

*Father Joseph Kentenich*

*Comments and suggestions by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus  
December 2000*

***Forming the New Person***

Original Title:

*Daß neue Menschen werden: Eine pädagogische  
Religionspsychologie (Pädagogische Tagung 1951)*  
Schönstatt Verlag, 56179 Vallendar-Schönstatt ©1971  
IBSN 3 920849 07 6 – IBSN 3 920849 08 X

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## FOREWORD TO THE GERMAN EDITION

Within the framework of a pedagogical convention held from October 2 to 5, 1951 in Schoenstatt, Germany, Father Kentenich, founder of the International Schoenstatt Movement, gave the 16 talks published here for the first time. Due to prevailing or cooling circumstances,<sup>1</sup> it was the last convention of its kind, even though here and there in the talks Fr. Kentenich mentions that others will follow.

The theme focuses on the conditions necessary for developing an effective pedagogy of religion, in view not only of the child or young person but also of present-day humanity in general, amid the current crisis and need of faith. Fr. Kentenich chose to clarify from different angles the favorable prerequisites for an experience of God that rouses and grips the whole person. The pedagogical intent is evidently “the new person in the new community” in one’s being and in one’s way of life as a Christian. In this light we understand the title chosen for this posthumous publication of the convention, *So That New Men and Women Arise, Daß neue Menschen werden*, literally: words written by Fr. Kentenich in 1942 during his imprisonment by the Nazi Gestapo in the Koblenz prison; they are part of a long series of verse titled *Hymn of Thanksgiving*.

The longing to form the new person in the Christian community, and the untiring commitment to the actualization of this goal were surely the most outstanding features both of Fr. Kentenich’s personality as well as of his life’s work as educator and priest. In this convention he explains the prerequisites which, in close to 40 years of experience at the service of this demanding moral religious aim, he had verified as psychologically significant. The result of his findings is an original compendium of religious psychology intended for pedagogical application. Jaime

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<sup>1</sup> The Holy Office had decreed the separation of Fr. Kentenich from the Schoenstatt Work and his transfer to the city of Milwaukee, USA. His exile lasted 14 years till Pope Paul VI rehabilitated him on October 22, 1965.

Fernandez, in an article, which appeared in *Regnum* (1970), gave it the title *Education in the Service of Grace*.

In a diagnostic review Schoenstatt's founder clearly traces the contours of the modern person's capacity for religious experience and the obstacles in its path. His presentation of psychologically founded pedagogical means brings to our awareness positive and effective possibilities for dialogue with God. He stresses the singular significance of having a firm hold in a religious community; in clear, comprehensive knowledge, and in a classic example. A positive home experience as an anticipation of the eternal homeland, he describes as a path to an all-around religious-moral integration of the personality, thus highlighting its pedagogical significance.

The convention was apparently announced as an introduction to Marian pedagogy, but since the founder considered the above-mentioned theme as necessary groundwork, he gave the Marian theme an ample margin, frequently relating to the content of his talks. In this way he took into account his listeners' varied needs, which he tried as he said later to take up and satisfy in a lively dialog.

It was characteristic of him, in intensive contact with his followers and his listeners, to take up in the vital matters and professional problems which preoccupied them and give answers coming from faith founded on knowledge and life, and on a rich comprehensive view flowing from his normed and anticipated pedagogical-psychological experience. Thus, in their abiding validity these talks can provide us moderns with answers to our questions and problems in the field of education and point the way. In addition, this convention offers an essential complementation to simplify the convention held in 1950.<sup>2</sup> For that reason this edition was prepared with that complementation in mind.

This edition of the convention originated as stenographic notes which were transcribed, edited, then put out as a hectographed manuscript.

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<sup>2</sup> Talks One through Seven of the 1950 convention appear in manuscript under the title *Education and the Challenge of Our Times* (Second Edition – 1996), translated by Fr. Ulric J. Proeller (1961), edited by Fr. Jonathan Niehaus.

In the foreword of that first edition we read, “This transcript conveys the principle thoughts of the convention. We do not claim that it is a literal rendition of the spoken word. The text has not been authorized.” In this new edition we refrained as much as possible from making changes in the text of the aforementioned manuscript in order to amply transmit the expressive fullness of the spoken word. The titles of the talks are derived from the contents of these and from the points highlighted in the outline.

May this edition of the convention be of help to all those interested and engaged in the field of pedagogy, a help in their search for answers as to the psychologically significant prerequisites for the fruitful religious-moral education and formation of the human person today.

Schönstatt, 19 March 1971

M. E. Frömbgen

## TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

A few comments about variations from the German edition: Inserted talks, titles and subtitles have been reworked to place the accent more on the individual talks than on a larger outline. Paragraph divisions also vary. Because the spoken word in print can seem stenographic at times, what appears in brackets [ ] has been inserted for the sake of charity.

What appears occasionally parenthesized is original to Fr. Kentenich, but is not to be found in parentheses in the German version. Based on the grammatical differences between the two languages, parentheses were used in this work to enclose part of a sentence that, if enclosed by commas, would be confusing or unclear.

Mary was the soul of Fr. Kentenich's soul. He said so himself. Most of the time he used the word *Gottesmutter* when speaking of her. In English you could render it *God's Mother or Mother of God*. On the founder's lips, though, the word *Gottesmutter* was filled with warmth and childlike love. Since the English-speaking do not share a single culture, each nation belonging to these has its own way or ways of addressing Mary with tenderness. With this in mind, I attempted to convey Fr. Kentenich's tone by using four variations: the Blessed Mother, our Lady, the Blessed Virgin, and our Blessed Lady.

In a similar vein, the use of *Vatergott* or *Gott Vater* was another expression favored by the founder. The reference is to God the Father, but the underlying tone expresses God's boundlessly loving kindness and his enduring closeness to us. We pick up a strong trace of Fr. Kentenich's meaning when he quotes St. Thérèse as having slipped once in a conversation about God; she spoke of him as *Papa le bon Dieu* or *the good Papa God*. Thus, in translation *Father God* was generally my preference.

Fr. Kentenich had a gift for reading the faces of his listeners. The charism of fatherliness was so unmistakably his that, although he had an outline in mind, once he began to speak, the needs of his audience took

preference. He lived to serve life in the souls of others. For that reason, although he may have begun a talk by enumerating the points he intended to cover, he deviated freely wherever necessary to answer the un verbalized questions of his listeners. It follows that, contrary to a written work, such talks cannot be outlined in the usual sense of the word. The Table of Contents, then, of this English edition comprises a summary though not exhaustive of the point covered by the speaker.

In the present edition Fr. Kentenich's central message the essential role of the father figure in every person's life is reflected in the title *Forming the New Person*. In the Second Talk he presents excerpts from Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Thérèse von Lisieux*:

The center of the family was the **father**. In a human way she revered, loved and almost idolized him... She looked at her father, he looked at God, and through him she learned to look at God.

The founder then comments:

This is the simplest way: The living example of the father leads the child who is attached to him directly to God.

Throughout the convention Fr. Kentenich repeatedly returns to this fundamental thought, stressing its significance in giving a firm faith foundation to children early on, as well as in restoring the root of faith in adults whose pressing need is to awaken the child within.

May Fr. Kentenich's message be a source of inspiration to natural and spiritual fathers alike, that they may turn with selfless heart to their children

Milagros Vega  
May 31, 1997

## First Talk

### *The Longing for a Pronounced Supernatural Atmosphere*

True educators are lovers who never cease loving,<sup>3</sup> not even once they have closed the school doors behind them, no, not even when they go on vacation. Their mission in life is far too weighty, far too serious to allow them a pause. Education in the form of self-education will continue to be our lifework till we breathe our last.

Educating the people of our nation, educating our youth has always been a task of great importance. This holds good above all for the present momentous turning point. The die is cast. And it is probable that it will stay as it fell, not only for one or two centuries but for several. We are living in a world of decisions, and these will be essentially determined by education.

We may count ourselves among the true and genuine educators. So I welcome you warmly. We want to ask our Lady who is at work in our shrine as the Mother Thrice Admirable and Queen of Schoenstatt, the great educator of the people, to bless our convention and to fulfill in some way all our wishes and expectations. May she grant me light so I can go to the root of the problem. May she put the words on my lips that are necessary and useful so you can return home with a clear answer to most of your questions.

In order to strike the right note and choose correctly from the overwhelming amount of material we have before us, it is worthwhile this evening to raise the question: What is it that brings you here? What do you expect from this convention?

Permit me first to pose the question negatively. What things did not influence your decision to come here? You did not come because it was required of you. You are here of your own free will. We spontaneously recall one of St. Francis de Sales' sayings: On the ship of

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<sup>3</sup> This saying is attributed to St. John Bosco



*God's Love* there are no galley slaves, only three rowers. The fact that we freely chose to come is the first bond that unites and welds our community together during these days. It will guarantee that our hearts open for the seeds and truths that should penetrate our souls during the coming days.

What brings us here? By no means a lack of continuing education in pedagogy. As professional educators we have had training in abundance, in superabundance during the past year. Recall all the events organized by school authorities and by the associations to which we belong. This draws our attention to an odd characteristic of our time: pedagogical inflation. It has almost become fashionable to pursue pedagogy. Almost all the communities and movements that would like to reach broader circles organize pedagogical courses. Think of our workers' unions or of the rural movement. Such conventions are announced time and again, and they are well attended. Apparently, vast circles have understood that nowadays what matters is to form a new person and a new community. Perhaps they learned from bolshevism and national socialism. Both had the definite goal of forming a new person in a new community.

Bolshevism has a pronounced Bolshevistic pedagogy. Its point of departure is a world view which focuses exclusively on this world. They want to create a society without class distinction and, in it, form the collectivistic person, a goal which they try to achieve by means of force and power.

If we pause for a moment and draw a comparison to what the Western democracies point out as their goal, we hear words about freedom: "Freedom, of which I am thinking and which fills my heart, come with your light, lovely angel's image!"<sup>4</sup> They all want to achieve their own concept of freedom: freedom from personal and economic pressure and from political coercion. The nations of the West agree on being free **from**, but not on being free **for**. To what end do they want to be free? They do not know the answer, they disagree. They even allow freedom to promoters of spiritual trends that strive to kill democracy.

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<sup>4</sup> Max von Schenkendorf, *Freiheit* (1813)

The Bolshevistic way of thinking and educating achieves unity by force. If, in this way, bolshevism brings about self-contained and organized unity, [in the process] it breaks natural laws and dries out the core of the human personality. That is why, in the long run, this system cannot lead to the goal. Nonetheless, it has temporarily initiated a triumphal march.

If we look into our own camp, we see that we do not belong to those who allow others to rob them of their personal freedom. Should we not be able to succeed in combining both sound freedom and self-contained unity? The present situation urges us to make serious efforts to acquire a Catholic concept of education, to apply the principles of Catholicism in our times and to inspire the people of our day with modern methods.

With this I have mentioned briefly the second bond that unites us. We are not only a community which freely chose to come together, but also a community united by the bond of the Catholic faith.

What brings us here? Allow me to follow the negative answers with a positive one, one that is not meant to go into detail but should summarize all the reasons: A two-fold longing is aflame in our hearts, a longing that awaits fulfillment and should be satisfied. First, the ***longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere***. We come from a world that no longer has anything to do with this supernatural atmosphere. Instead it is secularized, does not touch the religious core of our personality and, for that reason, can neither arouse nor help develop it.

Secondly, we experience the longing for a more profound introduction into the theme to be treated at this convention: Marian education set in the pedagogical situation of our time.

I think, dear listeners, in this course we should be satisfied with bringing out the features of the longing for a pronounced religious atmosphere, we should stress the inclination of this longing, tracing it back to its ultimate roots, and aspire to link it to Mary.

In analyzing the longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere we would like to attempt to clear the path to the top of the mountain. The

peak is Marian spirit, the Marian person. The values contained in the theme of the convention may then help us feel at home to some extent on the summit of the mountain. Of course, by doing so we will only have touched the theme from a distance. A third and perhaps even a fourth pedagogical convention would be necessary during which we would endeavor to reveal all the facts in their universalism.

Perhaps at the end of this convention you will be a little disappointed and will tell me: The convention was completely off the subject; its theme was supposed to be Marian, but how little was said about Mary. And yet you may not overlook the fact that we moderns need a little time till we have cleared the path and have prepared and relaxed the soul, opening it for the Marian world and wavelength. Whoever understands what we aspire to achieve during these days can see clearly how profoundly Marian spirit, Marian thought penetrates the above-mentioned longing.

During this convention, then, we will take a close look at what the longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere includes. Three points are to be studied and elaborated: This longing must be explained, clarified and transfigured. We shall look at it in its metaphysical context and see it as the access road to the peak of the Marian world of values. In the main we will dwell on the access road. During these days we will not be able to move about much on the summit. This will be the work of future conventions.

Two laws are manifest when we consider the explanation of the longing. First law: The longing for a supernatural atmosphere is a significant, concrete *form of homesickness for eternity*. Keep this statement in mind! It will be the red thread that runs through the whole course. Later this homesickness will lead us to the peak of experiencing a home and thereby to the peak of modern pedagogy. Eternal homesickness is homesickness for the eternal and infinite, a longing that can be neither satisfied nor fulfilled here on earth. St. Augustine referred to this fact in his classic statement, "Our heart is restless, O God, till it rests in you!"

Second law: The human being can *repress* and even misdirect *homesickness or longing for God*, for the supernatural world. But in the long run we can neither drown it out nor undermine it. These are three partial statements. We want to briefly reflect on their meaning.

The longing for God can be repressed. *Contra factum non valet argumentum*. One can find no compelling reasons against existing facts. Experience shows us that people can repress their hunger for God. I would like to give you two reasons for this.

First reason: *The irrational root of our faith in God is diseased*. Here we touch upon another red thread which will run through the whole convention and which we should impress deeply on ourselves. The irrational root of our faith in God is experience of a father on a natural level, an experience which penetrates the subconscious mind and, in keeping with the law of transferring affections, can easily and must be transferred to the Father God, the only one in whom we find a place of repose and the security that helps us master all difficulties in the midst of present-day storms.

Do you grasp the vast scope of these far-reaching statements? Do I have reason for saying that we are living in fatherless times? Do I have reason for adding that, because we are living in fatherless times, we are also living in a godless epoch? May the Blessed Mother help us to grasp profoundly the inner connections expressed in these very weighty truths which should be taken seriously.

Nietzsche formulated the grave statement: In modern times children's lands no longer exist because there are no longer any fatherlands.<sup>5</sup> Do you know what that means? May I take this thought a

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<sup>5</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Second Part (On the Land of Education): "Alas, where shall I climb now with my longing? From all mountains I look out for fatherlands and motherlands. But home I found nowhere; a fugitive am I at all cities and a departure at all gates. Strange and a mockery to me are the men of today to whom my heart recently drew me; and I am driven out of fatherlands and motherlands. Thus I now love only my *children's land* yet undiscovered, in the farthest sea: for this I bid my sails search and search." *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 233, Walter Kaufmann, The Viking Press, New York

step further within the context explained above? We no longer have Godlands because we have no fatherlands. And that is why we no longer have children's lands. According to Pestalozzi, the greatest tragedy of our era is that it has lost the attitude of a child, and this makes it impossible for God to be active as Father.

From a psychological point of view, what is at the very root of this loss of a child's attitude is our fatherless epoch. It is a depressing fact that we no longer have sound fathers to whom it is second nature to awaken [in children] the innate outlook of a child, the predisposition which penetrates the depths of the subconscious and grips the entire person.

In this context I would again like to quote Nietzsche. We are familiar with his cry, "God is dead!" Would you agree with me if I were to add that God is dead because, in the natural order, the father is dead? Under normal circumstances, without the profound experience of being the child of a father (or of someone who substitutes for the father) on the natural level, it is extremely difficult to have a supernatural father experience and father image.

Why is it that nowadays we can rightly speak of an extensive repression of the longing for God? We are living in a fatherless and, for that reason, godless epoch. Whoever understands this has one of the most comprehensive answers to the religious needs of our time, above all with regard to our youth.

The second reason that makes it possible to repress the longing for God is of a more philosophical nature. It points to a great gift which the good God gave us: a free will. It puts us in a position to stand opposite ourselves as if facing a third person. Though that's true, this gift also provides us with the possibility of temporarily repressing primal religious drives in our nature by *misusing our free will*.

In our times this tendency to repress meets up with a *distinct atmosphere of irreligiosity*. We are living in an epoch that flees from God and is addicted to the world, a collectivistic and interdenominational epoch. All these factors poison the atmosphere to such an extent that it is

easy to understand why moderns drown and repress so forcefully the longing for God.

***We live in a world that flees from God.*** Scripture says that Cain fled from the Lord's presence.<sup>6</sup> Today we bear the sign of Cain, flight from Good, on our foreheads. Many educators complain about how difficult it nowadays to reach youth on a religious level and direct them. Often they add that they do not even manage to arouse today's youth on the ethical level. Others are of the opinion that, to all appearances, the religious sense is distorted in countless young people. In effect, we are living in a time that flees from God.

What are the reasons? Here I have to point out the threefold root of faith in Good: the irrational, rational and suprarational root. We just took a look at the irrational root: the natural experience of a father which penetrates the depths of the subconscious mind. Because it is missing, the sense for a religious father figure and father experience is also lacking. An appropriate image of God is the rational root of faith in God. But today there are few people who have a clear image of God or one that is determined by faith. Of course, we must add that the image of God is largely dependent upon the experience of God. The irrational and rational roots are intertwined. The third root if the image of Good is supernatural faith, an all-pervasive spirit of faith.

How does repressed hunger for God show in everyday life? We can give two answers. One of them pertains to the opposing camp where atheism reigns. There is a religious and a nihilistic atheism. An example of a religious atheist is Nietzsche who says of himself, "I am dynamite." In his work *The Gay Science* he depicts himself as a madman. Reflect on the characteristics of this madman and, with a few strokes, you will have illustrated religious atheism. To be sure, he rejects God, and yet the longing for God has not died in him: Have you heard of the madman who

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<sup>6</sup> Cf Gen 4,16

lights a lamp in broad daylight and walks around the marketplace crying out “I’m looking for God!”<sup>7</sup>

The religious atheist is a person in search of God. Nietzsche himself was shaken by the fact that, together with others, he had become God’s assassin. He, who called this process a monstrosity, had in the depth of his soul a forceful longing for God which he was unable to kill. Thus, you can understand why Nietzsche later lost his mind and took his life.<sup>8</sup> He never succeeded in eradicating altogether his soul’s longing for God, for the infinite and eternal one. That is why we wrote the well-known words: At midnight we circle the grave of our God whom we murdered.<sup>9</sup>

The antithesis is nihilistic atheism as we see it embodied in the collectivistic person. Although we do not want to take the time to characterize this type, we raise the question: In what way does this type of atheism show in our ranks? In a strange coldness toward God and the distance from him. Moderns have reason to speak of cosmic coldness. The world has grown cold, for it has been torn from its connection with God. Anthropologic coldness! The human being’s features no longer reflect the eternal, the infinite one. Nor is the expression “distance from God” foreign

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<sup>7</sup> *The Gay Science*, Aphorism 125: “Have you heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran to the marketplace, and cried incessantly, “I seek God! I seek God!” *The Portable Nietzsche*, p.95

<sup>8</sup> This may have been a slip of the tongue. The unfounded belief that Nietzsche committed suicide, however, is not uncommon in parts of Germany. In *Nietzsche, A Critical Life*, Ronald Hayman relates: “On Monday August 1900 Nietzsche caught a cold. His temperature went up and it was hard for him to breathe. ‘At about midday on Friday the 24<sup>th</sup>, as I [his sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche] was sitting opposite him, his whole expression suddenly changed and, as the stroke came, he sank back unconscious.’ He was dead.” New York, Oxford University Press, 1980

<sup>9</sup> *The Gay Science*, Aphorism 125: “We have killed him – you and I. All of us are murderers... Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? ...God is dead. Good remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers of all murderers, comfort ourselves?” *The Portable Nietzsche*, p. 95

to us. To an extent we are surrounded by it. Nowadays we hardly perceive God's influence on world events even among Catholics this is a public secret. At times we may even ask ourselves with concern. Is God still alive? Why does he permit all the injustice that causes so many people to bleed and suffer? Doesn't he have an influence on this world?

We recall one of Rilke's expressions "Neighbor God." True, there is a note of conviction in it: the belief that God is still there; but the relationship to him, our neighbor, has grown cold. We have become estranged.

If faith in God gradually turns pallid in our life and dwindles, we must fear that the world will become even more secularized and sexualized. The danger of materialism and indifferentism confronts us. How many people even good Catholics say in the last nook of their heart: Isn't the materialistic concept of bolshevism right after all? To a large extent world history is being directed by bolshevism. Its representatives have taken the initiative. Don't we have to fear that, with everything in a state of transition, our faith too will turn into a mayfly, alive today but dead tomorrow? We think of the progress made in technology and industry. All these things explain why our faith in God is growing colder and more indifferent. In truth we are living in an epoch that flees from God.

What must we do? First, we must penetrate the depths of the spirit of practical faith in Divine Providence more intensely than we have until now, teach our followers to do the same, and help in that way to form creative personalities, persons who create history, neither activists nor passivists. Activists want to determine world order according to their own wishes; they separate themselves from God and tradition. The passivist sits back and leaves the government of the world to the godless. People who create history join God the Creator and would like to share in his creative activity, his knowledge, will and actions.

Second, we should ascend to and enter the supernatural world and lead those entrusted to our care to do the same.



Third, we men should embody, much more than we have until now, the image of Father God in order to help humanity acquire the natural, sound experience of being a child. Then the world will become capable of opening itself to the thought and experience of God.

Present times do not only flee from God. They are also *addicted to the world*. Falling away from God means destruction. Those who break with God are bound to see the gradual decay of their inner faculties, for they will find a substitute god – usually the world.

Why is it that there is so little dynamism in our life in contrast to Moral Re-Armament,<sup>10</sup> e.g., about which we hear so much? The reason for this is addiction to the world. The addiction of present-day Christians and Catholics to the world depletes their inner resistance and robs them of the impetus needed to commit themselves radically to religious values, to the Church.

The longing for God can be forcefully repressed for a time. Whether it occurs in the masses or in isolated cases, there is yet another reason for it: We live in collectivistic times. The collectivistic person is a person with a crowd mentality who radically denies and destroys from within all attachment to God. Collectivism's approach is this: Think and live mechanistically! Separate everything – thinking, living and loving. Consequently, it is easy to understand that a type of person is slowly developing of whom one can no longer say as we did in years past: *Homo naturaliter christianus*.<sup>11</sup> Nowadays we have to alter the wording *Homo naturaliter non christianus*. The collectivistic person is inwardly dehumanized, depersonalized, massified. It is self-evident that a person whose nature is so broken and torn no longer has a sense for the supernatural, for the divine.

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<sup>10</sup> In the 1920s Frank Buchman, a Lutheran pastor serving in Philadelphia, Tennessee, founded the Oxford Group. This became the Moral Re-Armament movement in 1938. It worked to further democracy by stressing moral and spiritual values and was very popular between 1950 and 1960.

<sup>11</sup> St. Augustine. Man is Christian by nature.

Lastly, we live in interdenominational times. Tomorrow and the day after they will be undenominational. All in all, we understand the reasons for the fact that, at times, our hunger for God, the drive for God can be repressed.

*It can also be misdirected.* The reason for this lies in our free human will. Apparent values can lead us astray and lure us until we begin to see and worship them as ultimate values. Our hunger for God is led astray! Think of materialism, industrialism, existentialism. Wherever we turn we see people whose hunger for God has been led astray. They bow and lie prostrate before idols created by their own heart and will.

Yes, the human drive for God can be repressed or misdirected for a time, but we cannot kill it altogether. The human person is not only an *animal rationale*, an *animal sociale*, an *animal metaphysicum* but also an *animal religiosum*. The drive for God is one of human nature's innate drives and such drives cannot be stifled or repressed indefinitely. For long stretches of their life moderns distance themselves from their hunger for God, but periodically it breaks through with vehemence.

According to legend, the holy city Veneta sank to the depths of the sea. At times the passengers on ships that went by heard bells ringing from the depths of the sea. Veneta is modern humanity; it is my heart, my soul; it is I. Like the ringing of the bells, in silent hours the longing for God arises in modern men and women. It breaks forth most powerfully if the person can spend time in a markedly supernatural atmosphere which leads to an inbreak of the divine in the earthly, and the earthly opens itself to the divine.

From experience we know where such a supernatural atmosphere has its strongest effects: at places of grace the Marian ones in particular—where religious communities work effectively, where perpetual adoration has its place. Schoenstatt is such a place of grace, home of a number of religious communities. Schoenstatt a place of perpetual adoration.

Now I would like to repeat the question I asked at the beginning of my talk. What brings us here? The longing for a markedly supernatural atmosphere as it finds expression in the Marian element in particular. Do

you sense that atmosphere here? Do we have the courage to expose ourselves to it? Will this supernatural atmosphere penetrate our hearts and souls and be creative there?

I know of forceful men, personalities who come here periodically, not chiefly to take part in courses. Rather, they absorb the local atmosphere and return renewed and resilient to the world. They visit places where they had religious experiences in years past. All these places speak a secret language, they radiate a supernatural atmosphere that draws and urges visitors upward.

We want to pray and ask that the distinctive atmosphere of our place of grace seize us interiorly. We pray that it impel and urge us upward and put us in a position to accept the seed of pedagogical truths which we intend to take in during these days. We ask for the grace to digest them in such a way that they yield fruit at a rate of thirty – and sixty – and a hundredfold.

## Second Talk

### *The First Basis for Religious Education: A Capacity for Religious Experience*

Last night we were able to compile the essential elements of the longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere. Three points should still be worked out : the explanation, clarification and transfiguration of this longing for the eternal, for the divine. What we discussed last night was the explanation of the longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere. Our reflections culminated in the thought: Here in Schoenstatt, at this place we find a pronounced religious atmosphere.

Now we shall turn to the clarification of the longing for a pronounced supernatural atmosphere which consists in its analysis, in its intellectual penetration. The religious element, the supernatural is not suspended in midair; it must of necessity have a subject, an organ; it must be put in concrete form. A human being must incarnate it. Thus, wherever a religious atmosphere prevails you may always assume that you have before you living people, living communities who have absorbed this atmosphere, sustain it and pass it on.

It may be worth the effort to examine in detail the tangible elements of this supernatural atmosphere. Two living factors are at work here. The first factor is grace, the second the human person. That is where we want to begin by asking the question: What are the psychological bases [which must be taken into account] if humanity as a whole and the individual are to be gripped on a religious level? I speak intentionally you will understand it presently from the context of the psychological basis. Are you aware that, by doing so, we expose ourselves to the danger of being accused of psychologism? It doesn't matter. The originality of educators lies in this: They are not only to expound on religious truths or speak as theologians or philosophers. Rather, educators are to discover in human nature the points of departure, with which religious values must be associated and linked.

In order to nip in the bud a difficulty which is beginning to arise, I want to add a second thought. It is one thing to strive for a religious atmosphere, and quite another to speak of psychological orientation. Our religious life the religious atmosphere too should be psychologically oriented. Therefore, whoever understands the connection will not accuse us of psychologizing religious values. We would almost like to say the opposite: If we would have a keener sense for the structure of the modern person, we would have a better grasp of the takeoff points that have to be worked out so that religious values have an effect on human nature. Perhaps then things would be going significantly better with all the education of our people and youth.

In our context the question which occupies us is of particular importance because it concerns the law of exemplary cases. We presuppose that a pronounced religious atmosphere envelops us here because religious elite communities have made their home here. The laws which are [generally] at work come to light more clearly in these exemplary cases, so much so that afterward they are considered valid, on the whole, for subordinate situations as well.

Lastly, a final point: Isn't it our task, all things included, to strive for this religious atmosphere in our parishes, schools and associations? Truly, today we would be better educators in every regard if we could manage to take the atmosphere of this place with us, bring it to our parishes and pass it on to our associations and organizations. Here too we ask the question: What are the psychological bases on which religious education rests? Which points of departure do we have to point out so as to achieve clarity on how to develop and form this religious atmosphere?

Before beginning further observations I would like to present the four psychological bases for religious experience; these are to occupy us later in detail:

1. The capacity for religious experience
2. The support of a religious community
3. The support of a clear, comprehensive view of religious truths

4. The support of a verification of these truths in a classic example.

We want to reflect on what can be said about these psychological bases individually. It is self-evident that we will not merely discuss them with one another. In addition, we want to discover the inner connections between them and Marian values. Once we have brought together what is of the essence in each individual basis, in the end we will still have to discuss the question: What is the significance of the Marian influence with respect to this? Let us begin with the first basis for religious experience.

***The capacity for religious experience.*** At present we have so many difficulties, so much distress in this area. Time and again we complain that people of today have no capacity for religious experience. This is the reason that, as an educator, I can talk as much as I want; everything goes right on by [my listeners] like empty words that neither move nor touch them inwardly. [My words] do not grip them.

We ask: What is religious experience? Which laws govern it and how does one apply these laws in present-day life? If you consider things from this perspective, you sense that we are trying to get to the bottom of the problem.

First we want to ask about the essence of religious experience; then we will know what the capacity for this experience looks like.

***Religious experience is the emotional reception and assimilation of religious truths.*** We are not merely speaking of an intellectually or rationally reception of truth but also of an emotional reception and, at the same time, emotional assimilation [i.e. on the level of the heart]. The truth that is presented should not only work its way into the heart. Rather, it should be digested there for as long as it takes the whole heart – and with it the whole person – to be penetrated and gripped by it.

Of course, the question immediately arises: What do we mean by heart?<sup>12</sup> Is it synonymous with feelings? We also sense a certain conflict – at any rate a certain possibility for tension – between the heart, mind and

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<sup>12</sup> In German the word is Gemüt, the person's seat of the emotions.

will. By the heart we mean the harmony between the higher and the lower appetites.<sup>13</sup>

In order to understand this definition you would have to make your own the whole psychology of human nature, and do so in the way the simple folk would. Those who have studied the book *Everyday Sanctity* will recall that human nature is composed of three levels: We distinguish in humans the animal, the angel and the child of God; put differently, the person on the level of the drives, is a child of God. The mind and will and the life of grace.

As regards the person of drives we can be compared to the animal, for we find in our nature the characteristics and powers of animals. The animal has a sensitive cognitive power; it has a sensory appetite. We do too. The human spirit (or the “angel” in every human being) has, like the angel, two faculties: the mind and the will, thus, a spiritual cognitive power and a spiritual appetite.

There you have the two focal points<sup>14</sup> the are to be united with each other. When do we speak, then, of the heart? When we can perceive harmony between the lower and the higher appetites.

A practical example: The will accepts a truth, a good God, e.g., or a person. If this deliberate, if this spiritual love, finds a corresponding response in the lower appetite, then we say the heart was at work.

If our love for God, even when it is markedly intellectual, grips the lower appetite, we say the heart has been penetrated and gripped by love for God. Look, in this context, at the all-embracing fundamental law of the spiritual life: You shall love the Lord your God with your whole *gamut*, with your whole heart, and with all your powers.<sup>15</sup>

I summarize once more: What is the answer to the question about the essence of religious experience? An emotional reception, compre-

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<sup>13</sup> *Appetite* in the sense of everything’s inclination to seek its own good

<sup>14</sup> The rational and sense appetites

<sup>15</sup> Cf Mt 22,37; Mk 12,30

hension and assimilation of religious truths [i.e. with the heart]. The answer is brief, precise, objective, scientific, yet it touches and affects everyday life itself. What is not quite intelligible to us, may later come to light and become clearer if we reflect on *the laws that govern religious experience*. We should highlight three laws in particular.

First law: Religious experience has *an integrating function that affects the whole person*. It presupposes the corresponding knowledge of religious truths, the corresponding inner surrender of the will to these truths. In addition, the knowledge must grip the heart and penetrate it.

If the heart joins the mind and will, and the whole person is gripped by a truth, then we can no doubt say: Religious experience has had an integrating function that puts the finishing touch on and affects the person as a whole. Then, in an outstanding way, human nature's creative powers are gripped, led upward, constantly inspired and kept in motion. We may see the heart as a bridge between the animal and the angel in us. If we talk across this bridge, it keeps two shores constantly linked and connected.

While looking into these truths theoretically, we may be distressed by the thought: How many present-day educators consciously and purposefully neglect to cultivate the heart! And, for that reason, they want to know nothing neither theoretically nor in practice about the way to arrive at religious experience and the capacity for religious experience.

Second law: Religious experience *touches the deepest core of the human soul*, the heart of a person, where creative powers, the profound depths of human nature are hidden. Religious experience moves elemental powers, inmost fundamentals which ultimately secure the basic attitude of the human person and the corresponding predispositions. We should weigh these two expressions.

