



## 57. Schoenstatt and Depth Psychology

*From one point-of-view this text could have been included with the autobiographical texts. The letter from which it has been taken was written by Fr Kentenich in his self-defence: the occasion for a wonderful personal testimony about his educational and pastoral work. In 1962, after having been in exile for ten years, he was informed that the main accusation made to the Congregation for the Faith (Holy Office), and hence the main reason for his exile, was that Schoenstatt's spirituality had been derived from, or was dependent on, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.*

*Fr Kentenich's answer to this accusation is remarkable for a number of reasons:*

*To start with, he pointed out clearly that he was well informed about all that was happening in the field of depth psychology.*

*He then, however, set the various schools of depth psychology aside and formulated what was actually at issue in this science, or what it should be dealing with: Purifying and understanding the depths of the soul. In the process he showed clearly that neither he nor his spirituality depended on any of the schools of depth psychology, although their concerns were also his. From this point-of-view he was also related to them. The main question for him was how to unite the depths of the soul with God – as a result he naturally surpassed the scope of depth psychology.*

*Finally, he showed Schoenstatt's relationship to depth psychology – perhaps also to the surprise of some Schoenstatters – by enumerating the elements in its spirituality that are designed to embrace the depths of the soul, even though the terminology is usually not that used in professional circles: Education for freedom, the importance of the Holy Spirit, the Inscriptio, childlikeness, education in humility, devotion to Mary and the Immaculata atmosphere, method of meditation, "Life Story" in the Tertianships, spiritual currents and the community spirit; hence this is indeed a text by which we can study the founder.*

*The text is taken from "Kleine Dokumenten-Sammlung" – a small collection of documents – of 1963, typescript, A4, 169-179.*

The Bishop's statement juxtaposes depth psychology and psychoanalysis. I quote:

“Notice that the Church condemns not just the father principle as such (as it has found expression in the Family), but also the principles underlying it, that probably have been taken over from modern depth psychology and psychoanalysis.”

This juxtaposition is inappropriate. Depth psychology is the general concept that encompasses many sub-divisions. One form of depth psychology is psychoanalysis – it is only one of many. This is said to clarify the concept. When people talk about depth psychology today, it is always to be understood – unless the opposite is expressly stated, or can be interpreted as such from the context – in this modern sense. It has also to be stated more precisely whether someone is referring to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis (and his school), or neo-psychoanalysis in its many and varied forms. Of the latter the main schools are the individual psychology of Alfred Adler, or the schools of Karen Horney, Erich Fromm, Harry Stack Sullivan, Harald Schultz-Hencke, Thomas French, Sandor Rado or Abram Kardiner. What connects all these schools is their distinctive orientation to depth psychology from the point-of-view of the natural sciences. They differ from the theories of depth psychology with a philosophical orientation. The main representative of this approach is C.G. Jung. In addition there are the theories of Otto Rang, the existential philosophical approach of Ludwig Binswanger with its analysis of existence, and the teaching on partnership and transference by M. Buber, M. Scheler, K. Loewith, E. Michel, P. Christian, as well as the system of Viktor von Weizäcker.

The accused knows about the modern trends touched upon here, but has at all times distanced himself sufficiently from them and preserved his independence. However, the questions at stake here were from the beginning a cause dear to his heart. It has remained so until today. It had to be and remain this way if Schoenstatt was to carry out its timely mission in a God-pleasing way as a distinctive educational movement of educators in a totally changed era, in the sense of the shores of a new era.

Throughout his life he kept only one great ideal in view: God and souls. Everything else was secondary to him. It was purposefully subordinated to, or integrated into, this one great idea of his life. His main concern was always to open the soul for God and to unite it with him indivisibly. However, this necessarily required that he see to it that as far as possible the ultimate depths of the soul should be opened, and remain open, for God and the divine. From the first moment of his work as an educator (since 1912) he emphasised it suitably, thus at one stroke courageously anticipating the impending problems of the life of the soul. So this happened more than a decade before the public slowly began to take an interest in this subject. From 1919 Divine Providence extended the sphere of his activity and influence. This increased year by year. So it happened that countless souls from every social class and walk of life, from all age groups and both sexes, opened up to him. Day and night, we would be justified in putting it this way, he lived and worked exclusively for souls in his unique and secret workshop. He never tired of taking in their secrets and following up the pathways to God, no matter whether these souls were thoroughly sound or ailing, or even sick, whether they were mystically graced, or called to wander the “cow path” to the peak of holiness. It became increasingly clear to him that only those souls who tried to be deeply and inwardly connected with God in their ultimate depths would be able to remain stable, genuine and

strongly rooted while withstanding the storms of the approaching uprooted era, which is without personal bonding and flees all bonding.

