup> See First Conference.

God-man will one day be our Judge. It is totally in the spirit of Catholic teaching to look upon Mary as the one who is exclusive goodness and mercy. God has taken, as it were, a diamond from his crown, the diamond of mercy, and embodied it in our dear Blessed Mother. As a result I must surrender myself to her, I myself, and then lead my youth to her, too. How the young people sense it when I myself am totally filled with this surrender to Our Lady.

### *2. Mary's Optimism*

An uplifting understanding must also be optimistic. Is not the Blessed Mother optimistic? After all, she knows that God's cause will carry the victory, even if a few little defeats seem to slip in. God will carry the victory.

### *3. Mary's Firmness*

Why must our dear Blessed Mother always be integrated more and more deeply into the hearts of our youth? Let us instill in their hearts an invincibly trusting love of Our Lady. Yes, we will return home, discover that we are the same as before, perhaps forgetting our resolutions... but our love, our unlimited trust must remain. Yes, it must even become greater!

Even if the storms come over us, even if my life quakes and trembles, we must hold fast to our unlimited trust, our love for the Mother of God.

END OF WORKSHOP