We speak of predispositions. In times past, the term was coined and frequently used: The human soul is a *tabula rasa*, a blank tablet, supposedly. If only that were the case! No, the human soul has been written on superabundantly so. First, due to heredity: Our parents and grandparents took the stylus in hand, so to speak, in order to engrave signs



in our soul. If you like, you may string together the whole family tree way back to Adam and Eve. We cannot say our soul is a blank tablet.

Not only heredity but also basic personality traits play a role. For all practical purposes these two factors, both of these life processes seem to merge and yet there is a difference between them. Even if Adam and Eve had not sinned, our basic personality traits would differ; we would still be individuals. In that case, of course, the basic relationship between the intellect, the will and the heart would be a different one. You see, the basic personality traits stem from the constitutive dissimilarities in human nature.

A third predisposition is indelibly engraved on the tablet of our soul; basic impressions that we took in even in infancy, almost from the moment of birth. You may and must bear in mind that the human soul is a wondrous creation. No impression taken in by it, engraved upon it is ever lost. Sooner or later, in one way or another, all these impressions set the human will, the human personality in motion. You can sense the significance, e.g., of the first impressions made on us as children. In this light, perhaps you will understand better what experienced educators have told us: In essentials, the education of the human person is complete by the age of three or four. At first that seems incomprehensible. We must look into the meaning of such an assertion.

The direction that our emotional life will take, our soul's ability to take in impressions is very essentially determined by the first impressions in infancy. That is why so much depends on our seeing that our children, our young people are preserved from dangerous impressions, not only in the first years but also throughout their youth.

Religious experience reaches into the heart and into the subconscious mind as well. On the whole our actions are borne and driven more so by subconscious currents than by conscious willing. Prejudices! For example, two people who want to be objective are asked to evaluate a case. The same reasons are presented to both; both see and acknowledge them. In spite of this, their judgments may vary greatly; prejudices are at the root of the matter. We know this from practical experience: If

sympathy inspires a relationship one judges everything good; if apathy is at work the same actions are judged differently. The reason is unconscious prejudices.

We could actually discuss this at great length. Those of us who belong to Schoenstatt and, in the course of time, have made the *inscriptio*<sup>16</sup> in which we fused our heart with the hearts of God and Mary, comprehend anew seen in the above connection the significance of such an inner attitude. Through marked love for the cross, which is characteristic of the *inscriptio*, we want to transform the subconscious negative bias against crosses and suffering into a positive one. The goal of religious striving is ultimately always conformity with the divine will. Love of the cross is simply an excellent means to remove all the disturbing elements so that the soul is always ready to say an undaunted yes to whatever pleases God.

You sense that religious experience is of great importance. It penetrated the depths of the human soul. If the human spirit is amply filled with religious truths, and the will really wants to do what is good but the heart is not gripped by religious truths, we will never succeed in activating our inmost energies. Instead, our creativity will suffer considerably.

Third law: Profound religious experience *usually presupposes a corresponding experience in the natural order*. A religious father experience presupposes a father experience in the natural order. A religious mother experience usually presupposes a corresponding experience in the natural order. The same hold good for the love of brothers or sisters.

The deeper reason for this normal, general law is the law of world government which can be traced back to the common denominator: God rules the world according to the law of organic transference and transmission.

When we have reached the summit of this convention, we will take the opportunity to come back to this once more. Here it suffices to know to some degree what is implied. God transfers to secondary causes in our

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<sup>16</sup> *Inscriptio* is an abbreviated form for St. Augustine's definition of love: *inscriptio cordis in cor*, the inscribing of one heart into another.

case our parents a part of his attributes: something of his omnipotence, his love, his wisdom. While transferring these to the parents he is thinking of the child. Hence, the law of organic transference. In educating themselves and others, humans should take the same law as their guideline; they too should apply the law of organic transference/ The reverence, love and obedience we owe ultimately to God, we should transfer to secondary causes, to our parents or to authorities similar in nature. It is, however, a law of *organic* transference, i.e., while loving father, mother and siblings, we simultaneously love God and our Blessed Mother. That is a matter of course; it is the fundamental Catholic perspective. With this we have touched upon a basic law; countless times during this convention we must take a closer look at it.

Often, in a vital way, the question surfaces in us (not only now, but tomorrow too and the day after): Why is the capacity for religious experience so minimal in people of today, in today's youth? There are many answers, but one of the most significant ones is: because they have not been prepared through experiences in the natural order. Later we will try to discuss the profound inner connections because here we are facing barriers of crucial importance, barriers that have to be cleared.

Since we celebrate the feast of little *St. Thérèse* today, I would like to draw your attention by using her life as an example to what the law of organic transference and transmission should impress upon us: A person who has a sound Catholic family and has had a [sound] relationship to father, mother and siblings, grows into the depths of supernatural realities in a very organic way, often without crises. This is simply due to the law built into human nature by God: Nature and grace are, so to say, interdependent. The order of nature and that of grace intertwine; there is a deep inner connection between them. If the order of nature is unhealthy it is difficult for grace to gain entry.

In this context we would like to give St. Thérèse the word. In the book *Thérèse von Lisieux*<sup>17</sup> we read the following:

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<sup>17</sup> The quotes which follows in the rest of the talk are from Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Thérèse von Lisieux – Geschichte einer Sendung*, Köln 1950

Thérèse was born into a family that immediately and permanently became a symbol of heaven for her. From her family, its laws, relationships and happenings she learned to spell, as if in an illustrated primer, the realities of Christianity. Everything in this book was concrete, actually eloquent and easy to understand, written in the language which God invented specifically for little children.

Which language is it? The language of a sound family life and, consequently, a sound family experience. It is not abstract theory. Rather, the father, mother and sibling experiences are imprinted in a definite way of the soul.

There was no danger that the child would get stuck for a long time on one of the letters and not be able to penetrate its underlying spirit and meaning. The pictures shone forth, the letters meant something and, while looking and listening, the child immediately learned the meaning of both. In her development, looking at symbols and grasping the totality preceded abstract thought and guaranteed the right orientation of the child's awakening spirit. For her the whole world was a sacrament; what appeared there was an effective symbol of the Spirit of God who works through phenomena and matter.

The law of organic transference is evident here. Thérèse spontaneously transferred to the supernatural world the family experience she had in the natural order. Of itself the law of organic transference flowed into the law of organic transmission which led her into the depths [of attachment to God].

The center of the family was the **father**. In a human way she revered, loved and almost idolized him. To her it was instantly obvious that he was the never disintegrating unity between authority and love. She never, not even for a moment, feared her father. Her relationship to him taught her that obedience and love belong unquestionably

together, that at root they are one and the same. By experiencing her father's authority she came to understand the authority of God.

Time and again throughout the text we find traces of the law of organic transference and transmission.

She looked at her father, he looked at God, and through him she learned to look at God.

This is the simplest way: The living example of the father leads the child who is attached to him directly to God. There is no conflict, no mechanistic, no separatistic thinking. There is no separation between the earthly and the heavenly Father. In the feeling and thinking of little St. Thérèse they merged. Consequently, she grew in such a healthy way, and that is why she is such an example for us moderns.

Thérèse was still very small when her father took her to church. During the sermon he bent down to her and said, "Listen closely, my little queen. He is talking about your patron saint." "I listened, but I must admit that I looked at my father more than at the preacher. His handsome countenance said so much to me. Sometimes his eyes filled with tears that he tried to hold back to no avail. When he listened to eternal truths, it seemed that he no longer belonged to this earth. His soul was transported to a better world." At evening prayer Thérèse's place was next to her father. "All I need to do is look at his face, and I know how saints pray." All her life Thérèse was convinced that her father was a saint. With pleasure she recounted that during the pilgrimage to Rome they called him "Monsieur Saint Martin," that at the onset of his illness he "made wondrous progress on the road to sanctity," that he rejoiced when he was mistreated, that he was accustomed "to forgiving immediately," and "according to the testimony of Mother and all those who knew him, he never said a word against love." Isn't it understandable that for his daughter such a

father became an actual parable about Father God? Both fathers were so closely united that, when her father died, Thérèse dared to write, “The good God took from us the one whom we loved so tenderly. Did he not do this so that we could say in truth, Our Father in heaven?” And once, when speaking about God, the words *Papa le bon Dieu*<sup>18</sup> just slipped out. The image of her own father reflected, as does the dewdrop the sun, the father love of the one from whom all fatherhood receives its name. “When I think of you, my dear Papa, then I spontaneously think of the good God, for it seems impossible to me to find anyone holier than you on earth.”

These are weighty laws presented in a concrete way: The earthly and the heavenly Father are two in one – organic thinking, not mechanical tearing apart [of what belongs together]! These are formulations that we no longer understand, particularly we men who are inclined to have a sense for such inner connections because their thinking is circular, integral, and organic.

All the great laws that we teach in Schoenstatt, laws that are for most part not understood nowadays, we find in classic form in St. Thérèse. If we do not learn to think in a sound, organic way, if we do not overcome mechanistic, separatistic thinking, we do ourselves, our followers and human society a great deal of harm.

Do you see how, from beginning to end, the experiences St. Thérèse had in the natural order were an exceedingly forceful determining influence for those in the supernatural order? May I assume that you understand the laws which prevail here?

In a brilliant way the text goes on to explain how the mother experience in the natural order prepared her for and determined the supernatural mother experience and that, in the convent, the sibling experience sustained her community experience and saturated it with the supernatural. May I ask you to read and study the text at your

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<sup>18</sup> The good Papa God

convenience; especially those of you who want to work in education, the education of our people?

Hans Urs von Balthasar continues:

Thérèse actualized on the supernatural level only what she had already experienced in some way on the natural level. Perhaps nothing she ever experienced was more intimate and overpowering than the love of her father and mother.

That is genuinely characteristic of a woman. That is why women of today are ill to the very root of their soul because, more often than not, they have bit experienced a [healthy] natural family life.

That is why her image of God was formed by childlike love. We owe Thérèse's teaching, "the little way" and her teaching about childhood, to Louis and Zélie Martin, for in Thérèse of the Child Jesus they made God who iiii more than father and mother come alive. In contrast to St. Teresa of Jesus, bridehood was not the experience of little Thérèse.

Do you understand why? Because she was prepared for all her supernatural experiences by the natural ones. The book explains very well how she embraced all people with such naivety. "It was a matter of course for her to give missionaries the sisterly love which she bore her brothers."<sup>19</sup> That is why she could speak so naively of her brothers in Christ to whom she wanted to give all her love.

The thought that God is her Father overwhelmed her to the point of tears. One day a novice walked into Thérèse's cell and stood sill because the heavenly expression on Thérèse's face caught her by surprise. "What are you thinking of?" the young sister asked. "I am meditating on the Our Father," she replied. "How wondrous it is to call the good

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<sup>19</sup> Thérèse wrote of the two missionaries to whose salvation she had devoted herself: "Just as I would have taken a special interest in the work of my own dear brothers if they had lived...so now I unite myself in a special manner to the new brothers whom Jesus has given me."

God our Father.” There were tears in her eyes as she said this.

From the beginning to the end of her life her core experience was childlikeness, even after her relationship to Jesus grew in depth. She is simply **the** child. That is why she has such a great mission for our times: to preach single-hearted, simple child’s love everywhere.

The point of departure for the formulation of her teaching is the passage from Isaiah, “As nurslings you shall be carried in her arms and fondled in her lap. As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.”<sup>20</sup> And it is summarized in the prayer, “O you who know how to create the hearts of mothers, I find in you the most tender of fathers. For me your heart is more than motherly. Every moment you follow and guard me. When I call you, you never delay. And when you seem to hide at times, then it is you who comes and helps me find you.”

You see: The heart of Good, the heart of the Father is even more motherly than the heart of a mother!

Everything in Thérèse was childlikeness; she couldn’t ever get away from the thought of childlikeness. In all situations: childlikeness in relating to the Father! Everything in her relationship to God was personal. Here during these days, we want to pray and think through, to overcome separatistic thinking, in order to be made ready to open wide our heart for the Mother of God and the infinite God.

The effect of having such training in Christianity was that everything in her relationship to God was absolutely personal; nothing was formal.

How classic that is! Thérèse’s actions did not derive from ideas, drives or instinct. Everything focused on the personal. In education we frequently present ideas only, but we are not inclined to look at the ideas, embodied in persons. Followers, however, should find in their educator an

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<sup>20</sup> Is 66, 12-13



image of the eternal. In many ways we tear down everything we build up because we are not acquainted with the sound laws of nature.

Even when she obeyed, she did so out of love for a person, never out of compulsion or merely out of respect for a “law.” “To be good meant in Thérèse’s world only one thing: to do her father’s will, and to make her mother happy. Only one thing awakened the feeling of guilt: to have saddened her parents. Remorse and forgiveness wiped out each offense totally, immediately, unquestionably and unconditionally. This was the basic moral experience and primary experience that never left her. Any formalism was eliminated at its very root.” In the process, as is obvious from her notes, “fear of punishment [played] no role. In her case the conscience began to unfold, as it were, at [what would otherwise be considered] the climax [of its development]: with an obedience that is free because it is love.”

Why all this? Because it was an experience in the natural order.

‘Even when I was three years old they did not have to scold me so that I would mend my ways. A word spoken with kindness was enough it would have sufficed my whole life long for me to see that I was wrong.’ The fact that, as a small child, Thérèse could not endure a feeling of guilt, was the effect of the “sanctity” that surrounded her. She herself admitted: “Since I had nothing but good example before my eyes, it was only natural that I tried to imitate it. Everything around me breathed the spirit of love...one can hardly picture to oneself how kind Father and Mother were to me, ...was incapable of enduring the thought of having saddened my dear parents.”

All the commands that her parents gave were commands of love; even if she did not see the sense in them, she saw the love from which they stemmed. That was enough to justify

everything and make it easy. And, when she saw and wanted to gratify this love, there was no difference between command and wish. "As of my third year I never denied the good God a wish." Morality and religion in their entirety were immersed in this atmosphere of bottomless love permeated by grace, the love which radiated from the relationship between parents and child.

I think with this I have adequately delineated the third law: Usually, religious experience presupposes a corresponding natural experience. We have dealt not only with general theoretical reasoning, but also with essential bases for the scientific investigations which we intend to make later.

## Third Talk

### *Love for Mary Transforms the Human Heart*

After convincing ourselves of the profound effects that a religious atmosphere can have on the longing for God and the divine, we began to clarify religious experience and penetrate it scientifically. We tried to bring to light the psychological bases for religious education. The first basis we identified was the capacity for religious experience. We posed three questions and answered them in part: the question about the essence of and the laws governing the capacity for religious experience.

The third question with respect to applying these laws in everyday life is still pending. But before I go into it, allow me to do – here as well – what I had proposed, i.e., to establish the relationship between Mary and the above-mentioned laws. Since, at a later convention, we want to unfold and lay open the whole system of Marian education, here you may expect no more than a few comments.

When reflecting on the image of our dear Lady, from the above-mentioned viewpoint you should ask yourself the question: What about her capacity for religious experience? Consistent with what we have discussed till now, the second question can be put even more specifically: What about Mary's heart? I would like to highlight two thoughts.

First thought: *the Blessed Mother's capacity for religious experience*. To some extent this thought sheds light on the pastoral practices of many confreres as well as on the way in which pedagogy is implemented in schools and parishes. Don't we all know educators who, due to modern religious trends which they consider compulsory, absolutely refuse to deal with the religious heart for fear that this could foster empty sentimentality and that people would not be resilient enough against life's blows?

Recently someone wrote me about a pastor whom he knows well. For decades this pastor has worked one-sidedly, i.e., stressing only the liturgy in his parish. In the church there is no picture of our Lady. On the

whole he rejects Marian education and love for Mary. The reason he gives is that in the long run education geared to the heart could easily lead to a piety that is out of touch with life.

*[Love for Mary forms the heart]* I think it is all right to spare myself an answer to the problem, for haven't we just sung a hymn of praise to the importance of the heart and its state? How do you want to cultivate the capacity for religious experience if you do not consciously reach out for a far-reaching education of the heart? And if Marian education is a means to this goal, how can we possibly reject it?

Be mindful of the psychology of love for Mary! Love transmits life. If I love the Blessed Virgin she transmits her life to me. In her person we find the outstandingly womanly heart. Love for Mary is an excellent means to cultivate the heart on a religious level.

Allow me to take another look at present-day pastoral practice. Even in Catholic German circles in which Marian thought had been resolutely repressed, we have begun to pay more attention to it although in a one-sided way since the dogma of the Assumption.<sup>21</sup> Certain liturgical groups who are idea-oriented to an extreme, herald Mary now more so than in the past. But they do not present her image in the fullness of its inherent laws. Instead they stress her symbolic value: Our lady as symbol of the Church. By doing so, they rob love for Mary of much of its power to educate. Such an approach leaves us with nothing more than an idea filled visual aid constructed from ideas.

Those of us who are older and have gone through the school of idea-oriented education know this from experience. In our life and striving we have to *overcome impersonalism*. Only when we attach ourselves in a childlike way to the person of the Blessed Mother does the extensive value of Marian education for our times open up to us, particularly to the sick Germanic soul.

We have no idea how unsound Germanic thinking is. Inspired by philosophical idealism and infected by Protestantism, it paves the way for

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<sup>21</sup> Mary's Assumption, body and soul, into heaven was proclaimed a dogma of faith by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950.

collectivism. Germanic thinking stresses the religious **idea** but is not moved by it inwardly in life. The idea is not effective, does not form life. In this light we can understand the clearly formulated statement which Pius X made in his jubilee encyclical of 1904, writing it into the heart of the present-day Church: Love for Mary gives us a *vitalis Christi notitia*, an understanding of Christ that touches life.

Mary's image, if we grasp its message in a vital way, is capable of bringing God's person closer to us. The account we heard of little St. Thérèse made this thought so clear to us: Everything in her life was personal, not idea-oriented. Ideas grew in her through her contact with people. Personal attachments preserved her from impersonalism. We priests have to be careful not to depict our Blessed Lady only as a symbol of the Church. Otherwise, we obstruct the power innate in Marian education or water it down considerably.

A second thought: We speak of *our Lady's heart*<sup>22</sup> May I draw your attention to the fact, that, in this respect especially, the new **dogma of the Assumption** should make us interiorly jubilant? What does the new dogma state? The teaching about glorified souls is actually nothing new to us. All those who have been taken up into the vision of God may see him, i.e., enjoy the glorified vision of God. For the Blessed Virgin, though, this experience is richer than it is for others.

The new dogma deals primarily with the assumption of Mary's body into heaven. Through this dogma, how much light falls not only on our Lady's body but also on her heart! I will have to pass on describing the heart of the one blessed among women as it grew and developed during her lifetime. (This we did in detail toward the end of last year's pedagogical convention. You can look it up.) We would like to pause and reflect on Mary's glorified heart as it is up there in heaven. This precisely

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<sup>22</sup> In this entire passage, Fr. Kentenich is speaking of the Gemüt of our Lady. In using the translation "heart" therefore, one must be aware that the accent of Gemüt lies on Mary's emotional integration ("harmony of the higher and lower appetite") and the personal richness that is hers in heaven precisely, because she partakes in glory not only with her soul, but body and soul.

is the eminent feature manifested by the new dogma: Next to the glorified Savior stands the glorified bride, the one blessed among women, his Mother and bride whose body and heart are glorified.

The thought of her glorified heart captivates us, thus helping to heal many a sick spot in our own heart. Enlightened by Holy Scripture and dogmatics, we know that the glorified body shares in the qualities of the glorified soul. The body enjoys agility; it is spiritual through and through. Just as one's spirit can move from here to America with the speed of lightning, the glorified body obeys this swiftness of the spirit. That is why it can penetrate matter. It is also incapable of suffering and cannot die. We are happy to know that the Blessed Mother's glorified body is in heaven. What is of particular interest to us is her heart.

We think of the souls who already partake in the eternal vision of God. God's providence took care that they would be able to know and love him in heaven. Actually, this is something unique; for, usually, the soul needs the body to be able to carry out its functions. The souls, however, whose bodies have not yet resurrected cannot love the living God with their heart because they lack the second essential component of human nature. And now we see that the Blessed Mother, because she was assumed into heaven with body and soul, can love the infinite God with a warm heart.

It is this warm heart that gives human nature its glow and aroma, fervor, warmth, rapture. I think I must highlight connections that make us utterly jubilant. How should we picture the Blessed Mother to ourselves as she is in heaven? There the living God, Christ, finally receives a full-valued partner. Do not overlook the fact that Jesus is not only God but man. And because he is a human being, he would like not only to love with his human heart, but also to be accepted, embraced interiorly, embraced by a human heart. That may be the psychological reason that on earth countless human hearts beat for him in prayer, work and suffering.

But, I would almost like to say: With that, the bliss of the God-man notice: the bliss of the God-man is not yet complete. What does human nature lack to round off its bliss in heaven? A heart, if you will, that

represents all of human nature and society, a heart that embraces the God-man with endless intimacy.

So let us rejoice because the one blessed among women was assumed into heaven. We congratulate and thank her, the peak of all creation, for giving the God-man, in our name, the warmth that we, unfortunately, cannot yet give him.

Think too of the bliss which pervades and thrills through the nature of the Blessed Mother. Human nature can be truly blissful only once it is totally penetrated and gripped by God; once not only the mind and will but the whole person the heart as well is filled by him, filled and gripped by him.

Now picture to yourself with what intimacy and warmth of heart our Lady embraced the God-man here on earth. Then you can conclude how intimate are the sentiments of love that soar from the Blessed Virgin's heart<sup>23</sup> in heaven and have the God-man as their object.

What does such a glorified heart in the beatific vision, mean for us humans here on earth? We need a heart that understands us. It isn't as if movements of the will are all we need. We would like to be sheltered, to have the support of a warm heart. How deeply happy our soul is because we can tell ourselves: Mary who became our Mother remains our Mother. With the purified, supernatural, warm affection with which she embraces the God-man, she also embraces us. We are the object of her warm, glorified, supernatural mother love.

When we take the opportunity to study Mary's historic life in Holy Scripture, we find situations in which the Blessed Mother gives expression to her warm emotions the wedding at Cana, for example.<sup>24</sup> But the warmth with which she embraces us from heaven is boundlessly fuller than it could be while she was here on earth. Doesn't that give us reason to put our

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<sup>23</sup> At times Father Kentenich now begins to use the word "Herz" as well as Gamüt (both translated as "heart")

<sup>24</sup> Cf Jn 2,1-11

needs, whether physical or spiritual, in her hands and in her heart, and to do so with profound, simple trustfulness?

The ultimate meaning of God's assuming our Lady's body and her transfigured heart into heaven is this: He rounded off, to an extent, his immeasurably great plans for the world. Earlier we spoke of the Blessed Virgin as the symbol of the Church and warned against separating her symbolic character from the laws innate in her personality. Nevertheless, now I think I may say the other way around: We may not overlook her symbolic character.

The body of Christ, the king of the world and head of his Church, is glorified, and he has the deep, intense longing to glorify his mystical body and make it one with him. That is the great goal of divine guidance and education. One day his Church here on earth should have glorified features. He has already anticipated this glorified mystical body of the Church symbolically in the life of our Lady. In the image of the Blessed Mother we already have the embodiment of the Church in its ideal state, the new Jerusalem. *Trahe nos* – Draw us/after you!<sup>25</sup>

If we ponder our Lady's image in this light and put it into the context of the great laws that govern religious experience, it become easy for us to ask and beg time and again: Mother, if only I were like you! More yet: Mother, if only I *were* you!

I think with this I should close the second train of thought. Let's recall what we have discussed: the essence of the capacity for religious experience and the laws governing it.

### *In-depth Diagnosis of the Modern Soul*

Now we will turn to the practical application of the same. In the course of these talks a question has probably been burning on our lips and in our hearts: What about the modern person's capacity for religious experience? Two thoughts come to mind, and we should think them

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<sup>25</sup> Cf Song 1,4



through to the end. First we have to *diagnose moderns to the depths of the soul*; then we have to ask ourselves: What are adequate remedies?

What are people like today? Should we look into the other camp to see which features of the modern soul it reveals to us? Should we look into our own faces? You can be sure of this: The bacilla that have invaded present-day humanity have also infiltrated our own souls.

Two answers could furnish our line of thought. The modern person shows *signs of atrophy* and mutilation. An unusual image of the human being! Human nature faculties suffer atrophy and mutilation! Imagine the body “in such a state”. That, we say, is what the soul looks like in these times.

Actually, I have to add that this portrayal is typified, for we have poured into one example all the traits which characterize moderns. In reality such a person does not exist; we have only typified. But it is true that moderns are developing in that direction. Thus, there may be people who embody a good number of these characteristics.

What does this atrophy of human nature and human faculties look like in detail? Today we speak of the crisis of the human person. Not only are religious truths caught up in a crisis; the human being *per se* is going through a crisis. There are those who are convinced, those who advocate the line of thought: Current events and experience have changed human nature so much that the old truths, which had formed people in the past have little or no bearing at all now.

Of course, as Catholics we protest against such relativism. We must admit, however, that the picture of the soul has changed, has been altered considerably in many ways. That is the reason for the challenge: Don't just teach theology; be a psychologist too! Don't just make objective truths known. Rather, combine with these the application of the same; show others the takeoff points for everyday life. If we do not do this, we are not sufficiently psychology-oriented and will not have an influence on people. We can pray and make sacrifices, but that alone does not distinguish the educator and priest. He has to be a man who is familiar with life, a man who is sensitive to the soul's features. That is why it is

important to see and characterize the image of the modern person clearly, for moderns are like the man who fell prey to robbers.<sup>26</sup>

What is the atrophied person of today like? What features does such a person have? If we want to characterize moderns in general terms we must say that they are obviously no longer as resilient as in years gone by. Evidently something in the depth of their nature has changed. They always tend toward extremes. Either they are the very silent individuals who cannot come into contact with those around them, or they are the loud mouths who are never quiet and must say everything. Put more precisely, human nature has become fragile to the point of crumbling. The human's spiritual volume has dwindled considerably.

One reason for this may be that the circumstances at home and often in public are so twisted and confused. Humankind can no longer manage not even if it were as resilient as in times past to endure pressure such as modern life exerts on it. Another reason for the distressing fact that the human soul is atrophied, thus rendering a person incapable of mastering life, lies not in external circumstances but in the soul itself. It shows signs of atrophy of the spiritual faculties, an atrophy which shows itself particularly in two ways.

First, moderns have lost the ability to maintain the internal relationship between the natural and the supernatural world. They have lost the necessary tension between the two worlds. Second, the technological and industrial age has cast its shadow on the life and image of the human person. These two facts taken together explain the fragility of human nature today. Draw several lines from this point to present-day inner life and you will come upon three weighty effects.

First, in many ways our contemporaries have *narrow horizons*; their spirit is very restricted. Exteriorly their knowledge has certainly increased in volume. How much they know about technology and the life of peoples, about the individual branches of knowledge, even about the human soul! Our knowledge has increased, but we have forfeited something of the essence, something of very large dimensions, for our

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<sup>26</sup> Cf Lk 10,30

knowledge: the entire supernatural reality. The modern person's organ for understanding and grasping the reality of the world beyond is atrophied.

Please keep in mind: Because they have crossed the whole supernatural reality out of their lives and for them it no longer exists, moderns must master the burdens of life on the natural level. And they cannot manage. Life's happenings have lost their meaning altogether. People circle around themselves and have no criteria, no standpoint from which they can understand the meaning of their life. We acquire these only if we expose ourselves to the life of the world beyond.

You shouldn't think, now, that such narrow horizons, that such a lack of meaning in one's own life, exist only on the other side of the fence. We find the same thing in our own ranks. In our case, the supernatural world may not have faded altogether, but is certainly has become significantly obscure.

Go to our large cities. When you see the stone deserts of houses destroyed by war, you have before you a symbol of the confined vision of moderns. Everything lies on the ground in ruins, and these narrow their horizons.

People today lack a naïve, supernatural, believing view. They lack the naivety of surrender to the eternal God: the single-hearted, simple faith in Divine Providence, the faith which dares the leap into the supernatural, into the other world in all situations of life. The modern person lacks the key that solves all problems, not in the sense of science but in practice, in mastery of life's paths.

In this light you can see how important it is for all of us to bear witness everywhere to Schoenstatt's weighty message of practical faith in Divine Providence, and how significant the spirit of childlikeness is as taught by St. Thérèse. We Schoenstatters like to say: Practical faith in Divine Providence is so highly developed and marked in us that it has simply become our world view. The main source of knowledge, of discovering God's wish and will lies in the structure of things, in life's blows of fate, in the story of our little lives and of world events. In the main, God wants to unveil his plan of wisdom to us in this way.

We must add, however, that even religious persons not only face the interior prospect of this shadowy faith but rather, they are also constantly exposed to countless influences, incessantly shaken and jolted by the impressions and problems of present-day life; [they are part of] today's mentality in which image upon image runs together. All this makes a person incapable of seeing hence and all the more incapable of looking calmly into eternal light, into the divine. That is what causes atrophy in human nature, atrophy of human faculties, narrowed horizons.

Second, it makes one *incapable of making weighty supernatural decisions*. Nowadays there is so much talk about the risk involved in making decisions. When people talk so much about something, it is a sign that there is quite a lack along that line. In our times humans find themselves in such an overwhelming earthly plight that as we have already said, they have to grapple with life to such extremes that their ability to decide is hardly up to par, and they cannot manage in everyday life to decide one way or the other. What is the reason for this? Perhaps it is a result of the intense burden of life in the past years.

In addition, we must admit that there is an abiding inability to rouse oneself to make momentous resolutions and decisions, particularly when it is a question of religious matters, of the supernatural. Observe how religious people are often incapable of making a decision. Their confessor or spiritual director is supposed to decide for them.

We have to re-learn to decide for ourselves, to make decisions of consequence independently, with regard to religious life as well. Today people hardly get past little decisions. The risk into the dark, into the mystery of Good, this forceful deciding for oneself and plummeting into the abyss if God how rarely do we witness it today! When it is a religious matter there is simply an inability to resolve [to follow a course of action].

In addition, where religious people are at work there is often evidence of an intense ethical outlook. They focus time and again on little moral demands and would like to keep their collars white at all times. Moderns rarely manage the great thrust into the supernatural, divine,

eternal world. Don't we too show signs, to a great extent, of this atrophy of soul?

Third, *the heart of the modern person is affected by the same atrophic illness*. You will reply: That can't be true; moderns have only lost the ability to think clearly. Consequently, in their hearts you find a certain overcompensation, at most.

True, their emotions have not died out altogether. Nonetheless, in many cases a modern is only a bundle of feelings. In those who do have feelings these have not matured fully on the level of the heart. Their emotions change quickly; they are neither deep nor constant nor warm. On the one hand, the mind and will can no longer regulate and settle the stirrings of the emotions; while on the other, the emotions cannot captivate the mind and will satisfactorily. The heart cannot make the ascent.

Atrophy of human nature and its mutilation stand side by side. The human faculties are cut to pieces. In truth, the modern person is like someone who has fallen into the hands of robbers and is badly wounded and mutilated. The next talk will illustrate what this mutilation looks like. It will also indicate the cure, the role of an all-embracing, far-reaching devotion to Mary.

## Fourth Talk

### *Continuation of the Diagnosis; Separatistic Thinking*

The aim of this talk is to take a closer look at the mutilation of the soul. For the sake of clarity we must first allow ourselves a preliminary reflection. The human person is a *unitas multiplex*, a multiform complex unity. Body, soul and spirit are rooted in the core of the personality. They develop according to definite laws, simultaneously but not uniformly, and each seeks, if possible, to its own way. The body would like to go its way, so would the spirit and the soul. They must remain related, however, and not separate.

The goal of their development is to mature to an organic totality which includes an ordered structure. The body should show the spirit the way and the spirit should show the soul the way, and all three should ultimately be subject to God. The parts of this ordered structure should be firmly and permanently linked to and with each other; they should form an organic totality. If, however, the individual levels in the human person develop separately, if they become independent and are divided, if the body detaches itself from the soul and the soul from the spirit, then we speak with good reason of human nature's mutilation.

If, for example, the mind breaks away from the will and the emotions and is no longer a light for them, if it absolutely goes its own way - we have before us an extreme intellectualist who has a big head and a heart that is shriveled up. That is a distortion of human nature. The same holds true if the will is pulled out of the entire structure, is not enlightened by the mind and does not set the heart in motion. When the emotions break away from the will and the mind, the same thing happens. Thus, the mutilation of human nature can be exceedingly complex.

In the interest of achieving the aim that we are pursuing during these days, allow me to narrow down the facts. Let's put aside the different types of mutilation and turn to a person whose intellect is developed to an extreme, whose mentality is characterized by separatistic,

mechanistic thinking. We want to dwell on this, a type of mutilation of soul, [a mutilation] of the human mind, of the human cognitive power.