A simple image could illustrate what is meant. On one occasion the accused had to explain the group ideal they had chosen to a group of boys. The leader had already come to him to explain the ideal briefly. He brought with him a young oak sapling. The boys wanted to be oaks in the MTA's garden. The leader pointed out that the roots of the young tree were three times longer and wider than the sapling itself. This determined the content of the talk. Whoever is deeply rooted in the storms of the times, and wants to be as strong as an oak, has to unite the roots of his soul to its deepest depths almost indissolubly with God.

The image tellingly reflects what the accused envisaged as the ideal of education and the guidance of souls. He wasn't satisfied with bonding the will to God, and purifying the conscious areas of the soul, suffusing them in light and divinising them. It soon became clear to him that people usually act more in accordance with what their hearts want, and what lives and works in their subconscious as undigested impressions or prejudices.

This explains why in his first programmatic conference he proclaimed the ideal of the free person as the motto for his entire educational work, and for the educational movement he founded. This ideal shines out through all the pedagogical enterprises and statements of the time that followed, and determined peoples life and striving. At every important crossroads, and at every crucial decision, it flashed out elementally and did not allow those who had understood him to come to rest again. This appears most clearly where human freedom was lethally threatened by outside pressures and through contamination from within. One could study the Dachau literature, one could examine "*Heavenwards*" – everywhere the ideal of freedom repeatedly shines out most brightly and in the warmest colours. What was at stake was the most perfect possible freedom from something, and for something: to be free – to the extent that this was attainable with the help of grace – from all that was not of God, or against God, in order to be correspondingly free for God. All this is intended to serve the wellbeing of the Bride of Christ, who in the onward raging storms needs not only heroes of the will, but above all geniuses of the heart (with all its ramifications and implications), if she is not to become a victim of the storms.

The Family did not succumb in the least to the first great onslaught of the storm caused by the persecution by the National Socialist Nazis. On the contrary! The oak tree sank its many and varied roots deeply into the heart of God and the Blessed Mother, from where it could not be torn out. In his divine wisdom God's guidance considerably saw to it that the opportunities for us to grow ever more deeply into the divine and eternal increased continually. If we think of the storms since 1949 and consider that the oak tree has still not been blown down, and that instead it has basically been strengthened and consolidated, we are involuntarily faced with the question: How is this possible at a time when faith all too often remains stuck in the intellect and does not take hold of the heart and the whole person, as Paul desired when he said, "The righteous will live by faith"?<sup>114</sup>

It is difficult to understand why people don't try to get behind the mystery of the unshakable steadfastness of the individual parts of the Movement, especially the Sisters. If they did so, they would involuntarily be inspired to study the means and methods applied to take hold of the

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<sup>114</sup> Ro 1,17; Gal 3,11; cf. Hab 2,4.

depths of the soul, to purify and refine them, to make them thoroughly spiritual, moral and divinised, so that as a result we can register a unique, divine and instinctive security, as well as a remarkable divine instinct.<sup>115</sup> It would then be easy to show that what we are dealing with here is the appropriation of the concerns of depth psychology from a genuinely Catholic viewpoint, without in the least falling prey to *cryptogams*, that is, secretly proliferating heresies. Instead it can be proven that it [the Movement] very clearly distanced itself from them.

So it may be worthwhile to reflect on how the accused took hold of the conscious, and – if one chooses to use the expression – the unconscious and subconscious life of the soul in the above-mentioned sense.

Serving the conscious as well as the unconscious may be called the fruit of a distinctive *sentire cum Ecclesia*.<sup>116</sup> In the first instance, if we think mainly of an *agere a proposito*,<sup>117</sup> we are justified in talking about a stronger *agere a natura*<sup>118</sup> in the second instance. As is evident from the text, and as experience in life shows, the two forms depend on each other. Acting in keeping with a resolution, if it is carried out correctly, is capable of capturing human nature even to the subconscious, purifying it and imbuing it with heart and soul. Purified human nature facilitates and secures actions in keeping with a resolution, lending them wings.

Since the question about capturing the depths of the soul in a God-pleasing way is in the foreground, I will only talk briefly about the *agere a natura* in the sense indicated. A comprehensive description would require a detailed study. This does not come into question here. It is only possible to present a few sketchy clues that aim at prompting reflection and making it possible to understand Schoenstatt in its timely ability to understand a situation, enter into a situation, while remaining unshakably rooted in tried and tested Catholic traditions.

So one is asked to content oneself with allowing some theological, psychological, sociological and pedagogical light to fall on the subject of touching, capturing and penetrating the depths of the human soul – burdened as it is with original sin.

Firstly, a theological light

St Paul points out that it is the Holy Spirit who says “Abba, Father,” in us with inexpressible sighs. So it is the Holy Spirit who takes hold of the whole of human nature to its ultimate depths, and, to the extent that is possible in *statu viae*<sup>119</sup>, pervades it with childlikeness before God and a supernatural childlike attitude. This is how the reference to inexpressible sighs<sup>120</sup> has to be understood. The Holy Spirit does it, as theologians tell us, through his seven gifts. Further, just as the Lord was driven by the Spirit, so the righteous experience something similar when supernatural motivational forces become effective to counteract our unpurified, instinctive human drives. If the supernatural driving forces remain unheeded, it is impossible in the long run to conquer our overgrown natural drives that break loose without restraint. It should not be difficult to apply these hints correctly to the depths of the soul.

To continue: “It is these gifts, the most hidden and finest threads, operations and keys, through which the Holy Spirit governs and works what he wills in the sanctified soul. ... Through these gifts

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<sup>115</sup> *Witterungssinn*.

<sup>116</sup> Feeling with the Church and as the Church does.

<sup>117</sup> Acting in keeping with a resolution.

<sup>118</sup> Acting according to natural inclinations.

<sup>119</sup> As long as we are still on our earthly pilgrimage.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Ro 8,22-26.

the soul becomes a chosen instrument of the Holy Spirit, who becomes its true educator and teacher” (Meschler). The most hidden and finest threads mentioned here reach into the ultimate depths of the soul. This is why the gifts of the Holy Spirit are called supernatural “organs of the soul” or “connecting forces” (Ruderer), that enable souls to act not just *humano modo*,<sup>121</sup> but *divino modo*<sup>122</sup>. They awaken, drive and wrench the soul upwards, as though airborne, to heroism, to the maturity of Christ. “Through them [the gifts of the Holy Spirit] God takes hold of the soul, it becomes willing and tractable towards all that is supernatural and comes more easily to God” (Franke). St Thomas explained, “The gifts of the Holy Spirit are enduring qualities that originate wholly in heaven, and through which a person is perfected to obey the Holy Spirit more quickly. ... They are special, supernatural abilities that make us docile, so that we carry out those excellent works known as the Beatitudes.” So once again it should not be difficult to discern and pick up the extent to which the emphasis is here placed on the Holy Spirit taking possession of the depths of the soul. This was also Laros’ opinion when he wrote, “The gifts of the Spirit are ultimately the spontaneous and brilliant works engendered by God’s Spirit in the human breast. They urge the person by inner attraction, by a sort of gravity, towards God, and work for him.” Other spiritual teachers compare the gifts with the sails of ship, or with the wings of a bird, in order to illustrate how easy the activity is when compared with our usual means of movement.

It should not be difficult to see the related subjects described here at work everywhere in our Family history. One need only recall how the individual and the communities strive for heroic holiness. If one keeps in mind that such striving is only possible when the gifts of the Holy Spirit can operate unhindered, one will understand why, and the extent to which, Schoenstatt guides and supports its members and sections of the Movement to take hold of, penetrate and purify the depths of the soul, thus integrating heart and soul and divinising them. To what result does one come when one calls to mind how divine guidance has repeatedly urged the entire family to live the theological (and cardinal) virtues heroically? Theologians point out that the perfection of the theological virtues is exclusively the task and function of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So, once again we draw the conclusion: Must not their souls be deeply possessed and permeated right down to the subconscious by God and the divine?