We want to accentuate two questions and place them in the setting of modern exuberant life:

1. What do we mean by separatistic, mechanistic thinking?
2. How should we evaluate it within the framework of the foment of currents in the spiritual battle of today in which all of us should and must fight?

First question: *What is mechanistic thinking?* It is neither organic nor sound because it splits human nature. It separated the mind, will and heart from each other.

Sound thinking is organic, symbolic, centered and integral. Please keep these four expressions in mind in order to check whether our own thinking has remained sound. Listen once more: Very sound, original human thinking is organic, symbolic, integral and centered. If we had the time we could look further and more deeply into the modern psyche from this point of view. To some extent in what follows, light will fall upon one or the other life process.

All mechanistic thinking is an abnormal, unsound thinking. If you want to go into more depth you have to look at this mechanistic, separatistic thinking from the viewpoint of both the subject and the object. With a view to the subject, the bearer of the intellectual faculty, we speak of separatistic thinking when the mind breaks away from the will and the heart.

We, the older generation, know that, don't we? When we were still young, [our schools] everywhere were forming the intellectualistic person; the training of the will and the heart was very much neglected. At present, however, that is of little interest to us. As we work our way into the topic, we would much rather turn to the problem of mechanistic thinking.

As regards the object, what is the effect of the mechanistic thinking? It separates ideas from life, the first cause from secondary causes, and life processes in their relation to each other.

*It separated ideas from life*, e.g., the idea of God from the life of God. It sees in Good ideas, but does not see life in God. In intellectual Germanic circles, how intensely is religious thinking an intellectualistic, separatistic, mechanistic thinking! Are we aware of this? Listen to the words of an expert, a lay person endeavoring to analyze and explain the modern religious psyche:

Among intellectuals there are spirituality-types who are willing to go along only if they can somehow grasp with the mind the initiative taken, only if they are able to feel that they are co-authors. These types do not notice that their joy arises more from the intellectual factor than from the actual object itself. They believe more in their own faith than in the reality which their faith represents. They have no need of motives because faith comes second to the esthetic element.

This is a description of religious connoisseurs, religious intellectualists. They separate ideas from life and ask: Is God an idea for me? Is the Blessed Mother an idea for me? Is my neighbor an idea for me? And yet if they are nothing more than an idea they will not arouse us interiorly.

Our religious life is abnormal because our thinking has become separatistic. If we ask time and time again, why is it that our education including our education in piety frequently shows very little creativity? The answer is: because it is far too intellectualistic. What we present in our sermons and instructions is a product of the mind, and it appeals to the minds of our listeners. True, in educating men we have to take the intellect into account to a great extent, but knowledge alone is dead; it kills, and leaves a person dead. The process of education is a procreative act. Each begetting presupposes real life. Only real life can bring about real education.

Isn't our whole system of education, including our piety-education, intellectualized to an extreme? Isn't it marked by the separation of ideas from life? We suffer from an intellectualized life of faith, from conceptualism that kills living faith.



How important is for example, the education offered by the Journeyman's Association?<sup>27</sup> What Kolping gave us in the line of wisdom in education and educative processes is so sound. He was a practical educator. Only personalities full of life can educate and form persons who are full of life this was a matter of course for him.

We have before us a problem central to present-day methods of education. For this reason, a sound devotion to Mary is of such importance if we are to overcome mechanistic thinking. In the long run intellectualistic, mechanistic thinking makes sound devotion to Mary impossible,

Kolping calls for fathers, not merely authorities, who engender life through the power of their own life and striving. You sense the true educator of the people in him. If we want to overcome intellectualistic, mechanistic thinking, the separation of ideas from life, we have to make room for true *paternitas* [fatherliness] and true *maternitas* [motherliness] in our life. This incessant reflection, this constant intellectualizing does not create life.

At any rate, we can say that the need for educators who teach theory is covered far better than the need for educators full of life who form our people. Kolping says that those who want to win people have to pledge their heart as pawn. He wants his educators to be more than spiritual directors. He wants them to be true fathers, for only a father can beget life. That is why the idea of a father is so very clear in the Kolping Family.

Do we sense the great significance of devotion to Mary for religious life? It gives us a *vitalis Christi notitia*, not only an intellectual knowledge of the eternal, living God, but also a knowledge that touches life.

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<sup>27</sup> Bl. Adolf Kolping (1813 – 1865), a German priest, was deeply concerned about the plight of the craftsmen of his day. In 1846 he founded the Journeymen's Association, offering its members a lifestyle suited to their specific needs. Now known as The Kolping Family, the organization operates on an international level.

*Mechanistic thinking separates the first cause from secondary causes.* A few examples can illustrate this:

Somewhere a deeply religious girl who belonged at one time to a Catholic youth organization, heard the Marian song “Beautiful and Magnificent Lady, I want to give you all I have, my life and blood as well.” She felt she could never sing such a song, for she could only abandon herself to God, not to people and, consequently, not to our Lady either.

True surrender to the Blessed Virgin is unacquainted with this mechanistic thinking, and does not separate her, the secondary cause, from the first cause, God. It is obvious that, separated from God, a creature cannot arouse my total surrender. If I give myself to our Lady or to another creature, I can only do so in the context of their relatedness to God.

In this connection I remind you of little St. Thérèse. She was crazy about her father because, enraptured, she beheld in the image of her father the image of God. Precisely in giving herself to her natural father, she gave herself in organic totality to Father God.

The above-mentioned girl went on with her complaint, “I cannot pray the prayer *My Queen, My Mother*.<sup>28</sup> I can only give myself totally to God.” Again, this way of looking at things is a fruit of mechanistic thinking.

Those who overlook the subordinate regions of the secondary causes and of the want to fly directly to the final cause, harm not only the organism of sound life. In the course of time they also deprive themselves of what secures access to the higher order. If I give myself directly and exclusively to the spiritual God, I must fear that sooner or later the thought

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<sup>28</sup> My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you. And to show my devotion to you I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my entire self without reserve. As I am your own, my good Mother, guard me and defend me as your property and possession. Amen.

The exact origin of this prayer, believed to have been written in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century, is unknown.

of God will evaporate to such an extent that, in the end, I may even be straining after a certain godlessness. If the thought of God is not filled with life, it does not create life. Since God made the subordinate regions a certain doorway to the superior regions, we have to say a firm yes to the wishes, to the orders of God.

Another example: From the pulpit a priest who is giving a mission somewhere lets thunder and lightning loose on certain parish groups. He admits that they are elite groups. And yet, because their outlook is Marian, he says, “They’ve been Marian so long already! When will they ever make headway?” That is separatistic thinking; he mechanizes the religious world. In an outstanding way, devotion to the Blessed Mother is indeed devotion to Christ, to the triune God.

Somewhere a pastor asks himself the question: “Should I consecrate my parish to Mary and even go so far as to give the diocese directly to her? That is something I may certainly not do... Years ago I made an act of consecration and addressed it to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Years have passed and the effect of the consecration is nil. Now if I go and give the parish to the Blessed Virgin, I’m documenting that I think she can do more than Jesus.” Do you sense separatistic, mechanistic thinking? Organic thinking always sees both the first and secondary causes, God and our Lady, in and with one another.

In a parish a pastor with modern tendencies decorated his church the modern way. The altar, of course, is in the center, but the picture of Mary is in a faraway corner so that Christ alone is in the foreground. All his pastoral activity is geared in this direction. One day he sees a few women kneeling before the picture of Mary and he cries out gruffly, “Just look at the old women kneeling in front of a figure and not in front of the tabernacle” that is how far separatistic thinking, living and acting can go!

Aren’t such things crimes committed against our people? We tear everything apart and are surprised that a religious surge of life is no longer possible. The subordinate regions are not only a certain preparation but also a lasting protection for the superior regions.

I quote a letter:

Our parish was assigned a new pastor. I knew him to be a radical anti-Schoenstatter, but I also know he sacrifices himself totally for his parish. After a short time he became benevolent toward the Schooenstatters because he learned from experience that he could rely on them. The Schoenstatt youth invited him to a meeting. Later the girls told me that for a long time they had thought about a song to sing that would not offend him. They decided on the song *We Are Building on Holy Ground*, and they sang all the verses. After the last verse the pastor said, “You Schoenstatters are not consistent. In the first verse you sing about God’s holy realm and in the last about the queen’s holy realm. You can sing either one or the other but not both.”

These are serious matters! We tear life to shreds and then complain that our people are not receptive anymore to religious values. We have become religious intellectualists and cannot overcome mechanistic thinking. Our people do not have that problem, but we do, and we make it a problem. We misuse our authority and make the sound thinking of our people unsound. We waste time and stifle life. Isn’t it time to find our way back to organic thinking, living and loving?

We have discussed the separation of first and secondary causes for a relatively long time. Mechanistic thinking separates life structures as well. That will be the topic of the next talk.

## Fifth Talk

### *Fatherless Times*

If you want to heal someone who is ill you must first make a diagnosis. The modern person has fallen ill. Therefore we must first get to know the illness in detail. On the one hand, the soul of moderns is atrophied in many ways, on the other, it is mutilated. To a limited extent we are trying to discuss this mutilation from the viewpoint of mechanistic thinking. The first question read: What do we mean by mechanistic thinking? Now that we have defined our terms, we may apply them to everyday life. We have three areas in mind:

1. the separation of ideas from life,
2. the separation of the first cause from secondary causes, and
3. *a mechanistic separation within the individual spheres of life.*

There are life processes both in the natural and supernatural order. We want to dwell carefully on the natural order in particular, its germ cell is the family. Good intended a sound natural family to be an organic totality; husband and wife, father and mother, parents and children should live spirit in spirit. The family is meant to be an organic unity of life. Its members should not live spirit or spirit against spirit.

Today this unity of life is extensively disturbed. Not as if we would not know that from time immemorial there have been countless obstacles in the way of creating and giving form to such a unity of life. But that is not the issue here. The point in question is: What is at the root of the lack of unity? One of the most weighty causes is separatistic, mechanistic thinking and acting.

Nowadays there are those who even boast when they can state that they have broken up families. How does the woman fare who, owing to mechanistic thinking and acting, is torn away from the organism of the

family as formed by God? How does the child get on who no longer has a home in a natural family?

In the interest of this convention's theme, we want to dispense with these two areas and focus intensely on the father of the family. The reason for the homelessness in our present-day world is the fact that it has become fatherless. With Nietzsche<sup>29</sup> we could add: Today there are no longer any motherlands. This may be true. That is why, particularly in Catholic circles, there is so much discussion about motherhood and motherliness. We pay too little attention, however, to the significance of fatherhood and fatherliness.

From the metaphysical point of view, *the father is the source of authority in the family*. He has the primary power because he shares in God's procreative activity. The authority of the mother is only complementary and dependent on the father's.

The father may not be torn away from the organism of family life so very much depends on this. Healing the world presupposes healing the family. And healing the family essentially includes reforming our idea of the father, our awareness of the father and of fatherliness.

The definitive metaphysical reason that the father is the source of authority in the family is that he participated in God's procreative activity. In the bosom of the Most Holy Trinity the Father is the source of authority because he is the one who begets. The Father begets the Son; the Father and Son bring forth the Holy Spirit.

We are living in fatherless times, fatherless because the family has become fatherless. First we will dwell on the fact as such, seek the reasons and point out the importance of paternal authority.

First the fact. Today, all too often the father is removed from the family, a structure meant to be a whole. There are even those who consciously aim at doing this. As a result, family life as a whole disintegrated, is torn apart, divided, a sound, living structure the family is destroyed.

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<sup>29</sup> Cf First talk, Footnote 3

Separatistic thinking endeavors, with great success, not only to cause a separation of ideas from life but also a separation of life processes from each other. There we have it: the tragedy of mechanistic thinking.

Because the father is removed from the family, a structure meant to be a whole, the aim becomes to form so-called mother-families, that is to say fatherless families. Accordingly, on account of the shortage of men, some years ago a member of parliament proposed that polygamy, as well as divorce on demand and without legal proceedings, be allowed. The grounds she gave were that many women are unable to find husbands. Another reason given was that today men have a great role to play in public life. They have to be active in politics and economics, so they should be taken out of the family.

It's not that a concession to human weakness in everyday life is hidden behind these views. Rather, this is simply an absolutely misled, misguided thinking: mechanistic thinking. Based on modern attitudes people also strive to separate sexuality and love. This is the effect of the terrible tragedy of separatism, of mechanistic thinking.

From this point of view let us shed a little light on our Catholic circles, on our Catholic priests, on our Catholic educators. Don't you think that, on the whole, we have to say that to a certain extent we too have been infected by this separatistic way which increasingly does away with the father of the family? For example, when we look for people to help with the education of families or with education in general, we usually look for mothers, rarely for fathers. To fathers, who should develop the principle procreative force in their families, we do not know what to say.

That is a concession to the modern spirit of the times. Without realizing it, we have been afflicted by mechanistic thinking; on our part we help, though not consciously, to break up the family's organic totality of construction. And then we search for the culprit who is at fault for the inability of moderns to have religious experience. Later we will go into detail about the damage caused by removing the idea of the father from the family.

Second: We inquire about the reasons for *concept of a fatherless family*, a fatherless world order. We could give many reasons for this. One of the most essential is the disappearance of the father and, therefore, the disappearance of paternal authority. The reasons for eradicating the idea of the father are to be found in our times. There are direct and indirect reasons. The direct reasons may be external or internal.

One of the *external reasons* is the long absence of fathers who were engaged in combat. As a result the mother and motherly authority came into forefront. Another external reason for the disappearance of the father's authority during the long period of separation caused by the war is the unfulfilled longings to husband and wife. They had set great hopes in each other and thought those would be fulfilled once they were reunited as family, hand in hand and heart in heart. The impact of seeing one another and living together again was, in many cases, terribly disappointing. In the meantime the man had developed in a completely different way, the woman too had gone her own way. As a result they were deeply disappointed in each other. In addition, the wife, who had been in command for years, did not want to give up any of her authority, for the most part, she wanted to be the one to rule. Often our men and fathers were exhausted and ill when they came home from the battlefield. So they became the object of motherly love and were no longer the natural bearers of authority. In the same vein we could list quite a number of exterior reasons that unveil the picture of our times, reasons that document the disappearance of paternal authority from the family.

The *internal reason* for the father's loss of authority may well consist in the fact that in the course of years fathers have shown their inner and outer helplessness. They were unable to protect their children from the dangers of bomb warfare. Time and again they had to rush into dangerous situations for which they were no match. Consequently, the concept of strong fathers faded, and an experience essential to family life was disregarded more and more.



If you want to know the indirect reasons you have to go back into history. Protestantism robbed us of the father-idea in religious life, the father as representative in the papacy by the Holy Father.

The enlightenment went one step further. Till then we had had a patriarchal era: In everyday life the father's authority was in the foreground, and because of paternal authority in the family there was on the whole, in the fatherly way of governing and wisdom in governing are **that** deeply and intensely connected in government and state.

Then the French Revolution proclaimed the motto, "Liberty, equality, fraternity," and it "beheaded" the family. All were equal. The family no longer had a head; it had no hold in a strong ultimate authority.

Of course, we must admit that in the last centuries the authority of the father was frequently misused. Homage paid you to a paternal thirst for power without keeping in mind what the authority of the father means to selflessly serve both natural and supernatural life in others, particularly in the family.

Third: Let us add a few words about *the importance of the father's authority* [and] of a father experience.

First statement: *Paternal authority provides both the individual and the community with a strong support.* First, it gives the individual a firm hold. Fatherly authority is simply one of the conditions for a child's, for a young person's, existence. It gives the child, whether girl or boy, an instinctive awareness of authority and hence the experience of security. It provides children with the experience of spiritual shelter, a shelter that affects life. Fatherly authority experienced instinctively gives the child simultaneously through word and example an original world view and the extensive possibility of making contact with others.

Each of these statements as such includes a whole world in itself. Do we want to take the time to think them through in detail? Whoever does nothing more than hear these thoughts, whoever picks up impressions only but does not grasp the connections, can't do much with them later in everyday life.

True paternal authority also provides the community with a firm support. In a family brothers and sisters are equal and need a superior authority. Of course, this may and should also be the authority of the mother. From the metaphysical point of view, however, the father must be the ultimate guarantee of the family's ability, possibilities and reality when it comes to establishing relationship. Children are brothers and sisters because they have been begotten by the same father obviously, also because they have been born of the same mother. However, because as St. Thomas Aquinas and Leo XIII teach and practical life verified – the father's procreative role is primarily active, the father is the family's strong support, the cement which keeps it together. Of course the father is to be complemented by the mother.

Our time does not recognize paternal authority anymore. Consequently, it overlooks (within the framework of family life) this essential root for forming both the community's ability to make contact and its possibility doing so must therefore look for new and different means, such as, dictatorship which forces people into its yoke. If we had true fathers and ideal families, we would have no need for dictatorships. Then there would be genuine communities with a firm, safe hold in paternal authority. The authority of the father would then – in reality and by necessity expand and spread out in all directions into the formation and education of municipalities as well as into national governments.

If we want to reach the root of modern problems, then we must help promote in a preeminent way a new father-conscious era. What's the use if we priests and educators work constantly but do not get a firm grip on the root of the disease and try to heal it! One may speak of the United Nations which want to restore the unity lacking among peoples, but time and time again you will have to acknowledge. All the means which are tried and applied as substitutes have not and will not lead to the goal. We may even say this: In the end, not even the authority of the pope and of the priest, insofar as it is meant to be a support for moderns, will lead to the goal unless the authority of the father in the natural family is more effectively restored.

In the normal course of events religious authority, a certain supernatural fatherly authority, will come to life only where there is a foundation in the natural order, in natural fatherliness. An otherworldly, supernatural, fatherliness and childlikeness may be possible even without the natural foundation, but for great stretches of its development such self-giving will fail to connect with the drives. There is hardly anything that can take the place of connecting on the level of the drives.

I remind you of what I said about little St. Thérèse. You can analyze an exemplary soul [if you study] her childlike relationship to her exemplary father.

You will surely not take offense or misinterpret my statement if I dare to say that, unless it can build upon natural father experiences, even divine fatherly authority can hardly give moderns the hold they need amid the widespread confusion of present-day circumstances. This is not meant theologically, God is clearly the ultimate authority but psychologically. As sentient beings we are dependent on sensory experiences in the natural order. Our childlike surrender to divine fatherly authority very often lacks the innate subconscious sense of being filled and gripped by God. If a person isn't given this experience of fatherly authority somehow in the natural order (either by one's own father or by a substitute father figure), if in some way a person cannot have deep, childlike experiences in the natural order, all along the line you will come upon a terrible tragedy, not only for the individual but also for present-day culture in general. Today it is not as easy to be a father as it was in the patriarchal age. If, for example, the father lacks deep reverence for the mother [of his children], for his wife, soon she and the children will, in keeping with the law of over-compensation, form an opposition party and turn against the father.

Nowadays it is not easy to really be a father. For example, if the father gives in to his thirst for power in relation to his children, if he does not know how to direct their urge for freedom into the correct channels, by tomorrow or the day after, he will have raised rebels. That is why we must renew the world by renewing the father and fatherhood. A colossal program!

We made a second statement: *Fatherly authority creates a creative tension between the father and the mother.* A twofold function of the father leads to this creative tension:

1. [It is his function to] help the mother be a true mother; and
2. without the mother's complementation, he cannot function as father.

You notice: This is an immense reform program to which we should dedicate all our love; the renewal of the father's authority. If only we had more educators who truly love and never stop loving, who constantly do this detail work behind the scenes!

I will now address the twofold function of the father as regards the creative tension between the father and the mother.

First function: The mother needs the father's authority in order to be able to be a true mother. If she does not have it, if she has neither inner support nor a mainstay and complementation in the father's authority, she will soon lose her love for children. She will be afraid of having children. Motherhood will not mature sufficiently into perfect motherliness.

In some way, motherliness should also develop the child within. The most beautiful realm in a woman's soul is the realm of childlikeness. A child is hidden in every woman. In every woman a child cries out. In relation to whom should she develop her true childlikeness, even after she has become a mother? In relation to her husband.

In some families, e.g., the mother does not call her husband by his name. Rather, she calls him "Father" and, vice versa, he calls his wife "Mother." They do this not only for the sake of the children but also because of a sound natural need for complementation.

Second function: [First,] if fatherliness is to develop, it calls for genuine motherliness, without which it cannot mature. With respect to the father's authority, the function of authentic motherliness is one of complementation. In a father, thirst for power has to be mitigated by motherly selflessness, a father's vainglory by motherly spirit of service; a father's urge to see a finished product even in education must be complemented by a motherly, affectionate, humble attitude and constant

cheerfulness, a father's nervousness must be tempered by motherly patience, self-sacrifice and self-surrender. That is what the ideal of the genuine mother is like. Do such women still exist today?

In our endeavors to renew the family we have to see that, in every regard, we gain mother – and fatherlands, ideal women and mothers, ideal fathers. For thirty years Jesus embedded himself in a family, he led a quiet family life for years and spoke so eloquently through his life. He wanted to heal and sanctify the family.

Second, as regards the father, genuine motherliness has a far-reaching, comprehensive, sheltering function. With his idea-flights, his creative ideas and train of thought, the father may devise and cook up great things. But it is in the heart of a woman that these great thoughts are stored. For his creative thinking as well, but even more for his formative work, a man needs the heart of a woman and mother. For this reason, whoever wishes to act as a reformer in the Church and world needs a gathering of noble women. Men can think and plan. A woman stores these great plans in her heart, in her life, and she is ready to give up everything in order to realize them.

Third: It is a wife's task or function to complement her husband, the father. This is exceedingly far-reaching, something of surpassing greatness and value! Many ideas from our past discussion on the philosophy of the complementation of the sexes would be repeated here. Although it would be of considerable value, I cannot go into it in detail now.

In his wisdom God did not embody the complete idea of the human being in one type but in two, and these two types are meant to complement each other. That is why a magnetic current flows continuously between man and woman; that, too, is the reason for the strong, noble urge toward ontologic complementation of the two sexes.

In addition to the function of complementation, a woman also has an entological function toward a man; an ideal woman complements the being of a man. The father's authority is softened and mitigated by the soothing influence, by the kind, serving influence natural to a woman. The

severity of his domineering ways is softened by her love. Conversely, the strength, sureness and firmness of the man crown and complement the softness and tenderness in a woman's structure.

In view of these important connections, what could almost be termed a passion may awaken in the true educator. If only I could help to form sound families!

The art of educating is wisdom; it is a charism. If only we had more educators with this charismatic gift! If we do not consider education a life's task, if it does not become a passion, if we are not gripped by the task of education, if our love for those entrusted to us is not truly reverent and sincere, then I ask you. What do we hope to achieve with all our endeavors and deliberations about reform?

With this I have answered the question regarding mechanistic thinking, stating in particular its effects: It tears apart life processes in the natural as well as in the supernatural order. The second point, the evaluation of mechanistic thinking, is still up for discussion. We want to answer that question in the next talk.

## Sixth Talk

### *Judgment of Mechanistic Thinking and Some Proved Remedies*

We are still discussing the modern person's capacity for religious experience and have not quite completed the diagnosis. We know that in these times the human soul is atrophied and mutilated. When we spoke of mutilation we dealt with two questions. The first question concerned the nature of separatistic, mechanistic thinking. The second question reads: ***How do we judge mechanistic thinking?*** After all we have heard, the great majority of us have probably arrived at the verdict: Condemn it. Nonetheless, I will add a few thoughts to round things off. Things that are active in our subconscious and half-conscious mind should be brought to our full awareness. Because these questions influence life extensively, we may not ignore them.

Mechanistic thinking is an evil, sad legacy left to us by the past, and a gift with dire consequences for the present – more exactly stated through collectivism. We have been repeatedly dealing with a serious train of thought, very weighty formulations that should make us sit up and take notice.

First: ***Mechanistic thinking is an evil, sad legacy left to us by the past***, by Protestantism, as well as by philosophical idealism. If you study the fundamental theological questions of Protestant doctrine, you will not find it difficult to discover the common denominator. Go directly to God. Protestant thinking rules out indirect access to God, such as, the saints as links between us and the living God, devotion to Mary in the Catholic sense, or an earthly human ideal image of the divine.

Because Protestants believe in going directly to God, they acknowledge neither the papacy nor the Church's teaching authority. For them God is utterly different from all others. There is no *analogia entis*, no relatedness to God, no bridge that leads from God to human nature. Protestantism teaches a frightening transcendence of Good, which allows for neither fulfillment nor for drawing near through the immanence of

God. He is beyond all created things, utterly different from all others. There is nothing perceptible in nature that is analogous to the unending, eternal God. They separate the first cause from secondary causes. According to Protestant theology, there are no secondary causes, only a first cause. There is no link between this world and the world beyond, between natural and supernatural thinking.

In the history of Protestant thinking and living the transcendence of God has been emphasized to such a degree, and placed at such a distance from the human person and creation, that in time the thought of God evaporated and was erased.

*Soli Deo!* God alone! In the course of centuries, they came to the logical conclusion that the Blessed Mother is not God. So they rejected her. *Soli Deo!* God alone!

These developments went further yet. There were those who did not believe that the human nature of the God-man is hypostatically united to the second person of the Trinity. So away with the God-man! *Soli Deo!* It should not surprise us that in time the expression was re-interpreted to mean *Soli Deo*: Everything for the sun-god, for the nature-god alone!

If you increasingly undermine the supernatural concept of God, in time you will have an evaporated concept of God, i.e., a certain godlessness, atheism. This development, as we have demonstrated it here, must be taken seriously. We could say much about it, but this general delineation should suffice.

In this connection I will add a few thoughts for those who have a speculative bent. Atheistic humanism teaches that human nature has nothing to do with God. Fatalistic humanism teaches that, on life's path, humans are at the mercy of blind fate and are separated from a personal God. Deistic humanism teaches that God touches the ideal of the human image only from a distance insofar as he has put laws in human nature. According to deistic humanists, the living God cares neither about human society nor about what happens here on earth. That is why people have to get moving and even use their elbows to get ahead. This deistic humanism can often be found in Catholic circles too. Idealistic humanists do have an



image of God, but it amounts to no more than their own ideas and thoughts; the image of a personal God is not sufficiently applied in practice, nor do they submit enough to the person of the eternal God who towers above us.

This evil legacy left to us by the past does not only go back to Protestantism but also to philosophic idealism which separates ideas from life.

Second: *Mechanistic thinking is a gift with dire consequences for the present*, a dangerous gift. Doesn't collectivism mean the dissolution of all of life's bonds, whether it is a question of the natural or the supernatural organism of attachments? Mechanistic thinking is part of collectivism because it separated ideas from life, the first cause from the secondary causes, and it interrupts the flow of life. Thus, mechanistic thinking almost has the effects of an atomic bomb, not only in the West but in civilization as a whole.

In the [moral] armament against collectivism we must not overlook the spiritual weapon. It consists in a profound and comprehensive overcoming of mechanistic, separatistic thinking.

Here I would like to make brief mention of Mary. The Blessed Virgin is the great vanquisher of collectivism. Her image rises higher and higher on the horizon. *Trahe nos!* [Draw us!]. Where mechanistic thinking is at work, profound, living devotion to Mary, a devotion that grips a person is simply impossible. Mechanistic thinking hinders the Blessed Mother in her attempts to overcome collectivism.

How important it is to overcome mechanistic thinking! You find it everywhere, particularly in our intellectual circles. The unaffected thinking of simple people has nothing to do with it. Our people have resisted to some degree the destructive mania of the intellectuals. If we do not want to tear down with one hand what we have built with the other, we have to do battle against mechanistic thinking both in theory and in practice.

So we know the modern soul is atrophied and mutilated. Second question: What is the cure? What can we do to help moderns become

capable of religious experience? Now that we have established a thorough diagnoses of civilization, we may and must design a comprehensive program to help heal it. With respect to the [spiritual] recovery of our contemporaries, a vast sum of thoughts and considerations overwhelm us. In order to organize them, we differentiate between a radical cure and a normal cure.

### *Proved Remedies*

As to the **radical cure**, we distinguish four forms. First, **total renewal of family life**, of father – and mother-consciousness, of fatherliness and motherliness. What is the nature of this path?

In the natural family the mother is the child's path. Considered historically, she is the first to take in the whole child, including the unconscious life of the soul. It is she who begins to shape the unconscious life of her child's soul while it is still in her womb. Likewise, it is she who leads the child to the father. The child does not know who is father is. The mother's task consists in drawing the child's attention to its father through her own attachment to him. By living in simple attachment and obedience, thus submitting to him, she is to draw and paint the portrait of the father in a simple, clear way.

Such a mother experience forms the child, and a deep father experience gains ground. Later, according to the law of emotional transference, the child, having gained consciousness, will be able to envision the supernatural world. Then it will not be difficult for the child to transfer to the heavenly Mother its attachment to its earthly mother, and to the heavenly Father its attachment to its earthly father. We have already illustrated these truths by studying the soul of St. Thérèse.

You will ask me, will it be possible to create such ideal families? Even if you doubt it, the effort of wrestling with the reasons why makes it worthwhile. Otherwise we will not tackle the evil at its root. In any event we must bear in mind that we want to renew our parish, we must renew the family, create a family movement, gradually inspire our youth to use

their entire life's strength to form their lives after the image of the Holy Family.

The significance of the completed renewal of family life: If a child has had a real, noble, natural father and mother experience, it provides the subconscious instinctive life of the soul with a good predisposition. In times like ours you must by no means underestimate this. Intellectual knowledge may be valuable and good, but today we cannot overestimate the significance of being filled and gripped on the subconscious, instinctive level. If a child is really attached to its father, this imprints instinctive security on the child's heart and subconsciousness. In the case of a real child-mother experience, the experience of being sheltered is imprinted on the child's heart. And that is significant for a person living in times that are so extremely confused, uncertain and insecure. The characteristic feature of our age is widespread insecurity and a sense of exposure.

We do not find it difficult to comprehend how, according to the law of emotional transference such an instinctive security can be transferred to the Father God; an instinctive sense of shelter transfers to the Blessed Virgin and, through her back to the Father. This is all the more possible if one succeeds in simultaneously enlightening the mind while adding to the natural father and mother experience a purified father image and a serene mother image. Whoever understands the connections has a complete reform program, a substantial program of education. Its realization would be the project of a lifetime. Mind you, if we want to strive for this radical cure, i.e., for the complete renewal of the family, we will have to work on a long-term basis and practice much patience. "...cannot be renewed families overnight.

Another type of radical cure is *an experience of true childlikeness in later life*. In the process everything focuses not on knowledge but on living, on experiencing. What matters is that the subconscious life of the soul and the heart be saturated and gripped. That is why I stress an **experience** of true childlikeness later in life, a belated **savoring** of a father

and mother experience; yes, even of a sibling experience. In practice, this can be made concrete in the father experience.

What does this belated experience consist of? What I could not experience earlier, I may experience later. It presupposes that God gives me a father, a mother, a father image, a mother image, if you will with whom I may experience all that I could either not experience as a child or not experience to a satisfactory degree in my natural family.

You will reply: “theoretically that is one way, but, but... How few people can take that path! What good is it to me if the child in me cries out, but no father or mother responds? And where are the people who have the time and sacrificial strength, who can summon up the endless love necessary to take my father’s and mother’s place?” And even if there is someone to fill that role that someone may be discouraged by the difficulty of the task.

During these days we heard the expression *tabula rosar*, it is erroneous. From childhood on, as by innumerable strokes of a pen, the human soul has been written upon. It is much easier to have a sound father and mother and child experience from childhood on than to make up for it later. In the latter case, the old father image has to be extinguished not only in theory but also through experience. If the old, sick father image of childhood days is not extinguished, the new one cannot reign, it cannot dominate and fill the heart. It may take decades to finish this work. Even when the person concerned is older and thinks the new father and mother image repeatedly breaks through and surfaces from the subconscious life of the soul. So whoever takes the place of a father or mother must be prepared for a very long-term process, involving countless crises in the newly accepted child. You will have to muster up patience. But it should not be too difficult as long as you bear in mind the inner connections. Educators are lovers who never cease loving.

A third type of radical cure is *the contrast experience*. There is not only a belated experience of childlikeness but also a contrast experience. If everyone would depend on a natural experience or a late

experience, numberless contemporaries would never be receptive to religious values.

We want to observe the contrast experience in everyday life. For example, if a person's natural parents were hardhearted, cruel and did not take care of their children, and if, on the natural level, there is no one available to impart a genuine father and mother experience, it is still possible to press forward toward sound father and mother experiences in the supernatural order. The reason for this lies first of all in contrastive insight. Holy Scripture, e.g., can lead to such contrastive knowledge and also to contrast experiences.

The mind gleans the features of God and Mary as delineated in Holy Scripture, and it acquires an elevated comprehensive view of the father and mother image as formed by God. Then, in time this comprehensive view based on ideas, opens up to a supernatural child, father and mother experience could be stated more simply against the backdrop of the deficient experience of childlikeness in the parental home. The insight acquired by the mind mediates a contrast experience: The supernatural world is also a reality. Being a child in and through Christ is also a reality with intrinsic laws and possibilities of development.