Again, when we guide people to the Inscriptio consecration or the Engling Act, we repeatedly emphasise that the conditional request for every form of cross and suffering is designed to overcome the negative attitudes and prejudices towards the cross and suffering, and – under the influence of the Holy Spirit – to transform them positively. An example of this transformation is the Apostles before and after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Beforehand, despite the presence of the Lord, they were people who depended on their instincts and fled from the cross and suffering. If people did not take sufficient notice of them, they were ready to call down fire and brimstone on them.<sup>123</sup> After the coming of the Holy Spirit they were happy to be dragged before judges, to be despised and ill-treated.<sup>124</sup> This is the picture of the new person in Christ Jesus whom the Blessed Mother wants to give in a special way to the present-day Church from her shrines.

A psychological light is added to the theological

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<sup>121</sup> Humanly.

<sup>122</sup> Divinely.

<sup>123</sup> Lk 9,54.

<sup>124</sup> Acts 5,41; cf. Mt 5, 10-12.

In order not to be misunderstood, allow me to stress that the elements that have to be discussed here, have to be seen and evaluated both from a theological and a psychological point of view. Here I will only highlight the psychological aspect; the theological has always to be included.

The first element that has to be mentioned is the teaching of St Thomas on the *potentia oboedientialis* for the divine, the supernatural, that is the ability of human nature to assimilate the divine, the supernatural. We could say instead, with a side glance at the Blessed Mother, that we are dealing here with a distinctive Fiat attitude, with being wide open for God's Word and for God's work, that is to say, with a distinctively feminine fundamental attitude to the Eternal, to the Infinite. All this totally contradicts an inarticulate masculine *Volo* attitude,<sup>125</sup> which, especially in the "virilistic"<sup>126</sup> times today, falsely supposes it can and must behave as *actus purissimus*, an absolutely autonomous creator.

In this context one should consider the whole world of childlikeness, as we teach it and try to live it. It is a flagrant protest against this extreme virilism, and a warm profession of the Fiat attitude of the Blessed Mother. We uphold unwaveringly that the eternal in woman and the eternal in man are always rooted in the eternal child. Childlike openness and childlike self-surrender are and remain the constitutive elements of masculine and feminine perfection. This childlikeness can take on different forms for both, it can have differing impacts and degrees, but no one may bypass it. This is how the saying of our Lord has to be interpreted, "Unless you become like little children ..."<sup>127</sup>

If we want to consider the vital process described here from another angle, in order to connect it more strongly with the depths of the soul, one has to exchange the word childlikeness with the word littleness, which means the same. It need hardly be emphasised how much childlikeness opens up the depths of the soul. This openness is simply part and parcel of the nature of a child. Immature childlikeness is unbridled openness. That is why one talks about the '*enfant terrible*'. It can be a period of transition. Nevertheless the ideal is and remains mature and mellow childlikeness, which is open towards God without restraint or qualification. Towards everyone else it is a carefully guarded secret, it is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed. Furthermore, allow me to remind you of what was said above. If childlikeness, as I have said, is unreserved openness towards God, we may rest assured that the Holy Spirit will descend, not just to some extent, but as profoundly as possible, through this open door into the deepest depths of this childlike soul. However, where the Holy Spirit is at work in this way, he speaks with ineffable sighs. He knows no rest until he can call the depths of the soul his impregnable dwelling.

In this context Grignon de Montfort opens up another point of view for us. He stresses that "in the Blessed Trinity, the Holy Spirit remains sterile, in the sense that he does not produce another Divine Person; but he became fruitful through Mary, whom he espoused. It is with her, and in her and from her, that he has produced his masterpiece – God made Man; and likewise, he constantly produces, and will continue to do so to the end of time, the members of the Mystical Body of this adorable Head. Hence it is that, the more the Holy Spirit finds Mary, his beloved and indissoluble

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<sup>125</sup> Attitude of "I will".

<sup>126</sup> A neologism to express an extreme tendency to value only man and masculine values.

<sup>127</sup> Mt 18, 3-4.

Spouse, in a soul, the more powerfully he works to produce Jesus Christ in that soul, and that soul in Jesus Christ.”<sup>128</sup>

“One of the main reasons why the Holy Spirit does not now work blinding wonders of grace in our souls, is that he does not find in us a sufficiently strong union with his indissoluble Spouse.”<sup>129</sup>

Such and similar observations caused Grignon to establish as one of the laws by which God guides souls,

“By the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, Mary has produced the greatest event which ever was or ever shall be: the birth of the God-Man. Consequently ... to her is reserved the formation and education of the great saints ... Only this excellent and miraculous Virgin can produce, in union with the Holy Spirit, such mighty and extraordinary events. When the Holy Spirit finds his Spouse in a soul, he flies to that soul, to communicate himself to it, to fill it with his Presence, in proportion as he discovers therein the presence and fullness of his Spouse.”<sup>130</sup>

Thus those words are constantly repeated: *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine* – He took flesh from the Holy Spirit in Mary the Virgin. When the Holy Spirit finds Mary in souls – this is the condition for the special effectiveness of the Holy Spirit – he also finds a marked Fiat attitude as a result of their fervent love for his Spouse.