By nature woman is impressionable and warm-hearted, so she can come to contrast experiences via good example. Among her friends, for instance, she may observe sound family life, children who experience a kind father and mother. This can lead to a contrast experience: What she observes in others, an experience contrary to her own, gives her soul the childhood experience, which she lacked.

I could give you very many examples of contrast experiences that I have observed. Instead I suggest you observe life and piece things together so you arrive at clear, firm convictions. I think I must add here, however: Even if through such a contrast experience, the child's love awakens, and with it a capacity for religious experience, a certain compulsion will remain until life's end because the subconscious life of the soul was not touched on the firmly held instinctive level. Therefore, we must add: If such a soul is to become healthy, you must see to it that,

wherever possible, the contrast experience is supplemented by a belated experience. If both the contrast and belated experiences merge, in time the soul may become free as a little bird and may be able, later on, to sing out with joy the hymn of child's love and simultaneously be filled by a profound capacity for religious experience.

A fourth type of radical cure is *the supplemental experience*. Let's say that I personally never had a child experience that gripped the subconscious life of my soul to its depth because I never had the instinctive experience of genuine fatherliness and motherliness. Now, if later on in life I may give father or mother love to others, it is possible for me to experience childlikeness in these children in a way that affects my own life.

Actually I experience two things. In myself: creative, bubbling fatherliness and motherliness that has awakened and penetrated down into the subconscious life of my soul; in the person before me: childlikeness. In this way the drive of childlikeness as an experience can awaken in me and can be transferred to the eternal God. If, prior to this, I was a child only [because I patterned my life] according to the idea of childlikeness, through this supplemental experience instinctive childlikeness can well up in me. In this way it is possible for a mature person to have a far-reaching belated experience of genuine childlikeness.

Please pardon me for laying so much stress on the psychological. We are, after all, discussing the psychological basis of a person's capacity for religious experience. While we do so, keep in mind that grace, too, works along these lines. Once mature and grace is in harmony with each other, the radical cures will be feasible. The normal cure, Marian education, can take their place.

A *profound devotion to Mary is the normal cure*, a viable way to make moderns capable of religious experience. We inquire about the effect of and the way in which devotion to Mary functions.

The difficulty may surface in your soul: If my soul or the soul of those entrusted to me is so ill, how should it become capable of a tender love for Mary? True, we are faced here with a serious difficulty. If

everything is so frail in the modern soul, can it still take in the seed of love for Mary?

The answer reads: If there is any possibility at all to awaken religious receptivity, then it is through Mary. The more profound psychological reason for this is that, under normal circumstances, the deepest experience of an infant is the mother experience. But if even that is missing, in desperation we may ask ourselves how we can possibly help the people of today. If there is any way at all that the capacity for religious experience can be awakened, it is through love for Mary.

Everyday life sometimes shows us odd connections. I have a young theologian in mind; he has a speculative bent. He is racked with serious doubts of faith. Strangely enough, regardless of the fact that his concept of Christ is completely distorted, in his soul the image of Mary lives. Actually, it is not logical but nevertheless possible. In his case his mother experience in childhood gripped his subconsciousness so deeply that his image of Mary was neither drawn into nor shaken by the crises connected with puberty.

Now I turn to those who endured [the effects of] modern, mechanized education or who went through schools that were extreme in their liturgical orientation. If you do not know how to adequately transfer to the Blessed Mother the emotions which, at one time, were aroused deep within you by true mother love, in later life you will lack something of great significance: the springboard for your capacity for religious experience. Even if it was eclipsed and has been stifled for many years, it is nevertheless possible for this deep inner receptivity for religious experience to break through again later in life.

Fathers and mothers! Do lead your children into the depths of self-surrender to our Lady; otherwise you go without a springboard for religious experience which from the human, psychological viewpoint can be replaced by nothing else. If not even this seed for the value of Mary is left in the ill soul, we are helpless. At best we can attempt to apply the four radical cures.

First: *What is the effect of devotion to Mary?* If my soul is touched to some extent by love for Mary, she gives me a capacity for religious experience in three ways: She grants me religious receptivity for a father experience. There are two reasons for this.

In the natural family it is the mother's central task to put the father in the foreground. If she does not do so she is not a true mother. A child comes to know its father through its mother. From the psychological viewpoint we have both the right and the duty to apply this law to our Blessed Lady.

Don't you think it is an essential task of the Blessed Mother to lead her children to the Father? Schoenstatt's spiritual lifestream provide a confirmation of this. From the very beginning we strove to become simple children of the Blessed Mother. In the course of 25 years we have superabundantly experienced that Mary leads us to the Father. That is why our Marian Kingdom is a very pronounced Father Kingdom. With our whole heart we want to be grateful to God. We are also convinced that our Lady, who led us to the Father, will also keep our image of the Father alive throughout all battles.

Both psychologically and in the order of grace the Blessed Virgin's activity is determined by what she is. Innately, our Blessed Lady is pre-eminently the child of the Father. As the Father's creation, she is the child of the Father in a singular way. She lived her life in deepest union with Jesus; since he is pre-eminently the child of the Father, she must, by virtue of this union of life with him, be pre-eminently the child of the Father.

Although only as a creature, Mary also shares in the begetting activity of the Father God. Jesus is not only the heavenly Father's child but her own as well. She is accordingly a singular reflection of the heavenly Father. The work most inherent to the Father that of begetting is reflected in her, though only a creature. That is why, in a singular way, preeminently, she is the child of the Father.

If what Mary is determines her activity, and if she is in a far-reaching way the Father's child, from the psychological standpoint and in keeping with the law of transference of life, she will give her own child's



love for the Father in a deepened manner to her children. Mary's activity saturated by grace sustains the [already existing] psychological basis [in her children]. Mary's mediation of grace merges with this psychological process.

When I lead those entrusted to me to our Lady, in her own way she sees that they develop a certain receptivity, the capacity to experience the Father. The same holds true for their Jesus-image. May I ask you to study and carefully consider these thoughts on your own?

We may even say that when the Blessed Virgin leads us to a deeper relationship with the Father in heaven we can even expect that, sooner or later, a powerful surge of grace will have a retroactive effect on the distorted image of one's natural father.

For example, say I have a distorted mother image and take in the image of our Blessed Lady. How often it happens that the light streaming from my image of Mary reflects onto the image of my natural mother and, as time goes on, I come to a profound mother experience in the natural order. The same life process is repeated with respect to the supernatural father image: It reflects onto the natural father image.

Second: ***What effect does Marian devotion have on the capacity for religious experience?*** With this we touch upon the mystery of the efficacy of grace. As we attempt to unveil it somewhat, we do so with great reverence. In mere theory we can very easily compile the thoughts.

We recall that the Blessed Mother is personified openness for the divine. Her nature is personified openness *ecce ancilla Domini!*<sup>30</sup> If I have a deep devotion to Mary, by virtue of the law of transference of life, I also share in her openness for God and the divine. More yet: She gives me back not only the corresponding supernatural interests and receptivity for values, but also a sound disposition. What does this imply? On the basis of much experience I think I may say that a fervent and deep devotion to Mary restores a sound receptivity for values.

The theory is easily stated, but the mysterious connections must be observed for many years. We think of the law of transference of life, of

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<sup>30</sup> Behold the handmaid of the Lord! (Lk 1,38)

the law that the efficacy of the Virgin Mary is determined by her position in the order of being.

If [among humans] any nature is still healthy today, then it ought to be the nature of woman. But to a great extent she too has fallen ill due to mechanistic thinking, purely masculine thinking. The ideal image of woman is sound, original, natural. Because by her very being she is so close to life, she preserves an organic, symbolic, integral and centered thinking. Wherever religious values still exist to some degree, it is because they have found a refuge in the nature of woman. Woman's nature is very sound, sounder than man's at least in regard to organic thinking.

If I give myself to our Lady I may expect her to give me some of her naturally sound thinking and feeling. Think of the *donum integritatis*, [the gift of integrity] her instinctive purity, she did not have original sin, nor were her drives diseased. On the natural level her thinking and feelings were very sound. When I give myself to her, I may expect her, in keeping with the law of transference of life, to pass on to me some of her sound unspoiled thinking. "Who finds me finds life,"<sup>31</sup> supernatural life, supernatural receptivity for life. "Who finds me" will also find a very sound natural life and may expect to be healed of mechanistic, unhealthy thinking, living and loving.

With that we close the first day. We have discussed a great deal, but hearing these things once is not enough. The world [of truths] which we have traced back to concise, ultimate principles is too vast for that. Whoever has not studied and observed life along these lines faces a foreign world [of thought]. Only those who take the time to study these ideas thoroughly will develop a new basic inner attitude toward the corresponding pedagogical questions of life and also a new far-reaching predisposition for their own heart.

May Mary, the one blessed among women, the choir director of human society as a whole, the ideal image whom the living God places before our eyes, bless us all so that we may form ourselves after her

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<sup>31</sup> Prv 8,35

image. As the Mother of Catholics who is at work in Schoenstatt as the singularly great educator, may she bless us. *Trahe nos!* Draw us after you! We want to follow the fragrance of your ointments.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Cf Song 4,10

## Seventh Talk

### *The Second Basis for Religious Education Solid Support in a Religious Community*

Till now we have dealt with one of the psychological bases for religious education: the capacity for religious experience. We demonstrated the inner connections between it and Mary. Today we do not want to take less time for the remaining three bases. We can deal with them more briefly because we have slowly lived and loved our way into a God-willed atmosphere.

The second basis reads: The solid support of a religious community. If I want to form a person religiously, if I want to educate someone, I have to bring her or him into a community. A community forms and molds the individual. Strictly speaking, without community education no matter what its name or what it is attempts to form and mold others with respect to religion cannot be fruitful. That is the normal way, the normal law.

We should think three things through:

1. the reason for this statement,
2. its practical application,
3. the climax: the Marian connection.

1. The **grounds** for this striking assertion lie in the nature of the human person. ***The human being is*** not only an *animal religiosum*, *rationale* and *metaphysicum* but also and *animal sociale*, ***a social being***. That is why human nature needs social exchange and the opportunity to associate and come into contact with others. If that kind of contact and exchange does not come about, an essential element is lacking and a person cannot prosper. Just as the bird is severed from its life's element when it cannot fly and the fish when it is out of water, so too it is with human being if, as an individual, she or he is removed from community.

**[Significance of community formation]** From this perspective we can grasp why Jesus founded his Church as a community. It presents a

solution to the social character of human nature. From this perspective we also grasp why the first Christians immediately worked toward community formation. In the history of primitive and early Christianity there were surely great leaders, but in the last analysis we can attribute the success of early Christian education largely to religious formation on the community level. Later on, as well, the Church stressed its importance time and again.

As a social being the human person has to grow into a community. The community carries the individual and the individual, the community. The community gives the individual security and shelter but also serves as a check.

Let's study the Schoenstatt Family from this point of view. Its branch shrines shed bright light on community formation. The groups who gather around Schoenstatt [and its shrine] should stay in their parish communities but also have a strong spiritual center in the shrines. The idea of community formation, an idea which can be traced back to the nature of humans, should once again be considered, stressed and brought to bear fruit.

Today we need a movement of renewal, many of them and in many forms. Having learned a great deal from history, we know that in the case of great movement of renewal, God, the great educator of the nations, called upon untapped peoples to achieve his aim. We recall the time when the Roman Empire lay in ruins; the Germanic peoples took up their legacy.

Our age too has fallen ill. From where we can expect renewal today? Does God want to use the Slavic nations, the people of the East, the Chinese, the Japanese? Who knows? In any event, today we must rally those who are in some way capable of renewal. We have not only the concern of leading the peoples of the East "into the sheepfold of Christ." Today we must gather a cross section of all peoples and nations. That is why all the renewal movements that operate on a large scale are working toward becoming international the Schoenstatt movement as well.

Again we look into the history of the missionary work done in centuries past. There were nations, the Spaniards and Portuguese, e.g., who missionized with fire and the sword. Boniface worked among us in a peaceful way. He built churches and made them the center of community formation. In order to centralize the movement in the districts concerned, we Schoenstatters seek and try to set up similar centers so that the movement has an appropriate nucleus in the shrines. In this way we take into account the social character of a God-willed movement and its education.

Because the opposition understands the significance of such community formation, and because they seek to shatter the bulwark of Christendom with massive blows, they earnestly struggle to increasingly undermine the Catholic atmosphere everywhere, their endeavors frequently bearing fruit. They use codes, e.g., they may speak of “depoliticizing” the Church; but, when all is said and done, what they really want to do is rob the Church of her community formation and leave the individual to him or her own devices. The effect? Woe to the one who stands alone, who has no support in a community!

Along the same line at present indeed for years they have also been trying to take the mark of Catholicism away from Catholic areas: Crucifixes should be removed and wayside shrines should not be existing anymore.

If you take the community and its atmosphere away from the human person, he or she stands alone. Then you can destroy a person, especially if the opposition gathers the masses like a steamroller that crushes all those who stand-alone.

2. **[Application]** We said that a community is a necessity for education and we stated the reason. Now we pose the question: What follows particularly for religious education? If we want to form and mold personalities, if we want to grip and educate the individual on a religious level, then we must see that they join a group, and since the point in question is religious education, they should join a religious group. If that is not the case, the human personality who remains isolated is eventually

afflicted in some way or other to the very depths of the soul. How often psychically disturbed moderns who are alone begin to recover once they make contact with a sound community!

So ask yourself the question: Have I attached myself to a group? What do I give the community and what has the community given me till now? Have I not joined a group yet? Where will I seek one? These are questions of great consequence.

In many ways the struggles of the past years have made us cautious toward community.<sup>33</sup> How many communities disappointed us! That is why we have become so wary.

In these days countless people are on the way to a very deep-seated psychic illness, and the number of those who go not to a medical doctor but to a psychotherapist is on the rise. We can understand this. The modern person's soul has become deeply disturbed and cannot endure pressure because it is incapable of digesting so many impressions. This puts quite an overload on the body, particularly on the heart. In the final analysis, a large number of physical diseases can be traced back to a disorder of the soul. Don't you think it is almost cause for astonishment that after, having gone through so much, people today can still withstand a load at all?

The human soul is not a *tabula rasa*. No impression taken in by the soul is ever lost. It sinks into the subconscious mind and from there continues to affect us. That explains so many complications in our own souls. That explains so many abnormalities we detect in the souls entrusted to us. It ought to be an essential task for us as educators to stress modern psychology more than we have until now. We have to help those who confide in us to adequately absorb undigested impressions.

What picture of the soul do doctors and psychotherapists sketch for us, particularly of young university students, male and female alike? ***A deep-rooted isolation*** and the inability to establish contact is characteristic of them. The isolation can be mental, spiritual or professional.

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<sup>33</sup> The methods used by Hitler proved how intensely the social nature of man can be manipulated and misused.

*[Mental isolation]* Our ideas have made us lonely if only because we have become so unbelieving, not only in the religious sphere but even more so in the general sense. Whom can one still believe and trust these days? How we've lost faith in the messages we hear! Where are the trustworthy prophets who proclaim a new era? Whom can we still believe today?

This mental isolation is widely nourished by films and the radio. Even though in times past people could always dream about the future and build castles in the air, for the most part they were geared to ideas [rooted in reality] and prepared for life's harshness. They knew that youth was a time to prepare for the severities of life. Because life is so hard nowadays, films produce so much illusion. Contemporary films are so far from reality! Consequently, in addition to isolation the soul is given to a certain illusionism. How the prevalent spiritual currents of today depict a paradise here on earth, such a world full of bliss.

Mental isolation intensifies when it causes *spiritual isolation*. How much loneliness! How many have no one who understands! Moderns have to clamber around their own person, are too occupied with themselves. They are small-minded, can only make rash decisions, constantly focus on themselves; the self has become ill. That is easy to understand because, with the passing of time, their supernatural world has shriveled up. Everything is supposed to be solved on this little earth.

The distress, affliction and need that people have suffered also has its effects. Through it all, the spirit should have become deeper, the heart wider, but instead they became narrower, resulting in intense spiritual isolation. The human person is alone and is preoccupied with the self. People may be together exteriorly that is company, not community.

Here and there you hear of so-called student marriages. A male university student, who has not completed his studies and cannot earn money, marries. His wife has to support him. You cannot expect [this arrangement to have the desired] effect, i.e., that they live spirit in spirit. It won't come about because in such cases the God-willed, God-formed order between man and woman has been reversed.



There is also *professional isolation*. In Germany we have outstanding professional training but not enough general education; our economy is vacillating everywhere. [It is possible] that those who finish university studies today, have no bread to eat tomorrow. We know that in America university studies are different from ours. Students there are prepared for many practical professions so that they are armed for life's blows.

Instead of bringing human hearts together, the hard blows of the past have only torn them further apart. The isolation has become so acute that one must speak of an *inability to make contact*. The human soul is no longer capable of establishing either natural or supernatural relationships. Here again we see a sign of human nature in decline. Our nature has a social character and depends on companionship. We can measure the depth to which the soul is disturbed by the degree to which the person is unable to make contact. Frequently, this inability to come into contact is demonstrated in two ways: flight from the community, from spiritual contact; and, at the same time, an unspeakable longing for community.

Add to this two more characteristics: *anxiety about the [present] situation* and an inability to take the initiative.

Anxiety about the [present] state of affairs is the fear which has gripped all of humanity academics include fear brought on by the insecurity connected with the future: How to provide bread, what to do about making a living? We know from experience what it does to someone to live in constant fear, all the more if the person is not in touch with supernature, with the reality of the world beyond. We cannot master life even under normal circumstances, much less in such abnormal conditions, unless we leap courageously into the supernatural reality.

Another characteristic of modern humanity is the *inability to take the initiative*. The human soul has grown so weary, so ill that it is no longer sufficiently capable of responding to inspirations that from time to time awaken in the soul. The human lacks the ability to decide particularly to make weighty, forceful decisions, to make daring acts – all the more so with respect to the supernatural and divine.

Again: Do you see the importance of community formation and community education? *Vae soli!*<sup>34</sup> Shouldn't we be grateful to God if we belong to a group? Time will tell what we owe to such a community. Of course, we have to see that we become full-fledged, co-responsible members of said community.

*Sound community formation* always confronts us with the question: What must I give the community? Not the other way around: What can I demand of it and claim for myself? I have to give the community all the talents that flow from my soul. They must be caught up by the community, unfold within it in a creative way and have an effect on it.

Kolping's outlook on family life was so clear. According to him, the family is brightly burning firebrand of love, a love that bears with and supports the others. Obviously, every community is not only pleasurable but also burdensome. That is why the family table again I quote Kolping is more so a table of sacrifice than of pleasure.

Do I belong to a group? Then I should ask myself the question. What do I have to give to the community? If I give to the community, it will reward me abundantly. Over and above that, we know there are times when we need the community and times when it needs us.

The first verse of the *Home Song* portrays the ideal community:

Do you know the land so warm and dear  
which eternal Love has built itself:  
where noble hearts beat with affection  
and bear with each other in the joy of sacrifice;  
where they glow and shelter one another  
and flow as one into the heart of God;  
where streams of love well forth with might  
to quench the thirst of the world for love?<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Woe to the one who is alone! (cf Friedrich Nietzsche, *Vereinsami*)

<sup>35</sup> This hymn appears in *Himmelwärts*, a collection of prayers written by the founder during his imprisonment in Koblenz and later in the Dachau concentration camp. The

This verse points clearly to living-spirit-in-spirit strongly to an “in-one-anotherness” of souls, as well as to sacrificial strength. Love of God is the fountainhead from which warm brotherly and sisterly love should flow. Just as love of neighbor wells from love of God, it should flow back to the same source.

How do we *create community atmosphere and what does this demand of us*? We look into the teachings of Paul the Apostle and reflect on his Canticle of Love.<sup>36</sup> It shows us the goal of self-education and education of others. The great stream of love of neighbor should flow from love of God. True love of God, a fire that should be burning in all of us, gives us new vision, new understanding, a new closeness and a new way of acting. These are goals for self-education and education of others.

*New vision.* We must see the human person in a new light, not as a machine, as humans are rated today, nor as the “blond beast.”

We read that Dostoevsky was condemned to the guillotine. There he stands on the scaffold and the end draws near. From the scaffold he sees the masses surging down below, above him the blue sky. At that moment all earthly things fall away; he is already living in eternity. Before death can overtake him, however, he is pardoned.

What goes on in his soul then is unspeakable suffering coupled with a unique new vision of humanity. “They are all sheep without a shepherd,” he tells himself. “They have all been led astray and are not responsible for what seethes in their hearts. Others are to blame.” This insight leaves him with inner vision: “All of humanity is in need of compassion and love. There is absolutely nothing you could do to me for which you would have to forfeit my love!” Dostoevsky shaped and formed his life anew in accord with this new vision.

We should all have a new vision of the human person! We should embrace the truth in a faith filled way. God is our Father. We are his

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above quote is taken from *Heavenwards – Prayers for the Use of the Schoenstatt Family*, American Edition 1992, p.158ff.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Cor 13

children. Although some of us are called to participate in his [divine] life, in actuality all [who choose to] may share in it. We should see in a human being not only his distorted features but also the features of God. From the human countenance God's countenance shines on us. The entire reality that we are children of God and members of Christ must light up before us anew so that others find their way out of isolation into a stable supernatural community.

In addition, we need *new understanding* because the modern person has fallen ill. If ever there was a time, it is the present time and world that have become one large hospital. Many religious communities too may rightly be compared many to a hospital, because in them countless bacilli have surfaced and taken over.

Again let's base our considerations on an account from Holy Scripture. They led an adulteress to Jesus so that he would condemn her. And yet the Redeemer's compassionate heart did not condemn but pardoned her. "Let the man among you who has no sin be the first to cast a stone at her."<sup>37</sup> No one dared. All those who had been standing around left, and Jesus stood alone with the adulteress. "Has no one condemned you? Nor do I condemn you."<sup>38</sup> New understanding!

Whoever knows the contemporary soul, whoever knows poor human nature, whoever knows the laws of heredity, whoever knows the sexual bacilli that run through humanity today, whoever knows the human heart should and must imitate Jesus in every way. If we want to get to know a person, we must look into the heart. We should let all the distress and afflictions of others go not only through our heads. Rather, in a far-reaching way, we should weigh them in our hearts first; this should become a norm for us. "My heart is moved with pity for the crowd."<sup>39</sup> How many times the human heart goes astray in an unsuccessful search for happiness and bliss, a search which leads to nothing more than unrequited love. Many sins, too, and false world views of a political

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<sup>37</sup> Jn 8,7

<sup>38</sup> Jn 8,10-11

<sup>39</sup> Mt 15,32

nature can be traced back, in the final analysis, to an unsated hunger for happiness, to a disappointed earthly and supernatural love.

New understanding! Has no one condemned you? Nor do I condemn you. Moderns need love, also those who live in and are connected with a community, whether it be a marriage or another form of community. We give this love when we practice the little virtues. They help us to overlook many mistakes, to be magnanimous, good-hearted, to smile about and overlook many a bad habit. The family table should be a table of sacrifice, not primarily a table of pleasure. If we bring new vision and new understanding with us, it becomes easy for us to sit at this table of sacrifice. Actually, it is the eternally old vision, the eternally old understanding.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to new vision and new understanding we must acquire *new closeness*, a spiritual closeness which has its basis in ontology. The popes of the last century frequently stressed the fact that the ontological foundation for a community is its relationship to the final cause, to God. We have our Father and Mother in heaven and we have them in common. All of us participate in the divine nature; consequently; new closeness.

When we pray for one another, we should do so out of profound closeness to our brothers and sisters. When we are happy together, when we serve one another, it should be an expression of an ontological interwovenness and closeness, but also of a deep interwovenness of fate. If we conceive of the family whether the natural or another family in this way, we will come out of isolation, and we will be educating ourselves and others to form stable communities. That gives us a hold in the community and the community also has a hold in us. Then we accomplish our task through the community and it accomplishes its task through us. That must be our lofty ideal.

Finally, what may be a burning question for us: the desire for a *new way of acting*; it's better if we say: an old way of acting. When we think of ourselves as members of Christ, we understand the Savior's words, "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for

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<sup>40</sup> "Old" because it stems from the teaching of Christ.

me.”<sup>41</sup> The formal standpoint from which we will be judged is love of neighbor. “I was hungry and you gave me food.”<sup>42</sup>

The natural basis for profound, mature motherliness and fatherliness (when the bond of blood unites us with one another) is the union of body and soul with the child of our womb and of our heart. Since celibacy does not include such a union, this natural basis for genuine motherliness and fatherliness is lacking. Instead of dealing with our own flesh and blood, we deal with a different type of following.

What, then, is the new basis, the new vision for our acting? Provided you do not misinterpret the expression: We are related by blood in the supernatural sense. Although this “being relatives” does not arouse in us the instinctive urgings that a natural family does, it is sustained by an ever deeper view of the human person. In the faces of those entrusted to us we behold the features of the heavenly Father, the features of Christ and of his Mother.

We must seek and provide support in a community. Let’s create a community in our schools! Every class should represent a sort of family. Today we must strive to create families everywhere so that people develop the ability to make contact. On your own, please think this thought through with all its implications.

***The Marian connection.*** We ask the question, Does devotion to Mary form a community? Since we are only collecting “building stones,” you will surely be satisfied with a few pointers. Think of the natural family. In the home, isn’t it mainly the mother who gives form to and creates a family atmosphere? If the mother is missing, the bonding element is gone today more so than in the past because we have so many families in which the father has been written off. Perhaps he is still the provider but not the father, not the priest. In many cases the mother alone is the sole inner bond of the family. Since the mother, however, can usually not live [out her role] without the father, the time is approaching

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<sup>41</sup> Mt 25,40

<sup>42</sup> Mt 25,35

when the concept of the mother will be undermined. In keeping with the nature the mother and the father should be the uniting bond of the family.

Now we apply these thoughts to religious communities: *Ecce Mater tua*. “These is your Mother,”<sup>43</sup> Is our Lady the mother in the home of my community? Is the Savior the head of this community? Is Christ the head? Is the Blessed Mother the heart? A community without a heart is not possible, not stable, just as the body without a heart cannot bear weight or keep up its resistance. Mary is the uniting bond that holds us together.

Thus, we can understand why communities who have an intense, intimate love for our Blessed Lady also have, without exception, a deep, warm community bond; they have achieved profound, spiritual in-one-anotherness and openness for each other. Thus, we can understand that all Catholic nations are happy nations. They have a mother to whom they are interiorly attached, and who sees that they become attached to each other. This deep spiritual community creates happy nations all along the line.

A solid support in a religious community we will now close this course of reasoning. If we want to educate on the religious level, we have to do everything in our power to bind the individual so that he or she has a hold in a stable religious community.

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<sup>43</sup> Jn 19,27

## **Eight Talk**

### *The Third Basis for Religious Education: The Support of Clear Knowledge*

We said that we would consider four psychological bases for religious education. We have discussed two of these: arousing the capacity for religious experience, and the solid support of a religious group. The third basis is the support of clear, coherent knowledge.

In the midst of today's lack of security, the individual needs solid support. That holds good not only for moderns; rather, it is generally valid statement. But today these connections should be seen in a new light.

Perhaps you will reply: "Isn't that a contradiction? First we discussed how awakening the capacity for religious experience is a necessity in religious education; and now we say people should be given support in clear, coherent, comprehensive knowledge?" The two are not in total contrast to each other.

Even if they are purified, we can and may not be guided only by irrational drives as they surge and swell. We have a spiritual will which must be taken into account. If the subconscious life of the soul is to be reformed and purified, it is not possible unless our intellect and will forcibly take our drives in hand, point out the way, and mold and resolutely form us. These are not opposing poles. Rather, they represent a creative tension. The masterpiece consists in weaving these tensions till there is unity and order amid tension. That is the masterpiece in education: to establish the right relationship between the irrational, the rational and the suprarational.

When we speak of gaining a hold in knowledge, we mean knowledge founded in faith, a faith-filled grasp and comprehension of religious truths. The truths of faith are a bright-darkness. The brightness that we distinguish from this darkness are the defined truths of faith. They are clearly formulated, absolutely firm truths. But even behind some dogmas there is still very much darkness, things that we will never grasp



while on earth. Not even in eternity will we be able to penetrate them totally.

We are speaking about the support of clear, comprehensive, religious knowledge. We inquire about

1. the reason,
2. the application,
3. the Marian connection.

1. ***Clear knowledge is part of sound religious education.***

The reason for this is twofold: from the viewpoint of the subject of education and from that of the object of education (*ratione subiecti et ratione obiecti*).

To begin with, I look at the ***subject of education***, the human person, whose nature we must attempt to comprehend. The human is an *animal rationale* in whom there are three levels of being: animal, angel, and child of God. The angel and the child of God long for clear vision, they crave truth. Through our spirit we share in the spiritual activity of God. The spirit is the most elevated part of our nature. It distinguishes us from all the other creatures on this earth. In accord with the *ordo essendi*, the spiritual nature of our being also needs fulfillment. It is open for truth and wants to penetrate the depths of truth. The entire person must be educated; that is why a person's spirit must also be given the support of recognition of truth.

The human heart must have the support of a person; but the human mind must have the support of clear knowledge of truth. The truth provides us with security, support, shelter, a world view and the possibility of establishing contact. If we want to do justice to the nature of humans, we must see that they can rest in ultimate truths. A clear view of God-willed and God-formed truths particularly a comprehensive view is a means to secure a firm hold amid the insecurity, lack of principles and lack of character of our day.

We must see both attachment to persons and attachment to ideas in a profound state of reciprocal tension. In addition, we have the attachment to places. Later, when we go into the home problem, we will speak of

this. In their insecurity, moderns must seek and find a local home. Amid the lack of security prevalent in our times this need is many-faceted.

As regards the *object of education*, religion itself, we must seek the support of ultimate religious truths. Not only does the nature of the human person call for spiritual vision and a comprehensive view; so does the nature of religion.

Our Catholic religion has a *pronounced normative character*. That means two things: Religion itself is normed and it is meant to have a *normative effect*. Religious education, leading a religious life should amount to more than just gazing at a world of castles built in midair. Leading a religious life should be more than resting in dreams. Religion should shape life and give it form; it should grip everyday life, form principles, reach into daily life – whether family life or some other form of community life. Religion should be yeast which penetrates and leavens every phase of life. That is why we must reject impersonalism and forcefully acknowledge personalism.

In every way religion must teach me to assume responsibility independently. I must feel responsible for realizing religion in everyday life. This is what we call everyday sanctity. I am responsible for this, and religion should educate me along that line. Religion means rejecting any kind of impersonalism, collectivism included.

The normative character of religion and religious education must transform us into personalities who create history. In a creative way we must reach into the chaos of our times. We should be neither activists nor passivists but creators of history. The greater our mission, the more fervently must we do our share to create history. In the past we had a saying: No one of us may die without leaving a gap behind; those we leave behind should miss us. Each life whether long or short, great or small should create ripples as does a stone cast into water.

We should raise personalities who create history, not activists who blindly reach for the gears of the times, not passivists who stand at the stream of history, arms folded in the hope that someone will come and take them along.

Personalities who create history use their minds to participate in the creative activity of the divine mind. They reflect on divine thoughts, and check to see what God wants and what features he would like to see imprinted on our age; they follow the law of the “open door.”<sup>44</sup> Time and again God wants to reveal his thoughts to us through the circumstances, to tell us how he wants to shape and form the present times, present-day life, also through us.

Personalities who create history use their will to participate in the creative power of the divine will. There are three major powers to make history: God, the devil and the free human will. We want to be on our guard against the third fall. Years ago we spoke of a triple fall: The first fall in paradise, the second brought on by the people of Israel; the third fall is that of a community that has a great mission and is unfaithful to it. As a creative factor in history, every community must remain faithful to its mission in an outstanding way, even when this mission is attacked.

Yes, we must reach the point where, as religious persons who want to educate religious persons, we consider it an absolute matter of course that religion is the norm for everything: not only Sunday or feast day piety but workday piety as well! Religion must give norms for everything: married life, family life...Religion is the ultimate, conclusive standard for everything. In a time that we may and must say flees from God, this has measureless implications. In educating our following a great deal depends on giving them the solid support of clear knowledge, which becomes the norm for everyday life.

Not only does the *Catholic religion* have a normative character, it *is also normed*. It is a religion of revelation, not of truths which people can discover themselves by working rational speculation. The Son of Man came and unveiled, revealed the truths and wish of God to us. Consequently, the merely natural religious drives does not suffice. Its norm has to be revealed truth. Religion itself gets its orientation, its norms from the truths of revelation. We should not be satisfied if we succeed here and

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<sup>44</sup> Reference to St. Paul's "A door has been opened wide for my work" (1 Cor 16,9).

there in arousing religious feelings only somewhat. Clear, comprehensive knowledge is a necessity.