So, almost automatically, the psychological view quietly combines with the theological view.

The psychological element again appears more strongly in the foreground when we exchange the word childlikeness with that of littleness. By it we understand the charming simplicity and humility of a child. There is probably hardly any other moral virtue than humility that is so little able to exist in a sound way without the most intimate espousal with warm and fervent love of God. Humility without love rapidly turns into sickly feelings of inferiority, and ultimately ends with spiritual breakdown or self-idolisation that repeats with Nietzsche: If there were a God, I could not bear not to be God. I have already mentioned guilt and weakness that are not understood or acknowledged, which often make the people of today so immeasurably ill and fragile. That statement is synonymous with a hymn of praise to completely sound humility, which discovers in weaknesses the most effective invitation to surrender ourselves totally into the arms of God the Father. Only those who can confess triumphantly with St Paul, “I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses” – not formally about my sins, but the wretchedness that finds expression in countless other weaknesses, because as a result Christ’s power is revealed in me<sup>131</sup> – are protected against a huge number of modern psychological illnesses, and are able to become sound and walk the steep road to God without danger.

*Everyday Sanctity* depicts the inner connection between divine omnipotence and human “al-mightiness” in this way:

“How little the people of today, even we Christians, know about this consoling truth! [Of God the Father’s immeasurable love for us, his weak children]. How else could we feel so abandoned and lonely, and run from door to door seeking help and consolation, and forget our heavenly Father! Don’t children turn to their father when they are in need? And just because a child is small and

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<sup>128</sup> St Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, *Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin*, St Paul, Athlone, 1962, p. 12. In these extracts the translation “Holy Ghost” has been updated to “Holy Spirit” in keeping with current usage of the Church.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21f.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. 2 Cor 12,9.

helpless, doesn't it awaken all the Father's willingness to help and joy in giving? God the Father wants to communicate himself; he wants to give of himself out of love, and love by giving of himself, because he is Love! Because his willingness to love is so great, he breathes forth the Holy Spirit. This strong and communicative force gave him no rest. So he united his Son with a graced human nature. I am even inclined to say that the Father does not want to exist without his child, without as many children as possible. He is Love, so he wants to communicate himself. *Deus quaerit condiligentes se*: God wants spiritual beings whom he can love, and who love with him what and how he himself loves. So he allowed his only begotten Son to become Man, and he incorporated us into him at our baptism. We have in truth become his children. God the Father has only one 'weakness', he cannot withstand the recognised and acknowledged helplessness of his child. Childlikeness means the 'helplessness' of our great God, and in its turn the 'all-powerfulness' of the little human being. Here we find the deepest reason for the fruitfulness of humility in God's kingdom. That is why the Blessed Mother called out jubilantly in the Magnificat, 'He exalts the lowly',<sup>132</sup> and our divine Saviour endorses his Mother's words again and again when he says, 'whoever humbles himself will be exalted',<sup>133</sup> and 'whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave'.<sup>134"135</sup>

There are three degrees of the state of "being pleased with ourselves" on account of our weaknesses and limitations, or "boasting about" them – no matter what form they may take – which mean an equal number of degrees of greatness before God, and liberation from disturbing "static"<sup>136</sup> and compulsions. If our experience of our smallness before ourselves and others does not flow into the experience of our greatness before God, it sooner or later becomes entangled in pathological inferiority complexes.

The first degree of smallness or humility consists in learning to willingly and joyfully admit our weaknesses to ourselves, and use them to remain in more profound contact with God. This combines humility and love. Humility awakens love, and love makes humility possible and easier. It doesn't matter whether these are physical, intellectual, psychological, moral or religious limitations. Of course it isn't easy to break with the purely worldly scale of values that is seen as essential in public life, and make God's scale of values our own, so as to make it the norm for our thinking, feeling and actions. Again it isn't possible without a high degree of grace.