Knowledge of the mysteries should be the object, a knowledge filled with astonishment and faith in the mysteries of the Trinity, of redemption, of the first fall, of the Church; faith in the great mystery concerning the end of time.

When we dare to go into this world of religious thought, isn't there great danger that we fall victim to religious intellectualism? Of course, the danger is great. So much is involved today when training lay people in catechesis that you would think they are all preparing to receive a doctorate degree. And in the process, there is great danger that the knowledge we have acquired goes to the head while the heart shrivels up.

If we are to combat religious intellectualism with respect to knowledge, we have to be heedful of two factors: It cannot merely be stored in our heads; it must lead us to make decisions in life. Secondly, it has to form basic attitudes in us. If these two factors are not translated into action, we will be bringing up religious intellectualists and, without our actually wanting it, we will have extensively promoted separatistic thinking.

In order to arrive at basic religious attitudes, we want to and must keep the following great laws before our eyes, laws which must be especially taken into consideration nowadays; in times like these the truths that the catechism teaches do not suffice: We must emphasize central truths, and these must become our central complex of values.

Thus, we have reason to say that the Catholic religion has a normative character. I summarize. Two things should motivate us to see that people are given the solid support of clear, comprehensive knowledge, in truths viewed as a whole: the subject of education and the object of education.

As a father or a mother I should ask myself: Till now what have I done for the religious instruction of my children? The mother, to the extent that she can be in the home, may have a special task as religion teacher, as the "priestess of the family." As a natural father, though, I

would never allow anyone to deprive me of the honor of exercising my priestly functions and instructing my children in religion. After all, as father of the family I participate in the teaching office of the eternal Son of God. Through the speaking word and even more so by embodying the word, by verifying the truths in my own life, I should teach my children. Little St. Thérèse's father was his "little queen's" teacher. How he taught her through the spoken word, but much more through his exemplary life!

2. We can spare ourselves the trouble of explaining the positive *application*. There are *Catholic elite circles* who have clear, coherent religious knowledge and strive to form their lives accordingly.

There is also a negative side with regard to religious education. Among Catholics, many who belong to the intellectual class show professional expertise yet have an *infantile religious knowledge*. Even though they participate in conventions for academics and applaud what they hear, all the same, their religious knowledge is infantile. In comparison to their intellectual capacity and their multifaceted professional lives, their religious knowledge goes no further than the primary level. And because it is infantile, it is knowledge that is mechanically strung together.

One effect of this is: Religion loses the strength [it would otherwise give us] to master life. Another effect is that learned Catholics, because they suffer from the blows of contemporary life, make a substitute religion for themselves. Thus, academics often seek in this world a solution to the trying questions, which make life so bitter for them. They usually have an absolutely unclear concept of the Catholic worldview and fall victim to the false prophets of modern times. They do not submit to the truth, but they succumb to the false prophets' proclamations and excessive show of emotion.

How many learned people are psychologically imbalanced because they do not have clear religious knowledge! How often the psychology of the subconscious mind, the analysis of dreams discloses the fact that infantile knowledge is the cause of much psychological illness, particularly in learned people. That is easy to understand. If they do not

have a firmly founded faith in Divine Providence, e.g., how should they be able to correctly interpret the blows of life or master them?

We Catholics have to make these connections clear. We have to do our share to help educate a sound, strong generation, sound followers. To do so we need (in addition to a capacity for religious experience, in addition to the solid support of a religious community) the solid support of clear religious knowledge.

3. ***What is the connection between this clear knowledge and the image of Mary and our love for her?*** Our Lady is the *speculum institutiae*, the mirror of justice. In the words of St. Thomas, she is the “golden book of the Lord.”

Time and again I cannot help but read  
Mary’s mother heart,  
for there is no book on earth  
that leads to heaven as does this one.<sup>45</sup>

We may complete the statement and add, “leads to earth as does this one.” One of St. Paul’s and St. Augustine’s favorite ideas is: The Creator is united with his creation. God speaks not only in words but also in deeds. Every creature so they tell us is a letter of the alphabet written by God. Therefore the whole world is a type of book of God. All creation points to God, is ultimately a book written by God. Theologians tell us: If this is so (if God’s writing is to be found in each person, if God has written something about himself in each creature), then we must call the Blessed Virgin a library of God. I should take each book from this library in hand and leaf through each page by page. Time and again I cannot help but look into Mary’s mother heart...

We see the Blessed Mother as a vivid, winning summary of all religious truths. She is a clear compendium that wins hearts, a compendium of all these: dogmatics, morals, asceticism, liturgy and cosmology. What we have touched upon, the artists of the Middle Ages understood better than we do. We may not overlook what the portrayal of

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<sup>45</sup> Novalis, originally Friedrich Leopold Freiherr von Hardenberg, German lyric poet (1772-1801).

our Lady's life, as depicted in churches of the Middle Ages, means. To a great extent these were the people's catechism: a clear, vivid, winning catechism, not an abstraction.

You might say: "That may have been all right then. So many people were illiterate, but that's hardly the case today." And yet innumerable people are addicted to films; they constantly hunger for new impressions and can't make heads or tails of their religion. If we want to clarify Catholic truths in a connected way to our followers yes, in a way that is vivid, clear and wins the heart we have to fall back on the picture of Mary; for there is no book on earth that leads us to heaven, that leads us to earth as does this one. You will find in this book all the truths presented and illustrated in a classic way. My children's picture book should be the life of the Blessed Virgin. We should present Catholic truths not only theoretically but also with illustrations from our Blessed Lady's life.

In our times the image of Mary has a singular role to play in education. We may not portray her as an idea only, but in such a manner that our following comes to bear love for her in their hearts. Attachment to Mary, the love of a child for the Blessed Mother, the personal attachment that is the great secret! If the image of the Virgin Mary stands as a visual aid only and we do not awaken in others love for her person, the visual aid will not grip the whole person. A person is gripped by love for a person, by personal attachment, not primarily by ideas.

"She is the great missionary. She will work miracles."<sup>46</sup> We will send this missionary out into the nursery, into the classroom, into the confessional, to the pulpit. We want to have this great missionary travel throughout the world. She will work miracles in a time when everything in human nature is mangled and has been undermined. She will work miracles: She will transform souls. She will see that people of today develop a capacity for religious experience, that they become creative and find their way into a community, that they be given the clear knowledge which will enable them to appreciate religious experience.

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<sup>46</sup> St. Vincent Pallotti's spiritual testament to his fellow priests who were leaving for the missions.

## Ninth Talk

### *The Fourth Basis for Religious Education: The Support of a Classic Example*

In three successive courses we would like to work out a complete system of Marian pedagogy set in the pedagogical situation of our Time.<sup>47</sup> In this course we are doing the preliminary work. It should not be difficult for us to establish the inner connections. Haven't we been discussing the educational situation of our age all this time? Are we not bringing the image of Mary to bear on this situation, at least in broad general stories?

We began unveiling the psychological bases for religious education, and we have discussed them in turn. But we must never overlook the fact that in everyday life they should be seen as an organic totality. Our goal is a capacity for religious experience that can develop into joy in religious experience. We strive for contact with a stable religious community and for the support of clear comprehensive knowledge. Marian devotion gave impetus to each of these three points. We know how important the Marian element is with respect to this threefold perspective.

One more psychological basis is yet to be discussed. ***The support of a living example.*** Here we mean a person who leads an exemplary life; we mean that our personal life should be an embodiment of what we teach.

Consequently, sound Catholic education has to work toward forming ideal persons who embody in their own life what they teach. In his own person the educator himself should anticipate in a most comprehensive way the ideal of those entrusted to him. Great ideas will unfold their driving force only insofar as we awaken to their value.

Academic psychologists may be able to mentally empathize with those being educated, may see great connections and even expound on them in logical terms. This is certainly of value. But the idea which proves to be the most valuable motive for one's actions and exerts most powerful

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<sup>47</sup> Due to circumstances beyond his control, Fr. Kentenich was unable to carry out this plan.



appeal is the one which has proven its value in the life of the speaker, in the educator. Only life can kindle life. Ideas are not yet life. They only come to life when they are embodied by the bearer of said ideas.

The process of education is a procreative act. Every procreative act therefore presupposes my life. Of course, it isn't as if we educators should get caught up in small details. What matters here is the personality as a whole, the great goal, the great thrust. I should be the embodiment of what I teach. I myself should be a portrayal of what I seek to achieve with my following.

To whom should I turn? To fathers and mothers of natural families? To our priests? To our teachers? We sense the impact and significance of an exemplary life, of the educator's example. Yes, we would almost like to say: Of what use is a capacity for religious experience and for experiencing joy in religion, of what use is the support of a stable community without the practical example which begets life!

At this point three questions arise:

1. What do we mean by a living example?
2. For what reasons is such a person fruitful?
3. Which methods must we employ in order to achieve this?<sup>48</sup>

First, what do we mean by a living example? If we want to put it in psychological terms the answer can only read: ***to identify heart and soul with the ideals my followers are striving for.*** A simple, unadorned sentence! And yet it encompasses a whole world of truths, realities and tasks. We want to explain each part of this statement.

I intentionally said "the ideal they are striving for." What I demand of my followers is not so much that they live up to the ideal, but that they strive for it. And that is what I should demand of myself too. If we wanted to wait until we embody the ideal until we reach the beatific vision. On the other hand, we may never overlook the fact: Even when we make mistakes in applying pedagogy, we may not crawl into a mouse hole and say we are incapable [of educating others]. As long as we strive earnestly everything is all right. Our followers do not expect more than that. We can almost can say: Thanks be to God that we make mistakes!

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<sup>48</sup> In the Tenth Talk Fr. Kentenich goes into the second and third points.

Then, too, we “act in accord with” our young people. Then we can prove that we make full use of mistakes as a means to grow. In every regard our followers should see in us a living and effective ideal that bears fruit.

Do you object and question; “How is that possible? Doesn’t our youth, don’t our followers have an original ideal? Doesn’t each individual presumably have a personal ideal? Am I to try to exemplify all of them in my person?” The answer should not be difficult for us. Don’t all ideals have something in common? Isn’t the substance of all ideals the same?

*[Self-discipline]* Allow me to give you a few examples. Let’s say I am an educator and director of a boarding school. People come to me with complaints about the lack of discipline among the students. How difficult it is nowadays to keep discipline when our young people are going through adolescence and everything inside them seethes like a witch’s brew. How difficult it is to urge and encourage such youth to keep discipline and obey!

What means can we apply in such a case? I must first consider how much lack of discipline there is in my own heart and the effect it has on my life and behavior. Identify with them! Before taking action, I must begin with myself; I have to find my way back to a disciplined, austere, forceful attitude as regards my character and, where necessary, back this up with deeds. Then I can intervene. If I do not do this, it will not be a procreative act; then I just stand there as a speaker. I start making demands, which are not back up in my own life. That way I probably impede the procreative act significantly or make it altogether impossible.

Another example: I see the immaturity, the inconstancy of my young people as they go through the process of growing up. They are teenagers in the awkward adolescent phase, and things seethe as if in a witch’s cauldron. Clouds gather overhead and soon the educator has to come downward; the effect is an easing of tensions.

Although this is a way of resuming peace, it is not a way of identifying with my followers. Rather, I should ask myself: How much immaturity is still hidden in my heart, in my head, in my fantasy, in my dreams? What will I have to do? Put myself forcefully into the harness of the will, fully renounce all the mediocrity in my nature. Then, as an educator, I can initiate a procreative act. Then the words I say are backed

up by life because I know how difficult it is to keep a tight rein on myself. When I have wild youths in front of me, I must first endeavor to re-master my own wild drives: consciously, clearly, humbly and forcibly. Only then can I master them in others.

There is hardly anything more beautiful than being an educator. If you are a true educator your task forms you much more than you form others. Educating is a mutual procreative act. That is the secret of education, of the process of education. If I stand there like the lord whose followers can paw the floor, I may be holding class but I am not educating. If I am not open to the values of my followers, they will not be open for mine.

Add more examples of your own! All in all, whether we are fathers and mothers of natural families or spiritual fathers and mothers, we should take this principle to heart: All the distress, the needs, the incivility of our followers must first be *filtered through our hearts* before we react verbally. The reaction must first be assimilated into our hearts down to the deepest root of our being. Then, in keeping with the laws of growth, we will steadily mature and become resolute personalities graced by God.

Another example: Someone tells me about his or her crises, either moral or religious. Perhaps my vis-à-vis cannot cope with practical faith in Divine Providence. Due to my studies I know, of course, any number of answers. All I have to do is open a volume of dogmatics. O, the person posing the question knows the answer as well as I do, perhaps even better than I do! To give some kind of a learned answer isn't life. He can consult books as well as I can. As an educator I must first fight out for myself the struggle he is going through.

For a time we may have to do this reflexively. I may even have to include it in my examination of conscience. It may take a long time till such a method becomes second nature to us: Have I taken into my heart all the needs and incivilities of my followers and fought them through? By the time we reach the height of our pedagogical life and striving, this way of educating must have become second nature to us. To listen [to their problems] and fight them out, and to take in their needs and digest them interiorly are one and the same thing. Only then should we give an answer.

Another example: A young person has difficulties with holy purity. Even if you, the educator, can tell yourself, in that line I have no difficulties, you should reflect as follows: Where does my misery and sorrow lie? What difficulties do I have? Where is my weak spot? A person in need has shown me his brokenness – what does mine look like? And while I take all this in, the strong will to form myself is quietly at work within me.

If as fathers and mothers we form ourselves in this way, we are highly blessed as educators and can say we are on the way to acting in accord with the ideal striving of our followers. Then they take our words seriously in a time when we can truly speak of a crisis of the word. The spoken word is not taken seriously today. Whose word do we still believe nowadays? Please answer the question for yourselves! If, as father and educator, I am and do the opposite of what I demand of my young people, they will make fun of me behind my back. Procreative power does not emanate from my personality, so it cannot give weight to my words. The secret of education is the educated educator; a miracle worker in the field of education because such a person takes seriously what he or she knows, teaches and demands of others.

***[Purification of the subconscious]*** We want to ponder another, an important word: to identify heart and soul. To identify in mind and thought is not enough; it might be instinctive. Ideas and mere words are like soap bubbles after a brief time in the air they burst. In the long run, even to identify with the will is not enough because the whole person is not sufficiently gripped by it.

Friedrich Wilhelm Foerster <sup>49</sup> wrote: A mother asked an educator what she should do to solve the problems she was having with her son. Answer:

First ask yourself what kind of example do you set now you stand to this problem. In your son's life there is tension between strength of character and earning a livelihood. But if your own attitude is "financial gain above all else" you can say what you like, when all is said and done, he will not make a good decision.

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<sup>49</sup> German philosopher and educator (1869-1966)

We are often helpless when confronted with today's youth. The answer has to be: Physician, first heal yourself! It will not do at least not in the long run I identify only in mind and will with the ideals my followers are striving for. I must also be filled and griped in the subconscious life of my soul. To use an expression from our training now I turn to our priests I should say: Even the *motus primo primi*, the initial spontaneous stirrings of our hearts, ought to be taken firmly in hand that they fly to the ideal. Obviously I am typifying. We know that we cannot achieve such heights. But we have to sight them.

Purification of the subconscious life of the soul! We must be filled to the brim with the ideal, with Catholic ideas; they should penetrate the deepest roots of our being, even if we have to go the way of the cross yes, precisely when we are privileged to die for them.

Put negatively: All the primitivity in our hearts, being and life must be *overcome*, beginning with *any immature outlook in life*, down to any form of hysteria. Both hysteria and immaturity have something in common: the powerful drive to fulfill the self. The human being constantly focuses on the self, in this, one person differs from the other only in the degree. Today there may be just as many hysterical men as there are hysterical women, clerics included.

A glaring disharmony between one's age and one's mental-spiritual attitude toward life that is what we mean by immaturity. A small child may behave in an immature way; that is not an immature outlook. Yet a man who is middle-aged but has a childish soul is immature.

There is yet another definition of immaturity: lack of harmony between I love and you – love. The effect is persons who by their age should have matured to a self-detachment, where a transparent you – love – not sick I love – should predominate in one's life.

We also find an immature outlook in a person who has reached an age at which childlikeness should be mature but degenerates into childishness. If, in one's mature years when a person should be unfolding motherliness or fatherliness, but her motherliness is blind and primitive, and his fatherliness is grandfatherly or gives into cravings for power, both have a primitive outlook on life.

An immature outlook also exists if we want to receive when we should be giving; or if, time and again, deep inside we have a secret longing to be fondled by our mother, who, when we were young, kept all of life's hard blows away from us; when we do not have the courage hard as iron and steel to take on the hardships of life and let God pound, mold and form us into resolute personalities. "If your mother knew!" this plaintive attitude that constantly focuses on the self and does not know how to master life that is immaturity. My attitude is immature if I repeatedly indulge in the question, what do others give me? Rather than ask, what do I give others? Or, do they understand me? Instead of, do I understand them? Or, do they love me? Instead of, Do I love them?

In St. Paul you find the opposite of an immature outlook: "When I was a child I used to talk like a child, think like a child, reason like a child. When I became a man I put childish ways aside."<sup>50</sup>

***In the life of the Blessed Virgin we find the classic ideal image that shows us how to overcome an immature attitude.*** Once she said yes at the hour of the Annunciation, once she openly professed and acknowledge that she was the handmaid, throughout her life she never went back on her word. Everything in her focused on the Lord. She served him and his work selflessly. Circling round herself was ruled out. She went with him, not only to the wedding feast but to Golgotha where she stood under the cross. Her life's path led through every kind of suffering, and even when the sevenfold sword pierced her heart, she went with him. She stood by him a strong person who knew what faithfulness is, faithfulness of the follower till death.

The Blessed Mother let Jesus take her in hand, let him educate and form her, and when noble wishes awakened in her, she renounced them. She had no peace till the Lord had rechanneled even these most noble wishes if the Father so willed it.

We think of 12-year-old Jesus in the temple. Noble mother drives are alert and alive when she complains, "Son, why have you done this to us?"<sup>51</sup> Jesus treats her harshly. He educates her to be heroically selfless.

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<sup>50</sup> 1 Cor 13,11

<sup>51</sup> Lk 2,48

How much time it must have taken to find the deep harmony between noblest motherliness and the demands of being the “handmaid of the Lord.” In the temple she is beside herself with a mother’s grief. Later, standing beneath the cross she surmounts every trace of primitive motherliness.

There are followers who go along as far as the cross, but when it comes to crucifixion, that’s the end of the show. There are followers who occupy an armchair in an ivory tower and can win laurels; but when the time comes to step out into the dark of night, that’s end of the show. A primitive outlook on life! Doesn’t every family, whether natural or supernatural, go through difficult crisis? It is then that the parents show, in their relationship to one another and to their children, whether they have overcome a primitive attitude. Therefore, every religious family that has a great mission must, for the sake of this mission, be prepared for dark hours, for Golgotha hours. Who will remain faithful? Will they say [of us] as they did of his disciples in Gethsemane, “He found them asleep”<sup>52</sup>? It is when life toys with us that we prove whether the forceful will to form [self and others] has achieved its goal.

I think, with that, you know what it means to identify heart and soul with the ideals our followers is striving for: Here there is no room for immaturity.

Modern psychotherapists draw our attention to the fact that if they want to help people who are psychologically disturbed, the therapist’s word alone is not enough. When the one who is not well lays subconscious complications bare, the psychotherapist should first try to overcome similar complications and weaknesses in her own soul. When a soul who is detached from self takes in the anguish of another, mysterious strength radiates from that person. If I circle round myself, however, and am not interiorly free, my vis-à-vis may tell me of his anguish a thousand times, but no strength radiates from me. Modern medical doctors say the same: If they want to help the sick on the spiritual level, first they themselves have to interiorly prevail over struggles similar to those which their patients face.

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<sup>52</sup> Mt 26,40

Today everything projects deep into the subconscious life of the soul. We have to treat, purify and ennoble it. We have to detach ourselves from the self.



## Tenth Talk

### *Identifying Heart and Soul with the Ideals of One's Followers*

As educators we must strive to identify with the serious striving of our followers. A holy competition should be going on between them and us: Who can reach for the highest, who can climb to the highest peak most quickly and most surely? For educators this steady competition should go on not only in younger years. Until the end of our lives we must be open, stay alert and encourage one another. Only then do we achieve a fitting Marian attitude and the genuine awareness that we are a family. Then natural family life makes us happy, and spiritual family life finds us always on the way to the heights.

To identify heart and soul with the serious striving of our following. My followers may be my parishioners, the children at school, the members of an association or whoever. Identifying heart and soul with the serious striving of our following means, first of all, *overcoming any trace of an immature outlook on life*. Such an attitude can take on as many forms as life itself: An immature attitude toward physical, spiritual and toward religious life.

An *immature attitude toward the body* manifests itself in softness. I should treat my body in keeping with the weighty law *Ordo essenndi est ordo agendi*.<sup>53</sup> The body should be healthy. In order to care for my health, however, I must treat my body austere so it remains resistant and productive. Our contemporaries try to make the body resistant by using injections. People of old managed to have serious meditations about hell in order to learn to be austere with themselves and make their body resilient.

Even though we made so many sacrifices, had to undergo so much, and our bodies had to put up with so much during and after the war, we are on the way to becoming a soft generation. Shouldn't we hold on to the principle: Be severe with your body and, in case of doubt, choose what is harsher? Aren't we living in an age of addiction? This is easily

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<sup>53</sup> The order of being determines the order of acting.

understandable, for us the supernatural reality has increasingly disappeared. In the past years, nature had to do without so many things; now it seeks and finds compensation in addictions: drinking, smoking, movies, radio.

A certain addiction is a danger for all of us today. At root addictions are [the fruit of] an immature outlook on life. We overcome them by making our bodies the instrument of our souls. It must become supple and be subject to the soul. That means, on the one hand, wise strictness and, on the other, reverent love. The body must be formed in such a manner that it can do vigorous professional work. This calls for overcoming an immature attitude toward the body. In the final analysis, my body contains the bud of glorified life.<sup>54</sup> That is why I must mold it in such a way that it can one day share in the glorified state similar to the bodies of Jesus and Mary. With how much reverence I must, therefore, treat my body!

Conquering an immature outlook on life is an essential program for every educator who practices self-education. Whatever I acquire in this way I may deposit in my “shepherd’s pouch”.

In addition, we may suffer from an *immature attitude toward the life of the spirit*. The higher I ascend in spiritual maturity, the more unworldly must my thinking become, the warmer my heart. Don’t I give in too easily to tiredness and fatigue? Do I still manage to seriously apply myself to studies?

It is a trait characteristic of our age that people cannot apply what they know to everyday life. Our contemporaries no longer manage to be discerning, to decide for themselves, to see through a situation or be prudent. They do not have the courage to dare deathleaps, under the Holy Spirit’s influence, into the supernatural world. An immature attitude toward the life according to the spirit! So we stagger into the world of collectivism. Of herd mentality. That is how it was in concentration camp: As soon as someone lifted his head above the masses was cut down. No one was allowed to be outstanding. Everyone was supposed to become part of the crowd and go along with the life’s rhythm of the masses.

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<sup>54</sup> Cf 1 Cor 15, 42ff

I have to overcome an immature outlook on life in myself first. Only then can I lead others in the same direction. We turn to the second point: the *fruitfulness of an exemplary life*.

The reason for the creative activity of good example seen from the psychological and philosophical standpoints is the *procreative power of the incarnate idea*. Only life generates life. These days we are so unfruitful in the field of education because most of us come from an age of exaggerated intellectualism and idealism. We teach too much and live too little.

What is the ultimate reason for the almost all-powerful efficacy of good example in living a religious life? Educators who are deeply religious may say of themselves as did the apostle, "The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me."<sup>55</sup> Their personality in its entirety gives off an unusual glow, projecting into the world beyond, into the supernatural. They radiate the atmosphere, the aroma of another world, a world with which moderns are no longer familiar although they have a hidden longing for it. This longing awakens most forcefully when we encounter the supernatural world in concrete form in a person who, in a striking way, has been effectively molded and formed supernaturally. Such people awaken everything noble that, until then, has been slumbering [in a person] down to the depth of the subconscious.

There is something so unusual about the mentality prevalent today. Because people are so terribly disappointed in humankind, they no longer bow to a human as a person. Unless something superhuman is at work in a person either something unmistakably diabolic or something unmistakably divine humans no longer bow to humans.

*[Lack of a supernatural outlook]* Why is it that I have so little success in religiously forming and educating others? Because I have not penetrated deeply enough into the world of super nature. I can speak brilliantly, but creative effects do not stem from eloquent speech.

Fathers, mothers of natural families! Can you say what Paul said of himself? "The just person lives by faith."<sup>56</sup> Do my children live by

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<sup>55</sup> Gal 2,20

<sup>56</sup> Rom 1,17

faith in Divine Providence? Are they genuine, pious persons who believe in Divine Providence? If we would have more supernatural, devout priests, devote educators, it would be easy for us to raise a devote supernaturally oriented generation.

If we look into our ordinary everyday lives, we have to admit that today it is extremely difficult to be supernaturally oriented; to think. Live and love supernaturally. We know why. The soul is not only atrophied and crippled but also mutilated. This is why there is so much materialism, secularism, sexualism, fatalism and interdenominationalism nowadays. Who dares to withdraw from these tentacles and, with a daring leap, spring into the supernatural? Yesterday we said so much about simple childlikeness, and little St. Thérèse had the word as she told us a little about her mission. “Unless you become like little children...”<sup>57</sup>

One of the difficulties connected with the religious-supernatural formation of our generation is the influence of the “island”, the enclave of the family. This has consequences: The stronger the effects of the centrifugal force, the more we must fight to make the centripetal force effective. For the educator this means a death leap into the world beyond, into the supernatural reality. We may not get stuck on the periphery. Others do not take us seriously because we lack the courage to follow through, i.e., we live too little what our lips speak.

In the present day it is becoming more and more difficult to raise, from among our lay people, Catholic leaders, a lay priesthood. If things continue to developing as they have been, soon we priests who joined in singing the praises of Catholic Action will be left alone. Why is there a shortage of Catholic leaders among the laity? Because we do not dare the absolute leap into supernature. Do not think that we can raise true religious leaders if the aroma of supernature does not envelop us priests and educators, if the mysterious glow of the supernatural world does not radiate from within us.

This may help us understand another phenomenon in education. Notice that, without exception, traditional Catholic religious communities whose task is education generally forbid physical punishment in

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<sup>57</sup> Mt 18,3

education. We who are all at work in the midst of present-day life know that in individual cases physical punishment can work miracles. We do not want to deny this. Nevertheless, we know that where physical punishment is permitted in principle, there is always danger that, tomorrow or the day after passion will triumph in us that we punish children when we ourselves actually deserve punishment that in time we forfeit the core of the personality.

*[What we must do to form ourselves:]* We must take ourselves in hand. Within us there must be a core that keeps us on a tight rein. The mysterious efficacy of the personality! The self-contained, supernaturally anchored personality, the fragrance of a true educator personality should effect what a punishment would otherwise accomplish.

Professor Golldbeck calls the basic attitude of the educator *priestly fatherliness*. He conceives of priestliness as a being-anchored-in-the-metaphysical, in a world founded on unchanging principles. Principles, monumentally secured, firm principles; a fatherliness supported by principles that is what people of our times need.

The word “priestly” has yet another meaning for us. As Christians we share in the priesthood of the God-man through which we grow into the supernatural reality. That is more than metaphysics; it is religion that gives us a home in the only world that can grip people of today and draw them heavenward.

For faith-education there are not only prior insights but also prior experiences that project into the region of the subconscious mind. We distinguish three types of prior experiences: *praebula fidei* psychological, ascetical and experiential prior experience.

Psychological prior experiences. Purity of morals and simple reverence are experiences that must precede, a person must see them lived out. Unless I educate myself and my following on the ethical level to the point of penetrating the world of reverence and purity, the organ [of faith] will not be sufficiently prepared for the divine.

The same holds good for ascetical prior experiences, among which are experiences of powerlessness and humility. Without them neither the educator nor the followers will be sufficiently open for the divine.

By experiential prior experiences we mean the experience mediated by those who live exemplary lives. For example, to lead someone to my community, the best propaganda is someone who lives the ideal. As a Catholic I must lead a Catholic life, as a priest a priestly life. Then I can educate. The reasons for this are the procreative power of the lived life, and being at home in the reality of supernature. Taken together, they unveil to us the entire life process of education.

What must we do to acquire procreative power? What should and must we do to become so totally and absolutely at home in the world beyond, in the supernatural reality? Or may I ask, referring again to the first point of our reflections. What must we do to form ourselves so that we come to act instinctively in accord with the ideal striving of our followers?

We will take up the last of these questions because it reveals the negative [side of the issue] and is more concrete: identifying heart and soul! *Purification of the subconscious life of the soul* as far as that is possible here on earth! We will never manage it to perfection; only eternity opens that gate for us. Only the beatific vision gives us the *donum integritatis*, the gift of integrity.

When [our first parents] lost the *donum integritatis*, we lost our being's adherence to God. Before original sin human nature was similar to the Blessed Mother's: The subconscious clung to God. Now it clings to the world, to the self, to the drives.

What must we do if we want to become true Catholic educators? Strive and fight for the ideal of true holiness. A saintly educator is always a fruitful educator, even if he or she is not intellectually gifted. Holiness includes not only the fight against mortal and venial sin, not only the struggle to overcome imperfections such as, superficial thoughts, pictures painted by the fantasy, stirrings of the heart. Rather, holiness also entails acting in perfect accord with the divine will; this includes love for the cross and a fusion of hearts. What we call *inscriptio* is not only a fusion of wills but of hearts as well, a fusion of heart with heart which penetrates the subconscious and is to make everything godly again.

It is impossible to achieve such a towering goal with human means alone. If God's grace does not raise us up we will remain adolescents, a

mediocre as we were from the beginning. True, we know that in order to be transformed interiorly to such a degree, we must pray and make sacrifices. That is necessary, but is not enough. Only the Holy Spirit with his seven gifts can reach down into our subconscious mind. Unless we all become Holy Spirit children, unless all of us can counter the natural drives in us with divine drives, we will never be able to act instinctively in accord with the divine will.

*[The charism of Mary]* Allow me to crown and close this train of thought with [words about] Mary. If the Holy Spirit alone can mold and form us into true saints through his seven gifts, and if we ask the Blessed Virgin to transform our souls, it follows that we await the Holy Spirit and his seven gifts here in the shrine, our Cenacle. How will the Spirit of God work?

When our Lady folds her hands in prayer, the effect in keeping with the law: The order of being determines the order of acting. The Blessed Mother's being is free from original sin; she has the *donum integritatis*. Consequently, she did not have rebellious drive. From the beginning her drives were in accord with divine wishes. Psychologically as well as in the order of grace, her being determines her acting.

Love for her entails a transference of life. By means of the psychological effect of love, she would like to transfer to us, as far as possible, her untouched, spotless life. The psychological effect must also be supplemented by grace, i.e., we may expect her to mediate the necessary grace.

As proof of the divinity of his person, the Savior promised charisms to the early Church not just curing the sick, but also gifts and graces beyond the natural such as the gift of tongues and the like. Has present-day Christianity lost these charisms? It is my personal conviction that present-day Christianity has been granted a charism and that charism is Mary. Those who have an intimate love for her are charismatically gifted.

Today this charism has a goal different from times past. In the Age of Christ, diabolic influence took the form of Christological heresies. In our times diabolic influence takes the form of anthropological heresies: the collectivistic image of the human person and of community.

Today the charism of devotion to Mary will have to blossom and bring forth the new Catholic person and the new Catholic community. That means transformation of soul down to the depth of the subconscious life of the soul: Unless I am altogether wrong, that is the charismatic gift which our Blessed Lady will give us, not least from Schoenstatt where she is at work as the Mother Thrice Admirable and effective as the great educator of peoples and of the world.

Even if we have to walk through dark nights, if hard blows come to mold and form us more vigorously, do not forget: The new person, the new community that wants to be shaped by the charismatic gift of our Lady, must also be capable of remaining steadfast in the face of today's trials, must be formed after the image of Christ who hung on the cross. After the image of his Mother who stood beneath the cross and whose heart was pierced by a sevenfold sword.

This we want to make the effort to learn from our Lady in order to strengthen in us the four psychological bases for religious education. The last basis which we have discussed is the verification which comes from an exemplary life, the good example of the true educator adapted to modern life and to the ideal of the new person and community.