*Everyday Sanctity* notes,

"Those who try seriously to detach themselves from their own honour and search for pleasure, and become simple in their volition, thinking and actions, that is, if they become single-minded in seeking God's honour and love, they will be set free from much inhibiting "static" in their soul, and no longer need to worry so much about nervous disturbances. Doctors are right in saying that an excellent remedy for nervous illnesses, if they are not organic in origin, would be profound humility and love that are rooted in God.

"Everyday saints have experienced this on countless occasions in their own lives. They do not lack work or suffering. Many others would have a nervous breakdown in similar circumstances. They remain upright. It is possible that they have weak nerves, but they remain strong and able to bear

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<sup>132</sup> Lk 1,52.

<sup>133</sup> Mt 23,12; Lk 14,11; 18,14.

<sup>134</sup> Mt 20,26f.; Mk 9,35; 10,44; Lk 14,11.

<sup>135</sup> *Everyday Sanctity*, Part I, p. 16f. (Johannesburg); p. 20f. (Waukesha). (My translation. MC).

<sup>136</sup> *Nebengeräusche*

the load, because they do not run constantly from one doctor to the next. They are everyday saints who master life through their sound, serious and profound striving for holiness, their humility and warm love for God, while others, who are healthy and strong cannot cope with the attritional difficulties of our times. We know, for instance, that St Thomas Aquinas, that intellectual giant, wrote his huge volumes of eminent theological science while suffering from continual migraine headaches.”<sup>137</sup>

It is self-explanatory that the permanent connection between smallness and greatness, between humility and love, which is seen and lived in this way, is capable of touching the depths of the soul and, with the help of grace, inwardly transforming them.

The second degree of humility consists in rejoicing to be seen by others in our limitations and weaknesses, and evaluated accordingly.

At the third degree one is pleased when others treat us accordingly.

All this is only possible if our love for God grows concurrently [with our humility], and our soul feels at home in God’s world of values, or at least knows that we are justified in applying St Paul’s words about “living in heaven”<sup>138</sup> to ourselves. We can feel how strongly the soul in such a state has transferred its centre of gravity from the self to the living God. We can also guess the extent to which the depths of the soul will have had to undergo a Copernican revolution. A human being is unable to bring this about by his or her own strength. God’s grace has to show its wonderful power, and it could take some time before the soul can confess from experience, “I can do all things in him who strengthens me”.<sup>139</sup> The effect could be accelerated and deepened to the extent that the espousal between humility and love has sought and found creative and wholehearted expression in symbolic external actions. In this connection one could recall once more the ultimate meaning of the customs<sup>140</sup> in question.

As the second psychological element allow me to remind you of our method of meditation, which we love and often prefer. It consists, as is generally known, of examining and savouring, as well as anticipating and preparing for, God’s mercies, which we have received personally, as well as our personal miseries. In both instances we are used to setting up a ladder, as it were, on every event in our personal and community lives. Since we don’t so quickly get into the habit of seeing God at the peak of these events, meditation guides us to catch up later. The God of life, who speaks to us on countless occasions during the day through words and deeds, wants to be heeded. He wants to receive a loving answer from us. During the time of meditation it is as though the mind climbs up the rungs of the ladder in order to see and understand God at the top. The heart joins it in climbing up the ladder, and tries to embrace God, our loving Father, and his providence and dispensations, with all its warmth. According to God’s intentions, the experiences of our miseries are an excellent motivation to drive us into God the Father’s merciful arms. It is always the same vital process that is repeated on countless occasions: everything we encounter – joyful and sorrowful, exhilarating and shattering, positive and negative – has to be seen as a loving gift and loving appeal from God, and receive a loving answer from a genuine child of the Father. It could take some time before the soul has grown so deeply into this world that it literally swims in the ocean of God’s mercy and feels at home there. Bit by bit the soul digests all its undigested impressions. It

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid, Vol. II, p. 25 (Johannesburg); p.124 (Waukesha). (My translation. MC).

<sup>138</sup> Phil 3,20.

<sup>139</sup> Phil 4,13.

<sup>140</sup> Brauchtum.

does so for as long as it needs to until its entire rhythm of life harmonises with God's rhythm of life; in the process it breathes deeply in and out. In this way it climbs one rung after the other of the ladder of the freedom of God's children. Day by day the soul becomes increasingly free from all that is not God or against God, in order to become free for the God of life.

Once again it should not be difficult to understand what a profound influence such a method of meditation exerts on the depths of the soul.

The function of the daily meditation for the immediate past and present is extended mainly in the Tertianships to a person's whole life. This happens not only through a communal "*Lapidatio*"<sup>141</sup> which sets the depths of the soul in motion; in addition, the entire life of the individual from childhood is again surveyed and digested in the above-mentioned sense. The extent and depth to which such a savouring of the past from a highly religious perspective touches the depths of the soul to its very roots and is able to transform it, is confirmed by many years of experience. The effect is particularly long lasting when the whole life story is spread out before a sympathetic and understanding transparency of God, who helps the individual, in the sense indicated above, to climb the rungs of the ladder with mind and heart, and totally digest the undigested impressions that are there.<sup>142</sup>

The more deeply the soul grows into the Family and feels responsible for it, the more it will feel urged to apply the same method of meditation to the whole history of the Family, and to regard and digest all events as personal turning points in its own life.

Whoever lives constantly in a loving and vital way in these three circles will soon feel how deeply God intervenes in the ultimate depths of his or her soul.

Our three dimensional spirituality has to be seen as the third psychological element. It is unnecessary to point out that once again it can be seen from two points-of-view: from the theological and the psychological. The former will not be discussed here, because we can presuppose it. So we are only concerned at this point with the psychological aspect, but only to the extent that it touches the depths of the soul. What has to be said in this regard will automatically be understood by the informed without a long discussion.

Our covenant spirituality implies the most perfect possible reciprocity on the part of the two partners. For both partners this requires the coordination of an enlightened and organic movement of love and sacrifice. Love embraces this world and the next, that is, every form of God-pleasing love: spontaneous, natural and supernatural. The aim is to bring all three forms into harmonious connection. The third part of *Everyday Sanctity* shows how this can be done fruitfully. Whoever understands what is written there, whoever tries to live it in practice, will soon realise how deeply human nature is embraced in its most powerful basic instinct – love – and united with infinite Love. It is unnecessary to enlarge on this subject further at this point.

Our everyday sanctity – by this we mean the God-pleasing harmony between affectionate bonding to God, to work and to people in every circumstance of our lives. In our context, when we are discussing the depths of the soul, we need to emphasise the key word 'affectionate' when we consi-

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<sup>141</sup> Literally "stoning". What is meant is that in a small and intimate circle the participants allow others to tell them their failings and weaknesses. See also "fraternal correction" in Text 63.

<sup>142</sup> The members of the Schoenstatt Federations and Institutes are guided in the Second Tertianship – when they are aged between 26 and 36 – to work through their lives in the so-called "Life Story", to look at their entire past honestly and connect it with God.

der the manifold bonding. What has already been said about love has to be repeated here, and applied not just to God, but also to things and people. If this takes place in the correct way, it is obvious how extensively such a praxis touches the depths of the soul, transforming it and uplifting it. This all takes place in every circumstance in life.

Our spirituality of an instrument stresses the inseparable connection between the instrument and the master workman, whether these are people, goals or methods. Since this connection (between instrument and work) is established, secured and deepened by love, we have in essentials the same situation as before. The spirituality of an instrument touches the depths of the soul in the same way as everyday sanctity and covenant spirituality. It is unnecessary at this point to recall more to mind.

Whoever has assimilated and digested the theological and psychological exposure of the depths of the soul to the light, will not find it difficult to allow them to shed light on the sociological element. For our present discussion it will be sufficient to highlight three elements briefly and make them available for further research.

First of all, please recall that Schoenstatt's origin, its source, was a vital process and not primarily an idea. In addition we need to become aware of how strongly the whole Family is borne by a universal stream of life that flows through it and soaks it. It follows that only those are full members of the Family who have been drawn into this founding process and have been touched by this stream of life. Both the vital process and the stream of life obviously speculate on the social drive of the member. They know no rest, and allow no rest – this is based on their essential nature – until the life of the individual member and the community has been embraced, penetrated and permeated to the ultimate depths of the soul. It is not without reason that we say that each genuine member of the Family has to re-live the founding process in all its stages (1914, 1939, 1942 and 1952), and swim in the river of life prevailing at that time.