And so we have come to the end of a long train of thought. We Schoenstatters would like to recall that, on the whole, we can expect three pilgrimage graces from the Blessed Virgin here: the grace of inner transformation, of a mission, and of a home. May our Mother see to it that, as an organic totality, all four psychological bases of religious education are increasingly translated into action in our life. *Mater perfectam habebit curam*<sup>58</sup> She, the great missionary, has to see that we succeed in mediating for ourselves and our following a more forceful capacity for religious experience, that we join an ideal religious group and that, in spite of all difficulties, this group asserts itself and wins out against present-day problems. She must see that clear knowledge molds and forms us, and that, when all is said and done, our life illustrates the clear and perfected verification of what we proclaim, of what we teach, of what we say.

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<sup>58</sup> Here Fr. Kentenich adds the word *perfectam* to one of St. Vincent Pallotti's sayings: *Mater habebit curam*: Mother will take care.



## Eleventh Talk

### *Homelessness and Being at Home in the Light of Religious Longing*

When mountain climbers have a good stretch of the way behind them from time to time they may occasionally wish to pause and rest, looking back over the way already covered so as to be better able to tackle the last stretch. We too are mountain climbers. We wanted to clear the access road to the summit of love for Mary, to the peak of Marian pedagogy. Part of this road lies behind us. When we first took it we discussed the longing for a marked supernatural atmosphere and pointed out three milestones on this access road: The first read “explain” the second “clarify.” For a long time we dwelled on this second milestone and, from a psychological point of view, analyzed the object of this longing. We left the supernatural world as such aside and, from the angle of human activity, exposed the bases for both religious education and a religious atmosphere.

In retrospect we may say that we worked out a good portion of a modern pedagogy, naturally, only from the standpoint of self-activity. If we do all we can, when all is said and done, we are still no more than “useless servants.”<sup>59</sup> But in the end, education is the task of the great divine educator.

Now it is time to take up the last milestone which reads “transfigure”. What is it that we want to transfigure? The longing for a supernatural atmosphere. We want to set it in a broad prospective, in its ultimate, vast connections. By “transfigure” we mean this widening, i.e., setting this longing in its ultimate, grand context.

This has always been our way: to begin with the smallest details, then penetrate the ultimate and most elevated [realities]. We have no peace till we attain this goal. For we would like to rest, not only in persons, but also in ultimate ideas and connections. Thus, we want to try to see the longing for a supernatural atmosphere in this vast context. This cannot be difficult for us, since we have already prepared the way.

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<sup>59</sup> Lk 17,10

Our first evening together we came to the realization that the longing for a supernatural atmosphere is a concrete form of eternal homesickness. It is homesickness which points to our eternal home! This is where we want to start. The object expands and the mind can delight in the powerful, bright light that it finds in the thought of home. The heart and will should expand too: the home-thought, the appreciation for home, and love for home should awaken.

There we have a triple star of thoughts. Proclaims these thoughts in our time and world! Let this triple star shine in the darkness of our times! What will the echo be like? Exceedingly polyphonic and varied. Even amid the babble of resounding voices, it won't be difficult for us to pick out, in essence, two facts.

First fact: In the final analysis, *the home problem* (in the breadth in which we present and understand it) is probably **the** problem of our present-day culture. That is why *homelessness is the issue of the heart of today's culture crisis* of course, we mean homelessness in an endlessly broad sense.

Home! There are various ways in which we can look at and examine the word as well as the life process implied by it:

We can speak of a local, a rational, and a metaphysical home; or of a home in ideas, for the soul and in a place the terms overlap. Later we will see what each of these expressions imply.

Second fact: If we call to mind for a moment *the prominent features of this homelessness*, we need only point out the type of person prevalent in our day: the collectivistic person on whose soul this all-around homelessness has left its mark. The collectivistic person is one of the masses who rejects all God-willed ties, from within, radically and absolutely.

We can rightly say that such a person is the all-round homeless one who has radically severed all bonds between self and God, between self and neighbor, between self and the earth. In a perfectly justifiable sense of the word, we may call this multiform, utter homelessness the punishment of hell.

In essence hell consists in absolute homelessness: one spirit against the other. Seen in this light, countless contemporaries already live for the

most part in a type of hell, [a state which] is outright homelessness: man against God and man against man.

With this in mind we should not find it difficult to point heaven out to the modern person. The essence of heaven consists in the beatific vision: the Spirit of God and that of the human person live in each other, while each human spirit lives in the other in a mysteriously profound way.

In the bliss of eternity, people who have loved one another here on earth will be able to experience this in-one-another spirit in a deepened and perfect way.

As a whole, contemporary western culture is on its way to an all-round, multiform homelessness. Because of this, in one way or another our culture is on its way not but to heaven, not even to a kind of earthly heaven,

The crows caw

And they migrate, take whizzing flight to the city:

Soon it will snow.

Woe to the one who has no home!<sup>60</sup>

When a natural catastrophe approaches, the animals are the first to sense it. Even the crows want to come in from the fields and fly to the homes of humankind. Woe to the crow that finds no place to go during the catastrophe!

In modern times, which crows [does the poet] mean? Human beings, the milling mass. They have grown restless, for a cultural catastrophe lies ahead. They migrate, take whizzing flight to the city... Which city? Apparently a mysterious city, for all the earthly cities are being drawn ever more deeply into the culture crisis. The human person's inborn drive for a home, a basic drive that cannot stilled on this earth, hears the words "Woe! Woe! Woe to the one who has no home!"

Even in our own circles homelessness is on the increase. Foreigners who streamed to our region during and after the war, left an alien mentality and culture behind. Many among us may have become homeless; they can speak the word "home" but can no longer understand its essence. They equate home with a filled wallet, with a certain

affluence. That is not yet a home. I can have a home although I may be hungry. I can have a home although I may be poor. I can have a full stomach and purse and be absolutely homeless.

*[Reconquest of home]* What is the enormous task, the immense pedagogical problem? The central element of present-day education in and out of school should unequivocally consist of giving and fostering a home. Homelessness should be supplemented and substituted; it should turn into and end in the reconquest of home, of the thought of home, of the appreciation for home, and of love for home.

Because we stand in the midst of life, and present needs and problems swirl round us, we know that attempts to reconquer the home are repeatedly made everywhere. People organize home evenings. In both rural and city schools the appreciation for having a home is to be deepened, and people are encouraged to cling firmly to the concept of home as the central objective on all levels of education. Here and there such attempts have succeeded; here and there they have not. What these attempts lack most is typical today the insight into profound, ultimate connections.

That is where our work begins. Didn't we ask the Blessed Mother on our first evening together to give me the insight so that, together with you, I would succeed in exposing the root cause of modern problems? Now it is my task to answer two questions and base my answer as far as possible on ultimate principles and reasons.

First question: What do we mean by home? Second question: What role does devotion to Mary play with respect, the thought of home, the sense of a home, love for the home? What role does it play against the backdrop of the present-day culture crisis and [the need to] overcome it?

You may not expect me to dwell on Mary now; it would not fit into the framework of this convention which we would rather devote to the pedagogical situation of our time while collecting various building blocks. It is a pity that our convention will soon draw to a close, leaving us without time to fit the blocks together and form a huge edifice. But you should not think that our convention has been completely off the subject. We are just moving along on the access road; and all we want is to see Marian thought at the peak of the mountain, to look around a little for

Marian values up there, so that the Marian thinking at least becomes the object of our pedagogical longing.

It conforms with our convention to highlight the function of Mary as regards both the Catholic thought of home and the Catholic appreciation for love for home. A far-reaching and pronounced love for Mary belongs to the Catholic experience of a home. A Catholic home, in the fullest sense of the word, is inconceivable without the warmth of love for Mary.

We'll begin with the first question: What is *nature of a home*? For us, of course, the thought "home" will always have a Catholic ring to it; what is supratemporal will recur continuously. The Catholic element should always, in one way or another, furnish its destructive flavor and seal. We will discuss a popular, a philosophical and a psychological definition of home.

First, the *popular definition* reads: Where there is love that is home! Or: Where Father, Mother, and siblings are that is home! Where we find and give shelter that is home!

The homeless person can be compared to a match discarded on the street; anyone who goes by can crush it underfoot.

We differentiate between a home in ideas, a home for the soul and a home in a place. In which direction do simple peoples feeling tend? The people always want to have something that has soul. That is why the popular definition, the description of a spiritual home reads: The in-one-motherness of souls. Home is where souls live in one another not where they live next to or in opposition to one another.

This concept of a spiritual home stresses the effect of a home; a home gives us shelter and security. However, the person who wants to secure a home as an in-one-anotherness of souls, may not focus solely on seeking shelter and security for the self, but must also give these to others. Modern existentialists claim that the basic state of the human person is fear. Catholics shake their heads and say: Our basic state should be peace, security, and shelter.

Allow me as philosopher and psychologist to add a few thoughts about homelessness. Homelessness is a state of soullessness, of being

without character, without religion. Please look into this yourselves to see to what extent it is true.

This may help you understand to some extent how emigrants fare these days. I myself have been abroad often and have met many German emigrants. For the most part they cannot bear it outside Germany, not even if they are better off economically than they were here. In a foreign country they find it too difficult to feel at home, to experience a with-, for- and in-one-anotherness of souls. That is why our emigrants have a hard time. Would we have the strength to stand alone in a foreign country? To have your stomach or purse full is not the same as having a home. Home is something filled with mystery. Let us pause a moment and connect to the natural and supernatural realities.

The natural reality: In popular terms, *home and family mean the same thing*. The basic and very first form of a home is the natural family. Here many questions arise. I turn again to our fathers and mothers. Do my children have a home in my family? Husbands, asks yourselves: Does my wife have a home in me and vice versa? Does my family have an in-one-anotherness of souls; do its members offer one another shelter, protection and security?

We know that this process of binding souls requires sacrifice. The family table is and remains a table of sacrifice. Living in, with and for one another implies, in essence, a considerable detachment from self-seeking. That is why there are so few sound families in our times: We cannot get over our immature attitude. A sound family life presupposes death to unhealthy self-seeking.

We connect to the supernatural reality: If, as we mentioned earlier, the home-instinct is a basic drive of human nature, we understand why *our Catholic religion is, at depth, a home-religion*. Where Father, Mother, and siblings are that is home. Doesn't the Catholic faith give me the guarantee that the living God who created heaven and earth is my Father? Does the word "father" have a special ring to it, does it say something to me or is it just a word that comes and goes with the wind? The Catholic faith assures me that we have a mother, too, the heavenly Mother; and that we have brothers and sisters.

We are familiar with such truths; we have passed them on often enough in school and at home. Why do they sound new today? Because they have been put into a new context.

Why has religion not become enough of a home for us? Wouldn't we have to say that today most people are orphans who have lost either one parent or both? The orphans who have lost both parents are those who no longer have a heavenly Father or Mother. They do not know God as their Father nor the one blessed among women as their Mother.

That is why there is so much insecurity, why so many lack shelter and why the human's basic state is that of worried fear. If the basic drive of the human soul, the home-instinct, finds no adequate response, no satisfaction either here or in the supernatural world, fear grows. Max Jungnickel once wrote the beautiful words: "The Protestant Church is cold. What do we have to do? WE must bring Mother Mary home again so our church becomes warm."

Wouldn't many from among our circles have to say: The Catholic Church is cold? We have to bring Mother Mary home. The foundation of our love for Mary is not solid enough.

Innumerable Catholics suffer from homelessness because most of them neither know nor acknowledge Father God anymore. ***We have to bring our Mother home! We have to bring our Father home!*** That is no easy task. If it would be a matter of depicting, with the help of our Holy Scripture and dogmatics, an appropriate father and mother image, it would be easy work at least for us. But go back to everything we said yesterday about the radical cure and the normal cure necessary for restoring the modern soul to health. Recall the four radical cures. (In this connection I would like to ask those who want to take a rich harvest home with them to study the material of this convention in depth.)

I would like to repeat one or the other central thought. Usually, unless I have had a profound, natural, subconscious father and mother experience, the thoughts "father", "mother", "God is my Father and Mary my Mother" will not grip my inmost being to the full. It is not enough if only the later regions of my soul are filled with the thought of Father and Mother, but the depth of my soul are not. If, in such a case, a person

cannot have a belated experience, a contrast or supplemented experience, the thought of Father and Mother will usually cause difficulties.

Please go over these thoughts until the ideas are clear. Otherwise we cannot expect to reap the fruit of the work of these day - thus far the connection with the natural and supernatural realities regarding the thought of home.

All the associations of the Catholic Church try to build on the idea of the family. Kolping's Journeymen's Association is a classic example; it is meant to be a bit of home. Don't you think that, from this viewpoint, we may and should say: All we do and all we undertake must have a family character? The work I do in school, how I relate to my students must be family like [I am] not the lord whose students can paw the floor, but a father and [they the] children; a mother and [they the] children. We must strive for a spiritual relationship and let them sense our spiritual nearness which increasingly unfolds procreative and creative powers.

If we set up our associations more and more in a family like way, we contribute to overcoming the culture crisis of homelessness by offering others a home that has far-reaching and multiple effects.

"He or she whoever's mother is not the Church cannot have God as Father."<sup>61</sup> In other words, not only religion but the whole concept of the Church must increasingly become a concept of the family for us.

I believe I have given the popular answer to the question, what is a home? We have only touched on the question but have not carried the thought through to completion. That we shall do tomorrow when we descend to the profound shafts of science and add the philosophical and psychological answers.

Happy is the one who has a home and can be a home for countless people! Fathers, mothers, wouldn't you like to be a home for each other and for your children? Children, wouldn't you like to be a home and give a spiritual home to your parents and brothers and sisters? Millions of people who are homeless cry out for a spiritual home. We should be so deeply at home in God and if necessary homeless here on earth so we can give a home to untold numbers of people.

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<sup>61</sup> St. Cyprian



## Twelfth Talk

### *Philosophical Definition of Home*

The approach and access road to the summit of Marian education, to the peak of love for Mary, has been opened to us. We explained and clarified the longing for a supernatural atmosphere; then we transfigured it. By “transfiguring” we mean seeing it in a broad perspective, setting this longing in its ultimate, grand context. This is as far as we have gotten with our work. Yesterday I drew your attention to the direction in which this longing ultimately urges us. We hear the ring of expressions, such as, the thought of home, the appreciation for a home, and love for home. We are struggling [to define] the nature of a home and want to hear in more exact terms what Mary’s function is with respect to the home-thought, the appreciation for a home, and love for home.

What do we mean by home? We differentiated between a popular, a philosophical and a psychological definition. Yesterday we looked into the popular definition. Now to the *philosophical definition*. We shall take up the thoughts that we touched on yesterday and expand them in all directions. The thoughts are three: the nature; the becoming; and the value of a home, of the thought of home, the appreciation for a home, and love for home.

First question: What is *the nature of a home*? In order to reach the goal more quickly, I will put the definition of a home at the beginning and try to explain it. On one occasion Linus Bopp defined it like this: *Home is that part of our physical-spiritual-mental lebensraum<sup>62</sup> in which we receive and give shelter, but it is also a symbol for our shelter in God.*<sup>63</sup> Considering all we discussed yesterday, we immediately understand the definition. Nonetheless, it may be worth the effort to add a few reflections in order to more quickly penetrate the depth of the values we have before us.

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<sup>62</sup> Space required for life, growth or activity

<sup>63</sup> Cf Linus Bopp, Christlicher Edelmut zur Ungeborgenheit, 1937

**[Physical]** Visualize your own home for a moment. Imagine that you are in a foreign country. What does the thought of home arouse in you? A room? A place? If you come from the country, maybe what comes to mind is a house in the midst of firs or trees and a landholding. If you are from the city, what is the place like where you experienced a home?

**[Spiritual]** Any number of emotions and spiritual values awaken in us when we think of home. That is what is original about home. We had spiritual experiences there. Without spiritual experience there is no home, i.e., no profoundly rooted home that grips me deeply. My home town, the house that was home to me may be situated in a bleak area; it speaks to me nonetheless because of the spiritual experience I had there. I may even have traveled through the world and seen countless magnificent places that inspired and enthused me, but in spite of it they did not become my home. Why? I had no spiritual experience there.

Once we have spoken about home, a true home speaks to us constantly: When the picture of it comes to mind, I remember the many people with whom I grew up: Father, Mother, siblings, friends, neighbors, (whatever the case may be). The reminder awakens in my soul warm overtones flowing from the heart. I see all those who were good to me and all those who hurt me, although they meant well. Warm emotional overtones are connected with the awareness and experience of home. If, for example, I am in a foreign country and master the language brilliantly, the memory of my homeland makes my mother tongue speak in and to me. How much resounds in one's native language! Its joys and its tears...

World travelers, who master a number of languages and, at the peak of their life, forget their own language, suddenly begin to speak their mother tongue when they have grown old and death approaches. When emigrants go to confession in a foreign country they would like to do so in their native language. But if they want to cover something up in confession, they prefer to speak the foreign language. And in life processes that are second nature to us, emigrants retain their mother

tongue such as the waiter who counts in German.<sup>64</sup> Our native language is so deeply connected with home!

And if we had a Catholic home, the heavens smiled in a special way on our hometown, for there we had not only general spiritual experience but also pronounced supernatural, religious experience.

I summarize: If we reflect on the picture I just painted for you, we immediately sense the three essential elements of a home. There is a physical home, a particular place. There is a spiritual, a psychic home characterized by spiritual experience. There is a metaphysical home. The earthly home and the experiences connected with it are a symbol for the heavenly home. These three elements constitute the nature of a home.

*[Metaphysical]* In the course of this convention we have spoken about God's law of world government and applied it to a personal attachments. A person who has grown up in a sound way lives in a network of attachments. By nature we are indeed nest-bound beings. In addition to personal attachments there is also a local attachments, the attachment to a [place I call] home.

Which law does the home experience follow in the metaphysical realm? Similar to personal attachments, it follows the law of organic transference and transmission. God transfers something of his attributes his kindness, wisdom, beauty not only to people but to places. The law of organic transference! Humans transfer to places in an organic way the emotions that belong ultimately to God. By binding themselves to the place, they are actually binding themselves to what it symbolizes and ultimately to God. One associates with home the association is experiential, not based on ideas shelter, security, and protection. In that case the earthly home is a symbol for the heavenly one, the one which can ultimately offer us shelter, security and protection in a perfect way.

Yesterday we presented the reasons for the inability of moderns to cope with the image of God; we said they are tossed to and fro by insecurity and they tremble with fear. From the psychological point of view the root cause is the lack of father and mother experiences, the lack

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<sup>64</sup> Some of Fr. Kentenich's experiences in this regard go back to his first visit to the United States in 1940. See J. Niehaus, *Visit to America* (Waukesha, 1999), p. 48F

of real home experiences. I purposely said “experiences,” so that you keep one thing in mind: This is a matter not of ideas but of a movement of the heart. On an irrational level I must have experienced my father, my mother. Otherwise I am not sufficiently secure and have no shelter. IN essence it is the same if I apply these expressions to a home. Without a home experience a man is a vagabond. This is true not only of men but, in an outstanding way, of women. The modern’s homelessness lies in the lack of a home experience. Even if moderns own a place of their own, in many cases they have no home; they lack home experiences.

Homelessness is the issue at heart of today’s culture problem; it is the shadow cast on our society. That is why giving others a home is the important task for us right down the line. Having a home and feeling at home directly in God alone does not solve the problem. We have to prepare a home for people in human hearts rooted in earthly places. Then the supernatural home experience will be a sound one; then it will grip the heart. If it does not grip the heart, it is not secured because it does not provide enough shelter and steadfastness.

Do you notice the pedagogical adjustment we must make nowadays? What interest us is ***creating both a natural and supernatural home***. We would almost like to say: In the present circumstances, what is most important is to create a natural home. Then the law of organic transmission can function on its own. We don’t really need to study in depth the law of organic transmission. It follows by itself, largely in a functional, spontaneous and irrational way.

Picture to yourself a Catholic hometown. What comes to mind when we visualize a Catholic hometown? Wayside shrines, crucifixes here and there, the parish church, your own home. Which pictures hang there?

[Such things come to mind] all the more if we are at home at pilgrimage places! What experiences did we have there? Alban Stolz draws our attention to the fact that there are not only times but also places which numerous graces are distributed, Marian pilgrimage places in particular.

All these seemingly minor things in our hometown were for us a symbol of God and the divine, a symbol of the supernatural home. And

when we saw how seriously our relatives particularly our parents took these religious things; how they were gripped by religious symbols; when we saw them kneel before a wayside crucifix, make the sign of the cross, and so on, the law of organic transference and transmission functioned on its own, becoming a reality.

In summary I would like to say: Home is the place where God released us from eternity into this temporarily; but it is also the place from which we return in spirit from time to eternity.

*[Home, a gift and a task]* Fathers, mothers, what may I tell you? Do not underestimate such things, especially not religious customs. Those of you who do social work, who work with the rural movement, for instance, know how attempts are made today to awaken interest in the thought of home. See to it that the speakers who promote the home-thought do not disregard the religious trimmings, religious customs. People who are differently inclined are often quiet about religious customs and, because of this, the religious home experience lacks an essential element.

If, as elected representatives or in some other capacity, we have a say in such matters, we must see that our Catholic city and town precincts bear the seal of Catholicism. If we want a truly Catholic home experience, general spiritual experience is not enough. Religious experience is a necessity if the words are true: Home is the place where God released me from eternity into this temporality and the place from which at least in spirit steer a course from time to eternity.

If we want to win people for a community, great speeches alone will not do the job. Those responsible for a community and their followers are secured only from the moment when the community leaders have had in and with the followers profound spiritual, above all religious experience, and these at the place to which they want to bind their following. What, for example, is the deepest reason for our attachment to Schoenstatt? The spiritual, gracefilled experiences that are connected with Schoenstatt as a movement or as a place. Of themselves the talks we give here do not bring about this home.

May the Blessed Mother bind us all more and more firmly to herself, for all of us are part vagabond. She must relax us all interiorly; we must all be more deeply at home and attached somewhere.

We will draw a few lines from this point into everyday life. Home encompasses both a gift and a task. It is God's gift to us. Experts even use expressions which, I suppose, we would absolutely not coin on our own. They call home a sacramental, a special gift and grace.

Home is – and this is of particular importance to us now as educators – simultaneously a seriously pressing task, an obligation, and an extremely difficult task, nowadays especially. It means seeing that all three elements of a home become an experience, a reality.

I do not want to go into detail about physical attachment, but I would like to point out one thing. Those who have a say in housing construction should see to it that plans to build huge “barracks” are not approved; individual homes should be built instead. Those stony high – rises are hardly suited to nurturing the home experience in a child. Happy those who have a home of their own! Happy the one who grows up in such a home! Shouldn't the father of a family do all he can to build his wife and children a home of their own? We must have great goals! Home is a task. Happy those who have a home of their own!

But I must also see that my children have a profound spiritual experience of moral value which arouses sentiments of gratitude, piety and reverence, sentiments of the inner life. All this is part of a home. A person who does not have these qualities cannot have religious home experiences, cannot speak of home. We must also do our share to firmly link the religiosity of our children to this place so that the home supports religious values. All that is part of home. We may not leave everything to the Church and associations.

As pastor I must also provide for religious experience. Our simple people want something tangible, they want to experience something. You will tell me: Stay away with experiences! We must see that they endure and master the harshness of life.

It is really a difficult task to educate persons so that they develop an awareness of and love for home. Those of you who travel around there

are some among us whose task it is to do so<sup>65</sup> may not take their work too lightly and think: A few talks will do the trick. We should foster small circles whose ideal is to create a home in the scope, however, in which we have presented it. We must not look only at the individual parts of a home; we must also create the organism as such, combining in it three elements: local, physical and metaphysical. That may be difficult to do in the case of people who are inwardly broken and mangled.

In that connection allow me to go into another question. When may I leave my home? If circumstances rob me of the place, I cannot do anything about it. But let's presuppose that leaving my home and moving away depends on my own will. The superiors of religious communities should have their members move to foreign countries only after they are really at home in the motherhouse. Whoever does not have a home somewhere should not move to a foreign country.

Allow me to draw your attention to another point. What I have said about local attachment holds true for personal attachments as well: I must not be too quick about pressing on [to God] the love others show me. Let's assume that someone is beginning to have belated experiences in the person of her educator. These days, general contemporary pedagogy is inclined to say: Just see that the attachment neither goes too deep nor lasts too long; just move on quickly to mature childlikeness.

Observe the natural family! How does God conceive of education in the family? How long may a child have primitive attachments in the natural family? Please understand what I am implying: It takes a long time to develop a living bond with another person.

We can say the same about the attachment to a place. How long it takes a small child, e.g., to actually experience its bed, to find a message in every corner of its home! Today these things must first be made clear reflexively. If we are too quick to advance the attachment, we don't allow it to grow. It takes time to become attached.

This is true too when people become attached to me. I may find it irksome, but I am not doing it for myself. I have to endure their primitive childlikeness for a long, long time. If you want to make your followers

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<sup>65</sup> Reference to public speakers

mature too soon, you will achieve the very opposite. All the ties and bonds will collapse, and you will have “reared” a collectivistic person.

If, thanks to having come from sound circumstances, we have brought with us this way of experiencing things and this circle of experiences, the feeling at home and having a home is not so necessary. But for a person who is of homeless origin and the number of such people is increasing takes a longer time to develop roots.

We see the crucial culture problem of our time. How do we give people a home, first on the natural level? If we do not succeed at this we will usually not manage to help them find a home in the supernatural world. Although there are exceptions, the normal thing is that, in one way or another, a person must have all the fibers of his soul bound on the natural level. If he has not attached himself, his soul will suffer a rupture to the degree to which he lacks this binding. The person who grows normally needs an organism of attachments: local and personal attachments and attachment to ideas. In this light you may ask yourself: Where is the weak spot in my character? Where can I still allow for complementation?

If you look at the problem in this way, you will always find joy in education. Then each sign of growth, even the slightest, will make you happy. When it is a religious community’s task to educate youth, how many of the young people are “crazy about” their teachers. Let them go into raptures as long as you yourself aren’t smitten! In the long run those who have not “worshipped” someone, those who have not loved in an infantile way for a long time, will not love with their whole heart and soul.

Our soul is faced with serious, difficult problems. We should see them, should solve them. If our present-day culture does not yet see them, tomorrow or the day after, these problems will be as plain to them as the nose on your face.

It is a master stroke to arouse the creative power of one’s own heart and give it expression in oneself. The person of today whose orientation is so collectivistic has a hard time raising a sound humanity. He finds it difficult to penetrate reflexively the things which we would normally have done in the past as a matter of course, without giving it any thought or considering it.



I think with that I have said enough in answer to the question about the nature of a home. The light we are seeking will shine even more brightly when we inquire about the “becoming “ of a home. When I know how something has come to be, I know what it is like.

## Thirteenth Talk

### *Origins and Value of a Home Experience*

In the last conference we unveiled the nature of a home. What we said yesterday at the beginning of our observations is increasingly being filled with meaning. A home as we conceive of it is the issue at the heart.

We inquire about the way in which a home comes to be, i.e., how does a home experience come about? To a certain extent, with this question, we touch on the psychology of home.

And again, we first want to create a basis for our observations. We would do best to take up Pestalozzi's spider allegory<sup>66</sup> in which he means to say that the human person is a nest-bound being. The reason for this: By nature the human is a created being. Even God is a nest-bound being, so to speak not out of weakness but by fullness of life for in God there are three persons. From this you may deduce how profoundly the social drive must be anchored in the human being, for we are reflections of the triune God.

A person must be at home in an organism of attachments. One is healthy to the extent to which one is granted this organism of bonds, whether it is on the natural or the supernatural level or, in the final analysis, the interaction between these two organisms.

In his spider allegory Pestalozzi compares the human to a spider. Spiders spin their webs from a substance that they themselves produce and then live in the center of their self-spun web. Of its own accord, the spider can spin what it wants, how it wants.

Humans are not so independent. Recall what we said about the basic impressions made on our human nature. What enters the soul from outside settles in the depth of the soul and continues to influence it. It is not always in one's power to decide what one takes in. I would almost like to say: The impressions absorbed from outside are determined by fate. Once my nature has taken something in on the irrational level, the

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<sup>66</sup> Henry Pestalozzi, *How Gertrud Teaches Her Children* (1801)

ancient law applies: *Quodquod recipitur, ad modum recipients recipitur*.<sup>67</sup> What I take in I absorb in my own way.

We recall what we touched upon the day before yesterday all the prejudices: the irrational, rational and suprarational receptivity for values. Can you form some picture of what these expressions imply? What penetrates my subconscious mind is irrational. Everything produced by impressions and the value-sentiments existing in the subconscious, we call the irrational receptivity for values or the irrational perspective of interests. These play a role in the becoming of a home experience.

To begin with, I want to use two expressions in order to make myself clear: The associative center and the summation center. ***The Home is the associative center of our imagination*** and the summation center of our feelings and sentiments.

Parents will observe these things time and again in their children. A child's first impressions have a twofold function. First function: The impressions are the material that will be processed by the mind later on by means of abstraction. This is founded on the old law: *Nihil est in intellectu quod prius non fuerit in sensu*.<sup>68</sup> The mind cannot process anything that, in one way or another, has not been taken into the soul as material.

In everyday life this has the following consequence: The first imaginings and impressions set the pattern for a child's whole life. We can compare this process to a [wooden] keg: It retains the aroma of the liquid first poured into it. Thus, the first impressions made on the soul of a human being can never be totally removed. Of course, neither can the later ones. The initial impressions, however, set the pattern for one's whole life because we associate and link all the following imaginings and impressions with the first ones.

Associative center of imaginings: We associate the first impressions, stirrings, feelings with those that follow. That is why the parents' attention and watchfulness are of such importance for the child!

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<sup>67</sup> Whatever is received, is received according to the mode of the receiver.

<sup>68</sup> Nothing is in the intellect that has not previously been in the senses.

How careful they must be to keep a small child from taking destructive, impure impressions into its heart and, as a result, into its imagination!

Psychotherapists are of the opinion that many pathological disturbances go back to impressions taken in very early in childhood. Whoever is familiar with the many faults of present-day life knows that what we later assimilate theoretically fails to take hold because we have insufficiently digested the host of early impressions for want of an adequate screening. Our parents guarded us too little. We became what we are through no fault of our own; perhaps through the fault of our parents.

How very much children take in today! Think of the endless impressions made by so many films! It follows that vigilance toward children who are not of age is a necessity.

We must all see that the atmosphere about us is serene and pure. As psychologist I would like to say: If we succeed in preparing a home that has a pure, noble atmosphere for those entrusted to us, it immunizes them against negative impressions. If a person has experienced within the self a sound natural and supernatural organism of attachments, sooner or later he or she will become immune to ugly impressions that come from outside.

Do you sense going back to the second element of religious education the significance of attaching oneself to a noble community, a thoroughly supernatural religious community? Such an atmosphere makes us sound. How often have we seen that someone who has lived in the shadows joins a community and blossoms like a flower...In this way many illnesses of the soul essentially heal by themselves.

However now we arrive at a second consequence we must also make sure that our children do not have to move frequently from one location to another. On the whole we assume that the people of today are like we were when we were children. In many cases the modern person is no longer like that. A few might still be that way but, by and large, the sickness of our age, homelessness, is on the increase. If, from childhood on, I am like a spider in its web I can take any number of things, but not if I have to build a nest and spin a web first, as is ever so frequently the case with the modern person.

How many pathological complications of the soul do you find in moderns because they did not experience a sound organism of attachments! That is why, if possible, children should not have to move frequently from one location to another. Of course, I know of the tragedy of modern life: frequent moves from place to place. Then one must cultivate the experience of a home as far as at all possible.

In the future it would be good for religious communities to do more than ever to allow all members grow in some way in a rural setting and in nature, so that we foster in us a sound natural organism of attachments.

Kolping could build a sound generation as he set about achieving his goals. He was dealing wholly with manual workers, people who are bound to things. The attachment to things, a realistic attachment to things, makes us sound; it insures that the spider spins its web from what it produces itself and that the strings are attached to an object. Then I can sit in this nest all the more peacefully and stay active.

When dealing with our girls youth and young women, we may not forget that, by nature, woman wants to be more intensely attached than man. It is self-evident that our young women above all, those who must constantly tackle ideas because of their studies at the university easily become psychologically ill and, consequently, cry out for compensation. Unfortunately, the compensations they offer seek are not of a noble nature.

Do you understand now what we mean when we say: Home is the associative center of one's imaginings? At the place I call home I took in my first impressions. All the imaginings that were later added to these, I associated with those first impressions. Whatever was not associated was simply not yet digested; it is caught somewhere and must be digested later.

Now we will descend into the unconscious and subconscious regions. ***Home is the summation center of our feelings and sentiments.*** Pestalozzi describes this process in his book *How Gertrud Teaches Her Children*. The infant has left its mother's womb and is lying in a crib. A being bows over the child and rocks it, and the child experiences the being as a kind power. What does this imply? All the feelings that awaken in the infant are concentrated on this being. That is a child's experience in relation to its mother.

To illustrate this process, allow me to list a number of terms. A child can experience:

emotional transference,  
emotional submergence,  
emotional paralysis,  
emotional obstruction.

With that we descend into the region of the subconscious, which must be explored toady and more forcefully taken into account if we want to form people of character, if we want to shape personalities.

[***Emotional transference***] Example: The one whom the child will later honor as its father comes to the crib. The child transfers to its father the feeling that it spontaneously experiences toward its mother. If the infant experiences its mother as a kind being, it transfers this experience to the father. If the father is kind and the infant experiences him as such, a second kind being is associated with the kind being who is its mother. But if she is a cruel or unnatural mother, the child associates fear and dread with her, not kindness. If the mother considers it her task to show the child through her own behavior that she is attached to its father, a transfer of emotions follows on the child's part. In this way the mother draws the father into her own circle of experiences and with that into the child's circle of experiences. The feelings aroused by the mother in the child, are transferred to the father. Later in life, the emotion that I had for the first person I encountered transfers to all those who in some way awaken my love.

Collectivism sees in the physical father the progenitor only; in the mother, the one who merely bears the child but is not its educator. The child is handed over to the state. How dreadful the effects of such concepts must one day be!

Then comes ***emotional submergence***. The first experience, the first object which awakened my feelings may fade from my conscious experience; these emotions are overlooked. The fact that they nevertheless live on can be verified in countless cases.

Take for instance a university student whose love was aroused by his religion teacher. In a noble way his soul was attached to his teacher. Later on he lost sight of his teacher but many years later suddenly received

news of the latter's death. Only then did his soul discover how subconsciously profound had been his attachment to his religion teacher. Both an emotional transference and an emotional submergence were involved.

If you understand the law of emotional transference you will not find it difficult to comprehend the normal path which devotion to Mary and love for God the Father take.

If my natural mother is attached to the Blessed Virgin, if she loves her, our Lady enters into her circle of experiences. Then, in keeping with the law of emotional transference, it won't take my heart long to make the Blessed Mother the object of its love. If a natural mother loves our dear Lady, her child will, already in its first years, transfer its emotions to the Blessed Mother. However, transmitting [the child's love from Mother to God] may not take place too quickly, the child may be passionately attached to its natural mother. Transference and transmission are to be seen in an organic, not a mechanistic light.

The same law applies to the Father God. If a natural father is drawn into the law of emotional transference, then this transfer is easily passed on to the heavenly Father. The experience of the Father God becomes a function to the extent to which a child has received beforehand, through a natural father and mother experience, the concomitant of shelter and security.

Time and again you sense for the most part, I must turn to you fathers and mothers that the core of reform lies in the family. Fathers above all must take their task seriously. It is preferable to renounce activity outside the home; rather, consider the natural family your main task.

The same holds true for religious communities: What you do in order to draw a religious community together in a family like way means more than letting one or the other member get a formal education. You must see the cultural problems of our age before you. We must take precautions. Our nature is diseased. It was ill in the past but not to the extent to which it is today.

There is also a type of *emotional paralysis*. People who suffer from this are poor creatures. On the level of the emotions they experience

no bliss. For the most part they have no tact. They have to sort everything out. Religion does not make them happy; nothing makes them happy; their emotions have withered. This may be a pathological tendency but, frequently, it can also be traced back to the way a person was treated as a child.

***Emotional Obstruction.*** How many religious people God leads in such a way that they preserve their love untouched by earthly love. Away with everything that is not God! My God and my all! Often people like this attain a child's love for God only through a contrast experience. Many of them are "off their nut," their souls are cramped till the end of their lives unless a belated experience of childhood comes their way.

How careful we educators must be in educating! What an immense task we have! Educators are lovers who never cease loving.

If I see the human person suffering from such emotional rigidity how easy it is for me to be a Samaritan! How easy it is for me then to pour oil into those wounds! How much patience we must have!

People who suffer from an emotion of obstruction have an inhibition toward every natural emotion. Their feelings are completely repressed. They give everything to God in an act of the will but he doesn't get everything because their feelings are blocked. Their emotions must first be aroused by a sensory object. The normal path runs from human beings to God and not from up above to down below.

May I assume that to some degree you have an idea of what I am presenting to you "in stammering tones"? Those who do have life lying before them [as if it were an open book], do not comprehend the entire scope of these problems.

To summarize: The thoughts of home come through home as the associative center of one's imaginings and as the summation center of one's emotions.

A number of ***questions***, which have come up, should be answered.

First question: What about those person who had a cruel or hardhearted father and, for instance if you will allow me the harsh expression a prostitute for a mother, what will become of them?

Frequently, those of us who grew up in sound circumstances feel that we are morally superior. We should be humble. What would have



become of us if we had noble parents? I believe I have given you a theoretical answer to all these questions. Think about what we said with respect to belated experiences and contrast experiences: the radical cure, the normal cure. You must study these thoughts thoroughly! You will get an answer to a vast array of current questions in all the thoughts we have gathered.

Do you recall what we said about giving good example? Even if I am incapable of doing all we have said in its classic form, there is certainly one thing I *can* do: let the procreative power of my good example take effect; radiate a supernaturally transfigured atmosphere. “My heart is moved with pity for the crowd.”<sup>69</sup> If you have such a poor child before you, do not condemn him. What must I do? First, assimilate everything the poor creature has suffered, and let it go through my heart...

We must reflect on the whole organism of thoughts and study them as a totality in order to find an answer to relevant questions.

Another problem: “Yes, at one time I was capable of religious experience. I grew up in normal circumstances. But at present I seem incapable of religious experience.”

You are mistaken...I will give two answers. Let's assume your feelings have gone numb and grown cold, so you are no longer as receptive for religious things as you once were. Everything inside you is dry, dry, dry. In that case I can tell you: Wait a little while! What you once experienced (I am speaking as psychologist) will come to life again later. I have already drawn your attention to the fact: There are impressions that sink into the subconscious but later come back to life (I am speaking as psychologist.) For example, if as children we had good mothers, how much longing arises once we grow old! The original experience comes to life again. It is the same in this case [of numb, cold feelings]. That is the first answer: Even if [numbness and coldness is the case at present], later the experiences will again come back to life.

It is one thing to renounce such feelings when God takes us in hand in our mature years, it is quite another to grow up emotionless in the course of a normal education.

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<sup>69</sup> Mt 15,32; Mk 8,2

The second answer: Do you believe that, if we are seriously striving, God is constantly going to shower us with blissful feelings? If we want to belong totally to God, if he wants to have us completely, the time will come when the good God will lay us on the operating table and take our feelings from us: the feeling of being good, of being upright, of being religious. Ordinarily, he does this once we have given ourselves totally to him. Yes, the time comes when the good God makes sure that others rob us of our reputation, that our drives are roused to their very roots, that all the dirty waters burst forth. Why all this? We are to learn to let him detach us from ourselves.

An illustration: With all the little fibers of its life a child in its mother's womb is entwined with the life of the mother but is not aware of it reflexively nor feels it. That is the state I mean. In my mature years I may seem to have lost my feelings of bliss, and yet the threads of my life are entwined with God in a living way. Although I feel unhappy, I am sheltered in the bosom of God all the same. Just one illustration to stand for many...

Only those who want to become holy educators, who do not only educate others but also themselves comprehend what I am pointing out. We know of some women saints who at such times of testing felt morally base drives churning within. When the state was over and they asked Jesus the question, "And where were you?" he replied, "In the very center of your heart."

A final question: It is certainly an ideal state perhaps we will attain that state someday if our earthly home becomes our heavenly home. In that case the earthly home is a symbol for the heavenly one. At the end the world, when the earth is transfigured, we may even find our heavenly home on it, the possibility isn't ruled out.

Now we would actually have to go on retreat and into solitude. You sense that I have told you so much. Now you must study and ask yourself: What can I do to make a home for all those whom God has given me? And if we cannot offer a home in a place we should offer a home in our person. Everyone should find a home in me. In order to make that possible I must have a home in God. And if God gave me no home as I was developing, if I had to give up having a home, I will

consume my life all the more selflessly, making sacrifices all the more joyfully in order to offer a home to as many people as possible through my own being, living and loving.

There is yet the last question: the value of a home. I almost think I am at a loss for an answer. Don't you want to give yourself an answer and ascertain the connections?

Homelessness is soullessness, is the state of being without character. That is why we may neither leave nor lose our home, even if I cannot be there physically.

Do you understand how being driven out of their home can become a serious illness for people? Displaced persons! Think of Christianity: Bishops were exiled. An unjust punishment of this type can have very profound effects...

I must make sure that I am never without a home. Later it is like this; In keeping with the law of transference and submergence. I live in God to such a degree that my earthly home continues to be with me, the sound of the word "home" always echoes in me, and yet I don't ever have to be there. It is just like a personal attachment: When I love people with all my heart and have taken them with me up to God, they continue to be a home to me even if I should never see them again!

Homelessness means deprivation of character, morals, religion; it is soullessness! For that reason I repeat: We must think of the home question as the core problem, the central problem of our culture; and of providing home as the issue at the heart of all our pedagogical activity.

## Fourteenth Talk

### *Psychological Definition of Home*

Two questions occupy us: What do we mean by home? What is our Lady's function with respect to home?

Two definitions have told us what we mean by home: a popular definition and a philosophical one. We still lack the psychological definition. Since we no longer have much time at our disposal, you will surely be satisfied if I point out the facts. Please have those who have taken part in past conventions explain the psychological definition to you in detail. Incidentally, a monthly journal titled *Catholic Education in the Schoenstatt Spirit*<sup>70</sup> is published here. So those interested in immersing themselves in our Schoenstatt world of values have an opportunity to do so.

The *psychological definition* explains home as something spiritual. In psychological terms we describe home in this way: ***Love of home is the basic form of a sound, instinctive, organic self-love which is capable of and in need of development.***

Thus, love of home is part of self-love; we even added: a part of love. The aim of fostering or "feeling for" home is to allow instinctive self-love to grow slowly to a higher level, developing gradually into natural and supernatural love.

Those who want to take a closer look at this world of values and inform themselves about it may want to study the third part of *Everyday Sanctity* in which this threefold love is delineated in an original way. For people who strive for sanctity it is always important nowadays in particular to get an insight into the nature of both instinctive and natural love.

Now and again psychopaths can be found even in religious circles because they have sense of instinctive and natural love. They separate the supernatural from the instinctive and natural, and they become ill as a consequence. Earlier generations who possessed a sound character could

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<sup>70</sup> Periodical for educators which appeared from 1951 to 1965 in Schoenstatt

endure this [separation] more easily. The modern person who is always teetering at the brink must necessarily be handled with much greater care.

Is my love for home a basic form of instinctive love? If it were only a natural-supernatural love, it would lack some warmth.

And what about self-love? May I love myself? Please differentiate between self-love and self-seeking. We take much measures against self-seeking. Have we not gone into detail about how the ideal of the educator, to identify heart and soul with the ideals my followers strive for, detaches us from ourselves? And now we speak of and proclaim the message of self-love! Aren't they opposites?

I would like to draw your attention to two things. Holy Scripture calls love of God and self-love the criterion for love of neighbor Christ considers this commandment a matter of course. Self-love is an inborn drive for self-development and self-preservation like? Doesn't this drive move us to preserve ourselves and to develop? Though it is true that people kill themselves, in such cases the drive for self-development and self-preservation has been led astray. Humans cannot do differently: They must always strive for goods and values, even if these are only apparent goods philosophers of old tell us so. The person who hurls himself into death, the one who takes his life, is convinced that for him death is a value. Thus, self-love is natively intrinsically linked with all living creatures. It may simply be difficult to draw the line between self-love and self-seeking.

I would like to draw your attention to the fact that in the next pedagogical convention we want to go into detail about what we have only been able to allude to during these days and endeavor to set healthy self-love in a large framework. For our purposes it may be important to highlight one thing: Self-seeking means the human being is unable to share. It may be a physical, intellectual or moral sharing. Self-seeking focuses so much on self that one must speak of self-obsession. Here you have it: the world of an immature outlook right down to the level of hysteria.

In the psychological sense the essence of love for home consists in this: that I take my surroundings into myself. Seen from the perspective of psychology, the initial home of the human being is the self, my own

person. The purpose of education is that the initial psychological home coincide with the initial theological home. From the theological viewpoint my initial home is God. When the self becomes so united with God that both concepts of home flow together, the human beings has found a home in the true sense of the word. Then we are truly, deeply at home.

Those who are involved in modern psychotherapy must reckon that in the foreseeable future it will do harm to people.<sup>71</sup> That is why our Catholic theologians must tackle the problem. By way of the Schoenstatt perspective we try to anticipate all the problems of our time and solve them in healthy way.

Home is a basic form of a sound, instinctive, *organic self-love* organic, not mechanistic self-love. In the case of mechanistic self-love, the self is separated from the you. In the case of organic self-love, the self takes in the you and other things. Please listen closely: This organic self-love comprises an organic closeness between the self and the you and the it. The self, self-love expands. All the things I take in, in such a manner that they amount to an expansion of the self, are transformed in me into love of home. My father and mother, siblings, goods, my possessions how effectively these have merged with the self! How verily they may be conceived of as an expansion of the self! Consequently, they all belong to the concept of home, to love for home, which is a basic form of organic, sound, instinctive love.

There again we have the point that caused us some headaches during these days. How distinctly have we emphasized the instinctive aspect in everything whether we were discussing a child's love, or father and mother love because this is where the sickness of our age is rooted.

Nowadays there is so little genuine supernatural love because there is desperately little genuine, sound instinctive love. If instinctive love is not sound it becomes self-seeking. If, in our development, we skipped instinctive love, you may be sure that part of our soul is ill; it is affected by compulsion.

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<sup>71</sup> According to Fr. Kentenich the reason for this lies in the fact that psychotherapy frequently denies, either directly or indirectly, the metaphysical and religious interests of the human person.

I have for example, someone before me who knows all the scientific answer. But a mistake reveals nothing more than this: Sound love never developed in her. Hers is a blasé attitude there is no vitalism in it, no strength. (As educators we must look at life, not as we usually do, but with altogether different eyes.)

Because a portion of shelter and security is connected with this expansion of the self through devotedness to a person, through taking persons and things into the self, the psychologist has defined home as a place where I find and offer shelter.

Once I have the feeling of being at home in my surroundings, and then God detaches me from them how great [a move] this is [on his part]! Then I can pass on [to him] all the things that I sense as shelter, Later God may be more intensely in the forefront, but all the things which helped me to develop in an instinctively sound way go spiritually with me into God. They do continue to live in me, but I do not notice it reflexively.

I never grow weary of impressing these things on you, particularly in view of future generations. We here present have brought with us, from the past, something of a sound character. The person of the future must be treated altogether differently from the way we treated ourselves and were treated. This instinctive self-love should be organic, not only between the self, the you and the it in my surroundings, but also [in the relationship] the exotic and love of neighbor, between homesickness and wanderlust. With this we are actually already touching on the educative goal of love for home.

I think of our Swiss. How many Swiss cannot visit distant lands, cannot be outside [Switzerland] because they are attached to their mountains? It is something absolutely beautiful that a person can be homesick.

Just as home is something irrational, so to is homesickness primarily irrational. It is proof of a profound, sound heart. As an adult one would almost like to be able to be homesick for homesickness. Whoever has experienced homesickness in the natural order is also disposed for homesickness for the eternal. The modern person is so worn is like a piece of wood that one puts down here, there, and that's the end of it.

All along the line we must see these things in a new light. How beautiful it is, then, if I may be a father or a mother! If, as a mature person, I have returned to a sound way of thinking, all my strength and love belongs to my following. Then I never grow weary, for educators are lovers who never cease loving. Every sign of growth in those entrusted to my care is my greatest bliss. That is genuine wisdom in an educator: I am not here for myself but for others. The educator must be a person of detail work, of gentle devotedness. Educators must selflessly give of themselves.

That also holds true for me as a priest. It is not enough if I tell myself I have a substitute, and then go traveling. That type of thing does not foster family consciousness. How great it is when my followers always want to know where I am. In that case the inner bond has become a totality. Thus we are speaking of the organic closeness between love of neighbor and love of what is distant. The latter may have people or an area as its goal. Sound education knows [how to achieve] a creative tension.

There are people who actually become ill when they have to leave their fatherland. How deeply St. Athanasius suffered when he was exiled from his community! That is why he could be religious through and through.

If only we could acquire a better understanding of what it means to be a human being; if only we could have reverence for people who are truly human, who can think, feel and behave in a human way!

A third area of organic self-love is the closeness between the individual forms of self-love. Think of what we have said: There is not only an instinctive love, love resulting from a natural impulse, love which actually has a physiological vitality all its own and gives the human heart warmth, but also natural and supernatural love. Instinctive love should be regulated by and organically linked with natural and supernatural love. That is the aim of education, also as regards love for home.

Thanks be to God if I can still love instinctively at all! How many religious people have stifled the natural drives and, consequently, become sexually sick to the core. In a cloistered abbey, e.g., a sister has a strong affection for the abbess, but the abbess rejects her [saying], among us in



the convent there is no more earthly love! In that case and this is what I say there is also no supernatural love, no divine love.

Truly, you may not look that: The idea is an organic union as far as this is possible between instinctive, natural and supernatural love. This is in itself a circle of love. That is how it should be. And that is how it will be in eternity. Do you think that in eternity we will not love one another instinctively? There the natural is so absorbed by the supernatural that, emotion wise; we will hardly notice a difference between the two.

One single circle of love, an organic intertwining of instinctive-natural-supernatural love that is how it should be in the family too. If husband and wife love one another supernaturally only, may heaven help them for having married in the first place! Any exclusively supernatural love must be complemented by instinctive-natural love. I know these things are difficult to express. I can also say: Heaven help every instinctive love that is not supernatural!

Once again I would like to stress organic self-love. There must also be an organic intertwining of the conservative and progressive approach to things, my surroundings and home. Everything that in some ways signifies love centers sooner or later on home-love.

What may change in our Schoenstatt Shrine here? We may change nothing because those who grew up here and are now away have a right, [when they come] again, to find the shrine as it was when they left it. If only you see the problem that is meant here!

I would like to repeat the definition of home-love and deepen it by presenting further reflections. From a psychological point of view home-love is a basic form of a sound, genuine, instinctive, organic self-love, which, however, is *capable of and in need of developing*. Why is it capable of developing? The answer lies in the nature of the thing: because it is a natural drive. Every natural drive can and must be developed. To begin with, it must be enlightened by the mind and then guided by the will. Because the natural drive is blind, it is also in need of development.

*How can I nurture home-love?* Through all suitable educative means, through spiritual, moral and religious means.

[Spiritual means] Love for home is not an intrinsic value, nor is it a mean; it is much more a value of the heart. The mind can, at most,

subsequently give the heart direction; make it aware of the values contained in a home.

[Moral means] Love for home is a great virtue that encompasses any number of other virtues. We may not overlook this. If I have provided not only spiritual but also moral training for my home-love, it is the product of the entire organism of genuine virtuousness.

If I do not educate myself and my followers to have a sense of reverence, to respect everything that exists, how can I expect to educate them to love home? Love for home presupposes veneration, respect. Furthermore, if I do not educate my following to foster an inner life and contemplativeness, to cultivate gratitude and the depths of the heart, how are they to acquire love for home? You understand: An appreciation for home, love for home is a bright star which we educators must follow as far as we can. This is also the context which shows the importance of educating [my followers] to be thankful. Without the cultivation of gratitude I cannot raise up in my own the necessary heart-and-soul devotion to home.

[Religious means] Any type of religion is an educational factor for home-love. Religion teaches a person to become empty of self. Without emptying of self there is no profound love for home. It must be a purified love for home. It must also be developed, unfolded and educated. Not only the psychic but also the metaphysical element of home, growth into the divine must increasingly develop.

Here we would have room, very much room to show how we must present our Catholic religion to our following, to our children. Religion must be a home.

The patient who go to psychotherapists often reveal the dreams that haunt their soul: a measureless psychic fear of the living God. In such cases God is portrayed and experienced too little as Father. Please think back to all we have said about little St. Thérèse. In fact, I should read it to you once more. Only now would you understand it. After all, everything I have said during this course is an analysis of her whole inner life. Try to apply these thoughts to everyday life.

Religion gives us a home, not only because it teaches us to mortify ourselves, but above all because it shows us God as Father and gives us a

mother in the Blessed Mother. We are given brothers and sisters in our fellow human beings. Recall the popular definition of home: Where Father, Mother and siblings are that is home. The Catholic religion is a home-religion. This must be acquired from below, by practicing and living it. Knowing that we Christians are brothers and sisters is not enough.

Can I as an educator manage to show the good God as Father? I must, however, also form my life accordingly.

The modern prime emotion is fear. It *should* be shelter, security in God. The existentialism to which people of our circles aspire proves how superficially we have grasped religion; how little we have known how to effect in us and in others an organic totality in our power of love. The ideal of education toward love always remains an organic intertwining of instinctive, natural and supernatural love. If we constantly have this totality before our eyes, we can be sure that we will educate a generation that is in itself genuinely human and genuinely “divine”;<sup>72</sup> that, as far as possible, is happy itself and can make others happy.

We should not nurture one-sided orientation toward the world beyond. The Catholic person is oriented, toward this world *and* the next. A Catholic is at home here on earth, is completely, naturally at home in human hearts, but is also oriented toward the world beyond and lives in God’s heart. True Catholics draw into their heart not only God but, with a natural need, also persons. That is the gospel to which we must bear witness, to which we may give all our creative educative strength. If we do not do this, the [things will] go downward into the abyss, and we will never sufficiently insure against the collectivistic person. The person who has a home (someone such as we depicted from the psychological, philosophical, and pedagogical perspective) is a classically anti-collectivistic, classically Catholic and classically holy person.

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<sup>72</sup> Cf 1 Pt 1,13 ff, 2,9 f

## Fifteenth Talk

### *Marian Education in the Service of Home Experiences*

We ask the question about *the function of love for Mary* in relation to the thought of home, the appreciation for a home, and love for home. I would like to give two answers. The first answer summarizes; the second goes into depth.

First, a *summary* of the factors which we touched on briefly in the popular, philosophical and psychological definitions. Although, to all appearances, we frequently wandered from the thought of Mary was the running thread throughout. We studied present-day culture to use it as an access road to Mary. Those of us who expect to be introduced more profoundly into Marian thought must make the effort to participate in subsequent conventions. Moderns being as they are am thinking of a definite type must first clear the way to love for Mary.

We summarize the factors we mentioned in the threefold definition of home:

First, *the popular definition of home* highlighted: Where there is love, there is home. Where Father, Mother and siblings are that is home. Seen in this way what light does Marian thought shed on home? We may give a threefold answer.

1. *Marian thought explains the home-thought.* You must keep the Pauline thought before your eyes. Paul sees the world differently than we do. In the ideas of God, the central position in the world is held first by the Savior, then by the Blessed Mother.<sup>73</sup> They are the *causa exemplaris*, the model-cause for the creation of Adam and Eve and for the Family. So when I say “Our Lady explains the history of the family, “I mean she explains the fact that home is where the father and mother are a reflection of Christ the Head as well as of the heavenly Mother. Thus through the popular definition of home, light actually falls on the one blessed among women.

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<sup>73</sup> Cf Rom3,21ff, 5,12ff, 1 Cor 15,21ff, 45ff

2. *The person of Mary also clarifies the thought of home.* In the end in heaven we are to savor family joys at the “family table” of the triune God.<sup>74</sup>

3. *Marian thought transfigure the home-thought.* Through the image of our Blessed Lady, the natural mother stands before us in bright transparent light. For that reason she should try to be a reflection of the heavenly Mother. Just as the heavenly Mother gave Jesus shelter, just as she, commissioned by God, wants to give shelter and security to all people, the earthly mother must, in accord with Mary’s example, do the same.

If we look at *image of Mary, framed in the philosophical definition of home*, then we may say: Mary’s image sheds light on home as a place and on home as a person, i.e., on local and personal attachment.

Light falls on *home as a place*. Alban stolz reminded us of this: Just as there are times of special distribution of graces, there are also places of this sort, above all, Marian places of grace and pilgrimage. There the person of the Blessed Virgin is united with the place. She takes care that, at such places, the home experience does not lack the meta-physical element.

A simultaneous thought: In their coarse-grained piety, simple people perceive the image of the Blessed Mother as tremendously far away, but also utterly close this is something uniquely beautiful. Our simple people want to have the Blessed Virgin before them. Similar to a good room, which is prepared in a home and placed at disposal for special occasions, this is how our Catholics themselves picture places of grace. Our simple people have sound feelings. They see our Blessed Lady not only as high as the heavens; they want to have her with them, too, and to communicate with her in a genuinely human way.

Another life process: We think of the sun; it is the same everywhere, but in certain places it displays a very special effectiveness. So too the Blessed Mother: Everywhere she is the same, and yet at certain places she has a particular efficacy: The image of Mary sheds light on attachment to places as it resounds in the home experience.

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<sup>74</sup> Cf Mt 22,4ff

Light also falls on *the person [as a home]*, first of all on the person of the Blessed Virgin. Please recall what we said when we visualized the image of home: The associative center and summation center. Here it is a question of the summation center of emotions. How do the first experiences of a child come to be? According to the law of emotional transference. In keeping with the law of transferring emotions, the feelings which have awakened in the child toward its natural mother can, *mutatis mutandis*, easily be transferred to the image of our Lady in a natural, functional way. From this takeoff point this is what we stressed later in our discussion the way to the heavenly Father is not difficult, again according to the law of emotional transference.

In the natural family, mothers must keep this in mind. One of their most essential tasks consists in leading their children to their father. That is what a mother does with a small child; that is what she must do later as well. Then it is easy to transfer the child's feelings to the father.

We must not overlook the fact that the Mother of God adheres to this functional task of a genuine mother. Consequently, it is understandable that our Marian Schoenstatt world has become a world of "Father-childlikeness." Mother lead us to Father God and that without much reflection. That is why Schoenstatt is not only a pronounced Marian kingdom, a "Mother kingdom," but also a pronounced "Father Kingdom."

Think of *psychological definition of home*. We spoke of organic self-love. We may understand this correctly if we stress that love for Mary is an organic point of transition to a sound, profound love of God-Father. The reason for this: Sound self-love has to expand. Instinctive love should become a natural-supernatural love. When it has become a natural-supernatural love it reaches instinctively for supersensory realities. And there, in the supernatural family, we see the Blessed Mother. Thus, it may be easy to look upon love for Mary as a gateway to sound self-love, to comprehensive love for the Father, love for God-Father.

In this day and age if we want to have shelter, protection and support in the living God, and should this support be stable, we may not and cannot dispense with the way [to this goal], a way which has been presented in such detail during these days. We think of all we said about the irrational, about the subconscious by which the foundations of

instinctive experiences are laid. Seen from the human, psychological viewpoint, when the foundations of instinctive experiences are not laid, the person lacks inner security against the blows of life. As a metaphysical thinker I may find shelter in the ultimate truths, bringing one repose, but even when I rest in ultimate ideas, I must also be at rest in persons. Then the human being is complete, as far as that is possible here on earth. Then he or she is a self-contained personality, a reflection of God, of eternal wisdom.

Secondly, as regards the thought of home, we want *to penetrate Mary's function in more depth*, so we ask the question: What influence does Marian thought have on the three elements of home, on the physical, psychic and metaphysical element?

*[Physical element: simple people's piety vs. elite religion]* The answer I give presupposes that we have a "Catholic nose," that we are familiar with a certain "diagnosis" of the Catholic faith and of the Catholic person. In Catholicism there is a coarse-grained simple people's piety and an elite piety or a high-level religion. There you have a contrast: people's religion and elite religion. And since Christianity is for all, it is fitting that both be kept. A movement, which is universal, must see both; it has to take the masses as well as the elite into account.

When I examine ordinary people's piety, observation tells me that our down-to-earth simple people have a unique yearning to see our Lady time and again in direct proximity to the earth, on the ground level, that they want to have her in a direct living relationship to everyday life and would like to communicate with the Mother of God in a confidential way.

These fragment thoughts are before us. With great love we want to absorb them, even if a certain aversion belies us. That may be the case if we believe ourselves to be the main bearers of the elite religion, if we believe we can call Catholicism, as an elite religion, our own.

The thinking of Catholicism as an elite religion differs essentially concerning these three elements. This is the great tension that has come into German Catholicism: on one hand, elite religion from the viewpoint of a certain liturgical piety; on the other, simple people's piety from the viewpoint of Marian piety. Neither understands the other. Consequently. There is no unity in German Catholicism.

First, let us examine the simple people's piety! A look into past centuries shows us how strong is the urge of the people to see the Blessed Virgin close to the earth.

As of approximately the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the places of grace in Germany multiply, in fact, in such manner that in certain areas almost every town has a kind of picture of grace. Shrine upon shrine goes up. There are also national shrines, e.g., in Switzerland, and [regional shrines, such as,] in Bavaria. There is a distinct tendency in this: The simple people cannot have enough of seeing the Blessed Mother always in connection with the earth.

It goes further yet. The coarse-grained piety bore still other blossoms, which do not appeal to us here, but our parents and grandparents would still like to have these things done. The people clung so to our Lady that, in the past, there were places of pilgrimage that still exist today where you could buy paper shavings on which were written the name of our Blessed Lady, and you swallowed them. We would almost take that to be superstitious. And yet the Church did not deny them this; she only warned against misuse. Do you understand how solidly close to the earth our simple people like to see the Blessed Virgin?

Now and again the image of the Blessed Mother is also drawn into town quarrels. It happens that a pilgrimage to two towns takes place with one picture of grace. Then they argue with one another as to who may carry the picture. They draw our Lady into argument. "She does more at our place than in the neighboring community." Why? "Because she loves our community more." The feelings of the ordinary people!

I think you should see things as they are. What may we say in criticism? Some of it may be less appealing to us; and yet we must admit: The core of the simple people's feeling must certainly be sound. Later, when I go into the reasons for this, I will illustrate.

We must not consider it our task to wipe out this sentient, coarse-grained love for Mary. The pedagogically trained educator knows how to take up, make use of and unfold each takeoff point for love of Mary. In the case presented we would have to try hard to slowly spiritualize to some degree this sensory, symbolic, coarse-grained people's piety.



The piety of the elite, high-level religion has its dangers. In many places its spirituality is so aetherial that we must cause us fear, for this spirituality stresses the transcendence of God so one-sidedly that God's immanence is almost not possible anymore. Which are the greatest dangers? I do not know if you will take offense at my saying now: I would prefer a community that has too much immanence to a community that has too much transcendence. If transcendence is seen too one-sidedly whether it is a matter of God, of Christ, or of our Blessed Lady don't we have ideas only but not a person and, for sheer elite religion, we will become irreligious? Please understand that I am typifying now.

Once more I would like to stress: The overemphasis of transcendence is a tragedy in Catholic Germany. You know, Romanic thinking and feeling are totally different. Therefore simple, coarse-grained. They are something spontaneously matter-of-fact.

We must see that both forms of piety somehow reconcile. Theoretically that is easy, but not in practice. I must help the members of the elite religion so that their piety becomes more sensory, that they delight in symbols. If we do not do this I cannot see that we will raise sound religious persons. And when it is a question of coarse-grained piety, I must slowly try to spiritualize it somewhat; but taking away its sentience.

The human is without being and should therefore be treated as such. Frequently, where a pastor supports elite religion and the simple people support the people's religion, the two groups misunderstood each other and are bitter; I could give you plenty of examples. If we have a sound [for such things], we have a steady hand and know how to combine the two.

The simple people would like to see the Blessed Virgin, not only close to earth, but also in direct closeness to life. Catholics have instinctively known how to see the Blessed Mother in connection with natural life processes this is something wondrously beautiful. Think, for instance, of the Italian nation: They see our Lady in closest connection with all the most intimate life processes with procreation, with birth. How natural it all is! Do you notice that here we have a means in our hands to transfigure even these processes to some extent? If we reject all this, just

toss it away what do we put in its place? Then perhaps we can give highly intellectual speeches while the simple people sleep. “Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine...”<sup>75</sup> Even if the people’s piety does not appeal to me personally, I have to serve the simple people. That is my task, not to make myself the measure of all things.

Observe the people’s nearness to life! In all needs, in all of life’s difficulties, worries about food, and so on, they say: “O Mary, always help!” Simple people are in natural contact with our Blessed Lady and see her in connection with all life’s questions. We may not destroy or shatter the people’s approach. Sound instinct is behind it. We just have to purify it slowly and transfigure it, just as we do at our pilgrimage places in Schoenstatt. We make sure that the Blessed Virgin is not only thought of as the “Bread Mother,” that we go to her not only to receive but also to give her something, to bring something along. All the sacrifices of self-education that we have been able to make, we give to the Blessed Mother so that in turn she gives us renewed impetus for far-reaching self-education.<sup>76</sup>

With regard to these two thoughts our Lady’s being close to earth and close to life the people like to communicate with our Blessed Lady in a very spontaneous way. It is almost as if Mary had “sat on the same school bench” with them. Their speaking with the Blessed Mother isn’t drawn-out and flowery. Simple people speak in plain terms; they don’t mince matters.