Besides this, the social drive in people is awakened by a distinctive Immaculata atmosphere, which exerts an essential influence on every aspect of life as it develops. What is said about the importance of the milieu from an educational point-of-view can be repeated here, and applied to the exceedingly tender and fine aroma of the Immaculata spirit that penetrates everything. As long as the Family has existed it has taken its bearings from the fundamental and vital principle: The Immaculata spirit is and remains its mother soil. It has never left this foundation; it has always drawn its children with gentle and attractive force into its spirit. It seems that this Immaculata atmosphere is its special charism. Please call to mind the extent to which the depths of the soul must thus be embraced, imbued with heart and soul, and divinised in the long run. It could also be the secret of the attraction of those who mainly cultivate a form of *vita communis perfecta* or *mixta*.<sup>143</sup> It is not without reason that people talk about a paradisaal meadow. Until now it has always proved to be extremely fruitful if a paradisaal atmosphere is created and spread around our shrines by the communities mentioned above. May it always remain so! A paradisaal atmosphere, understood correctly, is capable of forming and moulding paradisaal people – paradisaal people who even in a sensualised and sexualised surrounding world have<sup>144</sup> the effect of a living *Sursum corda*<sup>145</sup>, another Mary. Through the integrity of their whole being, through the way they dress and behave, they have an uplifting effect on those around. So one can understand how unjust and how hurtful

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<sup>143</sup> Complete community life, or a mixed community life (temporary absence on account of the apostolate).

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<sup>145</sup> Lift up your hearts – invocation at the beginning of the Preface in the Eucharistic celebration.

the sexual slurs are that have been spread about us. Perhaps the ancient experience is being repeated here, according to which God allows those people and groups of people to be treated most harshly in the area where they have a particular mission. Everyone's attention has to be drawn to them, so that later their complete integrity can shine out all the more brightly, and thus enable them to carry out their mission as widely as possible.

Thirdly, allow me to point out how strongly the whole Family and each individual section of the Movement is permeated by a community spirit. The degree and form of spiritual community and community life is simply the distinguishing feature of the individual formations. The Federations and Institutes demand a higher degree of community life as an obligation. It is unnecessary to prove how strongly this community life influences the depths of the soul. In order to ensure that the social instinct is given the greatest possibilities to develop creatively, the Federations and Institutes also have the free community with its original structure in addition to the official community. Besides this there is the careful bonding on both sides to the leader and superiors. Thus in our uprooted times there has been plenty of provision made for overcoming the present-day crisis of establishing personal contacts.<sup>146</sup> A profound orientation of the whole person to the Eternal and Infinite, as far as this is possible, is also guaranteed.

Actually this would be the place to shed some pedagogical light on the problem of capturing the depths of the soul. However it could be sufficient to indicate here that the Family tries purposefully to use all the pedagogical means at its disposal to implement the inner related realities described. Further details can be studied in the pedagogical courses. Whoever is interested could take the opportunity to study the history of the spirit and life of the Family as a whole from the points-of-view already discussed, and to codify the results for future generations.

Incidentally, if the ancient law applies today that God reveals through difficulties what he wants to have emphasised particularly, what he wants to have studied and implemented in a special way, it should be clear that the line of thought sketched here has to be introduced to all the sections of the Family and become their inalienable possession. The more we are accused of applying the aberrations of modern tendencies in depth psychology, the more we have to be informed about the true issues, so that we are able to separate the wheat from the chaff, and make the wisdom we have inherited our inalienable possession.

The great lines of thought we have plotted here can be followed up like a golden thread through the vital structures of the Family. They have constantly been worked out independently and also upheld; they were and are still today the norm we apply to the modern and current spiritual tendencies in the world. The opposite was never the case. The currents in the world were never the norm we have taken for orientation. However, this does not imply that we never learnt from them, that is, that we never tried to measure our convictions against the valuable achievements on their part, or to digest their verified observations and achievements in our way. All this took place, however, according to the great law "*quidquid recipitur, ad modum recipientis recipitur*"<sup>147</sup>. It should not be difficult to prove that the *sensus catholicus* or the *sentire cum ecclesia*<sup>148</sup> were never displaced in the slightest.

With that an answer has been given to the Bishop's statement.

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<sup>146</sup> *Kontaktnot.*

<sup>147</sup> "What has been understood is understood in keeping with the nature of the person concerned." This philosophical principle of the theory of knowledge means that the perspective of the observer largely determines what he observes and how he interprets what he has observed.

<sup>148</sup> Catholic thinking and feeling with the Church.