Schiller once complained that Catholicism had removed the gods from the world, earlier, nature gods were worshipped everywhere. Schiller did not see Catholicism correctly. We know that the living God is the immanent God who is present everywhere. The people sense the immanence of God as the “immanence of Mary,” as Mary’s nearness. That should not be taken to mean that our Lady is omnipresent through her knowledge and her love. But, generally speaking, the simple people

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<sup>75</sup> Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord...

<sup>76</sup> Schoenstatters make a covenant of love with Mary. Among other things they see it as a fruitful mystery of education according to the law “Nothing without you – nothing without us.” From the Schoenstatt Shrine the Mother of God grants graces of inner transformation on the condition that her children do their share to better themselves.

experience God's nearness through his Mother; to whom they know they are near, they feel her closeness too.

In early Christianity there was a large curtain in the sanctuary before the Blessed Sacrament. It was meant to represent tension between nearness to God and distance from Him. This is how I personally picture Mary as the large curtain before God. What I mean is this: Behind the curtain, in the curtain is the living God, the infinite God who wants to draw near to me. Thus we have both: on one hand, distance from God, on the other, closeness in the Blessed Virgin.

If you ask me the reasons for the simple people's nearness to life, I answer by summarizing: Simple, down to earth people has an exceedingly sound instinct. They instinctively apply four great laws without knowing them: the great laws of how God governs, orders, perfects and adapts himself to our world.

You see, we moderns need a reflexive comprehensive view of truths. Everything is so dispersed. Frequently we have no idea where the stone belongs in the edifice. It's a pity that I cannot dwell on this longer.

The law of how God governs the world is the law of organic transference and transmission. We are familiar with it. Simple people sense it: God transfers qualities, rights, something of His power to a father and mother. That is why a father, e.g. participates in the procreative power of God through fathering. In the interest of the child, God transfers some of his power to the parents. According to the feeling of the people, the living God has transferred some of his power to the Blessed Mother not merely something, but as much as possible. The people sense that and, with precision, they apply God's method: They transfer reverence and love to our Lady, yet they know that, ultimately, everything belongs to God. When they give reverence and love to Mary, they are aware that they are giving it to God. She is the living curtain with which I communicate.

The law of how God orders the world: The people instinctively feel that there are different orders in creation. In all created orders the mineral realm, the animal realm, the realm of the spirit our Blessed Lady is the pinnacle. She is [God's] peak performance, the choir director of the whole world and creation. Therefore, simple people are very attached to

the Blessed Mother and, in her, to God. They do not have this clear in so many words, but unconsciously they live by these laws.

The law of how God perfects the world: Here the people know well how to differentiate: When God gives graces; they are to be conceived of as seeds, which should develop. We see this in the life of the Blessed Virgin. At her conception she was abundantly endowed with graces. But she also developed (above all in suffering). That is why people's awareness of our Lady as the Sorrowful Mother is so fervent: Our people are a suffering people.

Moderns want to create a paradise on earth; they want to do away with suffering. Our simple people know that this is not possible. Rather than go after spiritual trends which are illusions and plunge them into still greater suffering, they prefer to go to the Sorrowful Mother, have her ease their suffering, have her console them. Do you sense how sound simple people are?

The law of how God adapts to the world: Because the living God has created mortals as sentient beings, he knows how to take the human givenness to the senses into account. For this reason the Savior, the second person of the Godhead, was to take on human nature in the Blessed Virgin; so that the living God would be able to come close to us, to turn His face to us in sentient form; for Christ is the Father's countenance turned toward us in a sentient way.<sup>77</sup> Therein lies the law of how God adapts to the world. But that is not enough. Apart from the countenance of the Savior, the most perfect countenance is that of our Blessed Lady. Simple people are sound. In many ways we are not sound. If we want to become sound again, we must go back to the people, adopt something of popular piety.

With that I think I have shown you adequately the home-thought in relation to love for Mary.

So, if until now I have been too intensely geared to the intellectual, I must adopt an attitude that is more in touch with life. A great number of our priests and, of late, also of our women are too intellectually oriented in what pertains to religion. Among Catholic women the elite have been

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<sup>77</sup> Cf Jn 14,9f

strongly influenced by this intellectuality of religion. That may be all right for a short time. But you must consider: The nature of woman has an inherent instinctive bent; in a unipolar way she is geared to life, to persons. If God's countenance is presented to her in such a spiritualized way, she is not aroused in what pertains to life. In that case we are raising a generation of women who will no longer be religious tomorrow or the day after. Man's nature is intrinsically significantly bipolar. His nature has a sense for life and for ideas as well. Consequently, man's nature may not suffer so acutely if the countenance of God is spiritualized to an extreme.

These reflections should all be taken very, very seriously. Please do not think this is merely a matter of erudite ideas. The thoughts presented here have all been read [from the book] of everyday life. In many ways we educators have become unsure and have lost our sound instinct; everything shakes and jolts it. Who can still be steadfast these days? That is why, on the whole, we need metaphysics of ultimate principles from which we always take our bearings. Then we will be able to give norms to our sound instinct. A movement of renewal that wants to reach the widest circles must accordingly; take its bearings from metaphysical and psychological principles as well.

*The psychological element of home* is twofold: mental and spiritual. I would remind you that the Blessed Mother is a compendium of dogmatics, asceticism and liturgy. Consequently, she is certainly capable of making the psychic factor of home bear fruit in a special way. That holds true all the more when the psychic factor involves the emotion and the heart.

Now I would have to depict the entire image of Mary from the viewpoint of the mother with genuine motherly love. She is the representative and guarantee of what is genuinely human, of the depths of the heart. From the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven we conclude and rightly so that in heaven our Blessed Lady's warm, glorified heart continues to serve; that she embraces the only-begotten Son of God the Father, and that she also embraces us humans with her pure, glorified heart. The Blessed Virgin is undoubtedly capable of making the psychological element of home bear fruit.

*The metaphysical element of home.* The very fact that our experience of home is colored by love for Mary gives it a religious seal. And above and beyond that, the deepest significance of the Blessed Mother's being lies in the fact that she is to lead mortals to the Father. From our shrine she already functions in this capacity.

What is our Lady's position in relation to the Savior? Whoever comes to and is absorbed by her enters, as it were, a Christ-whirlpool. And when I am drawn into a whirlpool I cannot resist. When my person grows into the depths of Mary's own, I too must be gripped by the person of Christ.

Thus, I have outlined for you the Blessed Virgin's function with respect to the thought of home, the appreciation for a home and love for home. The home problem is plainly the great cultural issue and cultural problem throwing the nations into turmoil. The person of Mary, if we see her correctly within the organism and learn to love her within the organism, is the solution to this cultural issue.

## Sixteenth Talk

### *The Importance of Marian Education Today*

Now that we have cleared the access road, we can slowly approach the peak of Marian values. The next convention will likewise free an access road. The one after that should accomplish the task of systematically presenting the Marian world from the viewpoint of pedagogy. This evening we want to savor a little the joys of attaining the Marian plateau. Marian thought should be the object of this talk and, in connection with this, Mary's mission, and in the background here and there, stroke by stroke, the image of Mary. With that we will have drawn lines, indicated the direction, brought to light the destination of our Marian education now and on times to come.

I believe I may put forward two assertions. Then, to some extent, I would like to clarify them for the mind and as far as is possible in one talk make them usable for the heart.

First assertion: Marian thought Marian education as well is relevant today.

Second assertion: Marian thought will be relevant in the future. [There are] truly singular concepts lifted from the modern minds.

First, *Marian thought is relevant today*. It sets our times powerfully in motion. That holds first of all for German Catholic circles.

Christ is the sign of contradiction. This holds true in general. It has always been like that in the world. It is that way today, will be tomorrow and the day after as well. If we, however, reflect on the present-day Christian world, I think I may say: What holds true for the Savior, holds true to an extent for the image of Mary. She is a sign of contradiction, the sign over which minds are divided.<sup>78</sup> That is true not only of Protestants and Catholics in their relationship to one another; it is even so in Catholic camp itself. If I see things correctly, there is hardly anything in Catholic circles as controversial as Marian devotion and, with it, the conflict between mechanistic and organic thinking.

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<sup>78</sup> CfLk 2,34

*[Marian thought divides minds: organic thinking vs. mechanistic thinking]* You will never be able to introduce the image of Mary to German circles if you do not cure them of their way of thinking, afflicted as it is by mechanistic thinking. That you must take with you as a sort of testament. All those who in one way or another contribute to saving the world through the Blessed Mother should not only draw Mary's image in nice dogmatic and pious terms. Rather, they must first establish a basis for it [by working toward] a transformation of soul and spirit. Sound thinking must be restored.

How powerfully the thought of Mary sets into motion many Christian, Catholic circles nowadays! And yet it is not alive the same degree everywhere. In Catholic circles you notice those of whom and who say so of themselves, *De Maria nunquam satis*<sup>79</sup>, i.e., one can never cultivate enough devotion to Mary. One can absolutely not be Marian enough, because Marian thought is exceedingly, intensely unifying; because Marian education is the easiest means, the surest way to become by Christ and seized by God.<sup>80</sup> Of course, one calls these circles *Marian maximalists*.

In the opposing camp we have the *Marian minimalists*: [They say] "Let's not yet get carried away with too much devotion to Mary!" In Germany the camp of these minimalists is large, strong and widespread. We have to admit that the number of priests who lead this camp is not small. What is the reason? Because, to a great extent, they are afflicted by mechanistic thinking.

You may have someone paint our Lady's picture for you in dogmatic terms, but do not forget: The seed has not only an immanent driving force; its development also depends on the soil in which it is planted.

Marian minimalists say: as little devotion to Mary as possible; otherwise the image of the Savior might be diminished. That is exactly the same as if we were to say: Heartfelt human love causes love of God to

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<sup>79</sup> Never enough of Mary. The expression is attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux.

<sup>80</sup> Cf Encyclical Epistle of Pope Pius X *Ad diem illum laetissimum*.



suffer. What I would like to convey with this is the deplorable fact that we are tracing the bacteria which have invaded the organism [of love] to their deepest roots. It is my conviction that the difficulty lies not so much in the realm of dogmatics but rather in the psychological realm. The soul that thinks, “Not too much love for Mary, otherwise love for God could suffer!” must be healed. **Do look through** these problems. Then you will find the root of the malady.

Today it is worth to risk one’s life, to commit one’s life to overcoming such difficulties from within. It takes the sun a long time to reach us with its rays, says Nietzsche. A statement takes a long time to penetrate the heart. How long it takes for a person to grasp the meaning of an expression such as “mechanistic thinking!” And if it is not understood, you may be sure that we are on the way to ruin. In that regard Romanic thinking<sup>81</sup> is more sound than Germanic.

The *irenists* try to ride the fence – not with method but on principle. It is the typical approach of weaker characters! They have been undermined interiorly, have become diseased, and they cover it up with a little religious cloak. They have lost their vitality. In the interest of peace, they are also as reserved as possible with regard to Protestants: “We may not stress so emphatically the teachings that differ, just don’t stir things up!”

The *idealists* integrate Christianity as more of a revelation-religion than a religion of life. Its doctrine may indeed be manifest in its demands; for them, however, the religious life is rather secondary.

In addition to these there are the so-called *pauperists* who always think God, in keeping with the law of stinginess, gave creatures even our Lady only a little of his perfection. For that reason, one should not put creatures not even the Blessed Mother in the foreground.

The *retorquists*<sup>82</sup> take their bearings from early Christendom only. They want to undo the entire development of Christendom from the

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<sup>81</sup> The thinking of the “Romanic” speaking nations such as Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.

<sup>82</sup> Those who propose the ancient tradition of the Church as the only valid standard for reform.

Middle Ages until modern times. Whatever is not specified in early Christendom should be permitted in the present age.

The *centralists* are of the opinion: Fostering too much love of Mary is a loss for Christ.

There are different types of love for Mary: ordinary, great and extraordinarily great love for Mary. Let me speak of the extraordinary, Grignon's<sup>83</sup> love for Mary; it is attuned to the thought: I have to approach and reach the Savior **in** his Mother, not merely with and through her. Nowadays we will make this in-one-anotherness understandable only if the people whom we are addressing have learned to love in a sound way both instinctively, naturally and supernaturally; people who have inwardly savored the reality; I love a person and love, in a person, God. I give my natural father the love of a child, I love him in a childlike way and am **in** Father; and this being-in-Father means being simultaneously in the heavenly Father. Recall what I read to you about little St. Thérèse! How original she was! When she gave herself to her father she gave herself simultaneously to the Father in heaven – not reflexively but in a natural, matter-of-fact way.

If I have not experienced such connections in a natural human way, I will never understand them and will never manage to think this way: In our Lady I should be in God and in Jesus. Mechanistic thinking disturbs these original processes. Because of this we bring upon ourselves a great many disadvantages. Mechanistic thinking makes us sick down to our very roots. It does not understand how this profound, ultimate being-in-Mary can be consistent with being-in-God. I can explain it to you philosophically but only someone who has grasped the realm of love and has a steady hand in this sphere will absorb and comprehend it. Many, including the learned, as well, say: This profound, spiritual in-one-anotherness is possible, but there are only a few eagles who manage it, who can enjoy it; consequently, we want to give the little strength that we have to Christ alone. That way of thinking is mechanistic. It is psychologically incorrect.

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<sup>83</sup> St. Louis Marie de Montfort (1673-1716), priest and founder of two religious communities. *True devotion to the Blessed Virgin* is his chief literary work.

One speaks of narrowness of consciousness: My consciousness is so extremely narrow; I cannot draw two persons, Christ and the Blessed Mother, into it. To that I would have to say, first of all: If that were the case, you would not be able to go in Christ to the Father. They too are two persons. It may be that this spiritual in-one-anotherness is not possible overnight, but it must not be rejected in principle.

If we educate sound persons, or if we want to make those who are ill sound again, it is a matter of course: We live in one another and, with one another, are in a third [person]. Nowadays we tear this spiritual organism apart. Personally, I am convinced that, if we want to save the higher forms and regions of religion, in the long run we can do it only if we are at home in the lower regions. I must be at home in people so that I can be at home in God and our Lady.

I would like to point out the things I have presented to you: In order to be secure in God I must see that I am in His Mother. Many want to skip the lower regions. This is the reason that minds are divided. There are many eagles who want to be in God but [on their way to him], they bypass [others]. I am convinced that, because of this, there are a fair number of people afflicted by sexual disorders in religious communities too because they are too supernatural and, consequently, unnatural. The human being cannot hold out against this mechanistic separation of regions rushing us too quickly into the supernatural world. What we did not know on the instinctive-natural level will come back to haunt us. Think of the hermits of old. What temptations they had! No doubt also because they were too supernatural and, therefore, too unnatural. The entire organism must be seen and taken into account.

What I shared with you impressed on you the image: Little St. Thérèse did not get stuck on the letter. Another picture: I write my name. If I am just beginning to go to school, I get stuck on the letter. When, however, I am skillful and can write well, I close my eyes and, while writing, think, not of the letters but of the person. Let's apply this picture to our Lady: When I say "the Blessed Mother," "Mary," it is like a word which I have written Christ and the Triune God are immersed in the word "Mary" via my experience [of our Lady] in life.

From time to time we Schoenstatters are accused of getting stuck at devotion to Mary. May I remind you that we compared Mary with a curtain such as early Christendom had before the altar? In the curtain, behind the curtain is the living, the infinite God. If I give myself to our Blessed Lady I give myself to Christ. It is an error if I think devotion to Mary would separate me from Christ. When I say “Christ” I say “Father,” when I say “Mary” I say “Christ.” Love for Mary does not hinder me from fostering love for Jesus. We complain that we have no influence on the youth. It is always the same problem: mechanistic thinking. In our times we have clouded everything. Through impersonalism everything has become spiritually diseased. Little St. Thérèse was carried by a sound personalism. Her father was the good God for her. Under normal circumstances, isn't that the way it should be? Shouldn't each father be the good God for his child? Shouldn't each father represent God, be a transparency to God?

How do I lead people to God? Not like a signpost that points the way but stays behind. I take people in and take them with me to God. Think of Paul! You should be imitators of me as I am an imitator of Christ!<sup>84</sup> I am not saying this must be reflective. But in a normal educational process it happens that way, and persons bind themselves on their own to the educator and mature with and in the educator. Thus, Paul could say, you should be imitator of me. At that time the community saw Paul in an organic closeness to Christ.

Perhaps I disturb you through such considerations. And yet I believe I may say, one of the most essential reasons that many of us do not arrive at a profound devotion to Mary lies in these psychological wanderings; [such people] do not think soundly because they do not live soundly, and they do not live soundly because they cannot love soundly.

Let's allow people to go their way! Sound Catholic thinking is secure and [of itself] reaches in the right direction.

I must conclude this train of thoughts, even though I would like to continue to unfold it. You sense that I was guided by a matter of great

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<sup>84</sup> Cf Phil 3,17; 1 Thes 1,6

concern which has run like a common thread throughout [this convention]:  
Overcome mechanistic thinking.

I would like to have followers who join me in setting such a task for themselves as their life's goal; otherwise our Schoenstatt Movement cannot clear a path through the thicket of present-day difficulties. Nor will any other spiritual trend break through in our times.

We said, the Marian thought is relevant today. It has caused opinions to go different ways. Unfortunately we must admit: What is dividing minds in Germany at present did not exist in times past. In the Middle Ages we had a pronounced Marian culture. The old churches with their paintings of Mary prove it. In those days the German culture had a vast Marian mission. Just think of the Church fathers who occupied themselves with [the thought of] the Blessed Virgin under the cross! In many cases, they were Germanic. Protestantism cooled everything down.

At present we should be happy if the Romanic culture gives us something from the crumbs that fall from their table. Thanks be to God, here in Germany we are at a seeming turning point. The flow of the Marian stream coming from the Romanic peoples, which had been stemmed for a long time at our borders, now swells and rolls forward. I think, one of the most essential fruits of last year's pilgrimages to Rome<sup>85</sup> is the contact between Romanics and Germanics. The Marian wave that comes from over there is making its way to a breakthrough in our German territories.

And do not overlook the dogma of the Assumption. What we have heard from the last popes amounts to an energetic jolt. The Marian wave is to sweep throughout the Germanic nations as well. Pius X, the Eucharistic pope is also the Marian pope. We have him to thank for the Eucharistic wave: frequent Communion and Communion at an early age.

As it appears, with the passing of time, the Eucharistic wave has faded away – I think, because it was not sufficiently carried by Marian stream of life. If we would have more sound people who are Eucharistically-liturgically clear and can think organically! If we form such person,

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<sup>85</sup> The Catholic Church designated 1950 a Holy Year. From all parts of the world the faithful made pilgrimage to Rome.

we will pave the way for the Marian wave in our country, into the depths of our soul. If the Marian wave is to begin its triumphal surge through the German countries, we must prepare the ground, take up what is alive in present-day culture and direct it toward Marian thought.

Second, *Marian thought will be relevant in the future*. What I would like to briefly tell you about this is, in part, a personal profession of faith.

Marian thought will be relevant in the future. By this I mean to say that the Church is approaching a time in which she will bear the seal and fly the colors of Mary as she has never done before, not even in the Middle Ages. By this I mean to say that the Church, [once it reaches the opposite bank], will be so markedly Marian as we cannot imagine it today. That is one of my reasons for having made such efforts to clear the way into the world of Marian values. How have I arrived at such an assertion: that Marian thought will be relevant in the future, that the future of Catholicism will be of such Marian character as Christendom has not experienced till now, something of which we ourselves cannot dream? I believe I may say: The Catholic people's sense of faith is moving in that direction. The views of popes also justify this assertion. And even the achievements of speculative dogmatics seem to say such an assertion is correct.

First, we want to consult *the Catholic people's sense of faith*. If you live in the midst of Catholics you will understand what is at work in their hearts. I think I may say: In their hearts there is the conviction that the living God is the great educator who trusts. He always has been. As an educator who trusts, at the beginning of world events, he laid the salvation of the world on the shoulders of two humans: Adam and Eve. He was terribly disappointed. Yet he remained the great educator who trusts. In the fullness of time He laid the salvation of the world on the shoulders of a weak little handmaid, the one blessed among women, and He was not disappointed. The Lord of the world made the world's fate dependent on the simple yes of the little handmaid at Nazareth, the small, small handmaid.<sup>86</sup> Those who have a simple sense of faith are convinced

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<sup>86</sup> CfLk 1,26ff

of this. Further, they are convinced that it is the living God who inspired the popes of the last century to proceed according to the same method to imitate God's pedagogy of trusts and to place the fate of the Church and the world into the hands of our Lady.

The Christian sense of faith is convinced that religious communities, who have anticipated the future development of the Church by giving the Blessed Mother the position in history, which by virtue of divine command is her due, are blessed in infinite ways. It is also convinced that, in an unprecedented way, God and the Blessed Virgin herself have erected in these communities a memorial of her might, her wisdom, her kindness, and are ready to erect an even more brilliant one in future.

Look at what all this implies and means! That is why the Catholic sense of faith presses forward to imitate God's method and, like God, to put the fate of the world into the Blessed Mother's hands. So, unconditionally and in simplicity we too want to put into our Lady's hands the salvation of humankind and of the Church.

The goal that God pursues with devotion to Mary is ever the same: As the one who bore Christ and as the handmaid of the Lord, the Mother of God is to serve the Lord in His work of redemption. The words spoken by Mary should become reality; "He has looked upon His servant in her lowliness,"<sup>87</sup> and "Do whatever He tells you."<sup>88</sup> The Catholic sense of faith is convinced that the living God is in the process of changing His method. Divine wisdom saw to it that, to begin with, the Blessed Mother would stay very much in the background. Later, in the course of the centuries, she moved more and more into the foreground. Now comes the change in God's tactics: Obviously God wants at least that is how it seems that now, in a singular way, the Blessed Virgin should step into the foreground, and should become the focus of attention. The other words spoken by our Lady should become true, "God who is mighty has done

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<sup>87</sup> Lk 1,48

<sup>88</sup> Jn 2,5

great things for me...all ages to come shall call me blessed.”<sup>89</sup> Thus, the image of the one blessed among women rises higher and higher on the horizon.

Second: Would you like to *ask the popes what they have to say about this sense of the faithful?*

Examine the meaning of the dogmatization of the Assumption: high in the heavens the image of the Blessed Mother. From heaven the apocalyptic woman shines forth in a singular way.<sup>90</sup> “Tota pulchra es Maria!”<sup>91</sup> Clothed with the sun, crowned with stars, the moon under her feet – this is how we see the Blessed Virgin before us.

Down on the earth there is another sign: the devil.<sup>92</sup> We see our Blessed Lady before us: She is totally against Lucifer, just as the devil is totally against Mary. High in the heavens the image of our Lady, and down on the earth the image of Satan. If today the devil celebrates his witches’ Sabbath, who should crush the head of this serpent again?<sup>93</sup> That is the task of the one blessed among women. “When the dragon saw that he had been cast down to the earth, he pursued the woman.”<sup>94</sup> In Mary he pursues the woman, just as he pursues Mary in each woman. In us men too he pursues what we have of the womanly nature: a childlike, simple receptivity for God and the divine.

In our day it is obviously God Himself who wants to glorify His Mother. She is to step into the forefront in order to serve the same mission. Which mission? That Christ be raised to the throne again by more and more people. Why we ask was precisely this mission of the

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<sup>89</sup> Lk 1,49,48

<sup>90</sup> CfRv 12,1

<sup>91</sup> You are all beautiful, Mary. Former *Gradual* (present-day *Responsorial Psalm*) from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, December 8; See Song 1,16.

<sup>92</sup> CfRv 12,3ff

<sup>93</sup> Cf Gen 3,15

<sup>94</sup> Ibid



Blessed Virgin left to our times? We sense the answer because today the point in question is the image of the human being, of human society. In that case the utter greatness of being human, of human dignity, of human nobility must be documented in the image of our Lady.

The immense hindrance that does not let us look at this great sign, above all in German circles, is and remains mechanistic thinking. In the interest of Good and of our Lady's mission, this must be overcome. Doesn't the Blessed Virgin herself also want to give her attention to the designs of the eternal God? And must she not do so? She knows only one concern: "Ecce ancilla Domini."<sup>95</sup> And when, in his testament, the Savior says to our times: "Ecce Mater tua! Ecce filius tuus!"<sup>96</sup> Our Lady must have the ardent longing to bind the world to herself. If God want this more intensely today than in the past, the Blessed Mother is obliged to see that mortals bind themselves to her in an exceptionally profound, intimate way; that in her they may regain their health; that in her they may look upon the genuine image of the human being; and that in and with her they may contribute to helping overcome the massive anthropological heresies of the present. I think these should be our observations with respect to the present situation.

Third: *Speculative dogmatics needs to paint the fuller picture of Mary.* The Blessed Mother's countenance turned toward us should be studied more precisely. Mary is between God and us. She is the permanent helpmate of Christ in the entire work of redemption. She helps the Savior redeem us. She stands before us as the great queen of heaven and earth, the mediatrix of all graces and, under the cross, as the co-redemptrix. Those are the unresolved questions which dogmatists should tackle.

*[A new Marian age is near.]* Everything urges in this direction: to see that the Church of the future, that future centuries have a distinctively Marian quality and bear a singularly Marian seal. Happy are those who are called to help the good God with this work! Happy are those who are

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<sup>95</sup> Lk 1,38 "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord."

<sup>96</sup> Jn 19,27 "Behold your Mother! Behold your Son!"

called to share this Marian mission with the good God! If we are called to do so, we may consider ourselves fortunate, and we can be sure that in all situations the Blessed Virgin will show her gratitude. In all situations she will erect a memorial for herself in our community, a memorial of her might, a memorial of her kindness, a memorial of her wisdom.<sup>97</sup>

Once again we look at present-day religious life and ask: This conviction, this premonition that we are approaching an unprecedented Marian triumphal march what effect does it have? First of all we must say: There are two answers and, with these, two concepts.

There are spiritual trends that are of the conviction. We live so intensely in *apocalyptic times* that we may say: At least from a distance, the end of the world can be foreseen. The epoch that lies ahead has similarities with the end of time, even if it takes who knows how long till it really comes. The devil will, in Grignon's opinion, precisely in these apocalyptic times begin a certain triumphal march; however, in a singular way our Lady will be at work as the one who conquers the devil. A new Marian age is near.

Another belief sees in our times, not a certain end, but rather a certain beginning. Only now are we approaching the rejuvenation, the blossoming of Christendom. Two contrasting views. They concur with each other in one: that a new Marian wave is to come, *a new Marian springtime*. Which convictions form the basis of the latter of the two views?

First thought: The original idea, which God had of the Blessed Virgin, is becoming clearer and clearer. According to said idea, Jesus and his Mother form one single, great, common redemption – and salvation – principle of course, in relation to Christ, Mary's place is of a lower order. Put differently: God thought of our Lady as *the official permanent helper of Christ in the entire work of redemption*. Do you grasp the scope of such formulations? Thus, she stands before us not only as the Mother of

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<sup>97</sup> Similar to St. Paul who was called, when Christianity had its beginnings, to proclaim the mystery of Christ to the world, Fr. Kentenich considered it his life's task to reveal the mystery of Mary to the world of today and tomorrow. He based his pedagogical concept of Schoenstatt on this, his calling.

God but also as the permanent helper: at the Annunciation, under the cross, and in heaven too, where she distributes graces.

Second thought: On the basis of such a conclusion we, who have taken our bearings time and again from the law *Ordo essendi est ordo agenndi*, come to a threefold conclusion: ***A real, intimate devotion to Mary*** is necessary for salvation. What does that mean? Couldn't God have redeemed the world without the Blessed Virgin? Yes, even without the Savior! [As Redeemer] He too is not absolutely but only conditionally necessary for salvation because the Father in heaven willed it.

Such as we now see the order of salvation before us, the Mother of God is necessary for salvation because God willed it so. Aptly, devotion to Mary is necessary for salvation. There may be no spirituality that would like to dispense with devotion to Mary.

Love for Mary ***promotes salvation*** in an exceptional way. Our Lady will fulfill her mission as regards our times and us to the extent that we bring ourselves into line with her position [in God's salvific and redemptive plan]. There is no grace [to be had] without her. That remains so eternally. If we conform with this law time after time to draw the Mother of God with fervent intimacy into the center of our inner life her answer and, with it, that of the Triune God will be an immeasurable overflowing abundance of grace. If we manage to take into account the Blessed Virgin's objective position in the salvific plan, our Lady will prove that she is the great one who bears Christ, the one who gives birth to Christ. Then we will stand before a new era, before a new religious springtime. This is the great hope that our popes have placed in the Blessed Mother. Pius X had the certain feeling that redemption through Christ with the help of Mary is closer to us than we think.<sup>98</sup>

Do you notice what the point is? Always the same belief: We are approaching a new Marian era because Christianity, because the Church gives our Lady the position granted her by God from all eternity, and which He wants to see documented in a singular way today. In the time of transition we, who want to help the good God give the Blessed Mother the position due her, can say: We are happy and we may await immeasurable

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<sup>98</sup> Encyclical Epistle *Ad diem illum laetissimum*

riches of grace because we are His helpers, His instruments in such a secular, important task.

If we increasingly recognize of which significance the position of our Blessed Lady is in the present times, if we grasp more and more deeply what a mission she has for our times, and that God wants to glorify her, and if we know what we owe her, what kind of judgment would we have to pass against our own soul if we were not abandon ourselves to her in simplicity and unconditionally?

Finally, love for Mary *secures salvation*. All those who know present-day life, who know themselves, their own wavering and vacillating, must fear for their salvation. Theologians tell us: One of the surest distinctive marks of election [i.e.] that we will be saved, that we will be granted the grace of perseverance and a happy death, is a profound, an intimate, tender love for Mary.

So, I think we want to close our convention. After having opened the access road to the peak of Marian education, and after having looked around a little up there, we now go into everyday life. Our task is contained in two statements:

First: In one of his books the German Rembrandt<sup>99</sup> writes an observation he made in North Germany: Protestants in a certain church always bowed at a certain spot. A later renovation of the Church opened up the place in question and they found a beautiful painting of Mary!

My portrait of Mary, our portrait of Mary is shrouded. Away with the dust! The colors of my image of Mary should become fresh again. I would like to learn more about the picture of Mary, to relearn love for Mary's personality, and this with the distinct intent of being gripped by God, of growing into the depths of God. That is my task with regard to my following and me.

Second statement: Israel's leader, Barak, was once in great need. A battle was to be fought. Nothing but a little troop was at his disposal.

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<sup>99</sup> Julius Langhelfm (1851 – 1907), a German author and culture critic devoted to counteracting trash literature. Because he wrote a programmatic book titled *Rembrandt as Educator*, in which he held up to the German nation Rembrandt as the embodiment of the classical ideal, he became known as the German Rembrandt.

He was afraid to begin the battle, and he had the prophetess Deborah ask Yahweh what should do.<sup>100</sup> The answer: He should go courageously into battle. But he did not dare it and said to her, “If you come with me, I will go; if you do not come with me, I will not go.”<sup>101</sup> These are the words that we would like to call out to the Blessed Virgin. We too are going out again to fight God’s battles; whether it is a matter of the enemies within us, of self-education or education of others. Today much less tomorrow and the day after it cannot be done without a struggle. If you come with me, I will go! Then I will dare the battle and will win victory. An expression for us all and a statement for those who believe they have a Marian mission in a special way.

All of us must take it as a matter of course that we may share in the destiny of the Blessed Mother.<sup>102</sup> Two things must be kept in mind here. First: All those who have a Marian mission must prepare themselves for continual struggles. They share in the Savior’s fate.

Second: Bear this firmly, unshakably in mind: The less our chances for victory, the more we stand like David face to face with Goliath, the more faithful will remain to our Lady and say, If someone robs me of my honor, I shall see that you are honored. The more we make the effort to provide for her in all situations, the surer you may be: In our community she will erect a memorial to herself and the triune God in an unprecedented way, a memorial of her kindness, a memorial of her wisdom.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Cf Jgs 4,6

<sup>101</sup> Jgs 4,8

<sup>102</sup> Reference to Mary’s sharing in Jesus’ fate: that of having been misjudged and treated with contempt.

<sup>103</sup> This last paragraph refers to the conflicts confronting Schoenstatt, particularly at this time in its history, due to its Marian mission. Because of misconceptions and misinterpretations, even the Church voiced disagreement and sent the founder, Fr. Kentenich, into exile. Fourteen years later, Pope Paul V ratified the decision of a plenary session of cardinals held on 20 October 1965, ending the founder’s exile and suspending all decrees connected with his removal from office.

